

## Encouraging more teachers to read “*Voices*” Fatos Ugur Eskicirak includes it in the reading club programme

### Pic Bio

Fatos Ugur Eskicirak is a teacher & teacher trainer at Bahcesehir University English Preparatory Program and currently pursues her PhD studies in ELT at Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey. She also designs & implements professional development activities for ELT teachers and coordinates the Professional Development Unit at BUEPP.

After Bahcesehir University English Preparatory Program (BUEPP) had become an IATEFL member in 2007, we started to think about how we could encourage more colleagues to read its bimonthly newsletter “*Voices*” regularly. With this in mind, we decided to include it in the reading list of our “Reading Club”. This was the first time a newsletter had been suggested. The majority of the members welcomed this option. Here in this article, I will share with you the process we went through to help club members to exploit the newsletter in the best way possible. I hope the ideas in this article will guide those interested in setting up their own Reading Club to encourage colleagues to read more ELT related books, articles, magazines or newsletters like *Voices*.

Right after we decided to read *Voices* in the Reading Club, a group of us gathered to choose between: (1) reading a whole issue or (2) reading selected articles from several issues (See Appendix 1). I had suggested 5 issues for both options. In the end the majority went for option two and suggested their preferred articles. After the session, I analysed their preferences and prepared a syllabus & planner based on the participants’ choices (App. 2 a & b). According to the planner, we would read 11 articles from issues 198, 204, 205 & 207 in 7 weeks and meet for an hour every week to discuss and reflect on the topics in those articles. See App. 3 for more details.

For *Voices*, we would follow the same procedure as we for ELT books. That is, as the Club facilitator, I would read each text beforehand, prepare note-taking and reflection questions, add some practical tasks based on the ideas suggested in the texts and e-mail them to the members at least one week in advance of the club meeting. With *Voices*, as we did not have enough copies of the newsletter for each member so I bulk copied the 11 articles, added the related questions and tasks to each, turned these into a booklet and sent it to every member two weeks before the program started. (App. 3 and 4)

During the meetings, we answered the questions and shared our reflections about the ideas in the articles. Moreover, we reported on the effectiveness of the practical tips and suggestions provided by the writer if we had had a chance to try them out in our classes. In this way, we tried to combine both theory and practice and conceptualise the suggested teaching ideas. We expected all the members to read and answer the note-taking questions and complete the tasks as much as possible so that we could have more fruitful sessions for everyone.

The members were also expected to write a “Post-Reading Reflection Report” upon completion of the program. To facilitate this process and wrap up each session, I provided them with a set of reflection questions (App. 5) at the end of every meeting.

So, did we achieve our aim? Do more colleagues read *Voices* now? To a considerable extent, yes. When I ask club members if they still continue to read the articles in *Voices*, most of them say “yes”. Moreover, based on the feedback I got from the school librarian, there are now more teachers asking to borrow it from the library!

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## APPENDICES

### App. 1

#### IATEFL Voices: Teacher Preferences

Name: .....

Choose one of the two options below:

**Option 1:** \_\_\_\_\_ (✓ / X) Reading the whole of an issue.

If yes which issue? Tick the one you like best:

Issue 198	Issue 201	Issue 204	Issue 205	Issue 207

**Option 2:** \_\_\_\_\_ (✓ / X) Reading different articles from different issues. Suggested articles:

Issue..... & page no.....

Issue..... & page no.....

Issue..... & page no.....

**App. 2.**

**a.**

**MODULE 4 READING CLUB SYLLABUS**

**(4 May - 15 June 2009)**

**Aim(s) of the Club:** To encourage teachers to read written sources such as books, journals and online articles regarding ELT and stimulate “academic talk” through reflection and reporting process.

**Components of the Club\*:**

1. Attending 90 % of the reflection sessions
2. Coming prepared to the sessions (i.e. reading the relevant chapter/article and/or doing the pre/post-reading tasks) to discuss the topics set in advance. (See the planner for details of the set tasks)
3. Writing a 500-word post reading “reflection report” about the book/article etc. Although there is no suggested framework for this reflection and Ts are free to come up with their own styles, a set of guidelines are suggested for reference.

*\* Failing to fulfil one or more of the components will make the participant ineligible for the certificate.*

**Articles:** Selections from IATEFL newsletter “Vocies” (Issues: 198, 204, 205 & 207)

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**Reading Club Day & Times & Place:** Monday, 15:15-16:15 (Meeting/Training Room)

**App. 2.****b.****RC MODULE 4 PLANNER**

<b>WEEK &amp; DATES</b>	<b>CHAPTERS</b>	<b>PRE-MEETING TASKS</b>
<b>W1 4 May 2009</b>	Participants read next week's articles and do the tasks	No reflection session
<b>W2 11 May 2009</b>	Issue 198, pp. 8-9: Acting skills for language teachers & Issue 198, p. 11: Mind the gap: effective vocabulary teaching in communicative situations.	Please come prepared (answer the NTQs & do the assigned tasks) to discuss the issues in the article
<b>W3 18 May 2009</b>	Issue 207 p. 13: Talk is...! (TTT & STT) & Issue 204, p. 7: Down with TTT and up with STT	Please come prepared (answer the NTQs & do the assigned tasks) to discuss the issues in the article
<b>W4 25 May 2009</b>	Issue 204, p.10: Spoken skills in an L2 environment & Issue 205, p. 18: Speaking (Practical teaching ideas)	Please come prepared (answer the NTQs & do the assigned tasks) to discuss the issues in the article
<b>W5 1 June 2009</b>	Issue 198, p. 18: Writing (Practical teaching ideas) & Issue 208, pp. 8-9: Restriction: one key to student creativity	Please come prepared (answer the NTQs & do the assigned tasks) to discuss the issues in the article
<b>W6 8 June 2009</b>	Issue 204, p. 6: How useful are comprehension questions?	Please come prepared (answer the NTQs & do the assigned tasks) to discuss the issues in the article
<b>W7 15 June 2009</b>	Issue 204, p. 13: Teacher development (Practical teaching ideas)	Please come prepared (answer the NTQs & do the assigned tasks) to discuss the issues in the article

**App. 3**

**NOTE-TAKING & REFLECTION QUESTIONS for:**  
**ISSUE 198 pp. 8-9: Acting Skills for Language Teachers**

1. Write a brief summary of the main points covered in the article.
2. In what ways are the performance skills relevant for language teachers according to the writer?
3. Take notes for each of the ways through which we could increase our classroom presence:

No	Ways	Why? & How?	My own awareness of and experience with each
1	Eye contact		
2	Spontaneity and improvisation		
3	Maintaining attention		
4	Conveying Enthusiasm		
5	Use of gesture and facial expression		
6	Use of movement and space		
7	Use of voice		
8	Use of humour		

4. What are the writer's own reflections about acting skills?

**The end of the article!!!☺**

**App. 4****TASKS for:****ISSUE 198 pp. 8-9: Acting Skills for Language Teachers**

**TASK:** Choose at least 3 ideas from the article and experiment it with your own class and reflect on the result.

No	Idea	How did I use it?	Reflections: Did it work? How do I know?
1			
2			
3			

**App. 5****END OF ARTICLE REFLECTIONS**

*Please answer the reflection questions below by referring to what you have read in the article. Answering the below questions may facilitate the “reflection report” writing process in the end.*

**ARTICLE:** \_\_\_\_\_

1. One important thing I realised about myself and my teaching after reading the article is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. One important thing I realised about my students and their learning process after reading the article is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. One idea/belief of mine which was proved after reading the article is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. One idea/belief of mine which was disproved after reading the article is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. The action I am planning to take after reading the article is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

