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Dear Readers,

This issue comes to you hot on the heels of the 1st FIPLV East European Regional Congress and the 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, whose echo is still ringing. Hence, several articles share a common focus reflecting on recent conferences and their potential for professional and personal enrichment, while the rest add more colour to the kaleidoscope that is English language learning and teaching.

In our first article, Bill Templer argues for developing a mini-research unit for investigation of alternatives to the present English language syllabus in state schools. Next, Todor Todorov and Rya Malinova share the experience colleagues from the BBIL Centre gained by participating in an Erasmus+ funded project on the use of technology in teaching. Then come Dennis Newson’s Reflections: in his first instalment, Dennis reflects on the pull of conferences, big and small, and on other forms of professional development. This is followed by three reports of local and international conferences which give additional insights into their power and attraction: Zhivka Ilieva’s account of the 51st IATEFL Conference in Glasgow, and two reports of the 15th ELTA Serbia Conference by Reneta Stoimenova, the official BETA representative, and by Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuseleva. Still on the topic of conference impressions, those of you who missed the 1st FIPLV East European Regional Congress and 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference in Varna can read Sylvia Velikova’s report of the event. Finally, you can get one more
glimpse of the conference through Tanya Bikova’s interview with Birsen Tütünis – a plenary speaker, who discussed the professional journeys of pre-service teachers.

Traditionally, we conclude with a poem – this time, Alan Maley’s story of separation warns us not to forget the lessons human history taught us. In the final pages of this issue, you can find details about forthcoming ELT events and the contribution guidelines.

We hope you enjoy this issue. Happy reading!

Zarina Markova
Issue Editor
‘Less is More’: Developing a Mini-Research Unit for a Leaner, Simplified English

Bill Templer

Bill Templer is a Chicago-born educator, a trained Germanist, sociolinguist and translator, with teaching + research interests in ELF, American Literature, Critical Pedagogy, Jewish History and Minority Studies. He has worked at universities in the US, Ireland, Germany, Bulgaria (VTU, Shumen U, Stopanska Akademiya Svishtov), Iran, Israel (Tel Aviv U, Open U), Nepal and SE Asia (Laos, Thailand and Malaysia). Bill is active on the GISIG/IATEFL Committee, within TaWSIG (www.teachersasworkers.org), on the Board of www.jceps.com and is long based largely retired in eastern Bulgaria.

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What influence can critical librarians, information workers, cultural workers, teachers, pedagogues, have in working towards a democratic, egalitarian society/economy/polity? (Hill, 2006:18).

The present article revises an earlier paper submitted to the 2011 Sofia BETA conference and available at the online site. I decided to rewrite and expand it for publication, since I strongly believe the mini-research unit it

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1 An earlier short version of this paper was published in IATEFL Global Issues Newsletter, No. 26, Spring 2011: 14-16; an expanded version of that is available at BETA, conference papers Sofia, 2011: ‘Developing a Research Unit for Simplified English’ (http://goo.gl/UCMU90).
suggests is still badly needed and could indeed be inventively created at a university in Bulgaria or elsewhere. Such a research mini-center would investigate the experimental teaching of more simplified and sustainable forms of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), especially for average non-privileged learners, a realistic and sustainable modest basal learner lect for ‘Plateau proficiency’ as a destination, ‘less is more.’ My prime proposition, in the spirit of Dave Hill’s question above, is that the TEFL profession is faced with an evident need it is not adequately addressing in seeking to forge a fairer, more equitable society in terms of basic ‘additional language literacy’ and ‘pedagogies for plainer talk’ (Templer, 2008a). The core aim is to further teaching of English as a ‘people’s lingua franca’ (Templer, 2005) and a ‘TESOL for social justice’ – forging what might be called ‘counter-hegemonic’ strategies for teaching ELF in the context of grassroots ‘globalization from below’ – a kind of ‘planetary reboot’ (Pinchbeck, 2016:216) in our teaching – and to ground this on solid empirical investigation, including qualitative (QR) approaches (Georgieva, 2017), and a range of concrete case studies (Mason & Krashen, 2017; Harrison et al., 2017), in ordinary working-class classrooms. Evidence is needed on what can work, for whom, a ‘Reality Pedagogy’ (Emdin, 2017) in and for TEFL, with a ‘primary goal of meeting each student on his or her own cultural and emotional turf’ (p. 27). Also centrally relevant is ‘Teacher Research!,’ as in the RESIG Istanbul conference. I have written a number of articles on aspects of such a downshifted, simpler English (as a robust lingua franca), usable as a communicative tool by the broader masses of learners who do not aspire to higher levels of proficiency in standard ‘full’ English for academic purposes or other aims of ‘cultural capital.’ Some are published in this E-Newsletter (Templer, 2014a; 2014b) or elsewhere, open-access.

Key research areas outlined for such a mini-center involve fresh investigation on
Ogden/Richards’ BASIC ENGLISH 850, VOA Special English, Grzega’s Basic Global English, Jean-Paul Nerrière’s GLOBISH, and other innovative alternatives to the present English language syllabus in the schools, including the key implications of the Plain Language Movement. Wedell (2011) underscores the lack of success worldwide in many teaching ecologies in getting most ordinary learners to develop a useful degree of English proficiency, noting the need to ‘seriously question the extent to which the investment in English for Everyone makes a genuine contribution to global development. This debate is just beginning’ (p. 288). Although he does not explore the question of a simplified, leaner model of English as part of ‘English for Everyone,’ this should become central to inquiry. It belongs within a hands-on perspective for ordinary working people – adults and children – on ‘plurilingual and pluricultural competencies’, and a new look at ‘partial competence’ in the dynamic mix, as envisioned by the Council of Europe (2009), and the ‘1000 Words Challenge’ of the plurilingual campaign Speak to the Future supported by FIPLV (2016). Also relevant are Lamb’s (2015) insights on the need for nurturing a ‘plurilingual habitus’ for all, not just the privileged. The proposal for such grounded research is likewise germane to diverse topics to be discussed at the 2017 BETA-FIPLV conference, such as durable multilingualism and innovative scenarios in language education policy for early language learning, and the learning inequalities that poverty creates (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013).

Esperanto as well?

Some of us in IATEFL also think a new look at Esperanto as part of that plurilingual mix should also be (re)explored, as reflected in the successful work in UK primary schools of SPRINGBOARD2LANGUAGES (S2L) presented by Tim Morley in a TEDx Talk on
the value of teaching Esperanto as a first easy-to-learn additional ‘neutral’ international language (see also lernu!; Phillipson, 1999). There is growing evidence that when children first learn a year or two of Esperanto (100 hours of instruction), they develop a special awareness for learning other second languages. Velitchkova (2014) provides an intriguing study of Esperanto’s history in Bulgaria, from the 1950s onward. The social justice, cosmopolitanism and linguistic rights politics of the Esperanto movement and the UEA are also relevant to concerns of GISIG in IATEFL, but this must remain beyond this article’s scope.

 Facing up to Reality

In an earlier E-Newsletter article (Templer, 2014a: 9-10), I called attention to a 2014 interview with Dr. Ellie Boyadzhieva where she expressed her doubts, based on extensive experience and recent empirical data, about the effectiveness of current EFL teaching in the Bulgarian schools. She discussed findings from a broad survey at South-West University in Blagoevgrad on students’ EL proficiency, indicating that those students who had had 7 years of school study of English, of 1,170 who took the exam, 558 (47.69%) were at level A1, 391 (33.41%) were at level A2 (so a total of 81.8% at beginner level). 199 students (17%) were assessed as B1, and only 22 (0.018%) at level B2. None were above that. Her observations point up a serious concrete problem in EFL instruction in Bulgaria, reflecting a situation not uncommon elsewhere in the Balkans and beyond: hundreds of thousands of boy/girl hours wasted in trying to learn a language that is in effect going in one ear and out the other. Students repeatedly self-classify themselves as false beginners even after many years of instruction, as Dr. Boyadzhieva emphasized. After teaching working-class university students many years in
northeastern Thailand (Isaan), Steven Graham (2011:1, 7) underscores a similar malaise:

‘As a university teacher in the north-east of Thailand, I have seen the problems that university students have learning English. The majority of these difficulties have been fossilised over the years, resulting in students having a very low level of English language competency [...] my university students have been learning English for about ten years by the time I see them and the majority of non-English majors have at best what could be described as a bad primary school level of English. Present simple is probably as far as they have ever gone’.

A colleague in Serbia bemoans analogous existing deficiencies in ELT there:
‘I’ve mentioned several times how bad language education (in primary and high schools, but often the faculties too) in Serbia is, how after 10 years of second language study the vast majority of students [...] gets no further than a set of several basic sentences and a mediocre vocabulary which they can’t put to any real use’.

Nepali EFL teachers’ ‘confessions’ also offer singular insights into their problems teaching in classic ‘difficult circumstances’. Strikingly, in an unprecedented open letter in May 2017 to the new Bulgarian education minister Krassimir Vulchev, over 10 NGOs and some 500 educators and parents severely criticized the overall poor performance of the highly centralized Bulgarian education system. They call for measures to enhance the quality of education through greater school autonomy and more individualization of learning, and to counter illiteracy in particular, with PISA results indicating nearly 40% of Bulgarian 15-year-olds are ‘functionally illiterate’ in Bulgarian, let alone a second language. Onerous chronic
stress levels leading to anxiety are evident in research on BG primary schools and their testing regimes, and poverty remains a key factor driving pupil dropout.

**Promoting Working-class Pedagogies of English as a Lingua Franca**

The core thesis here is that we have to experiment with and research in empirical depth new paths toward a more sustainable – and more easily learned and retained – ‘clearer, plainer’ English among the world’s social majorities, and in particular non-privileged learners from working-class, rural and poverty backgrounds everywhere. And a leaner, more ‘downshifted and de-cluttered’ English that can be more readily taught by harried teachers, grounded on evidence-based policies of what really works. Those teachers are themselves often overstressed, overworked and ‘deprofessionalized,’ disempowered, turned into deskillled ‘clerks’ by bureaucratic structures, in many countries largely underpaid. I would argue that there is excessive orientation in our field, shaped by the ethos of cultural elites and their meritocratic habitus, toward teaching middle-class learners, social ‘class in the classroom’. This is broadly exemplified by student family background at the key Bulgarian elite language high schools, their A-1 graduates and career trajectories, and also often leads to later emigration. Moreover, ever more Bulgarian high school graduates are seeking to study abroad, a ‘youth brain drain’ that defies any practical solution in the near future. Moreover, there is a prolonged economic and severe demographic crisis in BG. My guiding thesis suggests that ideally, all individuals on this planet should have the right to learn an efficient, compact lingua franca for inter-cultural communication, in effect reclaiming the commons of discourse through pedagogies for plainer talk, as applied in the teaching of English as an additional
language (Templer, 2008a; Solomon, 2010). Such a proposed research unit is in the clear interest of average people learning a simpler English to communicate across borders and social boundaries, a globalization ‘from the bottom-up’ for the Multitude, not the small stratum of a transnational elite, generally drawn from the social and economic middle-class strata. ‘ELF for the Social Majorities’ is often neglected in linguistic and pedagogical research and practice, and in national syllabi for teaching English. In many countries, especially in the Global South, only a relatively small minority of learners of English achieve a mid-intermediate level proficiency in English and relatively few go in poorer countries on to tertiary education. The teaching of English as a lingua franca across much rural and working-class education in the Global South – and in many lower-income social ecologies of language learning elsewhere – faces formidable challenges: a lack of qualified teachers & materials resources, and low levels of pupil motivation and achievement among non-privileged learners. For the small privileged learner stratum, proficiency in high levels of ELF is increasingly a core component in their kit of ‘cultural capital’ for reproduction of class privilege and upward mobility (Gee, 2008). As De Saxe (2016:14-15) reminds us:

‘Further, a neoliberal presence within the context of schools and education puts a premium on individuality, competition, and self-meritocracy. In fact, when considering the purposes of schools within such a perspective, the focus moves away from school as a common good, and instead looks at it as a purely private and individual good and service. Additionally, success in school is measured through quantifiable means, which only reinforces the notion that public education is objectively categorized rather than being a unique, nuanced, and complex system of teaching and learning’.
She goes on to develop an intersectional critical feminist analysis of this now global phenomenon and the imperative need to resist it, reimagining alternatives.

**Literacy with an Attitude**

Simplifying the lingua franca taught is also central to a second language pedagogy that seeks to promote ‘literacy with an attitude’, educating working-class kids and adults in their own self-interest (Finn, 1999; Gee, 2008; Papen, 2005:128-149). Patrick Finn reminds us that working-class kids, urban and rural, often develop an ‘oppositional identity, resisting school talk that seems to them alien, anchored in beliefs, behaviors, values and attitudes from a different class-anchored world. A powerful ‘clash of discourses’ (Finn, 1999:119) saturates their everyday life in the classroom. Such a ‘counter-school culture’ (Willis, 1982) can mean resisting undemocratic authority, passive learning, standardized testing, boring texts, elite school/teacher talk and values, the ‘hidden curriculum’ of social passivity: ‘Working-class children with varying degrees of oppositional identity resist school through means reminiscent of the factory shop floor—slowdowns, strikes, sabotage, and occasional open confrontation’ (Finn, 1999: xvi; see also Watkins, 2000). That helps in part to illuminate the huge resistance to learning ‘officially sanctioned school English’ among many children and teens from the underprivileged social majorities, North and South.

The classroom is a battleground in a class war over discourse, both in native and additional language instruction. Gee (2008:39) reminds us that ‘[c]hildren will not identify with – they will even disidentify with – teachers and schools that they perceive as hostile, alien, or oppressive to their home-based identities’. Such ideas
are also relevant for the schools across Bulgaria, wherever students openly resist the school discourses sometimes being literally forced down their throats.

The upshot of this in our own discipline is growing inequality in effective TEFL as a tool of international communication, and the increasing conversion of English language proficiency into a badge of class privilege, inequity and ‘cultural capital’. There is a widening chasm between small islands of privileged middle-class learners of EFL across the developing world, the *EFL haves* – and the masses of working-class learners and ordinary poor folks, the *EFL have-nots*. ‘Money talks English’, generating vast topographies of inequity in global discourse (Templer, 2008c). Another operative factor is the so-called Matthew effect, advantage begetting further advantage, evident in numerous societies (Rigney, 2010). Lamb (2011) discusses this for Indonesia, in which the social, economic, and cultural capital provided by home background and early educative experiences enables some learners to benefit more from English language education at school as well as to ‘exploit opportunities to learn the language outside school’ (p. 201), leading to a ‘massive competitive gain’ in English proficiency over children from more modest backgrounds. In turn, this can lead to a widening economic and cultural class divide over the long term, reinforced by us as teachers of EFL. Such ‘cumulative sociocultural, economic and educational advantage’ is a phenomenon here in Bulgaria today, shaped by social class. I would argue: in the interest of ‘discourse democracy’ and a *TESOL of equity and solidarity* in the 21st century, we need strategies to counter that. It is increasing the social divide between a multitude with weaker English and the relatively few with high proficiency. In explicating Reality Pedagogy, Christopher Emdin (min. 7:00 f.) stresses: ‘Equity is hearing someone’s voice about what they need and providing them with that’. ‘Someone’ means any person of any age anywhere as a learner.
In teaching ecologies where poverty is a major factor – the bottom two billion on the planet – we need to think more ‘out-of-the box’ about what teachers and most learners need as a solid basic skill. If we strive toward ‘putting the brakes on complexity’ (Templer, 2008c), we can work to forge a more sustainable TEFL pedagogy in the interest of average working-class learners pretty much everywhere. But extensive fresh research is needed on what kinds of more ‘downshifted’, simpler English for the Multitude can actually work. Can it mesh better with individual learner styles, strategies, motivation and self-confidence – key components in a focus on the learner and the ‘personal baggage’ and social background they bring to the learning process – among non-elite ELF acquirers from the working social majorities? In Bulgaria and elsewhere in Eastern Europe, similar questions arise about what basic language needs should and can be met for the many current and potential migrant workers. This jibes well with notions of more ‘situated literacy’ for EFL (Papen, 2005), beyond ‘schooled literacies,’ and reimagining the ‘E’ in a TEFL more in *solidarity and pedagogical empathy* with ELLs, their ‘own situated literacies’, their real social needs and vernacular social practice (Papen, 2005:54-58, 130-135).

**Proposed Research Unit**

I suggest the establishment of a >Research Unit for Simplified English<, needed especially for investigating in *empirical terms* alternatives to the present English language syllabus in the schools, and a simpler version of English for Academic Purposes (‘EAP Lite’) (Templer, 2012c). One concrete aim is to test specific models of simpler and leaner, more sustainable and significantly ‘less complex’ English as a lingua franca (ELF) for a range of working-class learners. To our knowledge, there is no such research unit anywhere (Templer, 2012a).
Salient Questions

What level and modes of language skills do migrant workers, especially in more low-skilled jobs wherever they labour, actually need? For example, the needs of the many Bulgarian construction workers now abroad in Germany, Belgium, the UK and elsewhere. What empirical knowledge do we have, how reliable is the research, how much more inquiry, especially locally oriented, is desirable and indeed necessary? The options for self-study and for guided study (with a teacher) via the Internet have expanded exponentially in the past few years. What levels of proficiency are being targeted and achieved? And what simpler levels might prove adequate for learners’ actual needs? How do children from the more subaltern, marginalized minorities fare in learning English at school? Many Bulgarian teachers may say their Roma learners, who speak Romani and/or Turkish as L1 at home, have ‘academic achievement problems,’ consistently underperform on tests or are even supposedly ‘unteachable’ (Kyuchukov, 2006; 2014; Kyuchukov & New, 2016), ‘diversity vs. equality’. Would they (and their relatives) be better served by a highly compact 1,000-word mini-English lect they can really master in a few months, then basta!, enough? And for some, on this foundation, schools and communities can organize access to simple graded readers for extensive voluntary reading, thus maintaining and extending the basal skill, but at a sustainable ‘proficiency plateau’? Can ‘less is more’ be enough? What about the immigrant children from Syria and elsewhere? What is best for them in respect to language education and their integration into schools in Bulgaria and elsewhere? This requires systematic experimentation, more qualitative studies (Mason & Krashen, 2017; Krashen, 2004a; Georgieva, 2017). The Research Unit (RU) can also spur efforts promoting teacher-research within CPD (continuous professional
development) for English teachers working in difficult circumstances, as reflected in the **International Festival of Teacher Research** in ELT in 2017.

### Key Focus Areas of the Research unit

The proposed Research Unit can concentrate on several focus areas:

*****BASIC ENGLISH 850.** There is need to initiate an array of pilot projects to test the efficacy of teaching a revitalized mode of Ogden & Richards’ BASIC ENGLISH, grounded on 850 to 1,000 key words/word families within school systems in a spectrum of language-learning ecologies, both as a ‘first stage’ and as a ‘target plateau’. It is also far easier to train teachers who concentrate on educating learners intensively in BASIC ENGLISH, as was done in Yunnan in China 1939-1945 (Templer, 2005; 2006; 2007; 2008c; 2012b; 2012c). Research is needed on using Richards and Gibson’s (1973) textbook *English through Pictures*, recently reprinted. It utilizes a slightly expanded version of BASIC that Richards came to call ‘Every Man’s English’ (Katagiri & Constable, 1993:344-355). Work is also needed on techniques of teaching ‘vertical translation’ from standard English into BASIC as a tool for *all* learners and users of English. That was Wynburne’s (1960) vision, and involves research on intralingual translation and “semantic leveraging” (Templer, 2012b), utilizing BASIC to enhance ‘language awareness’ among both L1 and L2 learners. Seidlhofer (2002) discusses the need for a new look at BASIC from the perspective of lingua franca research. Richards (1943) remains a good introduction to BASIC and its conception, itself written largely in BASIC. An excellent overview of BASIC is Ogden (1968). A mini-research centre could also develop a networked project of producing new texts in BASIC 850/1000, and translating newspaper articles and many other texts into BASIC 850. The **Bible in BASIC** is one such
paradigm. Such a ‘downshifted,’ ‘de-cluttered’ mode could be particularly useful for working with Roma children and adults, for example, who are largely marginalized in the school system and broader society, in Bulgaria and elsewhere. Experimentation with BASIC 850 in a number of schools with results compared over a two-year period would be one such project. This was done in Israel in 1961-62 in a range of primary schools with surprisingly positive results (Katagiri & Constable, 1993:361-65), research that is little known. The Ministry of Education in Bulgaria, Serbia, Romania could embark on such a grassroots, bottom-up basal project. BASIC ENGLISH 850 or Ivor Richard’s expanded version ‘Every Man’s English’, could be taught in experimental learner groups from high-poverty, low access-to-print and refugee backgrounds. A colleague with extensive experience in Thailand recently noted: ‘I also teach EFL in non-elite provincial higher education in Thailand, and I have always felt that Basic English, or a variation of it, might be the best means for getting our students out of that never-ending false-beginner loop’ (personal letter, S.M., May 2017). The Basic English Institute is the principal online resource center for Ogden’s BASIC ENGLISH, revitalized for the 21st century. See also BASIC links. The Easier English Wiki New Internationalist provides simplified NI articles, but not in BASIC.

***BASIC GLOBAL ENGLISH (BGE). There is interest and need to develop pilot projects to test outside Germany a model of easier English created by German linguist Joachim Grzega, Catholic University, Eichstätt (www.basicglobalenglish.com) in southern Germany. Joachim’s experimental model is grounded on 750 high-frequency words/word families, with a further 250 chosen by the individual student. Spoken communication is emphasized from the start. BGE has had success in trial projects in adult education and in early primary education in Germany. Broader empirical research and experimentation
is desirable; for a detailed discussion, see Templer (2014a). Here Dr. Grzega explicating BGE.

***VOA SPECIAL ENGLISH (SE)/LEARNING ENGLISH (LE). I am convinced we need to significantly spur classroom and academic research on VOA Special English, recently reconfigured in three levels as Learning English (LE), as a second tier of simplified clear English, at the level of 1,500 higher frequency headwords. Sentences average 14 words. There are few adjectives, almost no idioms, with generally one ‘proposition’ per sentence. Syntax is transparent. There is substantial syntactic parallelism and lexical repetition, without being repetitious. The speed of spoken SE is 90 words per minute, about 25% slower than 'normal' speaking tempo, good for listening comprehension and for really learning pronunciation. This can be promoted as a target plateau level, with a huge corpus of materials for reading (Templer, 2009). That can involve workshops for primary and secondary school teachers in the use of VOA SE/LE as a resource for a simpler ‘Scientific and Academic English Lite’, especially for supplementary comprehensible reading and extensive listening (Templer, 2008a; 2008b). Here a remarkable huge archive of articles. Syahro’s (2009) investigation indicated statistically significant better scores on the IELTS reading exam among an experimental group using VOA Special English texts for exam preparation. As Shelley Gollust (SE chief) commented: ‘It’s almost like Hemingway. You can write something easy and direct, and it’s more powerful that way’ (Goodman, 2007). It is my view that Special English, made active for speaking and writing, can serve as a reasonable proficiency target for many average ordinary learners. Students can continue to deepen their control at that level (see Templer, 2013; 2008b).
***GLOBISH.*** Jean-Paul Nerrière’s project for a simpler lingua franca, Globish, based on 1,500 word vocabulary, is now an expanding phenomenon (Templer, 2007). As Jean-Paul states: ‘Globish allows you to: Communicate in English, using only 1500 words. Employ simple, but standard grammatical structure. Learn enough pronunciation and spelling for 1500 words only. Provide a tool for leading a conversation in business or as a tourist, anywhere in the world’. Pekica Pagon provides a useful interview with its originator. A video with Nerrière is instructive as introduction. It is a growing movement and may be in some ways more flexible for communication than VOA Special English as a desired ‘plateau target level’. Like Special English, GLOBISH tends to avoid idioms and figurative expressions. Its promoters consider GLOBISH a highly robust and vibrant tool for communication; see also the overview. Newton (2013) is a thoughtful study, but we need empirical research. Fischer (2012) provides a critique of GLOBISH and its weaknesses as a reduced model of English, comparing it in part with Esperanto.

***PLAIN ENGLISH.*** The ‘Plain Language’ movement is burgeoning, promoted in part by the U.S. government ([http://www.plainlanguage.gov](http://www.plainlanguage.gov)), the New Zealand authorities and many professionals in a number of countries around the world. The goal is discourse simplification (European Commission, 2010; Cutts, 2009). What implications does a concern with ‘clear, plain language’ have for teaching English as a global lingua franca for the social majorities? The U.S. Federal Plain Language Guidelines (March 2011) are highly instructive. Here a useful introduction and overview of Plain English from Australia by John Pease. How Plain English can be inventively used within EFL is an area scarcely researched or even discussed inside IATEFL. CLAD in Toronto is another paradigm, as is the Center for Plain Language. Its motto: ‘Plain language is a civil right’. Its work is centrally relevant to the research agenda of such a RU. The work of Bill DuBay, as
exemplified in his IMPACT-INFORMATION site and Newsletter, is very relevant. See his Your Stake in Plain Language, and DuBay (2004). His ideas on readability are significant. The work of bureautaal and Texamen in The Netherlands, centring on both ‘eenvoudig Nederlands’ (‘simple Dutch’) and English at a clearer, more simplified level for trans-border communication is also instructive. Innovative ways to ‘de-clutter’ and simplify discourses are also central to the Simplification Centre at the University of Reading. Many Western democracies – and their corporate, government and academic elites – still have not grasped that most average readers prefer discourse at about 8th grade level in L1, and probably even easier in L2. Reading ease is gauged at ca. 98% comprehension of running words in a text (Nation 2001:147; see also Bartholomew, 2017:7).

***‘MAINSTREAM’ ELF RESEARCH. The Journal of English as a Lingua Franca launched in 2011 by Barbara Seidlhofer (Austria) and Jennifer Jenkins (UK) is a potential scholarly platform for research on simplified modes of English as a lingua franca (ELF). There may be a tendency for ‘mainstream’ ELF research in the Euro-Atlantic context to concentrate on more elite learners in the corporate, governmental, and university spheres. That in my view needs to be offset. Much of the research work in the subfield of English as a lingua franca looks more at the English of international students studying at English-medium universities in a range of countries, and the actual communicative behavior in English of businesspeople, politicians and such more elite personnel – and to a minimum extent, migrants and refugees, now a hugely expanding segment of those desiring some level of proficiency as a survival skill. Jenkins (2012) gives an informed overview of research on ELF, but does not mention the needs of the burgeoning multitudes of the disadvantaged, uprooted and marginalized.
An Equitable Alternative

The guiding thesis: the sustainable goal for the Multitude is a strong but simple lexical base that can be repeated and recycled until it is literally in the learner’s bones, mastered and ‘over-learned’ until it becomes a minimalist model to say almost anything. West (1955) repeatedly stressed a key point: ‘A vocabulary of 2,000 words is good enough for anything, and more than one needs for most things’ (p. 70). A durable equitable alternative: get learners to that basal point in ELF proficiency, and then they can work autonomously, either staying/recycling at that plateau proficiency and deepening their mastery, or continuing on to more advanced levels largely on their own if they so choose, mainly through extensive free reading (Krashen, 2004a; 2004b). My advice: increasingly, let learners decide. That is ‘Reality Pedagogy’ (Emdin, 2017) in our beleaguered context, highlighting the ‘need for understanding the authentic realities of young people’ (p. 29). Based on fresh case-study data from Japan, Mason & Krashen (2017:474) stress the attested possibility of moving ‘from the bottom of ‘Elementary Proficiency’ level to the threshold of the ‘International Proficiency’ in three years of relaxed, self-selected pleasure reading. [...] It also provides a clear and pleasant path to improved proficiency’. This foregrounds the centrality of free reading for those so motivated to advance up the steep proficiency ladder in the full standard, ‘choosing reading material of great interest to them at all levels’ (ibid.). It can be inventively embedded within a mix of ‘plurilingual competencie’ as in the projection of the CoE (2009), the campaign Speak to the Future and 1000 words for all! (FIPLV, 2016) and Lamb’s (2015) proposals for a ‘plurilingual habitus’ of enhanced interlinguality. In looking at the huge planetary dominance of ELF, there is clearly also need to mitigate certain ‘insidious effects of monster languages and their destructive power’ (De Costa, 2017: 3). And also consider eventually
grounding this on basic Esperanto as a mode of easy ‘1st-step bilingualism’ leading to a workable truly global education. Here a video introduction to learning Esperanto. Claude Piron on the need for Esperanto is well worth reflecting on.

Moving Forward

A Research Unit of this kind can spur comparative research in the field with simpler models for ELF pedagogy, conduct workshops for teachers, and begin to reshape more sustainable, ‘lower-energy’ curricula. The cost of establishing the RU can be modest, its potential impact exponential. Important is a formal attachment to a university. The core aim is to further pathways for teaching of English as a ‘people’s lingua franca’ (Templer, 2005) in the context of economic globalization ‘from the bottom-up’, and a more ‘human, egalitarian, socially just, economically just, democratic’ society (Hill, 2006; De Saxe, 2015; 2016), attuned to ‘linguistic human rights’ (LHRs) for all (Phillipson, 1999). And to ground this hands-on, on solid empirical investigation, quantitative/qualitative, even auto-ethnographic (Georgieva, 2017) in the world’s ordinary classrooms and on its streets – to better determine what is really useful for the multitudes of average working-class learners, who can decide later what is enough for their own needs, a ‘satisficing’ EFL, and proceed then on an autonomous basis (Templer, 2014b). As emphasized above, ‘rebooting’ the ‘E’ in a TEFL more in solidarity and pedagogical empathy with ELLs, their ‘own situated literacies’, as underscored by Papen (2005), perhaps springboarding this with a new Esperanto pedagogy as well. The research unit could also investigate future experimental Esperanto programmes, esp. in primary schools along the lines of S2L, as exemplified by Tellier (2013). It can also link with the Early Language Learning AILA Research Network.
As Thoreau called for radical change in the entire System: ‘Our life is frittered away by detail. [...] Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity! [...] In the midst of this chopping sea of civilized life. [...] Simplify, simplify” (Thoreau, 1854:70) – a ‘global reboot’ of the fundamentals in our current existential crisis of humankind (Pinchbeck, 2017:41f.) is a broader theme still worth pondering – of which ‘rebooted’ yet simpler plurilingual literacy and its pedagogy are an essential part.

In conclusion, find brief time to reflect on Christopher Emdin’s powerful TEDx talk on Reality Pedagogy in its entirety. He trains math teachers but what he says is relevant to all educators. He tells us in another TEDx talk: ‘You can’t be mindful if your mind is full. [...] What we surely need then is wideawakefulness. So the question is then: how do I know if I’m wide awake or not? And the answer is: the closer you are to convention, the deeper you are into narcolepsy. That in order to have mindfulness and to have it activated, we must fight against convention [...] A wide-awake educator realizes that teaching is a revolutionary act’. Listen to both talks – and also ponder the broader frame of De Saxe’s (2015; 2016) critique.

http://goo.gl/HfDh37

http://goo.gl/eZAiD8
References


Maximising Students’ Involvement through Various Applications of Technology

Todor Todorov, Raya Malinova

The application of new digital technologies in the process of teaching and learning has provided educationalists with unprecedented opportunities, but at the same time it has also raised a broad range of fundamental issues. Digital technologies have become an essential part of almost every aspect of learners’ lives and constitute their most essential source of information and perception of the world.

It is here that the inevitable question arises – how can teachers cope with the numerous challenges presented by this generation of ‘digital natives’ and respond adequately to the ever-increasing demands of implementing

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B E T A E-N e w s l e t t e r I s s u e 2 9
30 | P a g e
technology in the classroom? The search for answers to this question led our colleagues from the BBIL Centre to participate in teacher-training courses in the UK and Ireland under the Erasmus+ funded project *Raising Quality Awareness in Teaching English to Adults through Introduction of New Information Technology and Optimization of Academic Management* (№ 2015-1-BG01-KA104-013963), KA 1, Mobility for Adult Education Staff. We would like to share the experience they have gained with the hope it could be beneficial to the readers of this newsletter.

Over a period of two years (June 2015 – May 2017), eight teachers from the BBIL Centre (Stefka Apostolova, Vanya Yakova, Diana Varbenova, Raya Malinova, Magdalena Kapsazova, Polina Yavasheva, Daniela Kaladjian and Todor Todorov) had the chance to acquire theoretical and practical knowledge by attending various structured courses focused on two main topics. The first one involved the implementation of information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching. The courses related to it were: ‘Introduction to Using New Technology in the Classroom’ (BELL – Cambridge, UK); ‘Educational Technology Today’ (BELL – Cambridge, UK); ‘Effective Use of Technology in Teaching’ (ANGLOLANG ACADEMY OF ENGLISH – Scarborough, UK); ‘Technology in the Classroom’ (ALPHA COLLEGE OF ENGLISH – Dublin, Ireland). The second one included the problems of introducing new creative methodology into the classroom, updating and optimising the styles of the academic management and developing new managerial competences corresponding to the dynamic development of FLT sector in general, and teaching adults, in particular. The courses belonging to this area were: ‘Teaching Methodology Course Plus’ (LEWIS SCHOOL OF ENGLISH – Southampton, UK); ‘Creative Teaching’ (HILDERSTONE COLLEGE – Broadstairs, UK); ‘Language, Methodology and Culture’ (THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CENTRE – Brighton, UK).
All training activities proved to be exceptionally informative, motivating and inspiring and provided all the participants with ample opportunity to learn and adopt a whole array of new strategies and techniques, as well as make a valuable exchange of ideas and good practices. These were subsequently successfully incorporated into the teaching and management processes of BBIL Centre and further disseminated at other educational institutions and professional forums by means of presentations, seminars and workshops.

As stated above, one of the main purposes of our project is to ensure the active introduction and integration of the latest ICT into the overall teaching activity of the BBIL Centre, facilitate the optimisation of the teaching process in a technological aspect, as well as enhance teachers’ ICT competences through the acquisition of specific skills needed for the efficient use of contemporary ICT. The successful implementation of ICT presupposes not only excellent technical literacy of staff, but first and foremost a new type of methodology and communication skills, the number of which is increasing significantly in parallel with the increase in the ICT capacity and its specific applications which are becoming more sophisticated and more suited to educational purposes. The role of the teacher seems to have changed too – he/she is no longer the main protagonist on stage, but a facilitator in a supporting role. This facilitating role, however, is crucially important and must be fulfilled with the expected skill and insight.
We are confident that as a result of the participation in the project, the appropriate use of ICT will contribute substantially to raising the quality of teaching English at the BBIL Centre through increased activity and involvement on the part of both teachers and students, thus boosting significantly their motivation and commitment. The successful integration of ICT into teaching will also contribute to achieving considerable flexibility and greater autonomy of the educational process – factors that assume particular importance nowadays, in our ever-changing and extremely dynamic time, when many traditional methods need careful reconsideration, maintaining at the same time the expected high standards of the language services provided. We therefore hope to be able to create a sustainable learning environment for high quality education so that our learners, especially adults, can feel better-prepared for confronting the challenges of the contemporary world, the modern trends of our time, as well as the ever-growing demands of business.

We are strongly convinced that the participation in the project will further foster teamwork and benefit the international collaboration of our centre in a long-term perspective, thus giving our institution as a whole a
more European outlook and making it a reliable and preferred partner for future work in a European context.

The present article makes no claims to completeness of the problem description, nor does it claim universality of the conclusions drawn. It aims to suggest some practical ideas for using online resources and easily accessible web applications in order to make classes more interactive, engaging and result-oriented.

The following compilation, which comprises the most useful and teacher-friendly websites and applications, is a result of the concerted effort made by all project participants who were absolutely delighted to contribute by sharing what they had explored during their training activities, and later on tried out first-hand in the classroom.

**VIDEOS AND SONGS IN THE CLASSROOM**

**Application:** These tools enable the teacher to prepare practical and engaging listening activities and video lessons, encouraging students to practise a wide range of listening skills and check comprehension in a relaxed and motivating way. Students can also record and exchange video messages with the teacher or their classmates.

**Advantages:** This technologically advanced method enhances the traditional listening practice with video aids and makes it more suited to modern learners’ ways of acquiring information by combining the visual and auditory channels.
• **www.edpuzzle.com** – The teacher can access videos on different topics from the Internet, trim them in order to make them the necessary length, add a voice-over and embed comprehension questions within the video. This site provides excellent opportunities for designing a listening comprehension activity out of every topic painlessly and swiftly. It could be done either in class, as group work with the help of merely a laptop and a projector, or individually, provided that all students have the requisite devices. Alternatively, the teacher can assign it for homework and receive and check students’ answers online.

• **www.lyricstraining.com** – This is a website with popular music where students can enjoy their favourite songs and simultaneously type in the lyrics they hear. The level of difficulty can be graded ranging from Beginner to Advanced, according to your learners’ level of confidence. The main benefit is that it focuses not only on distinguishing words, but also on practising correct spelling.

• **www.screencast-o-matic.com** – The most remarkable feature of this screen-recording tool is the synchronous recording of the screen of the laptop and the image of the teacher via a camera. This makes it indispensable for flipped learning practices, when the teacher’s aim is that the learners prepare for the lesson in advance. Another use would be to record video lessons or provide video feedback on written assignments or tests.
**VOCABULARY**

**Application** – These sites provide an extensive range of options for teachers to present new vocabulary, reinforce meaning through images, definitions and examples, or practise and recycle familiar words and collocations.

**Advantages** – The major conveniences come down to the numerous options to illustrate the meaning of and practise the target vocabulary which is easily re-accessible due to the electronic storage of information.

- **www.quizlet.com** – This is a free website which can be used to introduce new words, phrases and idioms through definitions, pictures or translations at the discretion of the teacher. It offers different learning and revision features in the form of flashcards, matching activities and testing. It also allows students to organise words into topics or lexical sets that can be stored and accessed online at any time.

- **http://www.discoveryeducation.com/free-puzzlemaker** – This is a free online tool for creating puzzles, word-search grids and crosswords. It offers the teacher various possibilities of providing students with lexical practice, while focusing on the enjoyable element.

**GRAMMAR**

**Application** – This website ensures effective practice of certain grammatical structures. Once the more advanced students get accustomed to it, they themselves can use it to create cloze tests for their peers and challenge each other.
Advantages – The website is extremely time-saving and easy to use. The teacher simply has to find an appropriate piece of text, copy and paste it into the tool, choosing the specific language point which students need to practise.

- http://l.georges.online.fr/tools/cloze - This is a cloze test generator which can instantly transform any piece of text into a cloze test focusing on a particular language point, e.g. prepositions, articles, relative pronouns, etc.

CARTOON STRIPS AND ANIMATED STORIES

Application – Students can practise functional language in an entertaining way and create dialogues spoken by animated characters in a setting created by the students themselves.

Advantages – The cartoon strips and animations turned out to be a strongly favoured way by students to practise dialogues because they bear a close resemblance to computer games. Apart from boosting students’ motivation, there is an additional upside, such as the fact that shy students are quite willing to participate because they are not expected to talk in front of the whole class. In addition, not to be underrated is the fact that these comics or videos provide quite an explicit and illustrative context of the conversations that students produce.

MOVIEMAKERS

- www.dvolver.com
- www.zimmertwins.com
FOR CREATING COMICS

- www.pixton.com
- www.toondo.com
- www.bitstrips.com
- www.storyboardthat.com

CREATING BOOKS, STORIES AND POETRY

**Application** – Students who are more creative can write and share their own short stories or poems accompanied by illustrations, which can be read online and rated by other users of these sites. Another option might be to replace the traditional composition writing about students’ personal experience with letting them upload photos and record themselves telling about it.

**Advantages** – Such types of sites encourage learners not only to produce language and use it creatively, but also to read other people’s literary attempts and develop an attitude to literature and books.

- www.storybird.com – This is a website for creating and sharing short stories, books and poems;
- www.fotobabble.com – This is a great application which allows students to tell a story about a personal experience by uploading their own photos and adding a voice-over. It can then be sent out to other students or presented in class.

POSTERS, PRESENTATIONS AND INFOGRAPHICS

**Application** – The following websites are suitable for project-based learning, which presupposes the preparation of a presentation or a poster involving some
research that students have conducted, or simply for practising some vocabulary that they have studied in class. Students can rely on models, ready-made templates, pictures and graphs, which they can adapt for their own purposes.

**Advantages** – Not only is the digitalised and schematic form of such presentations closer to and more exciting for contemporary young people, but it can also be quite helpful in teaching them skills, such as how to be concise and precise in meaning, or how to imply symbolism and apply analytical skills.

- [www.piktochart.com](http://www.piktochart.com) – a website for designing infographics, posters, presentations and reports;
- [www.haikudeck.com](http://www.haikudeck.com) – a presentation software;
- [www.recite.com](http://www.recite.com) – a site for designing posters using famous quotes which can be shared on social media.

**MIND-MAPPING AND ORGANISING IDEAS**

**Applications** – These applications help learners to brainstorm and organise their ideas when working on a project or preparing for a written assignment. Likewise, they can be very useful for classes in which teachers have to present more complex ideas in clear diagrams and mind-maps.

**Advantages** – The major benefits are that students get used to learning and thinking visually, while building skills to structure and relate their ideas logically.
• www.spiderscribe.net – This is an application for brainstorming and mind-mapping. It enables learners to organise their ideas into files, notes, texts, images and events and share them online with others;

• www.popplet.com – This is a tool which enables learners to capture facts, thoughts and images and learn to create relationships between them.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND MAINTAINING CONTACT WITH LEARNERS

Applications – These sites and apps offer quick, effective and up-to-date ways to communicate with your learners and share information with them.

• www.classdojo.com – It offers simple and positive classroom management and ways to engage the learners in the educational process;
• www.vocaroo.com – An application for sharing voice messages over the Internet;
• www.padlet.com – Here you can create a virtual wall or sheet of paper where you and your learners can write;
• www.remind.com – A safe, free way for teachers to text messages to their learners and keep in touch with them.

To conclude, we would like to point out that we are well aware of the pivotal role that ICT plays in transforming the way we teach and our students learn, which makes us thoroughly open to implementing and incorporating all ICT aspects that are expected to bring about major benefits both to the learner and the teacher. Although the complete digitalisation of our classrooms is still in the distant future, our institution has definitely made an important step forward in this direction with
the kind support and the unique opportunity provided by the Erasmus+ project. The overall effectiveness of the use of such online tools and applications with reference to improving the quality of language teaching and learning is still to be proven, as it takes a lengthy period of trialling, adapting and evaluating. What is indisputable, however, is the key role that they have come to play in enhancing students’ motivation and maximising their involvement and success in the learning process.
Reflections:
The Big IATEFL Conference, National Conferences and Continuing Professional Development

Dennis Newson

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In April, although I had to take out a small bank loan to do so, I attended the big IATEFL annual conference, this time in Glasgow, Scotland.

Every year, in the months leading up to the annual UK conference, there are IATEFL online discussions where it is pointed out that, amongst other criticisms, the cost of attending the annual conference – conference fee, plus travel, plus food and accommodation for four or five days - is simply too high, meaning that most classroom teachers who pay for attendance out of their own pockets, even from the UK, let alone from elsewhere in the world, simply cannot really afford to participate.

Despite the cost, I had personal reasons for attending this year - to take part in a GISIG committee meeting, to meet colleagues and friends of long standing from India, England and South America (I live in Germany) but it is clear to me that it is worth standing back, reflecting and asking: Should the keen teacher of TEFL make it a priority to try to attend an IATEFL annual conference? Does attendance constitute an important part of continuing professional development?
The organisers think the answer is ‘Yes’. They have an online document that outlines arguments that a potential participant can use to convince their employers that they should attend.

‘The conference offers nearly 3000 delegates from around the world a unique opportunity to come together to gain access to the latest teaching methods, to establish and maintain contacts in the field and to proudly represent their own teaching institutions by sharing their ideas and research with delegates from other establishments....’

‘At this conference delegates:
• Learn about innovative approaches to teaching and learning;
• Have access to publications and cutting-edge research;
• Gain insights into the latest developments of the English Language Teaching field;
• Benefit from valuable professional development, which can be used to train other teachers or staff and/or improve their own practices’.

‘In short, IATEFL is the best, most effective solution to providing teachers with sound approaches in ELT practicum and a variety of ways to share information at a state-of-the-art venue in a warm and welcoming environment’.


It cannot be denied that in Glasgow it was immensely exciting to experience the buzz of being in a large foreign city at an immense, architecturally striking
modern venue, containing small shops, bars, quick-food outlets, a large book exhibition with stands from many universities and examination boards, all the major ELT UK publishers, with free give-aways and a programme of lead writers giving short talks and signing their books (It was extremely convenient to have so many ELT books gathered together in one place for inspection and purchase). Masses of keen, friendly, excited colleagues from most parts of the world milled around the extensive site asking the official and voluntary guides how to get to the rooms where the 300 presentations were taking place.

Others were sitting on the carpeted floors, taking a break, drinking coffee or consulting the printed version of the conference programme, a ring-bound booklet of 254 pages with tabbed sections like a telephone directory – General Information, Sponsors, Exhibition, SIG Days, Presentations, Quick Reference and fold-out, Floor Plans and Daily Overview Pages.

It was very easy to get into conversation with colleagues from countries you knew and from the many you had never been to since you knew that you had a shared interest, otherwise neither you nor they would have been present.

Each day began with plenaries from selected stars of the ELT world, often so popular and busy that they have to be booked 12 months in advance. This year it was:

**Gabriel Diaz Maggioli, Empowering teachers through continued professional development: frameworks, practices and promises**
https://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/2017/plenary/empowering-teachers

**Sarah Mercer, Connecting Minds: language learner and teacher psychologies**
https://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/2017/session/plenary-session-sarah-mercer

**JJ Wilson, ELT and social justice: opportunities in a time of chaos**
Jane Setter, Where angels fear to tread: intonation in English language teaching

and Imtiaz Dharker, Over the moon, readings from her collection of poems

All presentations were delivered in a massive auditorium that seated 3,000 with the presenters speaking from a stage large enough to accommodate a full orchestra and with the sophisticated lighting of a film-set.

It was extremely easy, too, to get into conversation with star presenters and if you wanted to have photographs taken with your favourite TEFL author all you had to do was ask. As an alternative to attending another talk in another room to locate and walk to – in the hope that it would not be full, with no more participants admitted when you arrived – you could stay in the central area, have a brief word with the Patron, David Crystal, who made a point of speaking with as many participants as possible, and watch the notables being interviewed by Nic Peachey and streamed live to the internet by the British Council camera team.

Later in the day, with luck, you may have stumbled across a book launch and got a free drink and possibly even the gift of a book from one of the publishers. In the evenings, amongst other meetings, you could attend a civic welcome and reception, or take part in Gavin Dudeney’s fun quiz evening, or share stories with David Heathfield and Andrew Wright, or attend the launching of the publication A History of IATEFL (IATEFL, London, 2017) by Shelagh Rixon and Richard Smith, or take part in a Pecha Kucha.
It was a great show.

But without wanting to put off anyone who dreams of attending an annual IATEFL conference in the UK, I would like to argue that it is not necessarily the best or most effective and definitely not the cheapest way of providing continuing professional development.

- You can learn about innovative approaches to teaching and learning, have access to publications and cutting-edge research, gain insights into the latest developments of the English Language Teaching field from your own home, most easily by using the internet or reading books and periodicals or by attending a local, national conference.

- You could have watched the highlights from the Glasgow conference and the interviews live on the internet at no cost.

- Or you can watch them now by simply going after the event to the IATEFL British Council site: [http://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/2017](http://iatefl.britishcouncil.org/2017)

My second set of reasons for suggesting that one should not feel too sad if one can never attend a UK conference are more substantial:

- The annual IATEFL conference is designed to appeal to a wide, comprehensive range of interests from within the English language teaching field. And each session a participant attends is a one-off experience, a self-
contained unit (This is not to deny that individual presentations or workshops can be extremely rewarding).

- I would further like to suggest that although attendance at the annual conference can provide a rich feast for those that are lucky enough to be able to attend, continuing professional development can be delivered differently and more cost effectively.

- Participants at the annual conference are delegates, participating in a series of one-off presentations and workshops. Continuing professional development is most effective when participants are members of a bonded community of practice, attending regular meetings which form part of an ongoing course, working collaboratively on medium and long term projects suggested by members themselves.

- The running of a short local, national conferences will be an important but not the only activity.

For a more focussed way of organising continuing professional development, I would like to suggest:

- It is done locally, nationally.

- Small local communities of common practice i.e. groups of teachers, individuals – not just a list of email addresses – come together on a regular basis to give support, answer each other’s questions, cooperatively work on small projects that produce something that they need, that will help them in
their day-to-day work, and end the isolation that many classroom teachers experience.

- The initiative will be from the grass roots, bottom-up, not top-down, to use the rather inelegant jargon.

- One illustrative example of how to work locally is provided by the ELTAs (English language teachers’ associations) in Germany. There are six of them. Below is a description of how a group in Frankfurt deliver continuing professional development.

- This introduction from the website of ELTAF, English Language Teachers’ Association Frankfurt/Rhine-Main-Necker e.V. www.eltaf.de is representative of how the German ELTAs operate.

Welcome to the homepage of the English Language Teachers’ Association Frankfurt/Rhine-Main-Neckar.

ELTAF is a regional professional organization for teachers of English as a foreign language.

ELTAF is dedicated to the ongoing development of English teachers and regularly provides workshops aimed to improve teaching skills, share ideas for classroom activities and encourage communication between our members. Some workshops are also focused on helping self-employed and freelance trainers with the business side of teaching - from information about tax laws to advertising and contract writing.
ELTAF has a members-only yahoo group which provides a forum for the exchange of information between members.

ELTAF publishes a printed newsletter for its members containing invaluable information about teaching tools, book reviews, classroom ideas, recent workshops, upcoming events, etc.

We are an officially registered association (e.V.) with nearly 400 members who come from all over the world and teach English in a variety of sectors.

ELTAF membership costs 40 Euro/year and new members can join at any time. Become an ELTAF member today!

Non-members may receive a complimentary copy of the ELTAF Newsletter from the Membership Secretary.

Questions and inquiries can be sent to contact@eltaf.de

It has to be noted that the majority of members of many of the German ELTAs are often self-employed, teach business English in firms or adults in evening classes. But there is no reason why local, national associations, many of whose members are, for example, teachers of children in state schools, should not offer continuing professional development along the same lines as these German models in addition to organising annual conferences.
Appendix 1
Selected national, regional IATEFL organisations

Bulgaria:  http://www.beta-iatefl.org/
Greece:    http://www.ekadeve.gr/node/95
Hungary:   http://www.iatefl.hu/
Macedonia: http://www.eltam.org.mk/
Romania:   http://rate.org.ro/blog1.php
Serbia:     http://elta.org.rs/
Slovenia:  http://www.iatefl.si/

Appendix 2
The websites of the German ELTAs are:

Berlin & Brandenburg ELTABB
Frankfurt ELTAF
Hamburg HELTA
Munich MELTA
Rhineland ELTA-Rhine
Stuttgart ELTAS
Zhivka Ilieva

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The 51st IATEFL Conference, Glasgow 2017

Zhivka Ilieva

Each IATEFL conference is a breathtaking event. My first IATEFL experience gave me the feeling of something enormous. My second one allowed me to get acquainted with more people and details. The next one left the impression I knew almost everybody. During the 51st IATEFL Conference in Glasgow, I met former and future plenary speakers at our local annual conferences, and also people I knew from the SIG activities.

Meeting friends and making new friendships starts at the airport and even on the plane. During my flight from Amsterdam to Glasgow I was sitting next to Romualda Liutkuviene – the official representative of Lithuania.

Before the Staff, Volunteers and Associates (SVA) dinner, I had the pleasure to meet, have a drink and chat with Olja Milošević, the president of ELTA Serbia; Maria Araxi Sachpazian, the president of TESOL Macedonia-Thrace Northern Greece, Marcela Cintra from Cultura Inglesa, Sao Paulo, Brazil, and people I had met at various conferences.
At the Associates’ dinner the organizers had taken care with the seating arrangement – we had our names written on special labels. I shared the table with Dennis Newson (BETA 2011 plenary speaker) and Kalyan Chattopadhyay, whom I know from the Young Learners SIG. Of course, there were new acquaintances. I could meet Birsen Tütünis, one of the plenary speakers at the forthcoming BETA and FIPLV Congress in Varna. We received a warm welcome by Marjorie Rosenberg and Margit Szesztay, the outgoing and the incoming IATEFL presidents, and the patron David Crystal. It was an exciting experience. Then we walked to the city centre, where most of us stayed.

At the Associates’ day I could meet Lou McLaughlin – a former YLT SIG committee member and a present IATEFL Associates Chair; we met again the President and the Vice President, and this time we could talk to them. After the 2017 scholarship winners were introduced to us, we listened to the report by the IATEFL Associates’ Representative. The rest of the Associates’ Day was dedicated to associates’ presentations and posters, plans for the year ahead and other activities.

The venue of the conference consists of three buildings (Crowne Plaza hotel, Scottish Exhibition and Conference Centre and SEC Armadillo) joined by complex passages, which prompted Marjorie Rosenberg to call it “a state-of-the-art event campus” in her note to the delegates.
There were 10 pop-up presentations, 12 “How to ...” sessions, 5 plenary talks. There were more than 20 presentations per slot. As a whole, the event was huge: more than 2,500 delegates, more than 150 presentations per day. Some of the most impressive presentations I attended were:

Sarah Mercer’s “Connecting minds: language learner and teacher psychologies” about the importance of teachers’ well-being;

Jane Setter’s “Where angels fear to tread: intonation in English language teaching”, where she discussed some key issues about intonation, and incorporated them in a karaoke version of popular songs – a really unique experience;

Jane Willis’ “Grammar in the context of task: what, how and why?”;

Penny Ur’s “Homework: some particular issues”;

Carol Read’s “Teaching life skills to children”;

Jennifer Dobson’s “Through a child’s eyes”;

Hugh Dellar’s “Following the patterns: colligation and a bottom-up approach to grammar”;

Theodora Koutoukis’ “Teaching very young learners: but do we really teach?”;

Hanna Kryszewska’s “Using music (not songs) in the language classroom”.

The venue
My presentation was part of the forum on CLIL, which consisted of three presentations: Jennifer Skipp’s “Exhibiting CLIL: developing student skills through project-based learning“; Claudia Connolly’s “CLIL and bilingual teaching, developing the program and the teaching“ and mine, “Creativity and integration with young learners.“

The schedule was extremely tight, breaks seemed so short and there was little time to speak to anybody.

There was a wealth of evening events to choose from: Meet the IATEFL SIGs, British Concil Networking Evening, International Quiz on Tuesday; History of IATEFL, The C group annual meeting, Sharing stories on Wednesday; Pecha Kucha, Extensive Reading Foundation Reception and Awards Ceremony on Thursday; and also events organized by the different publishers.

The only time I could enjoy Glasgow was Friday afternoon – after the conference closing. We were lucky that one of the stops of the hop-on-hop-off sightseeing tour was in front of the conference center and we could catch the last bus.
We left very early on Saturday morning. I met Romualda on the plane again, this time our seats were not next to each other, but we could enjoy a conversation in the lounge. There I met again Aet Sazr (the official representative of Estonia) and Ene Peterson (the president of The Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers – EVOL and organizer of the Nordic Baltic FIPLV Region Conference 2016 last June) and so many other colleagues and friends – people with whom I attended workshops together and did various tasks or with whom I danced Scottish dances at the welcome reception. Each IATEFL conference is a unique experience, the more you have, the more you like it.
The 15\textsuperscript{TH} ELTA Serbia Conference

Reneta Stoimenova

Belgrade is a great meeting point. It reconciles the Pannonian Plain with the Balkan foothills, flows the local Mississippi aka the Sava into the majestic Danube and finally resolves the ever-standing Balkan vote of the Orient against the Occident in favour of the latter through its prevailing Austro-Hungarian character. To the educated Bulgarian Belgrade can instantly create a number of specific cultural references: Singidunum, both a Roman city and the starting point of the ancient Roman road Via Militaris or Via Diagonalis; the Belgrade Fortress, witness of the fight of the Serbs and the First Bulgarian Legion, headed by Rakovski and Levski, against the Turkish garrison in Belgrade in 1862... To me, however, it created the venue of this year’s largest event of the English Language Teachers’ Association of Serbia (ELTA), which was its annual conference, titled ‘Awaken Your Curiosity’, held at the Singidunum University, May 19 and 20.

According to the information contained in the conference brochure, the conference had seven plenary sessions, more than seventy workshops, presentations, and talks, with speakers coming from eighteen different countries.
The plenary speakers were Marjorie Rosenberg (IATEFL Vice President), Mike Mayor (Pearson), Mojca Belak (University of Ljubljana), Igor Lakič (University of Montenegro), Julie Wallis (The London School in Thiene, Italy), Tim Bowen (freelance teacher trainer, author and translator) and Sylvie Dolakova (Masaryk University, Brno). Expression of the U.S. Embassy’s traditional support for the conference apart from IATEFL’s Vice President’s involvement was also the participation of two English Language Fellows: Jean Linehan, Teaching Assistant at the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade, and Colin Vandergraaf, teaching at the University in Szentendre (Serbian: Sentandreja), Hungary, a picturesque town near Budapest with a large Serbian community due to the 17th-century migration of Serbs from the Ottoman Empire to the Habsburg Monarchy.

Mr Vandergraaf, a native to California, might have had his curiosity awakened by a certain something in the summary of my Clint or Tuco? Have a Go... workshop before choosing to be my guest, supposedly by such words as ‘Spaghetti westerns’ and ‘American counterparts’. The workshop in particular looked at film-based techniques and strategies and was the aftermath of a plan I had had about teaching through films. In order to tackle the subject, comfortably ensconced in my kitchen for the long winter nights, first I watched a variety of films ranging from beautiful classical love-triangle stories set in exotic surroundings, such as the one in Out of Africa, to more recent creations with ample opportunities for studying (Scottish) geography, culture and accent like The Decoy Bride, until I was suddenly struck by the brilliant idea to pay tribute to the great Sergio Leone by focusing my project on his 1966 masterpiece western The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly.
Theoretically, I grounded the activity on Graham Workman’s *Popular Films for Language Use* and a session from American English Webinar Series 5 about using and creating games in language classes. An opportunity for pair interaction throughout the class is provided by a specifically designed board game suggesting a fun way of revising film content. I created the board for the game following an idea I had about using a screenshot of Clint Eastwood’s face in the film alongside the film’s title and year of release, and then drawing the steps of the game around his silhouette. And I have to confess that every time I look at Clint’s face, I can’t but just promote the game 😊.

These links provide access to the lesson plan of the workshop plus the game board:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4EEdOJ6CVRamFpQ3pWX3cwZmM/view
https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4EEdOJ6CVRFRqUEpmSG1YN0E/view

*Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva*, representative of New Bulgarian University, was the other Bulgarian presenter at the conference. Her presentation dealt with both the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching through literature and offered some ideas and hands-on experience of a series of practical activities.
Following: the one and only Mark Andrews, the SOL representative for this part of the world, either delivering his famous speech about the changing nature of the English language or talking about the share of interest on the part of the students as being instrumental in planning a lesson.

A telling scene from Sylvie Dolakova’s interactive closing plenary revealing how to do easy communication activities for learners aged 4-94; here – a shouting dictation

I would like to conclude this piece of writing by focusing your attention on the most recent symbol of Belgrade – the Church of Saint Sava, consecrated in 2004, set in the company of the monument devoted to the founder of modern Serbia Karajorje Petrovich - and finally say a big THANK YOU to BETA IATEFL BULGARIA for letting me experience the great pleasure of combined Travel & Learn by choosing me as their official representative for the 15th ELTA Serbia Conference!
An energizing and inspiring professional forum – that is how I could summarise my experience of 15th annual ELTA Serbia conference ‘Awaken your curiosity’, which took place in Belgrade – a historic place of great beauty and heart-warming charm – between the 19th and 20th May 2017.

The two-day forum was hosted by Singidunum University, the first accredited private university in Serbia, whose modern premises – spacious lecture halls, high-quality multimedia and internet infrastructure and all the necessary equipment and amenities – ensured the efficient and smooth running of the conference. The board members of ELTA Serbia and all local participants in the conference also went out of their way to

Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva

Svetlana Dimitrova-Gyuzeleva is an associate professor in Pedagogy at the English Studies Department of New Bulgarian University. She has long and varied experience of teaching English as a foreign language, as well as of pre- and in-service teacher training. She is the author of several ELT coursebooks, some grammar and vocabulary reference books, a series of resource books with English tests and teacher training manuals, and numerous articles published both in Bulgaria and abroad. E-mail: sgjuzeleva@nbu.bg
make us feel most welcome and to see to every little detail related to the perfect organisation of the forum.

As usual, the 15th ELTA Serbia conference brought together more than 200 ELT professionals from around Europe: teachers, teacher trainers, researchers and students, who came to Belgrade in order to discuss and reflect on a wide range of ELT topics, to share professional experience and good practices, and to establish and/or strengthen professional contacts and networks.

Plenary speakers included Marjorie Rosenberg, Julie Wallis, Tim Bowen, Mike Mayor, Igor Lakić, Sylvie Dolakova and Mojca Belak, who familiarised the participants with some of the latest developments in ELT methodology, teacher training and professional development, and EU language policy. The conference participants could also choose from a number of parallel practice-oriented training sessions, informative talks and workshops. The choice was very often a hard one to make!

Among the most widely enjoyed, professionally boosting and thought-provoking plenary talks were those by the current IATEFL Vice President Marjorie Rosenberg about the challenges and opportunities for professional development entitled *Getting unstuck – stretching out of...*
our comfort zones, and Tim Bowen's partly a plenary, partly a workshop You're having a laugh, mate, reviewing key elements of British humour and offering numerous examples of it and activities ready to use in the classroom with students.

It would be impossible for me to describe all the conference sessions I went to. Here I choose to focus on two of them only, which were very well-received by the audience albeit offering somewhat unconventional ideas for motivating not only children and teens but also adults to participate more actively in the ELT classroom: Paperless lessons, presented by Fani Miniadou and Stefania Mandravelli from Greece and Poetry as Inspiration – by Aleksandra Jevtović from Serbia. The first two presenters provided us with hands-on experience of some useful, engaging and fun activities (adaptable to work with students at any level of proficiency and of different cognitive style), developing learners' communicative competence in a holistic way and capitalising on the principles of cooperative learning – the sort of activities which you could resort to when you realise your students have not got a coursebook and/or your internet connection is too slow. In her workshop, the second presenter – Aleksandra Jevtović – explored some of the ways in which teachers can make their lessons both memorable and beneficial for their learners by using poetry – from acrostic and shape poems to haikus, from
rhyming to free verse. She showed us how we can get the students to learn the language in an entertaining way and then use it creatively to expresses their own ideas and emotions.

I had my slot on teaching English through literature on late Saturday afternoon just before Sylvie Dolakova's closing plenary and the Raffle. So I was happy to actually see some colleagues attending, despite the hour and the strong competition of other presenters. We shared professional experience and good practices in using artistic texts to develop our learners' communicative and intercultural competence, as well as to stir up their curiosity about what lies hidden between a book’s two covers and to empower them to benefit from the affordance and learn English through literature.

Even though I cannot describe all of the talks, presentations and practical workshops, I can definitely say that the conference programme was well-balanced and wide-ranging in terms of topics covered and speakers featured. There was also a sizable Book Exhibition where leading publishers and language services providers offered great discounts on the latest ELT books, resources, software and services, as well as gave away splendid prizes to different quiz and puzzle winners.
The organisers had also prepared an enjoyable evening social programme to help the participants relax after the multiple talks and activities of the conference day. There was a folk singing and dancing performance by students at Singidunum University, as well as a concert by five young flute players.

In conclusion, I would like to thank both BETA and ELTA-Serbia for sponsoring and facilitating my participation in this fantastic professional forum, and encourage all BETA members to consider applying for full or partial funding to attend the conferences of other sister organizations of BETA around Europe.
President’s Message

The 2016 FIPLV International Award goes to Zarina Markova!

In February the BETA-IATEFL Committee had the pleasure to nominate Zarina Markova for the 2016 FIPLV International Award. This is FIPLV’s highest distinction – in addition to the title of Honorary FIPLV Counsellor, which is reserved for members of the FIPLV Executive – and is awarded to FIPLV members who are or have been exceptionally active, innovative, valuable in one or more fields of language learning and teaching. The FIPLV International Award consists of a Certificate of Honour and publication on the FIPLV website of the candidate’s citation with a picture and congratulations by the FIPLV Executive Committee.

Zarina was nominated for her hard work and active involvement in BETA activities and in the SEETA Small-scale Teacher-led Project, and was confirmed by FIPLV Executive Committee and World Council as one of the recipients of the 2016 FIPLV International Award. The Certificate of Honour was presented by Terry Lamb (FIPLV Secretary General) during the Opening Ceremony.

Photo: Cecilia Odé
of the 1st FIPLV East European Regional Congress and the 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference ‘Learning and teaching languages: Creating bridges to the future’.

Congratulations, Zarina!!!

Zhivka Ilieva,
President of BETA-IATEFL
On June 22-25 2017, the Bulgarian English Teachers’ Association hosted the 1st FIPLV East European Regional (EER) Congress and 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference in Varna, Bulgaria. The event was held in conjunction with the Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes (FIPLV) and Shumen University Department for Information, Qualification and Lifelong Learning (DIQLL). While BETA had had an extensive experience of organizing large-scale conferences for teachers of English, a multilingual event featuring 5 working languages (Bulgarian, English, French, German and Russian) had never been put together by the Association. Therefore, the Congress may have seemed beyond the nature and activity of an English teachers’ association. The impetus for this unique initiative, however, came from

**Sylvia Velikova**

Sylvia Velikova is a senior lecturer in TEFL/TESOL at the University of Veliko Turnovo (Faculty of Modern Languages). She holds a doctorate in psycholinguistics from the same university. Former President of BETA (2010-2014), currently she is Co-Editor of BETA Publications and FIPLV Treasurer-General. She has been involved in ECML (Council of Europe) and British Council projects related to language teaching and teacher education. E-mail: sylvia.velikova@gmail.com

The BETA annual conferences are a must in teacher development and keeping abreast of developments in our profession + a great socializing opportunity with colleagues one does not see frequently on a regular basis.

Conference participant
one of the major goals that BETA (a member of FIPLV since 2013) has presently been working on – to promote collaboration and networking between professionals involved in teaching different languages, who share the common aim to facilitate language learning and to enhance the quality of language education. The Congress itself was the result of the close cooperation between several FIPLV member associations – Der Internationale Deutschlehrerinnen- und Deutschlehrerverband (IDV), Международная ассоциация преподавателей русского языка и литературы (MAPRYAL) and their members in Bulgaria: Bulgarischer Deutschlehrerverband and Общество русистов Болгарии – and BETA.
BETA was also delighted to welcome official representatives of three partner associations: Maria-Araxi Sachpazian, Chair of TESOL Macedonia-Thrace, Northern Greece; Slavica Stojcevska, English Language Teachers’ Association of the Republic of Macedonia (ELTAM Macedonia), and Sanja Tasić, English Language Teachers’ Association – Serbia. It was also a great pleasure to have Olja Milošević, ELTA Serbia President, as a speaker in Varna.

The Congress brought together delegates from 35 countries and 6 continents, totalling over 200 participants from around the globe. They represented all educational sectors – universities, primary and secondary schools; both state and private institutions. Over the conference days and through plenary and featured sessions, workshops and talks, the delegates explored the theme *Learning and teaching languages: Creating bridges to the future*. Internationally prominent plenary and featured speakers took to the stage with inspiring sessions which were held in various languages on the (first) Plenary Day at *Interhotel Cherno*.
More and during the subsequent conference days at DIQLL. The great line-up of guest speakers reflected the multilingual character of the Congress and included: Diane Larsen-Freeman, University of Michigan, USA; Terry Lamb (FIPLV Secretary-General), University of Westminster, London; Marianne Hepp (Präsidentin des IDV) Universität Pisa, Italien; Elka Todeva, SIT Graduate Institute, USA; Cenka Ivanova, University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria; Cecilia Odé, MAPRYAL/FIPLV; Christine O’Leary, Université Hallam de Sheffield; Penny Ur, Oranim Academic College of Education, Israel; Birsen Tütünis, Istanbul Kültür University, Turkey; Geraldo de Carvalho (Schriftleiter des IDV), Werther Institut in Juiz de Fora/Brasilien; Zuzana Tomaš, Eastern Michigan University, USA; Krystyna Droździał-Szelest (Vice-President of Modern Languages Association of Poland) Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań; Denis Cunningham (FIPLV Honorary Counsellor), Australia; Sylvia Velikova (FIPLV, BETA), University of Veliko Turnovo, Bulgaria.
Other highlights of the programme were the panel discussion on *Professional development for Bulgarian EL teachers today – needs and opportunities* moderated by Syana Harizanova and Svetla Tashevska, New Bulgarian University and the British Council Event titled *Keeping people in the picture... lest we forget!* by Keneward Hill, British Council Sofia.

Thanks to Marianne Hepp (President of IDV), who attended the conference as a plenary speaker, and Geraldo de Carvalho (IDV), German had a strong presence in the programme, with a strand of parallel sessions and talks running over the three days of the conference.
The Congress also saw the presentation of the *2016 FIPLV International Award*. During the Opening Ceremony, Zarina Markova (South-West University, Blagoevgrad), BETA Committee member since 2008 and current E-Newsletter editor, received the Award from Terry Lamb, FIPLV Secretary-General.
At the Annual General Meeting of BETA, Zhivka Ilieva (BETA President) announced the winners of the 9th Round of BETA Lesson Plan Competition. Congratulations to Stamena Hristova (first-prize winner) who received a certificate, an annual BETA membership, and a free pass to the 26th BETA Conference 2017; Diana Velcheva (second-prize winner) who received a certificate, an annual BETA membership, and a half-price pass to the 26th BETA Conference 2017; and Tsvetelena Taralova (third-prize winner) who received a certificate and an annual BETA membership.

As a launching conference, the event included an open session – led by Terry Lamb (FIPLV Secretary-General) and Sylvia Velikova (FIPLV & BETA) – which provided ideas for future collaborative activities and the scope of the FIPLV East European Region.

The organization of the 1st FIPLV East European Regional (EER) Congress and 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference would have been impossible without the generous support of the following sponsors and exhibitors: the Embassy of the United States of America in Sofia, British Council Bulgaria, Cornelsen Verlag GmbH, Deutsche Welle (DW),
Express Publishing, Macmillan Education, Prosveta Publishing House, ET Infolink, Educational Centre Ltd, Pearson Education – SAN-PRO Ltd partner for Bulgaria. It is through their funding and involvement that the community of language educators could connect and develop professionally, which will drive forward language learning and teaching in Bulgaria and beyond.
In the networking and sharing mood of the event, the Congress was concluded by a Farewell Reception at a restaurant by the Black Sea and a trip to Balchik and Kaliakra Cape. Judging from the participants’ overall feedback obtained through the Conference Evaluation Questionnaire, the event was a success.

It was really good with many teachers from different parts of the world, with variety of presentations. I have learned a lot. I have made friends. I have enjoyed the food and the music and dances on Saturday evening at Godzilla. Thank you for your hard work.

Conference participant
On behalf of the Organizing Committee, a big thank you to all who participated in the Congress in Varna! BETA will be announcing the next year’s location and date of its 27th annual international conference as soon as possible. See you in 2018!

A photo album from the 2017 FIPLV & BETA Conference in Varna is available here:

https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1549373588440374.1073741838.100001032435984&type=1&l=065d397d77
Interview with

Tanya Bikova
Interviews Birsen Tütünis

Prof. Dr. Birsen Tütünis has been an English instructor, a lecturer and an administrator. She has written articles and books on different issues related to ELT. She currently works for Istanbul Kültür University as the head of the Department of Foreign Languages. She has been the Co-ordinator of IATEFL Teacher Training and Education Committee (TTEd SIG) for six years. She is on the editorial board of ELT Research Journal, and an Honorary Member of AzETA in Azerbaijan.

Tanya:

Dr Tütünüş, thank you for agreeing to this interview. Could you tell us a bit more about yourself and your motivation to pursue a career in English language teaching in the first place?
**Birsen Tütünis:**

Dear Tanya,

First of all, I would like to thank you and BETA organizers for organizing this interview. It has been my honor to be one of the BETA plenary speakers. Your first question about my career takes me back to my secondary education. My English teacher at the teacher training college was a role model for me and I decided to become an English teacher.

**Tanya:**

How did you choose the University of Sussex for your Ph.D.?

**Birsen Tütünis:**

I was working at Bogazici University and doing my MA at ELL Department. I decided to attend a language and literature course in Brighton at the University of Sussex. I liked the university and the library, where I could find almost everything for my MA thesis. Later on, when I was awarded with a scholarship to do my PhD abroad, University of Sussex was my first choice.

**Tanya:**

You have been the key note speaker and given presentations at different international ELT Conferences. How has this experience enriched you personally and professionally?

**Birsen Tütünis:**

International conferences provide the grounds for professional development and they enrich an academic’s professional knowledge. Furthermore, they supply the
conditions for making friends of different cultures all over the world. So, I believe I benefitted a great deal from such experiences.

Tanya:
With all the developments that have taken place in language teaching over the past years and the impact of globalization, mobilization, and technology on foreign language acquisition can we keep up with educating teachers who are well aware of new technologies and prepared to meet the demands of digital natives? Since you have given a speech on what teachers do and what a good teacher should be, how do you think the role of the teacher has changed with the advanced new technologies in ELT?

Birsen Tütünis:
The generation gap between digital immigrants and digital natives is not something to be scared of; it is in line with the educational philosophies that encourage teachers to learn from their students. Therefore, the generation at teachers’ hands today come with experiences of all kinds of technology the digital age offers and can easily help teachers in their teaching if the latter know how to make use of this huge resource. The teacher’s role changed decades ago with the humanistic approaches that see teachers as guides, coaches and facilitators. Teacher’s role is to support students in their learning process. A good teacher knows how to make use of technology to support learning.

Tanya:
What specific problems do Turkish teachers of English have?
Birsen Tütünis:

Turkish teachers of English have to follow the set syllabus designed by the Ministry of Education. They have to prepare the students for exams. They do not have the freedom to choose other books than the ones MoE assigns. There is no room for teacher autonomy. Private schools choose different books but they also prepare students for exams.

Tanya:

What project have you been working on lately and what are your future professional ambitions?

Birsen Tütünis:

I have been preparing teachers to teach young learners. English Language Courses start at the second grade of primary school, but teacher education programmes fail to equip teacher candidates with the essential knowledge of how to teach a foreign language to young learners. So, I plan to organize teacher training programmes on not only how young learners learn but also the different roles their teachers should adopt.

Tanya:

Could you share one of your most memorable moments as a teacher?

Birsen Tütünis:

I have been teaching in this field for years. A few years ago, I was lecturing using my Power Point slides. Student teachers were sitting silently and were not taking notes at all. They did not have their books or notebooks open. I was upset and
told them that I had done a lot of preparation while they were not even taking notes. Five minutes later they all took their cell phones out and started taking photos. I was shocked. It was the first time that I experienced such a thing and asked them why they were taking photos. They said they would work on the slides at home. I asked how? And they said they would enlarge the photo and take notes at home. I LEARNED something. I went home and tried. Now I do the same at the conferences I attend. But when I do not have time to read and take notes afterwards, I also take notes during a presentation.

**Tanya:**

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

**Birsen Tütünis:**

Yes, I love cooking.

**Tanya:**

We have been really delighted to welcome you as a plenary speaker at the 1st FIPLV East European Regional Congress and 26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference. I think this is not your first visit to Bulgaria, so what do you think about our country and with what feelings have you come back as a plenary speaker?

**Birsen Tütünis :**

I love Bulgaria and my Bulgarian friends. It has been a pleasure to meet them all.
Every now and again
she would come,
the district nurse
who we called Nitty Nora.
She would stand
in her regulation blue raincoat,
a porkpie uniform hat
on her grey hair,
with her badge on it.

We stood in a long line
in the playground
as she called us up, one by one.
Her warm, dry fingers tousled
our hair as she searched
for the offending nits –
no surgical rubber gloves
in those days!

Some of us were sent to the right,
and back into the classroom,
reprieved.
The others went to the left
into the school hall,
condemned,
where they got a note
with instructions to take home,
about using a small-tooth comb
over a newspaper, and paraffin
to massage the scalp.
Somewhere on the other side of Europe, in a place with a name even now we cannot pronounce properly, children, women, the old, and young men were also being sorted, some to the right, some to the left, the reprieved, and the condemned... and nothing to do with nits.

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Forthcoming Events in the World of ELT

52nd Annual IATEFL Conference, Brighton 2018
PCEs 9th April 2018
Conference and Exhibition 10th - 13th April 2018

For further information, visit:

https://conference.iatefl.org/

IATEFL monthly webinars

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

SIG Webinars

For further information, visit: http://www.iatefl.org/web-events/sig-webinars
TESOL 2018
Chicago, Illinois
27–30 March 2018
Sustaining Dialogues Across the TESOL Community

For information visit: http://www.tesol.org/convention2017/tesol-2018-call-for-proposals

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

- **12th International and 16th National ATECR Conference** *ELT Signposts*, Brno, 8-9 September 2017
- **26th IATEFL Poland Conference**, Bielsko – Biała, 15-17 September 2017
Have you ever wondered if you should write an article for the E-Newsletter of BETA?

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

What exactly do you have to do?

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

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

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

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

We are on the web:

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

Thank you for your support!

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