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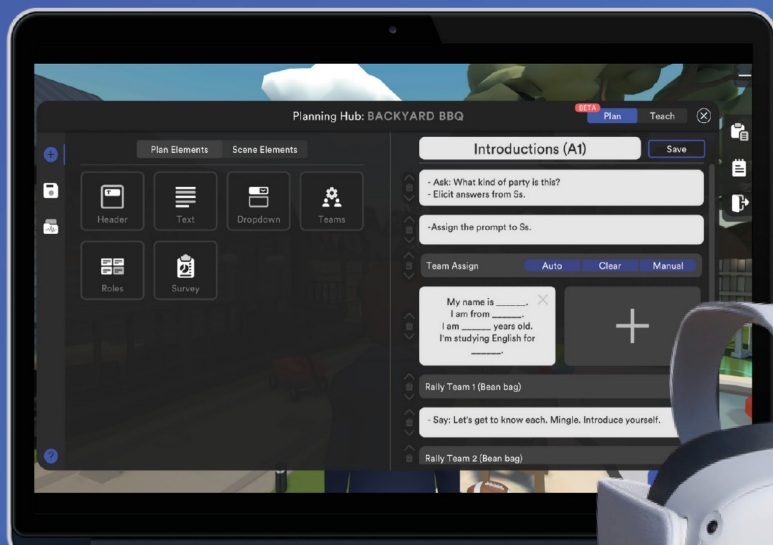
voices

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VOICES

From the Editor

For many readers, September marks the beginning of a new school year. Whether you are teaching online or in class, and whatever Covid safety protocol you are required to follow in your own context, I wish you all the best as you start this new school year.

As you move forward and eventually into a post-Covid reality, you will want to remember the role that IATEFL plays in your career. This is the focus of IATEFL Treasurer Bethany Cagnol's article; read how Bethany convinced her employer to become an institutional member of IATEFL. Could you do the same?

Much of this issue of *Voices* is related to the 54th IATEFL Annual Conference and Exhibition, which this year was held online. Despite some pre-Conference concerns about how this event would replace the much-loved in-person event, there is widespread agreement that it was a huge success. Read long-time IATEFL member Maria-Araxi Sachpazian's analysis of the event, along with reviews of the Conference and of the three plenary talks by IATEFL members around the world. Also in this issue, those SIGs that have already held their Pre-Conference Events report on those; some are still to come, and these will be featured in a later issue. Jean Theuma gives a comprehensive report on Associates' Day, and those members of the IATEFL family whom we have lost since the last Conference are remembered here.

In other papers in this issue, Camii West discusses the past, present and future of online learning, while Rachel Tsateri shows how a process approach to writing works well with her learners. As always, Ruby Vurdien brings you reviews of new titles to add to your must-read list.

Has the online Conference inspired you to become more active, perhaps by giving your own presentation? Two articles in this issue will interest you. Sandra Guadalupe Ojeda, María Clara Scarione Avellaneda and Juan Ignacio Gabás Hartman provide useful advice for anyone considering giving a talk, even at a very early stage in their career. Olga Kuznetsova, herself at a later stage in her career (Olga lived through the siege of Leningrad in the 1940s!) shows how she embraced online CPD and learned to give her own online presentations. Don't forget: the deadline to submit a proposal to present at the 55th IATEFL Annual Conference is coming up on 16 September.

With very best wishes,

Tania Pattison
Voices Editor
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Cover photo: IATEFL member and Conference delegate Zuzana Veselá



Tania Pattison, Editor

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From the Trustees

Bethany Cagnol stresses the importance of collaboration between ELT experts and non-ELT faculty

It's been said countless times in so many conference talks and plenaries: ELT knows no boundaries. And the members of teachers' associations, and those who attend conferences, webinars and events, have an instant added value whether they be freelancers or full-time teaching staff. And this added value is cross-disciplinary.

My institution, which is considered one of the best engineering schools in France, only recently set up an internal pedagogical department to support the full-time scientific professors. This department helps foster pedagogical collaboration, innovation and the sharing of ideas. When it was opened, the department's newly appointed director met with my ELT colleagues at the Languages and Cultures department to discuss our reaction and brainstorm ideas and initiatives. It quickly became apparent that we possessed a much stronger foundation in pedagogical principles than our other scientific colleagues at the school. IATEFL was mentioned countless times during this meeting as a pedagogical reservoir of support and inspiration for our department. It also became evident that our scientific colleagues could also benefit from the vast number of resources IATEFL has to offer. After this meeting, my school agreed to become an institutional member of IATEFL.

In July of this year, the new pedagogical director invited me to make a short 10-minute presentation on pedagogy in front of the scientific faculty members. It was the first presentation I had ever made outside of my ELT bubble and trust me, I was beyond nervous. I was



IATEFL Treasurer **Bethany Cagnol** is an English professor and head of the English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) programme at Telecom Paris. Before that, in 2005, she founded an English training company in Paris. Between 2009 and 2016, she served as President, Treasurer and Membership Coordinator of TESOL France, and in 2010, she was elected Treasurer of IATEFL BESIG and warmly welcomed into the IATEFL family.

overwhelmed with fear and trepidation, especially facing hard-core scientific experts, including the Dean of Studies himself. I took a deep breath and decided to turn to the resources of one of the experts in our field: Zoltán Dörnyei. I introduced his 'recipe' for fostering engagement, which Dörnyei has gone into considerable detail about in numerous publications and conference talks, IATEFL included. I stressed that if we were going to overcome the multiple challenges of this past Covid year and gain the momentum to take on multiple long-term recovery initiatives (including mixing fully online, hybrid, and/or face-to-face teaching), it was essential that our engineering school, as a whole, urgently had to adopt an engagement-first policy for our students.

At the end of my presentation, members of the scientific faculty asked multiple questions about Dörnyei's talk and where they could find out more. I also mentioned, once again, the powerful resource that IATEFL can be for not only a small group of ELT staff members at the school, but for other members of the academic faculty. My ELT colleagues on Zoom frantically nodded their heads and gave their thumbs up.

Many academic institutions are starting to ask themselves 'Where do we go from here?' If you are a member of faculty, I strongly encourage you to approach your Dean of Studies and to explain the cross-disciplinary benefits of joining IATEFL. Now is when many teachers and institutions are desperate to look forward and help their students with the recovery process. It will be a long and difficult recovery, no doubt. But with IATEFL, the support is still there, and is even stronger than ever before.

Reference

Dörnyei, Z. (2018, 19 April). *Engaging language learners* [Video]. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg6BSbpVgVU>

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“ If you are a member of faculty, I strongly encourage you to approach your Dean of Studies and to explain the cross-disciplinary benefits of joining IATEFL. ”



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A fully online Conference experience? Is it feasible? Is it IATEFL?

Maria-Araxi Sachpazian looks back at the recent IATEFL Conference, held virtually

Since 2001, when I first attended an IATEFL Conference, this event has become a kind of milestone on my calendar. For more than 20 years now, I have been planning my year (and my finances) around this event, to the extent that there were summers when I had no hotel reservation for my holidays, but I had already booked my IATEFL accommodation for the following April. In February 2020, telling Shaun Wilden, chair of DigiCom and my IATEFL 'boss' at the time, that I would not be able to travel from my home in Greece to Manchester to volunteer for DigiCom was one of the hardest things I've ever done – mainly because I felt I was exaggerating, as no lockdowns had been announced yet. Then, a couple of days later, the worst happened: the Manchester Conference had to be postponed, and the world as we knew it simply stopped.

One of the greatest characteristics of flexible organisations (teacher associations, schools and companies alike) is their ability to take the pulse of their target audience and adjust to current demands. In early 2021, once it became clear that the 54th International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition could not be held live, the IATEFL response was immediate. A new platform, Hopin, was found, which would enable IATEFL to present an event as close as possible to a live event. Hopin was user-friendly, it allowed concurrent sessions to take place, it featured an exhibition space, and it offered endless chatting opportunities and meeting



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She has been volunteering for the IATEFL Digital Committee (DigiCom) and Membership Committee (MemCom) since 2017.

spaces. So, the million-pound question is: 'Did IATEFL actually manage to deliver the full experience?'

Going digital: an exercise in adaptability

As Shaun Wilden said, the main concern in organising such a venture was not finding the appropriate technology; it was finding the people to moderate these sessions. It is this point precisely that differentiates IATEFL and its structure from other teacher associations. IATEFL is not a simply a Board that runs around desperately trying to put together a conference. It is not a group of Trustees who supervise the activity, nor is it an office of contracted executives. It is all forces working together and managing to mobilise others. IATEFL was no stranger to streaming technology as, for many years now, its Annual Conference (or at least a great part of it) has been live-streamed. What was needed was people, good old ELT professionals with common sense and a desire to help. As a conference organiser myself, I find it heart-warming that IATEFL has had the power to entice so many professionals to volunteer their time, to give up their weekend and their freedom to serve a common cause. It is also admirable that moderators

“ For me, the five days of a live IATEFL Conference are spent in the conference venue, surrounded by other IATEFLers, successfully IATEFLing. We breathe and live IATEFL, and sometimes we forget to eat because we... IATEFL. ”

were not simply thrown into the task. A set of meetings and training sessions (synchronous and asynchronous) were held. Guidelines were drafted and tested so that ambiguities could be clarified. Despite all this, considerable studying and note-taking was also necessary for us moderators to feel ready. As educators, we all know that a sense of being prepared is what matters, and sadly it takes a while to develop that sense. What holds us back? The greatest demotivating factor: fear of failure.

Some personal feelings

Let me start by listing my personal fears. I am a punctual person, but having to organise my own timetable while being mindful of different time zones stressed me out. Throughout that weekend, I would look at the clock on the wall, and something small would freeze my heart. Then I'd remember: 'Greek time! UK time! Phew!' Another major fear is related to technology. Despite my love of technology and my full awareness that without it, we would all have been unemployed for about two years now, I know problems can crop up. These tend to become more pressing and mind-boggling when one is up against a very visible deadline, in the presence of an audience. The worst thing is when you're sure there is a problem and you raise the alarm, only to find out that the problem was in your head, the solution being rather simple and staring you in the eye. IATEFL managed to ease most of these fears. The training sessions, the rehearsals and the chat channels available helped moderators feel that they were not left to their own devices. Speakers were also relaxed and did not convey any kind of stress even in the case of unlucky speakers who experienced loss of time due to malfunctions or connectivity issues.



IATEFL Patron David Crystal welcomes online delegates.

“ Participants were spoilt for choice. The range of sessions was great and catered to a diverse international audience of teachers who are at different stages of their careers and who teach in different settings. ”

But is the IATEFL Conference only a series of sessions? Perhaps it's time to see whether this virtual Conference managed to capture the essence of an IATEFL Conference.

So, was it an IATEFL Conference?

Indeed it was!

Participants were spoilt for choice. The range of sessions was great and catered to a diverse international audience of teachers who are at different stages of their careers and who teach in different settings. Another interesting feature was that the programme kept to its usual structure, with the early morning 'How to...' sessions, the plenary and then the concurrent sessions (all of which were professionally presented and showed how the speakers took advantage of the online mode of delivery). There were break times in between for participants to visit the Exhibition, join a pop-up session or go to the Careers Fair. The fact that IATEFL did not simply 'chuck' any one of these components but insisted on delivering the full range of options was really admirable. During the sessions, interaction among participants was very active, with delegates exchanging opinions through comments. It is also worthy of comment and praise that overall, few sessions were cancelled,

and that additional back-up was still available in the form of pre-recorded sessions in case speakers faced last-minute glitches and couldn't actually present. Finally, the closing event with its entertaining music was, to say the least, heart-warming.

No, that's not IATEFL!

IATEFL is more than a compilation of sessions and workshops, with one plenary to start the day. Sadly, there are limits to what an online tool can do to capture the essence of a conference. For me, the five days of a live IATEFL Conference are spent in the conference venue, surrounded by other IATEFLers, successfully IATEFLing. We breathe and live IATEFL, and sometimes we forget to eat because we... IATEFL. For me, an IATEFL Conference is packing and checking in at the airport. It's getting to Britain and then to the venue. It's registering and hugging people, and starting with Associates' Day to get the ball rolling. It's making plans with different crowds for every IATEFL evening and, at the same time, managing to pop in and out of sessions. It's trying to control myself not to buy too much from the Exhibition because I'm travelling on one of those discount airlines that might make me walk back to Greece if my luggage is too heavy.

All of this was lost this year, though this was in no way the fault of IATEFL. Each day, before the plenary, I missed the 'How-to...' session because I had to tidy up and walk my dog. Then, between the plenary and the first sessions, I cooked. I had to take screen breaks as my mind raced to the time when I would be monitoring. I had to organise lunch according to sessions, and my family life flowed into my lovely IATEFL experience. To put it simply, the moment my laptop lid was down, I was back in Greece and not IATEFLing. Economical though



Amos Paran entertains delegates in an evening of music.

it was, it hurt as a whole entity called 'Conference presence' was missing.

Along with that, I felt that some events were not best suited to this mode of delivery. I would like to compare two session types, while stressing that in both cases speakers and organisers did their professional best. The first example was the *ELT Journal* Debate organised by the *ELT Journal* and featuring Guy Cook (King's College London) and Harry Kuchah (University of Leeds and outgoing IATEFL President). The motion was 'This house believes that the job of the English teacher is to teach English rather than values'. This event with its brilliant speakers still stands out in my memory and will be a point of reference for me in the future. The two speakers, with visible respect for each other, were expertly prepared and had cogent arguments which made their cases hard to attack, but somehow, they each found points to rebut. This event lost nothing from its immediacy, passion and fire even though it took place online.

In contrast, I fear that the Interactive Language Fair (ILF) suffered as a result in the change in delivery mode, though not the quality of the sessions. When delivered live, the Interactive Language Fair is a great way for live presentations which are a cross between a mini-presentation and a poster presentation. Speakers are given two minutes to present their topic and then delegates go from table to table listening to different mini-presentations. In its online version, the ILF presentations seemed somehow disconnected, as we all attended all the sessions and the topics had no connection to each other. Despite the great work done by the speakers and their real emotional and cognitive investment, I could not help feeling that this event would have felt like an ELT fest in a live conference, but now it felt more like a string of unrelated presentations. An



ELT Journal Editor-in-Chief Alessia Cogo with debate speakers Guy Cook and Harry Kuchah Kuchah.

“ At a time of limited stability, this Conference provided hope for future Conferences and for more research and studying, which are the bedrock for successful teaching. ”

idea for the future would be to select topics roughly under the same umbrella for online ILF events. In the same vein, the buzzing centre of our IATEFL Conference, the Exhibition was not the same. Personally, I felt a bit reluctant to go into the Exhibition. I had no idea what to expect, who I would see in the 'booths' and what to tell them since this experience was a far cry from the actual buzzing IATEFL Exhibition in the live conference.

Looking to the future

Part of the IATEFL mission statement, as stated in the Conference programme, is that IATEFL helps to 'support, develop and link English language teaching professionals from around the world as a global teaching community'. At a time when travel is severely limited, IATEFL had to act responsibly. The organisation had to stop looking for ways to get back what it had; instead, it had to invest in the creation of a new delivery mode that could accommodate participants from all over the world.

To quote outgoing IATEFL President Harry Kuchah Kuchah in the Conference programme, 'The IATEFL Conference is always a unique opportunity to step out of your daily routine and step into the wider circles of the ELT industry. This year is even more exciting because the conference is happening on a digital platform which allows you to move between rooms and spaces easily from the comfort of your home.' As far as it could, IATEFL helped us to step out of our daily routine despite the housework, the dog-walking and the cooking. It helped us to keep up with our CPD, and it also put in place some useful 'hooks' for future learning and research. At a time of limited stability, this Conference provided hope for future Conferences and for more research and studying, which are the bedrock for successful teaching.

I feel, and this is a purely personal conjecture, that for some of us, travelling to Britain will remain hard for the next few years as a result of potential new



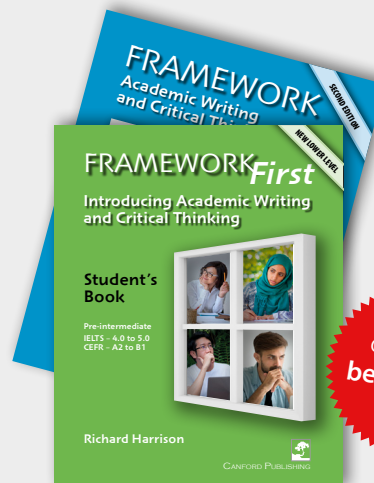
The evening Cookalong event was a huge success.

strains of Covid, Brexit-related issues or simply personal finances. Perhaps, it would make sense for IATEFL to look into the possibility of organising two Conferences: a face-to-face one, and a smaller two-day online one. The two events could feature different sessions, and perhaps some session types would

not appear in the online version. In this way, IATEFL can attract wider participation with delegates from all four corners of the globe.

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Professional development through conference participation

Sandra Guadalupe Ojeda, together with María Clara Scarione Avellaneda and Juan Ignacio Gabás Hartman, encourages conference presentations

Many EFL teachers are aware of the importance of professional development and they constantly try to attend new courses or webinars in order to keep up to date with the latest trends in education. However, not many of them dare to become speakers in conferences, which is another path in the teacher's career. Undoubtedly, this challenge might be very daunting, especially if one is not actively involved in a research project or an academic programme. Despite the fact that giving a conference session may mean leaving one's comfort zone, the benefits are numerous: the deepening of knowledge on specific topics, career advancement, acquisition of valuable public speaking skills and the forging of new contacts and partnerships. As a three-member team – a teacher educator and two teachers in-training – we bear witness to these positive outcomes. In this article, we will share our experience and also provide some useful tips to create an attractive conference proposal and successfully present a session.

Being an EFL educator involves many responsibilities, such as designing and delivering training sessions, correcting lesson plans, carrying out observations, providing feedback, fostering reflection upon the teaching practice, mentoring or coaching practising teachers as well as participating as a conference presenter. In over 20 years of teaching experience, I have been well acquainted with most of these activities; however, it took me a while before I came to terms with the idea of participating in conferences. Once I had done it, I decided to invite two pre-service teachers to join me, since I realised that I could not only share my experience and expertise but also motivate them to leave their insecurities aside and make progress in their academic pursuits. Taş (2009) states that the learning teaching environments which teacher trainees experience in the pre-service period will be an important factor in shaping their future professional life. Taking this into



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María Clara Scarione Avellaneda and Juan Ignacio Gabás Hartman are senior students in the ELT Program in the Universidad Autónoma de Entre Ríos (UADER). They have participated and presented in several congresses and seminars.



account, I tried to find the best way to support and encourage students during the process of preparing a talk so that they would be able to unleash their potential.

Pre-service teachers' perspectives

At first we were not completely on board with the idea of getting involved in conferences or talks. It took some convincing for us to join, yet we are glad we did. When we started getting more involved in these projects, especially presenting in conferences and panels, we felt somewhat out of place. After all, we saw ourselves as *just* students, and yet we were participating in these events in which the speakers next to us had master's and doctoral degrees. However, we have learnt that we also have valuable input and interesting experiences and perspectives to share. We provide insight into students' viewpoints and feelings. The very reason that makes us feel awkward is also the reason we are valued and valuable.

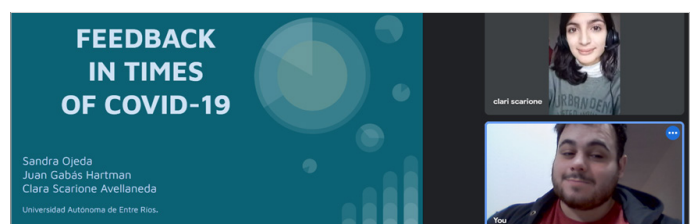
An insightful realisation we had throughout the experience is that we were not the only ones to feel that we did not belong there. Our teachers, who have now also become our peers in these conferences, are generally quite nervous and overwhelmed by the other speakers as well. Seeing our teachers in this new light has changed our perspective, not only of them but of our soon-to-be profession.

All in all, as pre-service teachers, our main message to others who might be hesitant to participate in these types of activities is to just do it. You might feel out of place, or that what you have to say is not valuable enough. However, the truth is that your perspectives and views of the world are just as unique and important as anybody else's in that conference room.

A few tips and tricks

There are two distinct stages in becoming a conference speaker. The first stage involves deciding what topic or area of expertise you want to talk about. It is essential to read the guidelines offered by the conference committee to have a thorough understanding of the requirements, since these may vary. Some conferences are more academic, and the talks given are generally focused on showing the processes or results of research carried out. At others, teachers share their experiences with new teaching techniques implemented, successful projects completed or new perspectives and theories related to teaching.

At first, you may think you don't have an idea worth sharing, but it just takes some extra time observing the classroom and reflecting upon your practices to discover a potential topic for the session. Once the topic has been chosen, it is advisable to look at the literature on the field in order to develop a theoretical background that will back up the presentation. This information will help



A teacher trainer and her trainees present at a conference.

you feel confident about the content of your talk when you face the audience. After gathering the material needed, you should start designing the layout of your presentation. An introduction–development–conclusion format is a solid structure that facilitates comprehension. The final step of this stage is to decide on the best application to create the presentation. There are many options, such as Canva, Prezi, PowerPoint, Emaze, Google Slides, Slidebean, Visme, Knovio, Hakiu Deck, Powtoon and SohoShow, to mention a few. One caveat: not all of them are free of charge.

The second stage is the presentation *per se*. First of all, it is necessary to take into account that many issues might arise, especially if conferences are carried out virtually as happened during 2020 and 2021 as a result of Covid-19. In this regard, we would like to share some useful tips from what we have learned:

- The pandemic context is forcing us to have virtual conferences, so it is important to check Internet connectivity and bandwidth usage. If your computer has an Ethernet connection, use it, since it is more reliable than Wi-Fi.
- Dynamic presentations are catchy, but it is advisable to avoid overusing effects and animations within slides since they add to the loading time. Slides Go or Slides Carnival are excellent options to achieve eye-catching visuals. The majority of their templates are free of charge and you have a wide variety to choose from.
- Use the 7x7 rule of thumb for presentations. This means that you should use no more than seven lines of text per slide (or seven bullet points) and no more than seven words per line. The titles are not included in the count. This helps to keep the audience engaged and prevents the speaker from reading too much from the slides.
- Consider presentation etiquette. If there is more than one speaker, select the slides each one is going to describe and build in some kind of smooth transition to introduce the topic the next speaker is going to talk about.
- Avoid reading from slides. Include pictures that might help you remember key concepts that you must cover. If you need some back-up regarding the content you are discussing, you can add footnotes in Google slides or PowerPoint, and attendees will not see them. Otherwise, keep some notes nearby in case you get lost.
- Rehearse in advance. This will help you to discover possible weaknesses of the presentation as well as keep track of the time you will devote to each slide. A good piece of advice is to use a timer to

help you keep to the time limit.

- Check the surroundings, including sound, light and webcam. In order to be seen clearly, check that the room is well lit. You should maintain eye-contact with your audience, so try to level the webcam to your face. You could place a photograph behind the webcam, poking out, to remind you where to look. Also, your voice needs to be heard clearly. If your computer microphone is not reliable, consider investing in a headset with a built-in microphone.
 - Be flexible. Sometimes, even when everything is perfectly prepared, problems still arise. As a speaker, you need to be able to think on the spot and acknowledge that you cannot control everything. Keep your spirits up and interact with the audience while you try to fix technical issues.
 - Be prepared for any inconveniences. For instance, if you include links to videos or activities and they do not load or start, you can show them from your computer. Have them ready to be played. Sometimes, external links to different applications do not work on the audience's devices because they need to be downloaded. If that happens, you can share the links in the chatroom and explain that they can view them later by sharing your screen. It is also advisable to save your slides enumerated as a PDF file. Sometimes the Internet shuts down, presentations are not compatible with certain platforms, or the equipment simply malfunctions. If anything like that happens, you can share the file from your computer in the chatroom, share the link if you have it in Drive or send it via email. Once the audience opens the file, you can go on with the presentation by explaining which slide you are referring to.
- On the whole, we would like to emphasize one key idea that we hope came through in the previous paragraphs: your expertise, skills and practice are valid and valuable, and no one can share them as well as you can. Be

“ Your expertise, skills and practice are valid and valuable, and no one can share them as well as you can. Be confident in what you bring to the table, and participate! ... ”

confident in what you bring to the table, and participate! Don't be concerned about any possible mistakes or difficulties, and focus on the amazing learning experience that you will have. Finally, remember that you will strengthen relationships and grow, not only professionally but also personally!

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Learning globally, though virtually

Olga Kuznetsova shows how a teacher from a traditional background embraces online CPD

Introduction

The year 2021 has brought about great changes and has forced us to adapt to new circumstances as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of lockdowns, we have needed to transfer our attention to online education, distance learning and virtual socialising. The necessity of doing so has become a universally acknowledged fact.

With global changes, the education system needs to be updated and reframed. For English language teachers, a few questions arise:

1. What new skills do we need to develop with regard to online learning besides ICT (Information and Communication Technology) literacy?
2. Are social skills being developed online, and how we develop them in a distance learning mode?
3. What are our gains and losses in distance education?

In this transformational period, teachers can be of great assistance in helping adult learners to overcome obstacles with regard to technology. Teachers can help learners to adjust their mindset towards technology, to address their fear of technical devices and to develop a sense of openness to learning more, in order to make online communication easier and more productive and, ultimately, to become part of a global online community.

However, in my case, I represent a generation of teachers who followed a traditional, face-to-face approach to education. I am not computer savvy at all. Nevertheless, blessed and guided by an ardent desire to grow and develop professionally, not to lag behind, and to meet the demands of these global changes, I jumped at the opportunity to learn ICT skills. Opportunity seldom knocks twice.

The International Conference in Malaysia

In November 2020 I was invited to participate in the 2nd International Conference (IConFEd 20), held online in Malaysia. The invitation was sent by the Director of Institute of Teacher Education



Olga Mikhailovna Kuznetsova was born in St Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) and survived the siege of Leningrad (1941–1944). Educated at St Petersburg State University, she has taught English

in the faculties of Economics, Journalism, Sociology, Psychology, Law, and Physics. Her interests include general psychology and communicative methods of teaching languages.

in Penang, Dr Mohd Saat bin Abas. Maybe it was a sign from above of the need for English teachers from Europe and Asia to communicate, and even to collaborate later. I was thrilled and excited that my proposal for a video presentation entitled 'My heuristic method', based on my own research and experience, had been accepted for presentation.

The conference was held virtually from 17 to 18 November 2020. For me, it was a new and very interesting experience, a great chance to widen my professional horizons, to become acquainted with EL professionals from Malaysia, Indonesia and Australia, and to start thinking globally. It was a wonderful chance to be an online presenter at an international conference.

The problem lay in my lack of experience working with technical devices and my worries and fears of using them. Luckily, my talented graduates who remembered me gladly offered their assistance. The organisers of this conference in Malaysia showed respect and interest in my professional career and in my presentation, in which I spoke about my many years of teaching at all levels, from secondary school to university level.

Once the video presentation was completed (successfully!), the online events followed. They brought new professional opportunities in this unhappy period of Covid-19 and strict lockdowns. It was like a breath of fresh air.

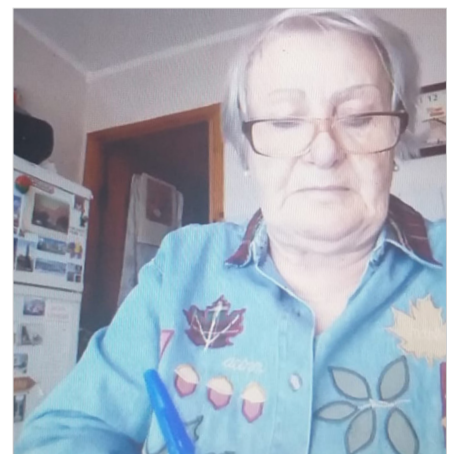
The PELLTA Conference

In March 2021 I received an invitation to participate in an online conference held by the Penang EL Learning and Teaching Association (PELLTA) in Kuala Lumpur, organised by Dr Denise Quah and Dr Yeoh Hee Hee. The conference theme was 'Tech tools to enhance learner engagement', an urgent issue in our digital world. I submitted a proposal to present my views on the topic, and it was accepted.

“ One of the most important skills that a teacher training workshop aims to build in its participants is the skill of reflection. ”

The points I made were as follows: firstly, the quality and quantity of online education and distance learning should not be ignored; and secondly, adult learning practices should be addressed, in order not to lose the intellectual potential of the older generation. I pointed out the need for research which explored the educational gains and losses associated with the online learning process. I then showed how the education system needs to be updated and reframed according to the new global changes.

For EL teachers, in my case, at the university level, it is obligatory to have some knowledge of psychology and to incorporate it in our practice, thereby combining psychology and knowledge of language in the teaching/studying process. This approach can enhance the course, establish healthy trusting relationships and contribute to the growth mindset of our learners. Besides, the teachers' skills will be broadened. That is why, in spite of its complexity, mixed research should be conducted in the area of online learning. To meet the present time demands, our adults, both learners and teachers, must be open to learning more and should be encouraged to see the lasting benefits resulting from the changes in this transformational period. A psychological educator can help in the process of developing the ICT skills required to improve the quality of



The author participates in a Zoom session.

“ [The online event] brought new professional opportunities in this unhappy period of Covid-19 and strict lockdowns. It was like a breath of fresh air. ”

online learning, to attract more learners and to involve more teachers.

Conclusion

Though this was a time-consuming and worrisome period in my life, it was worth the results. It was an excellent experience with an astonishing outcome. I was one of 30 award-winning teachers from over 20 countries around the world. I have been nominated for a Global Academy International Network award, a scholarship for a two-month study

course online.

As an English language teacher from Russia, I would be happy to advance our global collaboration with fellow teachers around the world, sharing the same vision and mission in promoting excellence in global education enhancement and equity. We won't stop learning globally, albeit virtually.

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Blended learning: the past, present and future

Camii West outlines the development of blended learning

Throughout the last year, teachers around the world have had to adapt and learn new skills due to the impact of Covid-19. Educational organisations have looked to experts and reviewed theories and best practices to support both their teachers and learners with this new 'blended' way of teaching and studying. For me, it has been an exciting experience (albeit stressful at times) as I've been able to put into practice what I learned about blended learning while studying for my MA TESOL in 2018. In this article, I reflect on the past, present and future of blended learning and discuss how it has evolved during this time.

The history of blended learning

Blended learning has been an established methodology in English language teaching for many years. The term was accredited to Sharma and Barrett after the publication of their 2007 book; however, it is thought that the concept and approach were developed sometime earlier, and that blended learning originated within the corporate business industry in the late 1990s. With the rapid advancement of technology and the Internet during this time, along with an increase in demand for corporate training on a wider scale, organisations began using CD-ROMs for more interactive learning experiences. Companies were able to deliver computer-based training to more people at a fraction of the cost and could easily track learner progression. However, this form of training was not always called 'blended learning'; many terms were used. The term 'integrated learning' became popular around 2000, followed by 'hybrid learning' or 'mixed learning', 'e-learning', and 'b-learning'. Despite the variety of terms, the one that is now most prevalent within the education sector is 'blended learning'.

So, what exactly is blended learning? It was often defined and is still widely understood to be a combination of face-to-face (F2F) classroom interaction with a technological online component. Learners typically attend a traditional 'physical' classroom for F2F instruction with their teacher for part of their course, and they



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complete a parallel asynchronous self-study element online.

However, from my perspective and certainly from my experiences over the last year, I find significant limitations to this simplistic definition. It does not reflect the complexities of this approach or the development of new technologies and how they can be utilised to correspond to the demands of our present situation.

The present

Blended learning today consists of so many different factors, making it, in my opinion, a creative, fun and enriched educational experience. With faster and more stable broadband Internet connections, and with the availability of numerous tech-friendly virtual learning environments (VLEs), it is now possible to have an authentic F2F learning experience within a virtual classroom environment facilitated by synchronous tools such as Zoom. Teachers and students have been communicating and studying online in real time, while simultaneously using asynchronous tools within programmes such as Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams or other VLEs to further support their learning experience. With this in mind, it could be said that a more accurate and modern definition of blended learning is needed.

I define blended learning as 'a flexible, varied, compatible and appropriate approach to learning, using a mixture of real time F2F (virtual or physical) study, along with asynchronous online autonomous learning'. I believe this definition better represents our ever-changing environment and our recent experiences of teaching during the lockdowns and restrictions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. It reflects how schools have had to adapt and offer flexible, individual and varied education solutions, considering both logistical and pedagogical needs.

“ Many academics have written about the ideal blend and what it might look like; however, ultimately, choosing the right blend isn't easy, and it will need to be adapted to suit your learners' needs... ”

The perfect blend

With such a need for flexibility, I have found myself considering what is needed for students to have both an enjoyable and successful blended learning experience. Many academics have written about the ideal blend and what it might look like; however, ultimately, choosing the right blend isn't easy, and it will need to be adapted to suit your learners' needs. Some important components, which were highlighted in my research and which I have also incorporated in my teaching, are as follows:

- **Multi-modality.** It is important to understand your learners' individual needs and different learning styles, and to ensure that students can choose the media modes which suit them best and which will aid their learning experience. One example is that many students don't have access to their own laptop and have had to study using a mobile phone. I have had to consider the impact of this reality on lesson interactions. Will a certain student have their camera on? Can students speak and write in the chat box at the same time? Should I record the lesson for students to watch later?
- **Flipped learning.** You may choose to allow learners to study initially in their own time and at their own pace. This enables them to bring cognizance and confidence to the classroom, thus allowing more time for real collaboration with peers while the teacher guides learners to apply the knowledge learned. Setting pre-class tasks gives students who learn more slowly the time to process new information. This means that they can engage in the online discussions and not miss out because of the time

they are usually ready to contribute, the discussion has already moved on.

■ **Sense of community.** Having a sense of community can have a positive impact on learner autonomy; it can improve attitude and motivation and can have a positive impact on student interaction and retention. I encourage questions, self-reflection and giving feedback to each other, while working hard on creating an open and nurturing classroom. I allow time at the start of the class for students to share what they have been doing or something interesting they have learned that week. I use the breakout rooms to enable them to work together in smaller groups, and I provide collaborative documents for them to contribute to.

■ **Well-trained teachers.** Online learning can be enhanced by supporting teachers, not just in terms of technical training, but also by showing the benefits of combining technology with their existing pedagogic knowledge. I have continued to develop and consolidate my own skills to ensure that I am the best teacher I can be for my students by reading papers, taking courses and sharing knowledge with other teachers.

■ **Principled and theoretical approach.**

A course without solid pedagogic principles can be detrimental to a learner's development and can appear to be simply a jumble of components. One common complaint from parents is that online learning is just not the same as F2F instruction. It is essential for schools and teachers to communicate to learners and parents how our principles and theories are still the same as those used in traditional F2F teaching.

Most of these components are not necessarily exclusive to blended learning: they are considered pivotal in designing and delivering any course. A traditional course in a physical classroom, using printed commercial materials, will always have its advantages and disadvantages, as will any solely online course using authentic materials. Nevertheless, a good blended learning course – and what I believe teachers have been offering this year – is described as the 'optimum mix of course delivery in order to provide

“ While many teachers are slowly going back to F2F teaching in the traditional physical classroom, I question our eagerness to go back to how we used to teach before Covid changed our lives. ”

the most effective language learning experience' (Sharma, 2010, p. 457). This is definitely an approach that is needed right now to accommodate learners during these unsettling times. Furthermore, multiple studies have shown that blended learning courses actually yield better results than solely F2F courses (Gleason, 2013; Wilson, 2014).

The blended future

While many teachers are slowly going back to F2F teaching in the traditional physical classroom, I question our eagerness to go back to how we used to teach before Covid changed our lives. One indisputable fact is that we are sure to face further disruptions, possible further lockdowns and sporadic student attendance as waves of the virus continue to spread. Consequently, should we not continue with a new modified system of blended learning? Though today's version of blended learning certainly reflects its traditional principles, it has definitely evolved since its early days. Some ELT practitioners prefer the term 'hybrid learning' to reflect this change, defining

hybrid learning as an approach whereby some teaching takes place both F2F and online at the same time.

Whichever term or definition you choose to adopt and follow, evidence suggests that blended learning is not only practical in today's world but most importantly, it is pedagogically robust. I personally hope it is an approach that is here to stay, and that it continues to grow in popularity.

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Improving students' essay writing skills with checklists

Rachel Tsateri uses the process writing approach with Spanish teenagers

My observation, based on personal experience preparing Spanish teenagers for the Cambridge B2 exam, is that writing an essay can be a daunting task, particularly for young teenagers (12–14 years old).

The opinion essay is Part One of the B2 First Writing paper, and it is a compulsory task. Students are given an essay title and two ideas to write about. They need to add a third idea, give their opinion, and justify it. The most common challenges my students faced were the following:

- exceeding the word limit or writing too little;
- a lack of interesting ideas;
- poor organisation due to lack of planning, such as writing the advantages of a topic in the introduction;
- relying on adjectives such as 'good', 'bad', 'happy' and 'sad' although they were familiar with more sophisticated adjectives; and
- extremely lengthy sentences, often without adequate punctuation.

Initial approach

Most of the coursebooks I used in the first four years followed a product approach to teaching essay writing (Badger, 2021). In other words, they provided a model essay; isolated certain elements, such as discourse markers, and raised awareness of how they are used for paragraph or text organisation; provided an opportunity to practise using the target items in sentences; and asked students to write an essay using the target items.

I found that this approach helped my students to focus on the target items, such as discourse markers; however, it only drew their attention to one or a limited number of components at a time, such as organising their ideas and text appropriately. They were still struggling with the rest.

Revised approach

Having read about the process approach, I decided to experiment with it. The typical model according to Tribble (1996;



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cited in Badger & White, 2000) is as follows:

- **Pre-writing:** Students are given a topic and asked to brainstorm ideas (individually or in groups) by drawing diagrams, mind maps or having a pyramid discussion (Hedge, 2010).
- **Drafting:** Students identify the key elements they want to include in their writing and write the first draft.
- **Revising:** Students read the first draft and/or receive peer/tutor feedback. They identify elements that can be skipped or added and corrections that need to be made.
- **Editing:** Students edit their writing and if necessary, repeat these processes until they are satisfied with the final result.

Advantages of this approach

Encouraging students to plan and brainstorm in groups helped produce interesting ideas. Students realised planning before writing is vital, and they gradually formed the habit of doing so when working individually.

Limitations

I was hoping that during the reviewing stage, learners would focus on more weaknesses. However, I found that both self- and peer-reviewing was not always done effectively, and was sometimes not done at all. Giving feedback to every

“ Overall, checklists proved to be quite effective in helping learners improve their writing skills and overcome most of their challenges. ”

single student myself was rather time-consuming, especially in larger classes.

Solution

A useful addition to the teaching of writing was the introduction of checklists. These can be a greatly beneficial tool and can help to develop independent learners if they are specific and not overly generic. Checklists can be used before, during or after writing. They empower the student by explicitly stating the elements of a good essay and keep them focused on all the assessment

Essay writing checklist	
I've organized my writing into paragraphs.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introduction - Main body - Conclusion 	✓
I've answered the question clearly.	✓
I've included the two ideas given and added a third.	✓
I've stated my position in the conclusion.	✓
I've used a formal style.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No contractions. - Use of passive voice. - No phrasal verbs or "friendly words". 	✓
I've used a range of grammatical forms.	✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modal verbs - Present perfect for progress/ changes 	✓

The use of checklists can be beneficial in teaching writing.

criteria; therefore, as Gabrielatos (2002) also suggests, I believe they are ideal for exam prep classes. They can also be personalised, simply by adding or removing some rows from a table, thus making them more relevant to students' needs.

Figure 1 shows a sample checklist I have created for my learners.

Evaluation

Overall, checklists proved to be quite effective in helping learners improve their writing skills and overcome most of their

challenges. There were some issues as shown below, but these were resolved.

Problem 1

Some students found it hard to assess their own work; according to their feedback, it can be difficult to be objective when assessing one's own writing.

Solution: Checklists lend themselves to peer assessment, so instead of reviewing their own essay, students can check their partner's work. There are several advantages to this. Firstly, I

have found that this activity is interesting and motivating; it also helps increase teenagers' sense of responsibility. Secondly, as they were focusing on someone else's work, they were more likely to notice areas for improvement objectively, without getting defensive. Thirdly, they also learnt from their peers' strengths.

Problem 2

As Lewis (2015) says, younger teenagers need a balance of independence and security, as they are still rather young to carry out certain tasks independently.

Solution: Monitor closely and look for signals. Are they comfortable doing the task, or do they need some support? Help them by giving prompts or ask exploratory questions, such as, 'Can you think of another positive adjective that you can use with this noun?'

Conclusion

As I had foreseen, the process of using checklists was challenging the first few times, but it became seamless after a while. With frequent use, students became accustomed to assessing their work using checklists; after a few attempts I noticed they gradually stopped using them, as the reviewing process had become automatic over time. As a result, the quality of their essays increased significantly in a matter of weeks, and more importantly, students felt more confident of their writing skills.

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Essay writing checklist	
I have organized my writing into paragraphs. ■ Introduction ■ Main body ■ Conclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have answered the question clearly.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have included the two ideas given and added a third.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have stated my position in the conclusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
The style of my essay is neutral and formal. ■ No contractions. ■ No first-person pronouns. ■ Use of passive voice. ■ No phrasal verbs or 'friendly words'.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have used a range of grammatical forms. ■ Modal verbs. ■ Present perfect for progress or changes. ■ Passive voice. ■ 'Used to' for past situations/states.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have used a range of discourse markers. ■ Addition: 'Moreover', 'Furthermore', 'What is more'. ■ Contrast: 'However', 'On the other hand'. ■ Introducing: 'To begin with'. ■ Concluding: 'To sum up', 'In conclusion'.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have used word combinations such as: ■ Adverb + adjective, e.g. 'absolutely necessary'. ■ Adjective + noun, e.g. 'useful suggestion'.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My sentences are short and clear (15–20 words).	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have used commas to avoid confusion.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have reread it to identify any mistakes.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I have written between 140 and 190 words.	<input type="checkbox"/>
My teacher's comments on my strengths	
My teacher's comments on possible improvements	

Figure 1: A sample checklist.

Materials reviews

Edited by Ruby Vurdien

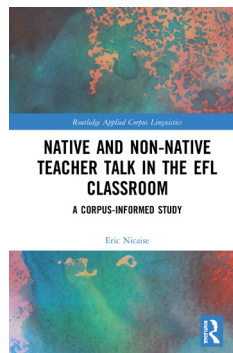
This issue of *Voices* presents reviews of four engaging books. David Rixham points out that *Native and Non-Native Teacher Talk in the EFL Classroom* can facilitate EFL classroom talk for non-native teachers. Tony Rusinak says that *Using Drills in English Language Teaching* is valuable for new teachers and those who have shelved classroom use of drilling. Lucia Bodeman looks at how *Inside Online Language Teaching* depicts a promising picture of online teaching in the present and the future. Hall Houston explains how the collection of activities in *The Creative Teacher's Compendium* aims at making language lessons more creative. Be inspired!



Ruby Vurdien manages White Rose Language School in Spain. She has been an EFL teacher for over 30 years. She is also a teacher trainer and a Cambridge English Speaking Examiner. Her research interests focus on telecollaboration and intercultural learning.

Native and Non-Native Teacher Talk in the EFL Classroom: A Corpus-Informed Study

Eric Nicaise
Routledge, 2020
223 pages
ISBN: 9780367207120



As part of the Routledge Applied Corpus Linguistics book series, Eric Nicaise's *Native and Non-Native Teacher Talk in the EFL Classroom: A Corpus-Informed Study* uses corpus linguistics to focus on specific features of native and non-native teacher talk, so as to provide a framework for the language that EFL teachers need to be proficient in.

The book is, as befits a study of this nature, quite technical. However, its format is such that there is a logical sequencing of chapters, which helps guide the reader through this wealth of meticulously researched data.

The first of the eight chapters informs the book's rationale: to examine the generally neglected area of teacher classroom speech and assist non-native teachers by building up a language repertoire, from elementary to upper-intermediate level, for their most common teaching functions. Following on from Chapter 2's analysis of major work in the field of classroom discourse, Chapters 3 and 4 are concerned with the methodological perspective underlying qualitative and quantitative analyses of teacher classroom language. In the spotlight here is CONNEcT (Corpus of Native and Non-Native Teacher Classroom Talk), a 165,000-word corpus 'based mainly on frequency, keyword and cluster-based analyses'. The next two chapters focus on the qualitative aspects of grammar, lexis and phonology used by teachers when explaining language and giving directives. Chapter 7 proposes the creation of a model for initial and in-service teacher development in terms of classroom language, building on the findings previously set out. The final chapter states the case for teacher talk being considered a category of English for Specific Purposes (ESP).

This painstaking examination of corpus-based

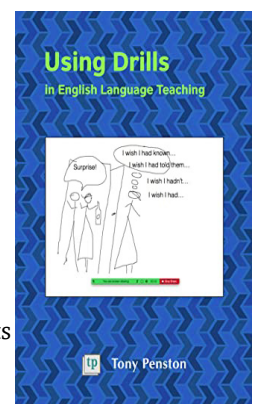
criteria makes for a book which provides a rigorous yet comprehensible bottom-up approach to facilitating EFL classroom talk for non-native teachers. Not, Nicaise insists, that these teachers have nothing to offer, since their affinity with the target language and with their understanding of learners' difficulties means their experience is fundamental. The point, though, is that quality classroom talk – 'the essential tool of the teacher's trade' – hinges on the need for 'expert users of English'. From my own experience as an EFL teacher, for whom, as the author aptly observes, 'the medium is the language', the reasoning here cannot be underestimated.

David Rixham

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Using Drills in English Language Teaching

Tony Penston
TP Publications, 2021
48 pages
ISBN: 9780953132362



A full stadium of Chinese students chant English phrases to celebrity English teacher Li Yang. A classroom of uniformed American soldiers shouts key vocabulary in chorus before an overseas tour. A language lab of plexiglassed cubicles reverberates as bell-bottomed newcomers enthusiastically repeat cassette recordings. The common thread among them: drilling. These scenes likely evoke nostalgia and curiosity for English language teachers, but would they be images to aspire to in 2021? In a refreshing new publication, Tony Penston's *Using Drills in English Language Teaching* has effectively flipped these stereotypes. He shows us why drilling tasks work – and work well.

Bridging the gap between rote learning and modern communicative approaches, Penston gives a clear and simple path for language teachers to include drilling in their lessons. *Using Drills in English Language Teaching* walks the teacher from theory and research, to practice and implementation. Critical to Penston's approach is that drills have enormous value for language learners when delivered properly. He maps out why 'parroting' meaningless phrases doesn't work, and why drilling corpus-informed chunks – communicatively – does work. This is exemplified in his sound knowledge of how language lessons unfold when teachers drill. For instance, he gives a wide range of whiteboarding tips to help guide the students during the drill. He shows how to use simple diagrams to bring forth meaning and context. He gives us strategies to handle different learner personalities when drilling tasks don't run to plan. Where theory meets practice, Penston's arguments for using drills are convincing, well-illustrated and digestible.

Penston doesn't attempt to give a full catalogue of drilling resources in his paperback, but provides a 'quick guide' for how to access materials and how to easily develop your own. His tips include exploiting coursebook clips, sampling YouTube videos, recycling authentic materials, and using 'go-to' texts like Hancock's *Pronpack*

(2017) and Baker's *Ship or Sheep* (2006).

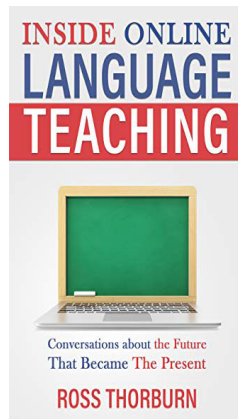
Using Drills is valuable not only to newer language teachers but also for those of us who have left drilling on the sidelines. Whether it is a five-minute task before an academic discussion, a warm-up to start an online Zoom class or a lively jazz chant, I highly recommend (re)visiting the use of drills in your classroom with a read through this book.

Tony Rusinak

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Inside Online Language Teaching: Conversations about the Future that became the Present

Ross Thorburn
Ross Thorburn, 2021
113 pages
ISBN: 9798706817626



This past year, the world underwent a major shift on its axis, with a global pandemic. And while it is far from over, this has also been a time of reinvention, adaptation and new possibilities. In education, much of our traditional practice has moved towards one where we are challenged to find innovative ways of engaging with our learners through online platforms. In his book, Thorburn provides valuable answers exactly when we need them the most.

This reference book caters to teachers at all levels of the teaching spectrum. Presented through a series of insightful conversations with teachers, trainers, managers and app developers, *Inside Online Language Teaching* is divided into two parts. In the first, conversations are centred on the online classroom, how teaching opportunities were overlooked prior to Covid-19, examining the possibilities yet to be explored, and what to consider when designing meaningful tasks. In the second part, educational technology takes centre stage, where app and online platform designers share their experience with ideas on how to connect the home and the school for successful learning outcomes in user-friendly environments.

Throughout the book, educational experts invite us to reconsider how the medium is introduced as the main tool for interaction, and how to encourage greater autonomy among learners. Educational technologists contribute relevant considerations on the presentability of learning apps to users, and encourage researchers and technology experts to develop simple, user-friendly activities that cause the least amount of distraction.

Prior to each conversation, the guest speaker is introduced and, at the end, Thorburn provides tips and takeaways to consider, along with discussion questions, on the issues presented.

Inside Online Language Teaching is an asset for any educator's library, and for language schools overall. As we 'sit in' on these conversations, we realise that this book could not have come at a better time. The tone is informal, comprehensive and just the thing for achieving greater success with online classrooms worldwide. Thorburn paints a very accurate and promising picture of what online

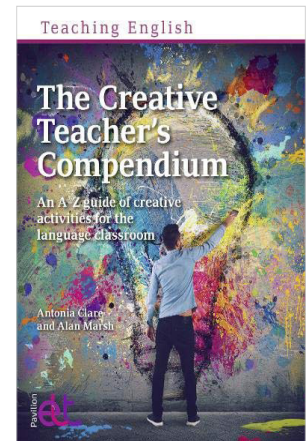
teaching is today, and what it holds for the future.

Lucia Bodeman

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The Creative Teacher's Compendium

Antonia Clare and Alan Marsh
Pavilion Publishing, 2020
575 pages
ISBN: 9781913414528



The *Creative Teacher's Compendium*, a recently published book from Pavilion Publishing, addresses the theme of creativity and creative teaching. It is a collection of over 130 activities whose aim is to make language lessons more creative.

The book has two main sections: the introduction, and the activities section.

The introduction presents the overall concept of the book in a straightforward manner, providing definitions of creativity and demonstrating the importance of creativity in teaching and learning. The activities section is made up of 26 chapters, each with its own theme, following all the letters of the alphabet, A to Z. For example, the first chapter's theme is Art, the second chapter's theme is Beginnings, and the third focuses on Conversations.

Each chapter follows the same format. It begins with a relevant quotation, continuing with a short introduction to the chapter's theme; a few activities (all listing time, level, language link, preparation and procedure); questions and activities for professional development; and a list of readings. At the end of the book, the authors have generously added over 40 pages of worksheets that can be used together with the activities.

When I first opened this book, I realised it is the type of activity book that I treasure, one with a wide range of activities that could be used in a variety of teaching contexts. Over the past few months, I have used some of the activities with my university classes in Taiwan. One example is Swap it!, in which students walk around the classroom with question cards, find a partner, ask and answer their questions, and then repeat the activity with a new question and a new partner. I created my own questions on the topic of social media, which was the subject of the day's lesson. Students enjoyed getting out of their seats to interact and benefit from this speaking practice.

I was very impressed with this collection of creative activities and look forward to using more of them, such as Crazy Responses and Strangers on a Train, during the next school year. This book is wholly recommendable, and it deserves to be on the shelf of every language teacher.

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Reviews of the Conference

Heather Austin, Zuzana Veselá, Maria Marta Mora and Tanya Fernbank talk about their Conference experiences

A Conference of 'firsts'

Heather Austin, Turkey

The 54th International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition was filled with many first-time experiences for me: my first IATEFL Conference, my first PCE, my first virtual conference, my first conference moderation and my first reflective write-up of all of these firsts! Overall, I was very impressed with the event and how smoothly everything ran despite being fully virtual.

Everything started with my seeing a call for moderators on IATEFL's LinkedIn account. Having been involved in the behind-the-scenes of a few conferences hosted by the university I teach at, I thought this would be a great opportunity to get more involved in the organisation. I had also already signed up for the MaWSIG PCE, of which I am a new member (another first!). The PCE was a great start to the Conference with topics ranging from covert syllabuses, avoiding gap-fill fatigue, and scope and sequence design to mood boards, surviving overwhelm, and self-publishing in ELT. I found it an extremely insightful mini-event, and I especially appreciated the themed breakout rooms that provided a way to chat, network, and – for me personally – get advice from seasoned materials writers on how to break into the professional materials writing world.

As a session moderator, I very much enjoyed supporting the presenters in setting up their presentations and guiding them through questions from the audience. Shaun, the IATEFL Digital Committee Chair, did a great job with moderation training and maintaining contact with moderators to ensure we were prepared. An additional perk of being a moderator was free Conference admission, so I was able to attend other sessions and browse the Hopin platform when I didn't have moderation duties. In doing so,



Heather Austin holds an MA in Applied Linguistics and is an undergraduate English instructor and course coordinator at Izmir University of Economics in Turkey. She has taught preparatory English, EAP and ESP and is active in materials development and research.

I was surprised at how easy it was to connect with other delegates. One particularly fun feature was the 'Meet others' option, which essentially worked as a chat roulette with other digital delegates. The event and session chat boxes as well as the ability to directly message someone and schedule a one-on-one meeting with them were also fantastic.

Of course, the plenary and academic sessions were also a highlight for me. They were intriguing and varied, and I appreciated how many options there were with little overlap in theme. With sessions on flipped/blended learning, using simple drawings as a teaching tool, translanguaging, student-led lessons, drama and acting in the classroom, empathy and mindfulness in ELT, cross-cultural exchange projects, identity, senior language learners and even ELT's role in fake news, among other topics, there was truly something for everyone. I'm happy to have had the opportunity to attend the conference in exactly the way I did, and now I'm certain that each 'first' I experienced at this event is actually the 'first of many'.

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Having it all

Zuzana Veselá, Czech Republic

As a freelance teacher, I like to plan the content of all one-to-one lessons according not only to my students' individual needs but also to their prevailing mood. Moreover, as a left-handed person, I doodle notes for them to understand clearly on the piece of paper upside down.

I would never dare to use these non-academic but psychology-based approaches to teaching if I were teaching at some institution. One day, I felt a need to boost my energy and knowledge, so I registered

for the 2019 IATEFL Conference in Liverpool. The event exceeded my expectations, and making new friends was a bonus. And the music! The rhythm of the Beatles' songs was in every step I took right after landing.

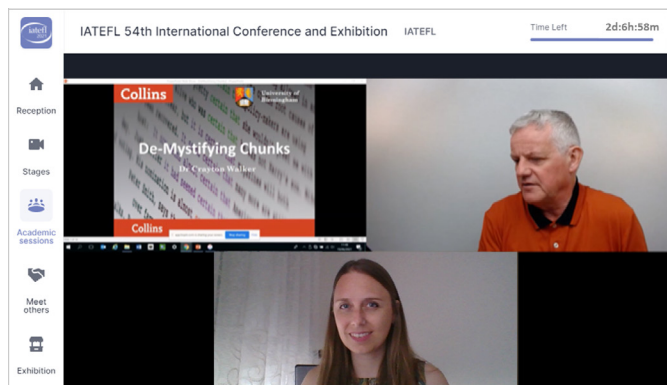
I registered for the next Conference, just to feel the energy of a melting pot of cultures. I assume none of us had anticipated that the 2020 Conference would be postponed. The days went by, and the dates for another Conference were set. Needless to say, I was so disappointed that the talks and all encounters would only be virtual. Well, despite the challenges of holding a virtual event, the organisers all did such a great job that I feel ashamed of my minimal effort to stay optimistic.

There is one thing I haven't mentioned yet. I am a mom of three children, which makes the three-day online experience

“ I was surprised at how easy it was to connect with other delegates. One particularly fun feature was the 'Meet others' option, which essentially worked as a chat roulette with other digital delegates. ”



Zuzana Veselá is an English teacher and freelancer from Liberec, Czech Republic. She has a master's degree in teaching English and PE from Technical University in Liberec. She is also a member of Mensa International.



Heather as a moderator assists presenter Crayton Walker in setting up his session.

quite demanding. Nevertheless, thanks to the boundless empathy of my husband, I was able to participate fully. The range of topics presented was vast, with so many options. If I had to choose some key moments,

I would pick the BESIG session on DISC assessment, which really helped me to understand my students' psyche. I enjoyed the session on CV writing at the Careers Fair, and at 'How to...' sessions, I was encouraged to think about my own talk next year, since I have some ideas to share. What I appreciate most, however, is regaining my self-confidence as a freelancer and making sure my business remains serious and professional.

Did I miss out on the social element that is a part of every regular conference? I must point out the 'Meet others' feature, where you went from wondering who would show up, to slowly beginning a conversation, to experiencing an emotional final countdown to the end. What an enlivening idea! All the evening programmes made me giggle, sometimes quietly, but mostly in fits of laughter.

I also made a faux pas when I was searching for something interesting to hop into. I was in the garden on a hot sunny day, I didn't see the screen properly and hop... I was in an interview for a job in China. I hope I cheered the director up a little.

So I had it all. My big thanks go to the tireless organisers for planning such a well-knit 2021 Conference.

The cover of this issue of Voices shows Zuzana watching a plenary talk at the Conference.

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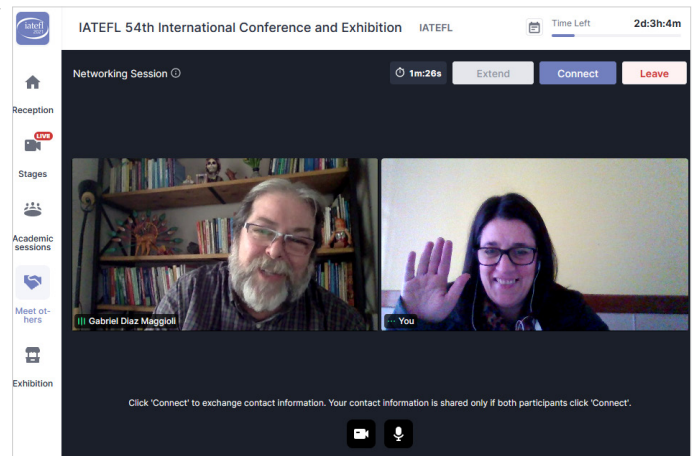
'My first (online) IATEFL Conference

Maria Marta Mora, Argentina

'My first time in Liverpool, my first time at the IATEFL Conference, my first time sharing a hotel room with my colleague and my first time experiencing...' This is the beginning of Jūratė Helsvig's article in *Voices* 269 about her first time at an IATEFL Conference back in 2019. It certainly does not resemble my first time at an IATEFL Conference. I had no hotel to stay in, no plane ticket from Buenos Aires – but the Conference did have a great impact on my profession. After struggling for an on-site event during 2020 and 2021, IATEFL finally held its Annual Conference online. And the Conference kicked off very early in the morning: 4 am in my country. The plenaries every day were a source of knowledge, experience and wisdom from the speakers.

On Day 1 I attended the opening plenary session by Judit

“ What I appreciate most, however, is regaining my self-confidence as a freelancer and making sure my business remains serious and professional. ”



Meeting incoming IATEFL President Gabriel Díaz Maggioli.

Kormos, one of the daily 'How-to' sessions, and as many academic sessions as I could. During the welcome reception, Harry Kuchah Kuchah and a British Council representative pronounced warm words of welcome to all the delegates. David Crystal recalled the traditional face-to-face

Conference spirit by sharing pandemic-related neologisms like 'nostalgIATEFL', 'cafeterIATEFL' or 'inertIATEFL'.

The Hopin platform was incredibly versatile and it offered a 'Meet others', area where everyone could have three-minute conversations with other participants at random as a way of making up for the casual face-to-face conversations of the onsite breaks between sessions of a traditional conference. I managed to meet and have a chat with nine people from four continents, the first of whom was the incoming IATEFL President Gabriel Díaz Maggioli. At the end of the day, the social programme hosted a cook-along session with Harry Kuchah Kuchah sharing a traditional African recipe from his own kitchen!

Day 2 offered a fantastic plenary by Thom Kiddle on the integration of teaching, testing and technology. More academic sessions, poster presentations and commercial presentations in the Exhibition followed. One of the distinctive events of the day was the Forum on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in materials. The recently published book *RaiseUp!* was displayed as an example of inclusion.

On Day 3, Kieran Donaghy was in charge of the last plenary session on a culture of empathy in ELT, which left in all of us a taste of deep and insightful reflection. Workshops and talks on a vast array of topics ranging from technology to gender sensitivity continued and made me feel almost as if I had attended the event in person. To wrap up, the incoming President's message, 'Continue changing the world through education', was very inspiring, and there was an invitation to join the IATEFL Conference 2021 in Belfast. The Conference next year is not to be missed. Not in a million years.

“ Workshops and talks on a vast array of topics ranging from technology to gender sensitivity continued and made me feel almost as if I had attended the event in person. ”



Maria Marta Mora has worked in public schools in Buenos Aires, Argentina, for over 25 years. She is a specialist in education and ICT and co-coordinates the Teacher Research Special Interest Group in her local Teacher Association. She was a first-time delegate at the IATEFL Online Conference 2021.

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From an EAP perspective

Tanya Fernbank, UK

I decided to attend Conference sessions which were related to EAP as I currently work in this area. However, I also attended other sessions on themes which interest me and which might be relevant to EAP.

I found the online Conference platform Hopin straightforward to navigate. I also personally found that having 15–30-minute breaks and lunch breaks of at least an hour helped me to process the information. The platform was set up to emulate a real Conference, with exhibition spaces and even a place to chat with a stranger for up to three minutes.

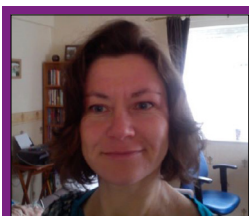
“ Sessions which I found particularly interesting included those on academic reading and writing, language, assessment, supporting EAP students and peer feedback. ”

Sessions which I found particularly interesting included those on academic reading and writing, language, assessment, supporting EAP students and peer feedback. One workshop which I found particularly interesting was ‘Teaching patterns in context: uncovering semantic sequences in writing’, in which Amanda Patten and Susan Hunston discussed the importance

of encouraging students to recognise semantic patterns in academic writing, arguing that if students notice the meanings in these patterns and the academic purpose of such patterns, this can motivate them when reading and help them to use these patterns in their writing. I will try out some of the techniques they suggested for doing this in summer pre-sessionals this year.

I also attended several other sessions exploring themes which I chose for their relevance to issues in EAP, even if these were based on studies of different age groups or other areas of ELT. These included presentations and workshops on Inclusive Practices and Special Educational Needs related to dyslexia and technology (Judith Kormos; Marcio Oliveira); refugees and trauma (Yvonne Pratt-Johnson); and under-represented minorities in general (Sergio Durand). Other sessions which might be relevant to EAP practitioners and university language teachers included those on motivation and engagement through teacher–student co-construction (Nancy Mitchell; Richard Pinner) and Daragh Behrman’s interesting presentation on procrastination in assessment. In addition, there were some helpful sessions on peer feedback and technology (Sally Mohamed Ali; Panagiota Tzanni), which were particularly helpful for me as I am currently teaching online and am interested in improving peer feedback.

Overall, I found that many sessions gave me plenty of food for thought for areas to work on improving, not only in the areas of academic skills and language development but also related to inclusivity and involving students in constructing activities, areas which we are also trying to improve on in EAP.



Tanya Fernbank is a lecturer in English for Academic Purposes at the University of Leeds with an ELT background. Her interests include encouraging student autonomy in online and blended learning and in the crossover between different branches of ELT.

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A WORLD


Reviews of plenary talks

Juan Quintana, Greg Rouault and Freddie Ryder review the three plenary talks held at the IATEFL Conference in June

Judit Kormos: Engaging students with specific learning difficulties: key principles of inclusive language teaching in a digital age

Reviewed by Juan Quintana, Peru

Demystifying! An eye-opener! Insightful and enlightening! Comments like these, shared during the plenary session presented by Judit Kormos, embodied the audience’s unanimous stand on her shedding light upon inclusive education and its impact on second language learning.

In fact, the idea of embracing diversity was put forth from the very beginning by Kormos when asserting that inclusion is a never-ending process, yet it is a process conducive to making students with specific learning difficulties (SpLDs) part of the educational milieu by fulfilling their particular needs. In this regard, educators’ buy-in is essential, for they are to become the main upholders of this postulate and its active agents.

Dyslexia, dyscalculia, ADHD... SpLDs theoretical arena is vast and not exempt from nuances, while encompassing all the possible hindering effects on learning, self-esteem, social relationships and many more. Nevertheless, there are also hitherto undervalued strengths, as Kormos emphasised. Little did the audience know that she would turn this kaleidoscopic maelstrom of terms into the ‘aha’ moment of the session by referring to them as *neurodiversity*, an umbrella concept comprising *neurodiverse* students’ potential expecting to be cherished. Certainly, by learning term it was easier to become conscious of the fact that the classroom melting pot remains a possibility for boosting those learners’ strengths and creating the pedagogical conditions for them to succeed in learning a second language, regardless of their seemingly impairing conditions.

How is it possible to plan and implement lessons fulfilling



Juan Quintana is an English teacher, author, speaker, and researcher from Lima, Peru. He has recently presented at the IATEFL 54th Conference and published an article in a French online newspaper called *Le candidat bicentenaire* about Peru’s 200 years of independence.

neurodiverse students’ needs? Kormos addressed this question by referring to the practicalities of Universal Design, emphasising the importance of implementing lessons with as many means of expression, such as video recording, songs, acting out, mnemonics and drawing, while carefully providing them with scaffolding. Tapping into certain regularities of the English language to teach pronunciation and utilising graphic organisers as well as comics for reading were also added to attendees’ bag of techniques, along with the necessity of fostering planning skills and the essentials of technological competencies.

Finally, during Kormos’s talk, there was a feeling that her ideas could be applied to any group of students... an inclusive accomplishment in itself.

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Thom Kiddle: Integrating teaching, testing and technology: where angels fear to tread

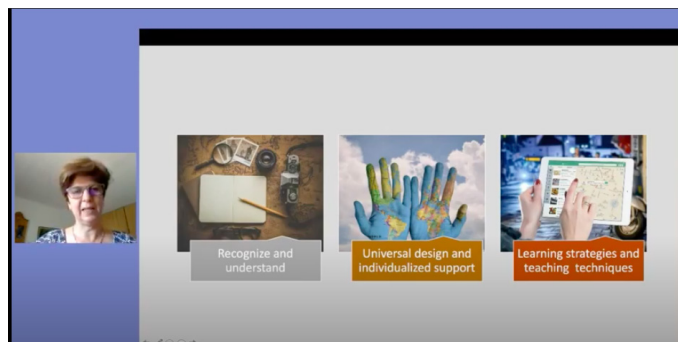
Reviewed by Greg Rouault, Japan

On Sunday 20 June, Thom Kiddle shared his knowledge, insight and experience in his plenary. As is often the case with an international conference plenary, more questions were asked about ‘what we need to think about’ than answers given on ‘what we should do’. This, however, is not a flaw when they are relevant questions presented for various stakeholders to consider and reflect upon.

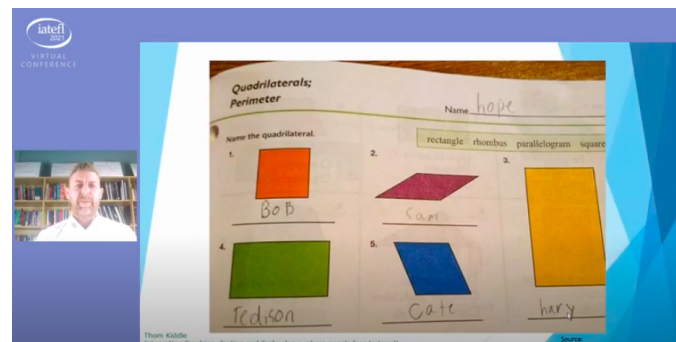
As such, my reflections begin with three things I learned or did not understand as well before the plenary. Kiddle noted the black sheep reputation of testing in language education based on the complexity of interactions; the cognitive, procedural and linguistic processes; and overall an incomplete emerging theory of SLA. The traditional testing (and often curricular) paradigm of disaggregating or separating out the four skills was identified as only providing an arbitrary account of these essentially integrated components of language use by social agents. In the debate between alignment with good teaching practices and limited discrete items to provide statistics,



Greg Rouault is at Hiroshima Shudo University and has taught EFL courses in EAP/ESP, test prep and business communication in Japan for over 20 years. Like many, he was forced recently to integrate more technology in his emergency remote teaching.



Judit Kormos giving her plenary talk.



Thom Kiddle giving his plenary talk.

something fundamental may be missing from our testing process regarding factors that we know actually matter in language learning.

Two issues positioned as the proverbial elephants in the room when it comes to the integration of technology were: (1) the influence and power of AI; and (2) the functionality of automated marking. These certainly provided food for thought to research or engage further in dialogue. Kiddle advised that AI needs to move away from merely reproducing an atomised program model objectively measuring discrete point items to involving a more holistic co-constructed discourse space. With the environmental influence and human resources involved in creating algorithms and curating data, AI was said to not actually be artificial, nor is it value free. In automated marking, after citing the correlation between the mere length of papers and their score (Perelman, 2005) with no actual measures of quality, Kiddle asked, ‘What can machines measure in terms of quality of language produced?’ With a referenced slide of the language competence model, he suggested that with pragmatics the illocutionary and sociolinguistic competences are areas that (fortunately!) still require teacher expertise.

One thing that I will change in my own professional life is to better balance the affordances of multimodal digital technologies with pacing, choice and collaboration under asynchronous or repeat administrations to incorporate better feedback.

Reference

Perelman, L. (2005). New SAT: Write long, badly, and prosper. *Los Angeles Times*, 29.

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Kieran Donaghy: Embedding a culture of empathy in English language teaching

Reviewed by Freddie Ryder, UK

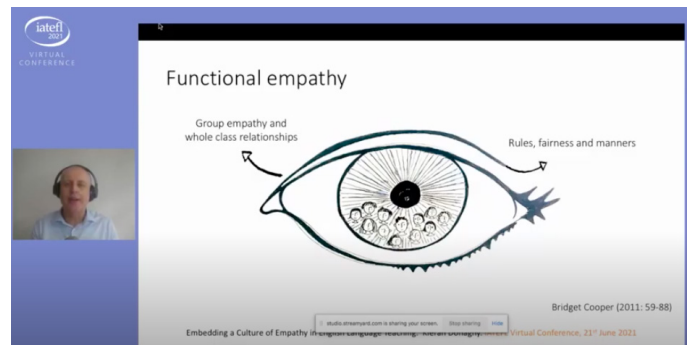
Firstly, I must declare more familiarity with the work of Kieran Donaghy than with the IATEFL Conference. That is, I was fortunate enough to have attended one of his talks on the use of film in the classroom at Canterbury Christ Church University, while this was my first foray into the (virtual) Conference world – and indeed, film did receive a brief mention in relation to empathetic viewing.

Empathy is, of course, highly topical, especially given the global pandemic and its economic fallout. It is certainly a broad area, yet Donaghy offered a comprehensive overview, drawing on a wide range of relevant theory in order to consider empathy in relation to its neurology foundation, to its importance in society as well as in education and, in particular, to the language classroom context.

Of particular note, Donaghy highlighted the concept of ‘empathy deficit’, which is especially pertinent given the aforementioned global turmoil. In light of recent lockdowns and the switch to online learning, for many, there has been isolation and a lack of social and community activities which



Freddie Ryder has a PGCE and MA TESOL and is a freelance teacher who teaches on short and EAP courses for UK universities. Since the pandemic, he has set up Focus on Learning, an online school with friends and former colleagues.



Kieran Donaghy giving his plenary talk.

typically nurture empathy. This thinking puts empathy at the heart of all considerations, as opposed to technology. Essentially, he promotes a message of empathy *before* technology – which most educators will surely embrace.

To my mind, empathy in relation to the teacher proved to be the most intriguing aspect of the talk. Certainly, any presentation that contains a slide entitled ‘The undervaluing of teachers’ deserves credit on that basis alone. Here, Donaghy highlighted several pressing issues, namely, long hours, low pay and the precarious nature of the job. This was particularly interesting to me, having completed my MA dissertation on the subject of teacher motivation last year, and I imagine almost all teachers could relate to some extent.

Subsequently, Donaghy discussed teachers’ (poor) mental health. He quoted some frankly shocking, if not unsurprising, statistics from the *Teacher Wellbeing Index (2020)* such as the fact that 84 per cent of teachers described themselves as stressed. As a result, empathy must surely be considered in terms of relations between both teacher and student and – perhaps more importantly – between teacher and employer. That is to say, more empathy would likely provide both happier students and teachers, while promoting inclusion and more effective learning. This, according to Donaghy, and indeed in my own estimation, should be a key consideration in post-pandemic education provision.

Reference

Education Support (2020). *Teacher wellbeing index 2020*. <https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/resources/research-reports/teacher-wellbeing-index-2020>

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From the Conference: SIG reports

Several of IATEFL's Special Interest Groups held Pre-Conference Events and SIG Showcases during the Conference. Some are described here. More will be featured in future issues.

BESIG

Business English SIG

BESIG held its annual Showcase on Sunday, 20 June. A full day of business English sessions with an impressive line-up of speakers and topics was followed by our Open Forum and the exciting announcement of our 34th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference.

The day began with **Barry Tomalin**, who gave advice on how to present yourself as a business trainer to employers, how to use appropriate business language in proposals and interviews and how to use a business-led methodology in training seminars in intercultural training. Next, Facilitator Scholarship winner **Mary Sousa** showed us the importance of storytelling skills for Business English teachers and shared three business-based stories suitable for telling either in class or in a pub afterwards. **Marjorie Rosenberg** shared her expertise in bringing soft skills into the BE classroom. This workshop gave us plenty of innovative ideas and an opportunity to use breakout rooms to practise these different activities.

Later, **Karin Heuert Galvão** gave a delightful talk on the different characteristics of DISC assessment; we discovered ways to better unlock new strategies tailored directly to learners' personality traits. **Soroush Sabbaghan** outlined six competencies that international students need, based on an analysis of assignments in first-year BComm courses. **Ariane Niemeijer** demonstrated how putting learners in the position of company stakeholder provided a new way to use English to accomplish a specific business goal. One of her secrets: learner autonomy. **Graciela Alchini** wrapped up the day by looking at some of the soft skills strategies necessary to help university students develop their future

workplace abilities while enhancing their language and business communication skills.

After a day full of inspiring sessions, **Rob Howard and Maria Szugfil** began the BESIG Open Forum by discussing new Committee roles and members, new initiatives and events for the summer, the positive condition of the SIG and finally, the long-awaited announcement of the 34th IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference, to be held online in November. The forum, as usual, proved to be a smash hit, proving once again that at IATEFL BESIG, we mean business!

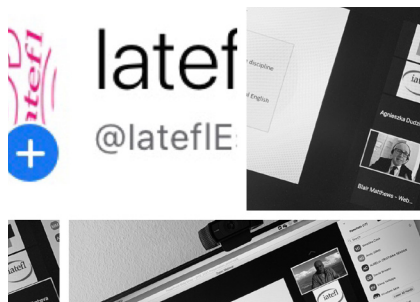
Rob Howard and Maria Szugfil,
Joint Coordinators
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ESPSIG

English for Specific Purposes SIG

The theme of the 2021 ESPSIG's PCE, held online on 12 June 2021, was 'ESP in the world of tomorrow: academic and professional perspectives'. The purpose of the event was to provide an overview of the latest developments in a variety of ESP contexts, from Aviation English to EAP. The PCE included 13 talks in three forums and provided a variety of perspectives from different countries, including Switzerland, Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Algeria, Qatar and the UK. Each forum was followed by a roundtable discussion which allowed attendants to participate and brought out issues to serve as starting points for further discussion on our social media.

This year's PCE speakers also included **Jemma Prior**, our very first Roving Reporter Scholarship winner, who spoke on ESAP in the age of EMI.

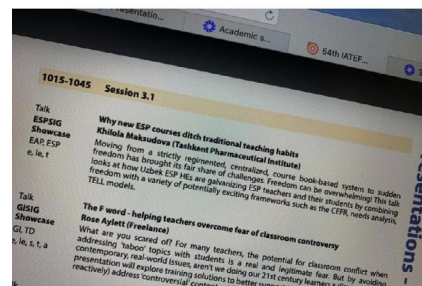


Impression of the ESPSIG PCE 2021.

ESPSIG latef ESP SIG is feeling motivated.
Posted by Caroline Hyde
21 Jun · 🌐

#ESPSIG

Excited to watch our 1st scholarship winner's talk - starting at 10.15 UK t... See more



Impression of the ESPSIG Showcase.

At the end of the event, the Committee used the opportunity to inform all participants about the SIG activities: past events and webinars, our journal, our cooperation with Express Publishing, our new visual identity and upcoming changes to our website. We also asked for contributions to our 2022 PCE theme in Belfast.

The ESPSIG Showcase, held on 21 June, encompassed a wide range of talks with speakers from seven different countries. Topics ranged from the development of teaching materials in ESP and new methods of teaching ESP courses to EMI and core academic skills in the EAP classroom. The day was bookended by our two scholarship winners, **Khilola Maksudova** and **Komila Tangirova**. Khilola was our scholarship winner for 2020 and Komila for 2021. Both winners come from Uzbekistan, and this was the first time they had attended an IATEFL Conference. Khilola gave a talk on why new ESP courses ditch traditional teaching habits, while Komila's focus was on specialised vocabulary and materials design for ESP. All in all, the Showcase was an extremely valuable day of ESP professional development.

Caroline Hyde-Simon,
Coordinator
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ESOL SIG

English for Speakers of Other Languages SIG

This year our PCE was entitled 'ESOL: sidelined no more'. It was online but was not stymied by the medium. It was great to reach so many people



Participants at the ESOL SIG PCE.

in so many countries, including the USA, Scotland, Wales, England and Germany. The day's objective was to ensure that teachers working in ESOL felt valued and supported. This is important because traditionally, the field of ESOL has been regarded as playing only a minor role within the ELT profession. This is evidenced by a lack of context-focused classroom materials, an absence of ESOL-specific initial teacher education and insufficient ESOL teacher development opportunities. Additionally, ESOL has suffered from a lack of government support, even though language is seen as key to integration and community cohesion.



Speakers Jeremy Harmer and Steve Brown.

All of the PCE presenters outlined various challenges that ESOL teachers face and offered practical solutions to address those challenges. It was a great day with an impressive line-up. **Jeremy Harmer** kicked off the day by looking at the current situation that ESOL teachers occupy. **Jo Gakonga** looked at very practical ways for teaching low-level learners. **Mel Cooke** and **Dermott Bryers** looked at participatory ESOL practices, and **Philida Shellekens** examined best ESOL practices. **Steve Brown** challenged mainstream coursebook

publishing, and **Rachael Roberts** got us to take our social and emotional wellbeing seriously, which was particularly useful given the year that everyone has gone through.

We are now looking forward to moving ESOL ever forwards and were all encouraged and motivated by a day that, as a whole, was a call to action. We are now considering more ways to engage ESOL teachers and ensure our field is not sidelined.

Lesley Painter-Farrell,

Coordinator

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Inclusive Practices and Special Educational Needs SIG and Testing, Evaluation & Assessment SIG

We were very proud to present an all-star cast for our joint Pre-Conference Event, which took place on 18 June. Not only did **Judit Kormos** talk about fairness and accessibility to our participants before her plenary at the main Conference, but we also had top-quality presentations from **Ruth Arrowsmith** on neurodiversity; text format variations from **John Herbert**; L2 selves from **Lucie Cotterill**; practical tips for working with learners with dyslexia from **Jon Hird**; validity from **Richard Silby**; and inclusive assessment for quality learning from **Alaa Aladini**. The day ended with a discussion on special arrangements organised by examination boards. We would like to thank our sponsors, Euroexams, for helping to make this event possible. Don't forget that recordings of these talks will be available for members in the near future, and if you are not already a member, it is not too late to fix that!



Participants at the IP&SENSIG Showcase.

Monday 21 June was IP&SENSIG's Showcase, and we were pleased to feature talks on a variety of subjects including assessing dyslexia (**Wimansha Abeyawickrama**); visual thinking (**Martin Bloomfield**); learning through technology (**Marcio Oliveira**); and teaching the third age (**Aysen Cem-Deger**). We ended our Showcase with an Open Forum, in which outgoing Coordinator **Anne Margaret Smith** volunteered to eat our birthday cake as we celebrated five years of existence. The Committee and members thank Anne Margaret for all the hard work she has put in since she helped in the creation of our SIG in 2016 and wish her well for the future. Our new Joint Coordinators, **Rachael Harris** and **Giovanni Licata**, were presented, and we talked about subjects of interest such as geragogy and how to incorporate them in future events.

Our forum ended with a fast-and-furious Kahoot! quiz on inclusion and diversity. The first prize of a personal mentoring session went to **Eleanor Baynham**, who has now graciously deferred it to **Božica Šarić-Cvjetković**.

We would like to thank our speakers, sponsors, sister SIG TEASIG and the participants, as well as the Committee members who worked hard behind the scenes to make these two events such a success. We look forward to seeing you all in Belfast next year!

Giovanni Licata and Rachael Harris,

IP&SENSIG Joint Coordinators

ipsensig@iatefl.org



Learner Autonomy SIG

LASIG's PCE is just around the corner! There's still time to register for 'Defining and contextualising language learner autonomy: theory and practice', which is taking place on 11 September. We've got a fabulous line-up for the day:

- Plenary by **David Little**: David's talk will define language learner autonomy for the 21st century, explaining where his definition comes from, how it is supported by empirically grounded theory and what it implies for language teaching and learning, whether in classrooms, self-access centres or online learning environments.
- Interactive presentations: presenters from around the world will present on how they implement language learner autonomy in their contexts.

Topics include learner self-perception, the role of memory, using translation, advising and language learning outside the classroom.

- Workshops: we'll have two practical workshops, one led by **Carmen Becker and Annika Albrecht** with a focus on learning landscapes and another by **Frank Lacey** which explores the role of logbooks in fostering learner autonomy.
- Networking: we're also providing plenty of space to get to know your fellow delegates and to exchange ideas.

For more information, visit LASIG's website. We hope you can join us and share your experiences with learner autonomy.

Lawrie Moore-Walter and Christian Ludwig, Joint Coordinators
lasig@iatefl.org



Learning Technologies SIG

LTSIG was really looking forward to the first IATEFL Virtual Conference ever! We spent many hours planning for this and were delighted to see it go live!

LTSIG had their Showcase on Monday 21 June. Our six speakers delivered really interesting sessions touching upon topics such as social media in challenging contexts, inclusive digital materials design, digital literacies, flipped learning course design, mobile learning and VR 360° videos.

We ended the day with our Open Forum, where we talked about the SIG's activities during the last two years and discussed future options

with attendees. We are proud of the events and publications we delivered from July 2019 to now. Some of them were:

- LT Newsletter;
- *Teaching English Reflectively with Technology* (2010);
- *Digital Innovations and Reserch in Language Learning* (2020);
- #LTSIGfridays and #LTSIGmonthly webinar series 'Teaching online' from March to June 2020, focusing on helping teachers transition to online teaching as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Research Book Conference (6 February 2021); and
- 'Inclusion through technology' (29 May 2021), a joint event with IP&SENSIG.



The LTSIG Showcase.

We highlighted the benefits of being an LTSIG member and encouraged participants to become active members of our community. We took some time to talk about what it means to be part of the LTSIG Committee, especially as we are seeing a heavy restructuring. We said farewell to six Committee members: **Sophia Mavridi, Heike Philp, Nikki Fortova, Phil Longwell, Raquel Ribeiro and Graham Stanley**. We also welcomed five new Committee members: **Maria**

Diakou (Events Organiser); **Letizia Cinganotto** (Events Organiser); **Amin Neghavati** (Content Editor); **Belen Albarracin** (Webmaster); and **Serrana Muniz** (Social Media Manager). There are more openings coming soon!

We were also present at the Scholarship gathering to support our Roving Reporter Scholarship winner, **Kateryna Holubinka**, who is currently writing about the event and will be featured on our social media channels soon.

We thoroughly enjoyed this first IATEFL Virtual Conference and we hope you will join us next year in Belfast!

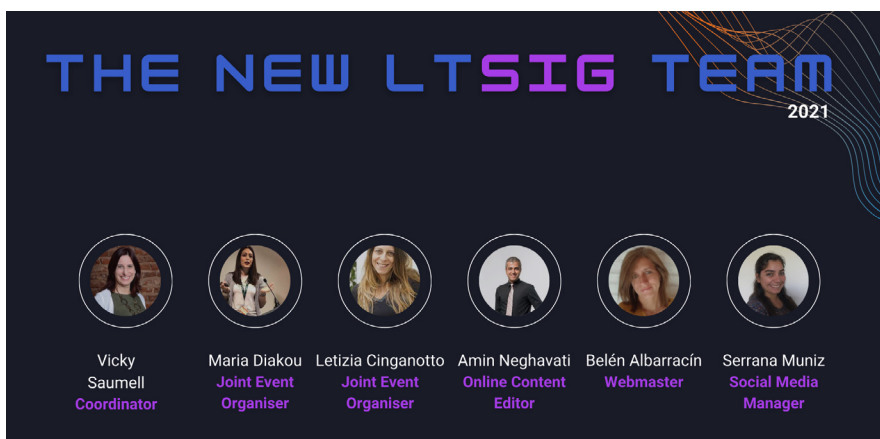
Vicky Saumell,
Coordinator
ltsig@iatefl.org



Literature SIG and Global Issues SIG

So, our PCE on 'Migrant narratives', a joint event with GISIG, finally took place! It seemed an age that we had had to wait, but the patience and goodwill of speakers and attendees was finally rewarded on 12 June. Some of us wondered how an online PCE would compare to a face-to-face event. The answer was – very well indeed! **Rose Aylett**, GISIG Coordinator, created a series of breakout rooms available a whole hour before the plenary and then after the speakers' input, allowing attendees free choice of where to go; this guaranteed the sharing of opinions and experiences. Thanks to Rose, too, for inventing a series of metaphors from travelling to structure the day: passages, crossroads, border crossings, departure lounge, arrivals, suitcases.

I won't repeat the contents of the day – I had to do this for the physical events at Manchester and Harrogate that didn't happen – but if you didn't enrol for the PCE and are now curious, you can read about what you missed on our website. Those who had bought their ticket for the PCE will have received the video recordings of the speakers' 'passages' as well as our 'suitcases of texts', in addition to our annotated, attendee-sourced bibliography of all genres of



The new Committee.

texts inspired by migrant narratives – suggested by attendees, and an innovation that we are pleased with.

The LitSIG Showcase on the last day of the Conference displayed interesting variety. **Nayr Ibrahim**, followed by **David Valente**, started the day by focusing on literature for younger learners: Nayr talked about multicultural literature, while David talked about verse novels. **Amos Paran** from the LitSIG Committee showed us research findings about the practice of reading aloud. **Alison Koushki and Abderrahim AitBara** documented students' performances in the creative arts, and performance informed **Conny Loder's** talk on approaches to teaching Shakespeare. I talked about imagining the role of characters who are unvoiced in or excluded from narratives. The day closed with our Open Forum, which generated quite a lot of interest. If you, too, are interested in our SIG, do visit our website or FB page, or drop me a line.

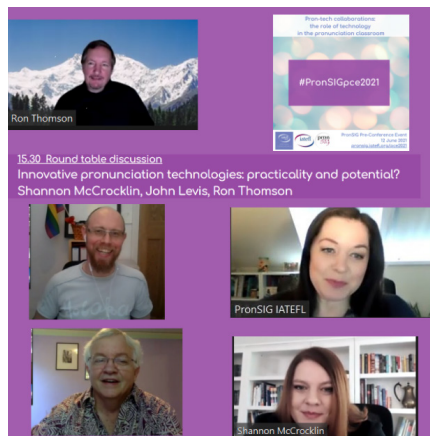
Robert Hill,
LitSIG Coordinator
litsig@iatefl.org

**pron
SIG**

Pronunciation SIG

June was an extremely busy month for the PronSIG Committee as we put the finishing touches to preparations for our PCE (12 June) and Showcase/Open Forum (20 June). Ironically, our theme for the PCE, decided upon in those heady pre-Covid days over face-to-face coffees (no social distancing!) at the 2019 IATEFL Conference in Liverpool, was the intersection of technology for pronunciation instruction.

None of us could ever have



Shannon McCrocklin, Ron Thompson and John Levis join PronSIG Joint Coordinators Adam Scott and Gemma Archer.

imagined that within 12 months of that decision, technology and its applications in the classroom, including for pronunciation instruction, would become some of the most sought-after CPD teacher training topics of the early 2020s. As such, we watched in frustration as the 2020 Conference was deferred, hoping that by the time the 2021 event came around, people weren't completely burnt out from all the technology talk!

Happily, an enthusiastic audience of participants logged in to join us for our PCE. Over the course of the day we had sessions on a range of topics, from the practical uses of Praat, an acoustics analysis software, to online tools and resources to create pronunciation materials, to the use of podcasts for pronunciation training. This was followed by a fascinating round table discussion on innovative pronunciation technologies with some of the most recognisable names in the pronunciation field: **John Levis, Ron Thompson** and **Shannon McCrocklin**. With plenty of time scheduled to chat and discuss ideas, it was, as one of our participants said, 'almost like the real Conference!'

One week later, the PronSIG Committee were back online to host our Showcase. We listened to sessions on pronunciation standards, the IPA, pronunciation teacher identity, the application of mindfulness, CEFR updates and more. One of the many highlights of the day was our interactive Forum event, this year taking place in the form of a 'swap shop'. Teachers from all over the world joined us to exchange pronunciation teaching tips, resources and techniques; it was wonderful to learn from each other and see so many pron-thusiasts taking part.

If you'd like to learn more about our PCE, catch up on our July TIICT blog where Committee member and blogger **Ana Paula Biazon Rocha** shares her top tips from the day. Alternatively, for the full event report, be sure to read September's issue of *Speak Out!*

Gemma Archer and Adam Scott,
Joint Coordinators
pronsig@iatefl.org



Young Learners and Teenagers SIG

The YLTSIG PCE took place on 18 June, with a focus on plurilingualism. For a comprehensive report on this event by **Gail Ellis**, please visit the YLTSIG website.

David Valente,
Coordinator
yltsig@iatefl.org



Not all English language teaching professionals are the same!

Create the perfect membership by joining one or more of our 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

Our SIGs focus on a different area of English language teaching, offer publications, webinars, podcasts and the chance to give back to the community by volunteering.

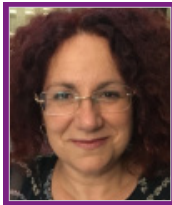
Login to your Member Dashboard and click 'Add additional SIGs' to tailor your membership.



PronSIG PCE speakers.

From the Associates

IATEFL's Associates Representative Jean Theuma brings Associate news.



Welcome to the Associates section of *Voices*! We would really like to share your news as much as possible so please get in touch with updates and reports on your events which have taken place. Please send this to me, Jean Theuma, at associaterep@iatefl.org.

Associates' Day, held on 26 June 2021, was as historic as the main IATEFL Conference this year. It is the first time Associates' Day has been held online, and it was a resounding success. The day was divided into two, starting on a Zoom webinar platform and transferring to a Zoom meeting after lunch in order to take advantage of the Zoom breakout rooms. Overall, the event was smooth and well organised, and each item flowed well from one to the other, thanks to the wonderful organisation by **Lou McLaughlin**, the outgoing IATEFL Associates' Representative.

The day started with the new IATEFL President, **Gabriel Diaz Maggioli**, welcoming the Association Representatives to the event. This was quickly followed by **Amol Padwad**, **Maureen McGarvey** and **Lou McLaughlin** who announced the winners of the Hornby Trust Teacher Association Project Scheme Awards, the IATEFL Scholarships, and the IATEFL Projects (2020) grants. Unfortunately, IATEFL Projects 2021 has been postponed.

Four Associate Representatives gave

a short talk, each presenting a recent success story from their country. **Inga Linde** representing LATE, Latvia, spoke about an initiative in which teacher trainers organised professional training all over the country for teachers who were unable to travel to centralised areas, bringing training to those who need it. From the Cote D'Ivoire (CI-AEFL), **Marcos Ngoran** inspired his listeners with his work on merging Teacher Associations in his country so they could work together on training, meetings and projects to benefit them all. Over in Argentina, FAAPI is a federation of 21 Teacher Associations started 50 years ago for graduate teachers of English. This year, to celebrate, **Virginia Lopez Grisolia** explained how FAAPI is organising its first virtual Latin American Conference on Language Testing and Assessment in September. And finally in this section, **Annie Altamirano** (TESOL-Spain) highlighted the need for moderators when organising an ambitious online conference in Spain, which included sessions, online areas for exhibitors, a community area, a mobile app and even the conference's own Spotify playlist.

The day's sponsor presentation was given by **Simon Dunton** for Trinity College London. The Trinity CertTESOL is now 40 years old and has recently been joined by a new Trinity qualification – the CertPT – a qualification which supports practicing teachers. The CertPT is for teachers seeking to update, improve and enrich their professional teaching practice, leading Simon to explore a number of developments in TESOL and EFL teaching courses over the years. The new qualification takes into

consideration the progress made after reflection on course duration, format, distance and blended learning, remote assessment and moderation, resource creation and contemporary teaching contexts, such as CLIL, SEN, YL and exam prep.

Just before lunch, **Louise Atkins**, the Deputy CEO of IATEFL, reminded Association Representatives about the benefits of joining IATEFL and encouraged associations to publicise the much cheaper IATEFL membership, which is available to association members. This is an opportunity for all teachers to join the IATEFL community and also strengthen their involvement in their own associations. During the lunch break, the Zoom link was left open and Association Representatives were encouraged to chat to one another using the Zoom chat box. After lunch, the event transferred to a Zoom meeting link and the participants were able to see each other.

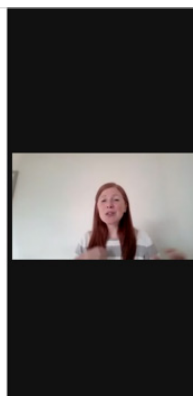
Judith Mader, the IATEFL SIG Representative, was unable to attend Associates' Day, so Lou delivered the session instead. The focus was on the wide variety of Special Interest Groups (SIGs), which are available to members of IATEFL, each having their own publications, meetings and events. The variety is so wide that there is a SIG for every aspect of English teaching.

Associates' Day continued with two more presentations given by Association Representatives from Greece and Turkey. **Georgios Chatzis**, representing TESOL Greece, proved that nothing could hold them back when 'daring the virus' by organising webinars and an online conference with speakers, exhibitors and a cultural and social element, including music, Zumba and yoga. Meanwhile, TESOL-Turkey have been organising training Roadshows to reach teachers in remote places, and **Yasemin Yelbay Yilmaz** explained how this was leading to better communication and sharing of best practice between schools in order to invest in the quality of EFL education in Turkey.

The final speaker of the day was **Roy Cross**, representing the British Council. Roy spoke about the PRELIM project, a collaboration between

IATEFL Associates | Who are we?

- IATEFL Associates is made up of non-profit teaching associations from around the world
- There are currently **118** IATEFL Associates
- Associates are spread across **78** countries around the world
- The IATEFL Associates Committee (Marta Bujakowska, Lou McLaughlin (Chair), Jean Theuma) oversee the various areas related to IATEFL Associates.



Lou McLaughlin gives key information about IATEFL Associates.



Simon Dunton announces a new Trinity qualification – the CertPT.

IATEFL, the British Council and English UK. PRELIM is the first collaboration of its kind, and is designed to pair teachers in 20 developing countries with English language centres in the UK. The idea was to run virtual English language classes in order to improve language proficiency and confidence for teachers from countries which are eligible under the Official Development Assistance (ODA) fund. Roy also gave information about the British Council English teaching website, teachingenglish.org.uk, which is undergoing changes, including one which allows teachers and students in areas with less connectivity to work offline on downloaded material. Also available on the website are a series of six introductory videos to British Council publications which discuss teacher development, learning and language. Finally, Roy invited participants to investigate the blog he writes (<https://roycross.blog>), which gives readers links to useful, inspiring, interesting and current ideas on language, teaching and learning.

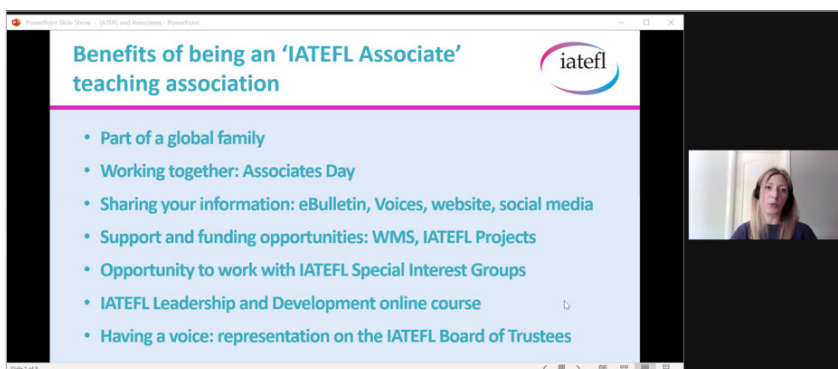
Associates' Day also allowed time for the participating Association Representatives to chat, network and share ideas. There was no agenda, just time and space for participants to catch up with old friends, make new ones, and share ideas and inspiration. A variety

of topics came out of these discussion groups, highlighting the challenges many associations and teachers have been facing recently. With the current situation, some associations did not manage to organise a conference in 2020 and do not have the resources or know-how to organise an online one. This leaves the associations feeling out of touch with their members. On the other hand, individual teachers are facing a different set of challenges: the issue of juggling face-to-face and online learning which, although easier in this second year, is still very tiring. Some mentioned the fear of contracting Covid-19 while teaching face-to-face in schools, while other teachers who are at home in front of a screen all day worry for their mental health. Teachers are also now exhausted from creating and adapting resources to use online with their classes as the change from classroom to online left little time for preparation. However, the pandemic was not the only topic of discussion in the breakout rooms; some of the larger associations lamented the fact that they had a large membership but that many of these members were inactive or did not renew their membership after a year.

Associates' Day closed with **Lou McLaughlin** thanking the participants for joining the event. She then handed

over to me, **Jean Theuma**, the incoming Associates Representative, and I thanked Lou for her hard work, dedication and focus on creating better two-way communication and interaction between the associations. **Gabriel Díaz Maggioli** also thanked Lou for her six years in the role of Associates' Representative and hoped that she would find ways to remain part of the IATEFL family.

associaterep@iatefl.org



Louise Atkins outlines the benefits of becoming an IATEFL Associate.

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In memoriam

At this year's Tribute session, we remembered:

Dr Roger Bowers, long-time ELT professional with the British Council and Trinity College London, author and editor of various books on teacher education and Chair of the A. S. Hornby Educational Trust from 2007 to 2014. 'Loved for his warmth, intellect, courage and ability to make others blossom', Roger was respected for his knowledge and wise judgement – and his great sense of humour!

Paul Davis, exceptional teacher and outstanding teacher trainer, profession-changing author of teacher resource books and one of the creative practitioners in Pilgrims' golden years. Paul was a person of immense kindness who wasn't afraid to ask the questions that set others thinking.

Sara Martin Diez, teacher, materials writer, ICT trainer and teacher advisor. Much loved and highly respected in

the Canary Islands, Sara was a victim of Covid-19 who died long before her time and is now remembered in sadness.

Mark Krzanowski, who must hold the record for the number of universities, mostly in and around London, at which he taught EAP, and who was a long-standing member of IATEFL, serving as ESPSIG Coordinator for nine years and editor of the ESPSIG Journal for seven. Mark was a person of drive and initiative who set an example of industry and enthusiasm and an inspiring and supportive colleague who brightened many a meeting.

Jim Wright, for many the face of Pilgrims, remembered for his Cheshire cat smile, contagious positivity regardless of what life throws at us, and his warm welcome to the Pilgrims' stand at IATEFL events. First visiting Pilgrims as a photographer's assistant, he was so taken by what he saw that he joined and eventually worked his

way to the top as Principal.

Sophie Rinvoluceri, wife of Mario Rinvoluceri, kindly spirit and poet, who embodied the essence of human understanding and in whose home everyone was welcome.

This was an unusual Tribute session in that it was two years since we last met, and even on this occasion were meeting online. Under more usual circumstances, in all probability more delegates would have come to the session to speak about colleagues who they had lost. If you are reading this report and thinking of a colleague you remember alongside those we spoke of at this Conference, please come to the session at Belfast or get in touch with me before the Conference so that we can remember them then.

grundypeter@btinternet.com

Coming events

[iatefl.org/events](https://www.iatefl.org/events)
[iatefl.org/iatefl-associates-events](https://www.iatefl.org/iatefl-associates-events)

2021 SEPTEMBER

27–30 Australia

Australian Council of TESOL Associations National Conference, Brisbane and online 'Pushing the boundaries'
<https://tesol.org.au/conference/>

NOVEMBER

5–6 Online

20th Inged International Online Conference
<https://www.inged.org.tr/>

2022 MAY

17–20 UK

55th IATEFL International Conference & Exhibition, Belfast (PCEs 16 May)
<https://www.iatefl.org/conference/home>

Submissions for the calendar are welcome and should be sent to membership@iatefl.org. Submissions should follow the format in the calendar above, and should include submission deadlines for papers for potential presenters.

Webinars are always being added to our Events page and members can access the recordings via 'My resources'.

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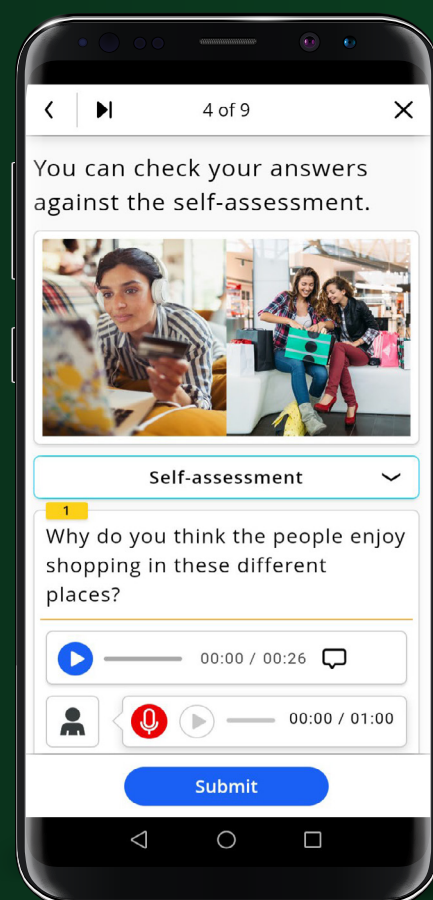
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