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# voices

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# VOICES

## From the Editor

In many parts of the world, and for many teachers, the new year begins not in January but in September. This is often the time when teachers and students go back to school, college or university – full of anticipation and excitement about what the new academic year will bring. For those of you who are fortunate to be returning to a face-to-face teaching situation, I'd like to wish you a successful and enjoyable year. If you are still teaching remotely as a result of COVID-19, I hope it's going as smoothly as possible, and I hope the situation in your part of the world improves as we move towards the end of 2020.



**Tania Pattison**, Editor

In my own case, I don't teach much these days, but one thing I enjoy is teaching pre-sessional EAP at the University of Warwick. I'm back teaching in this six-week course again, but this time it's online. It's a great course, and I have two lovely classes – but I'm exhausted! Zoom fatigue (or, in this case, Microsoft Teams fatigue) is a real thing. If you've been doing this for a while, you know what I mean. Like many teachers, I look forward to the day when the world recovers and face-to-face teaching becomes a possibility again. And if you are nodding in agreement here, please take the time to rest and look after yourself.

If you are teaching online, there are several articles in this issue that will interest you. In our Keynote paper, Viktor Carrasquero looks at teacher development during a pandemic. Michelle Ocricano continues her series on the principles behind effective e-learning. Matthew Donley gives advice to managers on how to communicate with teachers in a crisis. And Ross Thorburn shows how online teaching with children might actually have some advantages.

For those teachers who are back in the classroom, Catherine Prentice explores the use of drama techniques with international students, while Silvana Accardo shows how literature can be used with very young children.

In her From the Trustees piece, Judith Mader outlines her work with IATEFL's 16 Special Interest Groups, or SIGs. In this issue, four SIGs are featured: the Business English SIG, the Teacher Development SIG, the Young Learners and Teenagers SIG and the Research SIG. Please visit the IATEFL website to learn more about the amazing work all 16 SIGs are doing. On the topic of research, Elena Ončevska Ager and Loreto Aliaga Salas show how various Teacher Associations are becoming involved in research initiatives around the world.

Finally in this issue, Hall Houston continues his series on using YouTube channels in teaching; Ruby Vurdien brings us reviews of new resources and Lou McLaughlin brings us up to date with Associate activities.

As always, I wish you well during this difficult time. I'm already thinking about the next Conference, in Harrogate, and I look forward to meeting many *Voices* readers then.

Until later,

Tania Pattison  
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# From the Trustees

## Judith Mader writes about the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and her role as IATEFL SIG Representative on the Board of Trustees

The role of the IATEFL SIG Representative on the Board of Trustees is to act as a link between the Board of Trustees and the SIGs, represented by their Coordinators.

### The SIGs and their members

IATEFL has 16 SIGs. An IATEFL individual membership includes membership of one SIG, which the member chooses. SIGs have existed since 1985 and so far no SIG has 'gone out of business', although there have been some mergers. Occasionally, there are suggestions for new SIGs, and the newest SIGs, the Materials Writing SIG (MaWSIG) and the Inclusive Practices and Special Educational Needs SIG (IPSENSIG) are only a few years old. I can definitely recommend that members check out all the SIGs on the IATEFL website.

Anecdotal evidence seems to suggest that there are SIG members who remain loyal to their SIG over the years, and there are others who, absolutely legitimately, move from one SIG to another. After all, many ELT professionals have several areas of interest, and interests change with new areas arising for the teaching profession in general. So the choice for members is not always easy. There are SIGs, such as the Global Issues SIG (GISIG), which seem to encompass everything. And how do you decide whether to join the Teacher Development SIG (TDSIG) or the Teacher Training & Education SIG (TTEdSIG)? IATEFL members are really spoilt for choice.

### Representing the SIGs

With 16 SIGs, this is not an easy task. SIGs not only have different interests, they are naturally in healthy competition with each other. Inevitably, perhaps, the Learning Technologies SIG (LTSIG) has been in the forefront of online activity, while other SIGs, such as the English for Speakers of Other Languages SIG (ESOLSIG), may have focused more on classroom teaching. Now that all of us have had to apply ourselves to online teaching, this is one example of how SIGs can profit from each other. When, in 2018, I was elected as SIG Rep, one of my aims was to encourage inter-SIG collaboration and cooperation. Gratifyingly, there have recently been seemingly unlikely 'marriages', for instance, the Business English SIG (BESIG) and the Literature SIG (LiTSIG), although



**Judith Mader** has been a member of IATEFL since 1980. She recently retired from the position of Head of Languages at a private university in Frankfurt, Germany, and now works freelance as an author, test developer and teacher trainer.

I don't think I can take any credit for this! Further successful examples of SIG partnership were seen in the SIG sessions in the recent Global Get-Together.

One of my main tasks is organising and chairing the SIG Coordinator meetings. All SIG Coordinators officially meet twice a year and also, of course, at the Annual Conference. Up to this year, all the meetings I attended as SIG Coordinator and SIG Rep were held in Faversham at the IATEFL Head Office. This enabled volunteers to visit Head Office and meet IATEFL staff, and to find common interests in the breaks around the official meeting. This year, our first SIG Coordinators meeting was held online. This was convenient and saved time; however, the downside for me was that meeting people I already know online works quite well, but meeting someone for the first time online somehow lacks something. The informal chats are definitely missing in an online meeting. How the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face and online meetings weigh up will be something which SIG Coordinators need to agree on in order to decide how to proceed in future, once we can make the decision ourselves.

### A Trustee

In 2018, I also became a member of the IATEFL Board of Trustees. In my role as Trustee, I rely tremendously on Head Office staff, particularly the SIGs and Publications Officer for help and advice.

The Trustee role has been very gratifying, although not always easy, given some of the decisions we have had to make. I have learnt a lot about how a UK-based charity is run and how the different groups of stakeholders can be involved and get the most out of the Association – and I am still learning.

### A member

I became a member of IATEFL in 1980, but I only attended my first Conference in 2005. I was immediately hooked, and have been going to the Conference ever since. When I became a full-time test developer, I joined the Testing, Evaluation and Assessment SIG (TEASIG). I then became an IATEFL volunteer, first as a SIG committee member and then as SIG Coordinator. My decision on which SIG to join was based on my work, but I have since become familiar with all the SIGs. As I later worked at a university, the Leadership & Management SIG (LAMSIG) the Research SIG (ReSIG) and the English for Specific Purposes SIG (ESPSIG) could also have been my natural choices; my teaching focus was on methodology, so I often looked at the activities of the Learner Autonomy SIG (LASIG).

However, for me the most interesting SIGs are those I would not have joined, such as the Young Learners & Teenagers SIG (YLTSIG), as I have never taught this learner group, and the Pronunciation SIG (PronSIG), because I must admit (to my shame) that this is an area I avoided as far as I could in my professional life. Through discovering the SIG, I now realise how interesting it can be.

I'd like to express my thanks to all the SIGs for the variety you bring to IATEFL. As a member and volunteer, I have definitely profited from your work.

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# Keynote: CPD in the midst of a global crisis: teachers' perspectives through metaphors

## Viktor Carrasquero looks at teacher development in the time of COVID-19

In the British Council global teaching network, as well as in many other language teaching organisations around the world, the rapid spread of COVID-19 has meant that face-to-face operations have come to a halt in many, if not all, places. With large segments of the world's population going into preventive quarantine or self-isolation, learners cannot leave their homes and, in many cases, teachers cannot leave theirs, either. The consequences of these circumstances have been twofold: first, teaching centres have sought to migrate their face-to-face, physical teaching to online platforms in an effort to keep providing learners with the services they expect, and to guarantee business continuity; and second, many different stakeholders in teaching centres, from teachers and administrators to customer service and marketing departments, have had a steep learning curve, dealing with



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the multiple tasks needed to transfer services from a predominantly face-to-face business model to an online one.

Such a steep learning curve has resulted in a great deal of professional development taking place organically, outside formalised, scheduled schemes. In the case of the British Council in Hong Kong, *some* of that learning has been facilitated by management; however, we have witnessed the emergence of a lot of cooperative learning taking place among teachers and teacher communities within our centre. In this article, I set out to briefly describe some of the initiatives that have come about in our centre,

paying particular attention to what teachers have perceived, from their vantage point, under the conceptual notion of *metaphors* our teachers have used to describe their experiences in the present situation.

## Conceptual metaphors: the current context and its tensions

These difficult times, in which uncertainty and anxiety prevail for many, teachers and administrators have had to deal with issues that, in many instances, they have never had to even consider. Our teaching operation in Hong Kong is massive: we have many teachers of multiple national backgrounds, and we serve a large student population, both local Hongkongers and people from mainland China and other countries, who live here. Before the COVID-19 crisis, none of our teaching products had been ideated for online media and platforms, and in a matter of weeks, most of our services have been made available to learners through



CPD often originates with teachers. Image: Rawpixel/Shutterstock.

video-conferencing tools, such as the globally pervasive Zoom.

Taking on the challenges of learning about a plethora of technologies *and* coping with the ever-unfolding effects of the pandemic have caused anxiety among teachers and administrators. However, we have borne witness to how our staff have used this inescapable anxiety and, in most cases, turned it into some kind of facilitative tension, which has kept us all ‘poised, alert, and just slightly unbalanced to the point that one cannot relax entirely’ (Brown, 2014, p. 151). Facilitative tension is what keeps us on our toes as we strive to find solutions to operational challenges, and as we learn to grapple with the demands of working in an environment with manifold pressures.

In an attempt to understand these pressures, I consider it interesting and useful to use the notion of conceptual metaphors, as first outlined in the seminal work of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). These authors suggest that

... our concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world, and how we relate to other people. Our conceptual system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in suggesting that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience, and what we do every day is very much a matter of metaphor. (p. 3)

The metaphors we use unveil the ways in which we perceive the world, they are a door to our cognitive conceptual maps, and they are a tool to unpack the complexities of our everyday realities. Given that said complexities abound in our current circumstances, I set out to ask teachers in our centre about metaphors they would use to describe their learning over the last few weeks and months. These will be reported below. In presenting the teachers’ metaphors, I will also comment on the CPD initiatives they make reference to, which have come from either the centre administration, or from the teachers themselves, from within their emerging communities of practice and collaboration.

“ Our staff have shown great resilience, as they engage in a wide range of activities, while dealing with the physical and emotional effects of the global pandemic crisis. ”

### Metaphor 1. Teachers are elastic

In our centre, all staff have had to do tasks that in many cases they have not done systematically before. For instance, when no teaching was operationally possible, some teachers have been asked to produce lesson plans, materials and entire courses. While some staff members may have engaged in similar projects before, for example, in completing teaching qualifications, this time around, teachers have been asked to present more or less finalised products, which would be marketed and rolled out after the crisis eases up.

Creating courses from scratch was a particularly anxiety-inducing endeavour, and quite a few teachers talked about the challenges this posed. Such conversations led to two highly productive practices: (a) management became more acutely aware of the specific needs of teachers, as well as of the types of input they needed to give teachers before tasks were assigned; and (b) teachers started co-planning courses or, at the very least, comparing the outlines, methods, activities and aims of the materials, lesson plans and courses they worked on.

Teacher collaboration has taken on many forms: while meetings and informal conversations are still common, online organisational tools have become ubiquitous. We have all come to the realisation that it is of key importance for a teaching team to have access to input materials, guidelines and the work others have done; a variety of online tools now available allow us to do just that, plus having some sort of commenting and change tracking facilities, which help us better provide each other with feedback and distribute workloads and responsibilities.

### Metaphor 2. Keep the ‘bigger picture’ in mind

Times of crisis bring to the fore that which is of true value in CPD and general teaching practice. Teachers and managers I talked to agree that training and development provision has to focus on the current emerging needs of the teaching centre and the market. For instance, most of our teachers had not used online video-conferencing applications to lead teaching, which highlights the importance of providing teachers with training on the technical aspects of using such applications in their classes.

It is crucial, though, to bear in mind that in streamlining our development offer, we cannot ignore the ‘bigger

picture’ of teaching, which means that now – probably more than ever – teachers need to have access to training in teaching practices more than on online technologies as, in truth, a sound understanding of teaching principles will guide our conscientious use of such tools. To this purpose, we have created a space, specifically aimed for teachers to come together and share ideas and concerns they have while teaching online. More spaces like this are necessary, for teachers and administrators to come together, possibly in non-instructional ways, but as part of a community that learns from its different members’ experiences.

### Metaphor 3. Learning new skills is ‘climbing a mountain’

Many of our teachers describe this period as an ‘emotional rollercoaster’ (yet another metaphor!) as they have had to learn to do very specific tasks. For instance, monitoring learners’ pair work in break-out rooms on a video-conferencing app is, in principle, similar to our regular onsite classroom monitoring, but it is technically different. There are other elements that have to be factored in, such as learners – or the teacher – experiencing technical difficulties, not knowing how to perform certain operations, or not wanting to engage in particular tasks because of the nature of the online platform. Some teachers have started filming instructional videos for our learners, which has required that teachers learn how to record and edit video in a very short time, including the preparation of scripts and video lesson plans. However, teachers report having felt a deep sense of achievement once they had carried out these activities, and their successes have increased their impetus to experiment with more tech tools, and to propose new ideas to tackle issues.

### Metaphor 4. Teaching online is ‘a mixed bag’

In our centre, teachers and administrators have gained an increased awareness of the range of purposes online tools can serve. Given the possibility of a lockdown and total quarantine and self-isolation looming on the horizon, as this is now a reality in much of the world, organising our time, delegating tasks effectively and working through projects in online teams have become learning priorities. Teachers have had to learn not only about the intricacies of online teaching, but also about working on collaborative documents, using project-

“*Times of crisis bring to the fore that which is of true value in CPD and general teaching practice.*”

management applications, and posting ideas, comments and questions on online boards. None of this is new, but the use of online tools had not been widespread – or necessary – in our organisation, or in many other centres.

### Conclusions

The metaphors outlined above are variations on the same theme: teachers and administrators showing their ‘ability to withstand adversity and crisis and for devising appropriate interventions’ (Capstick, 2018, p. 210), which is, by the way, this author’s definition of ‘resilience’. Our staff have shown great resilience, as they engage in a wide range of activities, while dealing with the physical and emotional effects of the global pandemic crisis.

Before closing, I would like to briefly mention some of the learning teachers have reported to have happened organically over the last few months:

1. increased informal and spontaneous collaborations between teachers for co-planning, co-teaching, and joint tech troubleshooting;
2. teachers and administrators volunteering to be ‘students’ in online platform trials, to better understand our learners’ perspectives and needs;
3. teachers working together to learn how to use video-filming and animation software;
4. teachers informally coming together to self-reflect on what goes well and not so well in online teaching, and on what can be done to solve issues; and
5. teachers and managers producing instructional videos to explain theoretical and practical aspects related to teaching in general, and to online teaching in particular.

The changes the current crisis is causing are an unprecedented learning opportunity for all our teachers and administrators. The common thread in

all the metaphors discussed above is people communicating openly and freely, which enables them to work together collaboratively, to achieve mutually beneficial goals. The challenge now is to guarantee that such transformations are sustainable and integrated as working and marketable options for the future. Let us hope that the crisis has pushed us all to the ‘next level’ of teaching, and that collaboration and mutual help will only increase and consolidate.

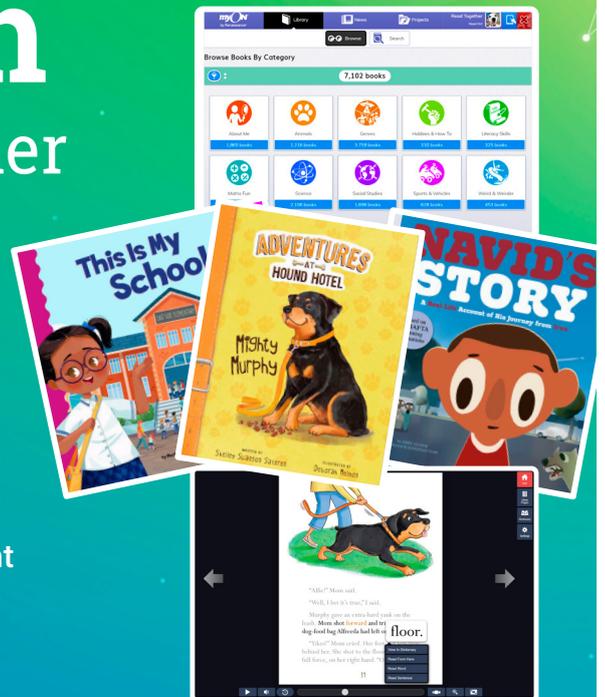
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# Considerations when building e-learning courses, part 2

## Michelle Ocriciano presents Part 2 in a series on teaching with technology

In the first article in this series, I discussed students' contexts, good education and good e-learning, and universal learning design. This time I define LMS and present some of its most important characteristics. This is followed by the difference between synchronous and asynchronous e-learning, and an introduction of the SAMR model. I conclude with a reflection on student autonomy in e-learning settings.

### LMS

LMS stands for Learning Management System and is a type of software application for administration and monitoring of online courses. Some of these systems also support course management, including resources for evaluating and monitoring users' performance and progress. In other words, an LMS basically allows for content creation, course organisation and student enrolment. The most common features of an LMS are as follows:

#### Content management

The main functionality of an LMS is the distribution of content to users. Therefore, every LMS has mechanisms for inserting and managing content. The content can be videos, audios, PDFs, files in general, animations, external links, HTML pages and SCORM packages (e-learning content standard).

#### Assessment tools

A very common feature among LMSs is the possibility of creating tests or surveys with various types of questions such as multiple choice, true/false, matching, open response and numeric response.

#### Forums

Forums are a resource for proposing and discussing a specific topic where participants comment and respond in an

“ Ideally, the LMS should offer the possibility to configure which information and how the information should be presented. ”



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organised way to a question or sets of questions. There is usually a moderator who guides the discussion and keeps participants engaged. It is possible to collaborate in forums via text and to share video, images, audio and links. In addition, many LMSs have built-in social networking features, such as liking, evaluating and tagging specific people in discussions.

#### Reports and dashboards

Ideally, the LMS should offer the possibility to configure which information and how the information should be presented. Many LMSs rely on a kind of report builder that allows administrators to create their own reports and dashboards with charts of different types according to their needs.

#### Do I need an LMS?

This is a difficult question to answer. It depends on the purpose of the e-learning being designed. If the interest is only in content management, such as sharing links with students, then using an image annotator such as Genial.ly and ThingLink might be enough. However, if the intention is to deliver a full course online, including managing, tracking students' performance and allocating teachers, then an LMS is a better idea.

### Synchronous and asynchronous learning

Synchronous tools are those in which students and teacher participate at the same time and in the same environment. Both must connect at the same time and interact with each other in some way to complete a lesson. One of the main benefits of this modality is that it is a practical way to answer questions and have discussions. The main tools are virtual classes, webinars, chatrooms and instant messaging applications.

Asynchronous tools are disconnected from the actual moment. In other words, it

is not necessary for students and teachers to be connected at the same time for the tasks to be completed. Asynchronous education may lead to greater autonomy as students need to be more committed and responsible for their study routine. An advantage of this model is its high levels of flexibility. The main tools are forums, emails, blogs, recorded classes and portfolios.

When choosing between synchronous and asynchronous activities, it is important to consider that learning must allow for flexibility (not everything at the same time); ubiquity (any time and place); adaptiveness (the context of each student); and inclusion (equal opportunities to learn). Other points that should be taken into account are the physical location of students, students' access to bandwidth and time availability.

Planning, prioritising and defining are key elements when building e-learning. If we do not have or follow a plan, we may end up with a well-intentioned final product that does not deliver anything apart from a mess of well-designed but disconnected activities; this is frustrating for both teachers and students. Finally, it is a good idea to mix both synchronous and asynchronous tools, activities and even platforms to offer a more complete learning experience.

### The SAMR model

Popularised by Dr Ruben Puentedura, SAMR is a model designed to help educators infuse technology into teaching and learning. Its main objective is to assess the impact of the digital world on education by analysing activities and different levels of engagement in these tasks. SAMR stands for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification and Redefinition; these four levels represent different degrees of technology integration in the classroom.

#### Substitution

This is the most basic level of technological interaction. It happens when a resource such as a computer is used in the same way as an analogue resource; in other words, it does not exert any significant change in learning. The technology is applied as a supporting element of another pre-existing one, but no methodological change takes place. An example of this stage would be the creation of a text with a processor or a mind map with an online tool.

### Augmentation

In this case, the use of the Internet or another digital medium helps to elaborate an activity, causing a change in the method. Technology is applied as a substitute for another existing system, but it produces better functionalities. Through technology and without modifying methodology, it is possible to enhance learning situations. A clear example is to look up information using a search engine.

### Modification

Modification represents tasks transformed by technology which could not reach their full capabilities without technology. The goal here is to bring about a structural change in the classroom, developing new skills in students. A significantly better redefinition of the tasks is achieved through technologies: a methodological change takes place. One example is the creation of a video that summarises a book and comments from viewers, who debate the key points (for example on YouTube).

### Redefinition

This concept covers exercises that would not exist outside the digital world. Here, electronic tools are fundamental to the completion of the task. The idea is for technology to be fully incorporated, also serving as a communication platform. Students create audio-visual material that represent what they have learned; one example is a project designed to raise awareness of excessive food waste and to convert the school food's waste with the help of the community. Such a project would need social networks to spread the idea, graphic design tools to develop plans and banners, and video to disseminate the process and results.

In order to implement the SAMR model, you are likely to use online applications; choosing a suitable app is a task in itself. One way to make this journey easier and more pleasant is by using the Pedagogy Wheel, developed in 2015 by Allan Carrington and based on the principle that pedagogy should determine the educational use of applications. The Pedagogy Wheel is a chart with the four domains of the SAMR model; and under the domains are listed the educational purposes various apps are most likely to serve. It is a brilliant resource and beautifully designed, but it can be a bit overwhelming because of the amount of information it contains.

If you find the Pedagogy Wheel overwhelming, consider using a typology, such as 2020 Typology of Free Web-based Learning Technologies by Matt Bower and Jodie Torrington. The Typology provides a list of 226 technologies arranged into 40



types and 15 clusters that can be used to promote interactive learning.

Whether you choose the Pedagogy Wheel or a typology, remember that what matters is pedagogy. The tools are there to support teachers and students in their learning journey, not the other way around.

### Apps, apps and more apps!

As I write this, many teachers are starting their journey back to the classroom after a few months of remote teaching. COVID-19 caught us off guard, but the ELT sector reacted promptly and started offering webinars on how to teach online and on the many tools available. As a result, we finally understand that language teaching can be delivered via e-learning.

Let's take a minute and think critically about all those applications we were shown and started using. As Kerr (2020) has pointed out, very few of these webinars mentioned costs, the marketing of educational technology, the profits available, or the non-educational uses to which data is put. Neil Selwyn is one of the most active researchers proposing a critical look at educational technology. One of the discussions he brings to the table is the link between technology and education, and how one does not necessarily improve the other. Selwyn (2017) points to a long history of communication technologies failing to transform education by reviewing the 20th-century take-up and use of film, radio, television and micro-computing. He argues that each came with high levels of 'hype, hope and disappointment', yet none changed the dominance of 'chalk and talk'-style classrooms. As teachers, we have to be critical of what we are choosing to expose our students to and mindful of what happens to the data derived from our students and our own use of any digital platform.

### Scaffolding and autonomy

E-learning is often associated with learner autonomy – but autonomy is not easily achieved, especially if students have

not experienced it before. That is why scaffolding is a vital part of successful e-learning. As teachers, we should not expect our students to know how to learn in any setting, particularly in e-learning. The first interactions in the online environment should be guided; video tutorials on using the online space could be provided, and there could be a 'Week 0' or induction on how to use the platform. This could happen without the teachers, but I recommend otherwise, as it is a very good opportunity for teacher and students to get to know each other.

Once students are aware of the processes related to using the platform, it is time to discuss expectations and autonomy. The role of the teacher in e-learning is not to expose learners to knowledge, but to create conditions which allow students to develop ways to acquire such knowledge, that is, to provide them with conditions to achieve autonomy in learning. The choice of tools in e-learning should assist students in the construction of knowledge that encourages them to question and seek answers, leaving behind any possible passivity involved in the learning process

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# Communicating with teachers in a crisis

**Matthew Donley suggests that the difference between managers providing reassurance and inciting panic is not just what they say, but how they say it.**



**Matthew Donley** has been teaching and managing EFL around the world since 2005. He currently works in Hong Kong.

Like everyone else these days, EFL teachers are perhaps more worried than ever about what's in store next semester – or next week. And as always, managers bear some responsibility for ensuring the well-being of their staff. When a manager needs to pass on worrying news to teachers in a crisis, it's worth thinking about ways to do this which will maximise the best of what your staff have to offer – resilience, creativity, community spirit, good humour – and minimise the fear, uncertainty and doubt which can make working in an office during troubled times that much harder.

Your staff's identities and values have implications for how they expect a manager to sound and how your communications with them may be interpreted. Depending on factors like their home context (and how at home they feel where they work), the generation they identify with, the culture of management they prefer, or their relationships with colleagues, each teacher may receive what seems like a 'neutral' message very differently.

And while every emergency is different, regardless of its scale, keeping teachers' psychological safety in mind as you deliver difficult news can help create a climate of collaboration since colleagues are less concerned about self-protection in spaces where they feel less vulnerable (Edmondson, 2018). If your message involves asking for something beyond what's expected in normal times, it may be best to ask in person: a 2017 paper found that emails from those perceived as 'strangers' are *34 times* less effective at 'getting to yes' than when the request is made in a face-to-face conversation (Mahdi Roghanizada & Bohns, 2017).

## Structuring your message

### 1. Start with empathy

By beginning with an acknowledgement of people's concerns, you establish that you are aware of their fears and can credibly express relevant information. Depending on your context, you could mention worries you have heard related to safety, job security, immigration rules, health, or anything else with a deep emotional resonance. This is a good time to mention good work you've seen so far.

Instead of...	Try...
'It's a real shame you'll have to curtail your curriculum development work for now because sales are plummeting.'	'I have been really impressed with your determination to finish the curriculum project early as the situation outside has evolved so rapidly.'

### 2. Speak plainly and focus on immediate needs

Share basic information your staff needs to know today, and for the immediate future, as simply as possible. Give people dates, times, and locations in unambiguous ways. The anxiety of a dangerous situation limits people's ability to process information: stress, lack of sleep and changes in people's routines all negatively affect our understanding of complex messages.

Instead of...	Try...
'It's probably a good idea to wrap up your work by 7:50 at the end of the week and scoot home ASAP so you don't run into trouble. The metro shuts at 9, though. Good luck!'	'Because of the curfew, you must leave the building by 8:00 pm on Friday. The building will be closed ten minutes after the end of the last lesson at 7:50 pm. The metro is scheduled to close at 9:00 pm.'

### 3. Explain what you are doing now, and what has been done so far

Teachers should see that the organisation is trying to mitigate the impact of the crisis. This means not just explaining logistics you think are relevant to teachers' working lives, but also mentioning the impacts on stakeholders teachers care about and interact with, like students, admin staff or security guards. By showing what is happening behind the scenes, you show teachers that plans exist, even if this isn't normally part of your communications with them.

Instead of...	Try...
'Placement test questions go to Martin and Rosa as normal; Yuki's off for a bit.'	'The admin team on the ground floor will be working from home this week during normal business hours. If you need a student's placement test result, email Martin at [address] or Rosa at [address]. Yuki has taken a week of paid leave and will be back next Monday.'

### 4. Share credible sources

Teachers away from home may receive crisis-related information from many sources, including social media posts from people in places where the impact of the crisis is different. Do what you can to direct teachers to the sources that managers are using to make decisions: corporate guidelines, government departments, public broadcasters, or charity organisations might all have advice which is authoritative and impartial enough to be of use. If you include web links in a written message, contextualise them so teachers don't necessarily need to click through to reach vital information or translate.

Instead of...	Try...
'Check the National Health Office's advice here [link].'	'The National Health Office is providing printable English-language guides to staying safe during the crisis which you may wish to share with friends and family here [link].'

**5. Set boundaries – and restate the rules**

Crises are so unsettling because previous ways of ordering the world are either put on hold or changed, often without our consent. Your workplace may have rules to deal with teachers not being able to manage regulations or rules. While you should try to be supportive, you probably also want your teachers to be where your customers are! For this reason, it's important to make policies clear so teachers are aware of the consequences of their actions in your office in a way that reflects the relationship you have with them. If you think that, to some teachers, the boundary seems unfair or arbitrary, give them a way to reach you.

Instead of...	Try...
'Please try to be back from your holiday on time to teach on Monday morning; I know traffic is bad because of the floods west of town, but do your best.'	'If you plan to travel through the flooded area this weekend, remember that you are responsible for arranging your journey so you can return on time and be ready to teach on Monday morning. Unexcused absences will be noted by the HR team. Please contact me personally on [number] if you have questions.'

**6. Be timely, or risk discontent**

If you don't share messages quickly enough, speculation and rumour will fill the gap. At the very least, teachers will want information about when your next update will be.

Even if you don't have much to say, reassure teachers that you'll be providing further updates. A 2014 study found that rituals – in your office, this might be a weekly meeting or email bulletin – are not necessarily only useful because they facilitate information transfer or reinforce norms; rituals help give people control over uncertainty, the power to navigate their anxieties, and mitigate grief (Norton & Gino, 2014). In a crisis, when control of many kinds may seem fleeting to even normally confident colleagues, knowing your workplace is sending you a message on time, and then receiving it, can be very comforting.

Instead of...	Try...
'Look out for a message sometime later this week so you know when we're open next week.'	'You will receive another message from me by 4:00 pm on Thursday to confirm our opening hours for next week.'

**7. Help teachers calm learners**

Teachers spend far more time with learners than managers do, and you may ask teachers to speak to learners or their families about the impact of the crisis on their classes. The challenge is especially acute in the young learner classroom, where important messages may be distorted or lost between managers, teachers, admin staff, students and families, or not received at all by young non-local students unfamiliar with the local community.



Instead of...	Try...
'School closes at 7:30 next week. Send parents/caregivers to the front desk or show them the posters if there are questions.'	'If parents or caregivers approach you after the lesson and have questions about the early-closure policy, please tell them we will close at 7:30 next week. You can also refer them to the bilingual posters near the lifts or to the front desk.'

**8. End with positivity and community**

Teachers often draw a great deal of satisfaction from their role as leaders, and as a manager you will hopefully be aware of many of the positive anecdotes your teachers share about how they help others grow. Yet in a crisis, teachers may feel excluded from the community that elevates them if they only hear about their work, and not the relationships that enrich it. Share anything positive you can.

Instead of...	Try...
'To wrap up, we've had some customer feedback asking when we'll open again while you've been working for the last few days preparing for this. We've received a donation from a customer to rebuild the teacher lounge, so we'll have more cash for supplies than we expected.'	'Finally, I want you to know that while you've been preparing for the school to reopen this week, the admin team has been receiving dozens of phone calls from parents asking about your well-being and if they could assist us. One parent wanted to thank you for all you do to keep our school community so enjoyable for her daughters and has offered to rebuild our teacher lounge at her own expense.'

**And when it's over...**

Surviving adversity is something humans are built to do. The right message can help teachers survive whatever is affecting the place they work in ways that provide reassurance rather than instil panic or make your organisation seem unprepared. By attending to the means and methods of your communications with your teachers when things go wrong, you stand a better chance of coming through the crisis with a stronger team than ever before.

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# Open space learning: a personal reflection

## Catherine Prentice explores the use of drama techniques with international students

For the last 16 years, I have been using Open Space Learning (OSL) with international students on short courses in the Centre for Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick. Open Space Learning (OSL) involves the use of spaces without tables or chairs, drawing on the practice of theatrical rehearsal rooms. Our groups can comprise undergraduates, postgraduates, pre-service teachers, heads and teachers from schools, or university lecturers. They have a limited time in which to improve their communication skills in English. This article is a reflection on my own teaching practice and attempts to share a few practical ideas.

### First steps with OSL

I first became interested in OSL at the Institute for Advanced Teaching and Learning (IATL) at Warwick, which involved a 'Dragons' Den' challenge (based on the TV show). I wondered if this concept – pitching a new product to a panel of judges – might work with a group of business placement students from Hong Kong. I felt these students needed to be challenged in terms of their L2 language fluency, so I set up the first of many Dragons' Den activities for the students to experience a business-style simulation activity.

I used an open teaching space with low-level lighting, which offered more flexibility than a conventional classroom. The students faced three 'Dragons' (university academics). The skills involved were team-based planning, confident



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speaking and business creativity, all generating interest and challenges. The Dragons, whose role was to pull apart the ideas presented to them, were arranged very much like on the TV show. The students were spot lit, which was unnerving for them.

This activity demands critical thinking, appropriate business language, clear articulation of ideas, presentation techniques, delivering pitches within a time limit, collaboration, and addressing questions accurately and succinctly. The activity also generated language for follow-up sessions. In feedback, one student said: 'This was a wonderful real-life opportunity to use English'; another stated: 'I was so nervous having to think on my feet in front of intimidating dragons, trying to think of suitable vocabulary'.

It was the setting of this activity which most intrigued me. I started to wonder about other areas of my teaching in which I might incorporate drama-based techniques. I realised that I could call on my past experiences in amateur theatre and began to look at teaching which would be enhanced by drama-based approaches.

Drama draws on the energy and ideas of its participants and is always changing: no two OSL sessions are the same. An OSL plan is therefore versatile and can be adapted for multiple levels and age groups. Some of the ideas I have employed were developed from teacher-training sessions at the Royal Shakespeare Company, which included using the voice and close readings of Shakespeare. I found that many of the exercises could be adapted for my OSL classes.

### OSL in practice

I usually start an OSL workshop with a standing circle of learners, including me. The floor is a leveller: we are all

equal. This helps foster an 'ensemble' way of working and builds confidence. Learners return to the circle after each exercise and are encouraged to move to a different place within it.

A favourite activity of mine is 'Walking the text'. Learners speak and walk a particular text, moving about the open space in an alert, purposeful manner: there should be a focus on the 'energy' of speech. A few clearly defined rules include: (a) not walking in the same direction as the next person, because others pick up the same pace and rhythm of speaking, resulting in group 'chanting'; (b) not picking up other learners' speech patterns; and (c) not getting caught up in faster speaking. When a learner encounters a full stop, they should stop, change direction and carry on with the next sentence as they move off again. At the next stage, we add in a sharp change of direction, moving when encountering any form of punctuation other than a full stop. I like using the passage from the beginning of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*, which is full of contrastive language, and gets learners 'chunking', breaking up the text with their voice, and adding their own emphases. I demonstrate the power of the full stop – and of the associated drop in intonation – along with pauses between sentences, which improves presentation techniques.

Drama techniques can also be applied to dialogues. For a first encounter with a dialogue, I may ask students to sit in pairs, back to back. This removes some of the pressure of speaking: their partner is not looking at them, using body language or prompting automatic responses. This is an effective exercise for less-confident students. To extend this exercise, the pairs stand opposite each other a short distance away, hold the text in their left hand and keep eye contact. This is a simple sharing of text, using the punctuation marks as a guideline. The exercise has been used before as a group exercise, so the dynamics are similar, but now numbers are reduced to only two!

Rather than having one speaker deliver an entire monologue, it is possible to work in small groups. Students change speaker at each punctuation mark (or perhaps at each verse line); thoughts must be handed on and picked up with energy.

“ This activity demands critical thinking, appropriate business language, clear articulation of ideas, presentation techniques, delivering pitches within a time limit, collaboration, and addressing questions accurately and succinctly. ”

“ This whole activity involves pushing new boundaries for the students: they ‘own’ their learning as ‘producers’ of the session. ”

### Meeting challenges

For many teachers, access to an open space can be difficult. For example, when teaching in China, where desks were static, I had the teachers standing, sitting and turning around, and moving into the aisles.

If texts are difficult, vocabulary and pronunciation are first explored. For example, I often have learners perform the final scene from *Hamlet*. I randomly assign learners to groups, and they work out the roles within a time limit; then each group ‘performs’ the scene. I am constantly thrilled at their inventiveness and what they produce after only 30 minutes of preparation. This whole activity involves pushing new boundaries for the students: they ‘own’ their learning as ‘producers’ of the session. Learners are highly attentive, listening to their own voices. Most importantly, inhibitions are lowered.

Critical to these OSL activities is overcoming embarrassment. A teacher should not ask learners to do anything that they cannot do themselves, so I have to embarrass myself first. For example, I might go into the centre of the circle and say my name clearly but using a funny walk or gesture.

In an OSL class, to make practising pronunciation more motivating, I often use Hamlet’s famous ‘To be, or not to be’ speech; many students are familiar with

this, and it can be used to demonstrate the power of stress. At Warwick we have two studios. I tell my students there is nowhere to hide: it’s just you and your voice! I often use a black rehearsal room (with low lighting) for an exercise in which each student takes a turn to walk in the gloom delivering these famous lines, each offering up their voice and stressing key words. This is extremely powerful as every single utterance (and mistake!) can be heard and is quite nerve-wracking for some. But intonation, stressing and pausing are all practised, and students have reported feeling empowered.

I have recently started using theatre props such as cloaks and hats: they support a kind of ‘displacement’ on the part of the student when speaking. Learners walk around the room in different directions, and on the count of three, each must run and grab a prop. They then should ‘introduce’ their prop to another learner (‘This is Hirako’s hat’), then swap props, and find someone else. This exercise involves attention to pronunciation and intonation, as well as memory, generating camaraderie and thus breaking down barriers.

### The potential of the voice

These OSL activities are all about using the potential of the voice – not just about practising English. OSL does require commitment and enthusiasm from the teacher: you have to take the learners with you. I have very occasionally experienced resistance from learners, but enthusiasm generally wins through; indeed, our feedback from learners testifies to their satisfaction (‘We have never experienced anything like this

before’). OSL is often the highlight of the learners’ learning experiences. Ultimately, speaking out and projecting the voice in an open space does wonders for learners’ self-confidence.

### A sample exercise

This exercise, also known as ‘Playing Devil’s Advocate’, is a personal favourite and best explained by looking at the script below. This exercise used *Romeo and Juliet*, but I have used it with many texts. Notice the questions asked are in an italic font, a different colour and bold. The questions do not relate to the original text, but have been superimposed:

’Tis torture, **’Tis what?** ’Tis torture, **’Tis what?** ’tis torture and not mercy: **and not what?** And not mercy: **Not what?** mercy: **What?** mercy: heaven is here, **what is here?** Heaven **Heaven is what?** Here **And???** Where Juliet lives **Who?** Juliet **Where Juliet what?** Where Juliet lives **Juliet what?** Lives.

The text is being shifted and deconstructed by a barrage of questions. It takes an age to run through the whole text in this way and is exhausting, so swap over at key points and share the misery of being on the receiving end of the questions! It’s great fun to watch – almost like ‘death by script’. This exercise relies on both parties’ familiarity with the text, but I have used famous speeches, poetry and texts. The advantage is it does not have to be learnt by either party. Both parties are very close to each other, which helps to heighten the intensity of mood as the exercise evolves.

The objective is for the questioner to deliver words at pace, but I play around with timing, thus allowing longer pauses, and walking away before answering and questioning. The questioner repeats questions and in that repetition can get louder and more intense so they are able to load them any way they like.

Key words and phrases are repeated by the responder and at different intensities, which is excellent for working on intonation, pitch and register. The key to this exercise is to keep on track and keep focused. Responders must keep alert and listen to what is being asked; likewise, the questioner must be clear and concise.

### Conclusion

OSL does require commitment and enthusiasm from the teacher: you have to take the students with you. The key point is that speaking out and projecting the voice in an open space does wonders for L2 students’ self-confidence. Give it a go!

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Students working with Shakespeare

# From rhymes to stories: discovering different genres in primary school

## Silvana Accardo uses literature with young children

Literature plays a significant role in the EFL class, not only because of its importance in developing linguistic skills but also because it enriches learners' understanding, both culturally and on a personal level. It broadens their views of the world and enhances their understanding of themselves and of others. Furthermore, literature provides valuable authentic material, rich linguistic input and effective stimuli to nourish readers' creativity, imagination and motivation.

This article shows how English and Spanish teachers join in the making of their projects and create cross-curricular instances of work at Escuela Cooperativa Mundo Nuevo in Buenos Aires, which involve the completion of meaningful final tasks. Based on the curricular guidelines for EFL and Spanish language and literature for primary school teachers in Argentina, this article will show some of the benefits of dealing with a variety of literary genres by including them progressively in the syllabus, from shorter units of text, such as rhymes and limericks, to longer texts such as fables, legends and fairy tales. The use of literature in the EFL class can foster a holistic and scaffolded reading approach by following a progression of literary genres.

## Theoretical framework

This article is based on the conception of literature as a beneficial medium that provides language use in context, brings authenticity to language learning, promotes the articulation between subject areas, raises both cultural and linguistic awareness, builds a community of learning and enables the production of meaningful tasks by students.

Literary texts are appropriate didactic materials to teach English as a foreign language during childhood. In fact, children learn and memorise best through the presentation of contextualised content in narratives. For instance, poems and nursery rhymes appeal to rhythm, intonation and rhyming patterns. Children are familiar with these types of texts since narrative is a fundamental characteristic in the development of the L1 (Beacon &



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Spoturno, 2016, p. 28).

Reading works of different literary genres offers students familiarity with many linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings. It also familiarises students with the literary conventions of each genre. Repetition within a text allows students to anticipate, make predictions and recognise the genre and some of the characters. By using classic fairy tales, cumulative stories, legends and fractured fairy tales, students can identify their familiarity, learn language in chunks and achieve metalinguistic awareness; that is to say, our students' ability to talk about, analyse and think about language independent of the concrete meaning of each word is enhanced.

It could be said that, when students are presented with a text, they can make connections to other written or oral texts or to illustrations, gestures, images, videos or their social and cultural contexts. Texts are interconnected, and students can reflect upon them and make connections. Teachers can work with the intertextuality of different classic fairy tales, nursery rhymes and legends, connecting cultures, oral tradition, films and, of course, our students' previous knowledge.

A way of achieving this is to work with the identifiable clusters of codes and literary conventions grouped together in recognisable patterns. This allows readers to anticipate, expect and locate them, and to cause them to seek out similarities and links between texts. Moreover, students can make links with their personal experiences and their own reading. Finally, students can produce their own texts by following conventions, repeating patterns or phrases and being creative with the language input that has been presented.

## The work at Escuela Cooperativa Mundo Nuevo

Based on Ministry of Education guidelines regarding the genres and types of texts proposed for each level, each grade works with selected genres each term. The articulated work among teachers of both languages activates the use of students' prior knowledge as children sometimes already know the story or the characters. Choosing stories, characters and themes that are familiar to them lowers the affective filter, makes the stories more memorable and comprehensible to learners, facilitates understanding and promotes students' confidence and motivation. Ellis and Brewster (2014) emphasise that stories provide opportunities for developing continuity in children's learning since they can be chosen to link English with other subject areas across the curriculum.

During the first four years of primary school, children study and work with various genres, as shown in Table 1.

Grade	Genres
1st Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Playground and nursery rhymes</li> <li>• Songs and chants</li> <li>• Traditional fairy tales</li> </ul>
2nd Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pirate stories</li> <li>• Stories about princes, princesses, knights and ogres</li> <li>• Traditional fairy tales</li> </ul>
3rd Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stories about dragons, dinosaurs and witches</li> <li>• Traditional fairy tales</li> </ul>
4th Grade	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legends and fables</li> <li>• Greek myths</li> </ul>

Table 1: Story types used in Grades 1–4

In this progression of content, students are exposed to traditional lullabies, chants and playground and nursery rhymes such as 'Humpty Dumpty' or 'Hickory dickory dock', typical verses that have been assisting grown-ups in pacifying and entertaining children, from birth to the age of about five, for years.

According to Opie (2004), these verses are suited to every practical purpose and introduce the limerick structure. Besides pacifying and entertaining children,

another effect is 'to implant the rhythms of the English language in minds too young to understand all the words' (Opie, 2004, p. 300). One of the benefits of working with rhymes is their easy recognition due to their universality. Brailoiu and Burling have concluded that children's rhymes around the world have 'strikingly similar metrical patterns and these may indeed be universal' (as cited in Arleo, 2004, p. 295).

When it comes to tales, their memorability and identifiability help students in constructing meaning and understanding. Literary conventions are recognisable in their patterns.

Finally, teachers create units of work and projects based on the above-mentioned selected reading material. The material includes different versions of classic fairy stories and fractured fairy tales with different points of view. For example, when dealing with 'The three little pigs', students also read 'The three little wolves and the big bad pig' by Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury and 'The true story of the three little pigs' by Jon Scieszka. Therefore, students are presented with a variety of points of view according to the characters being represented.

'Goldilocks and the three bears' is one of the central projects in Grade 1 (see Table 1). During that project students analyse and hypothesise on how texts interrelate with each other and spot the connections by working with texts such as 'Goldilocks and the three dinosaurs' by Mo Willems, 'Believe me, Goldilocks rocks!' by Nancy Loewen – which develops Baby Bear's point of view – or 'You and me' by Anthony Browne.

As teachers follow a task-based approach, each unit or term includes a final task with a tangible and meaningful activity and students' oral and written productions. Each project in each unit has a name or title to present the outcomes to the community and to students as well (see Figure 1).

The basis of work with literature at Mundo Nuevo School can be found in Ellis and Brewster's (2014) work on storytelling; they have stated that the purpose of stories is to provide a springboard for creating complete units of work that can involve students personally, creatively and actively in a whole-curriculum approach. Therefore, it could be said that following a holistic approach by incorporating literature into the EFL class sets our main goal: to have a meaningful purpose and a concrete outcome to foster students' motivation and self-efficacy and to contextualise their learning. Students are engaged in meaningful activities which require personal involvement on their part and that activate their own creativity and pleasure.

## Conclusion

It is of paramount importance to use



1st Grade: versions of 'Goldilocks'



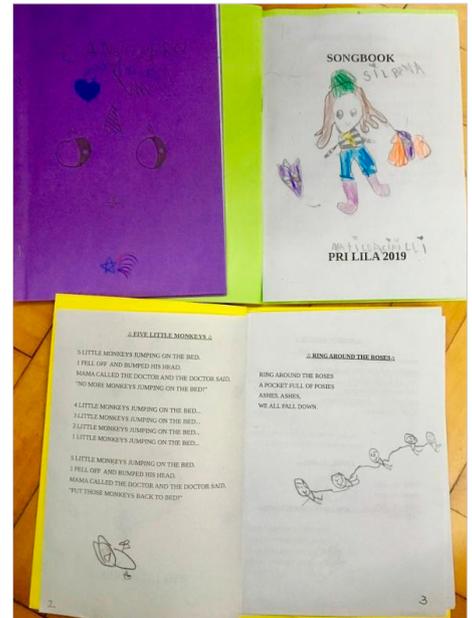
3rd Grade: 'My pet dragon'

students' cultural knowledge in the teaching and learning process. Literature brings familiarity to students, and the various genres raise a certain level of expectation towards what will happen in the stories and encourage readers' anticipation and their construction of meaning, from simple and shorter units of texts to more complex and longer pieces.

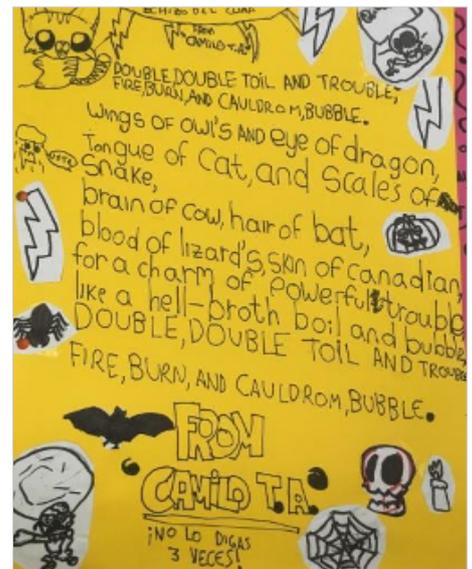
Undoubtedly, working with literature can stimulate children's imagination, develop literary competence, promote critical thinking skills and creativity and foster a love for reading. And by working with different genres, students can also develop their own reading habits and their own reading tastes.

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3rd Grade: spells

Figure 1: Final productions

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# Opportunities in online teaching with young learners

## Ross Thorburn shows the advantages of teaching online

As teachers around the world get used to teaching online, it's easy to focus on the drawbacks: the things that we used to be able to do offline but can no longer do online. Far less attention is paid to what we can do online that was never previously possible offline. In my experience as a teacher trainer in an online language school, this context holds just as many opportunities as it does limitations. In this short article I will discuss six opportunities unique to online young learner language classes and how to take advantage of these.

### Genuine communication

Many of the questions that teachers ask in face-to-face classes are questions to which teachers already know the answers. Because teachers and learners in offline classrooms inhabit the same physical space, questions about that space often tend to be 'display' questions. Questions like 'What's the weather like today?', 'What colours can you see?' and 'What fruit is that?' are unlikely to provoke any genuine communication because everyone in the classroom knows it is raining outside, the room is painted orange and the teacher is holding a flashcard of a banana. David Nunan pithily sums this up, writing that 'in



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communicative classes, interactions may, in fact, not be very communicative after all' (1987, p. 144).

Online teaching has the potential to change this. Because teachers and learners in online classes do not share the same physical space, questions about what learners can see, hear and feel are more likely to be genuine. The teacher does not know what the weather is like outside the learner's house, what the learner can see in their bedroom, or what fruit might be lying on the table in front of them. In an online class, the information shared by teachers and students is limited to what both can see on their computer screen. If teachers can ask questions about the learner's world beyond their computer screen, meaningful communication is bound to follow.

### Personalisation

Learners need to be involved as individuals if they are to stay sufficiently

“ *In online classes, the learner's entire house is a giant repository for personalised realia.* ”

motivated to successfully learn a language (Griffiths & Keohane, 2009). However, it can be challenging to get to know learners as individuals in offline classes. They sit in the same room in the same chairs, use the same coursebook, and in schools with uniforms, wear the same clothes. Personalisation can also be especially difficult at beginner level, where learners often lack the linguistic resources to discuss their feelings, ideas and experiences in detail. One way to personalise at this level is by using objects and items familiar to learners. In offline classes, the use of realia is often limited to items inside learners' pencil cases or the contents of the school's lost and found box.

In online classes, the learner's entire house is a giant repository for personalised realia. Instead of using pictures in the coursebook to learn clothes, online students can open their wardrobes and talk about their favourite outfits. Instead of relying on food flashcards, learners can fetch their favourite snacks from the fridge. Instead of retelling a story from a graded reader, learners can choose one of their own books and try to retell the story in English. Doing this in an offline class would require learners to travel to school in a removal van! Online lessons give us the opportunity to personalise topics using our learners' surroundings.

### Parental involvement

Much of what teachers do in face-to-face classrooms is invisible to our peers and managers (Bailey et al., 2001) and also to parents. Parental involvement in offline education is often limited to pushing kids into the classroom at the beginning of lessons or waiting by the door during the final five minutes of class time. Online teaching tips the scales in the other direction: many parents sit next to their children during class. This can be potentially catastrophic, as some parents translate instructions (often wrongly!) into their child's L1 or even answer on their



son's or daughter's behalf. This interference deprives some young learners of the confidence to speak in English without checking what they want to say with a parent.

But parental involvement can also be a blessing; students can bring their own teaching assistants to class who can help them focus, give assistance when required and manage behaviour. In group classes, parents can also act as language partners for young learners to practise language with. However, parents need to be carefully and respectfully managed if they are to work with lessons rather than against them. Setting clear roles and expectations for parents in online classes can help young learners receive the support they need, without supporting too much.

### Screen sharing

Why do offline classes centre typically around a whiteboard? Perhaps because the text on a whiteboard is virtually the only writing large enough for everyone in the class to see at the same time. This is unfortunate, because there is an abundance of learner-produced language in coursebooks and notebooks just waiting to be tapped into. Moving classes online means students can screen share their stories, drawings, photos and answers with the rest of the class. This opens up possibilities for personalisation, where learner-produced materials can take centre stage in place of generic coursebook content.

### Learning 'online' language

When I taught very young learners face-to-face, my first lessons with new groups of students always involved teaching phrases like 'stand up', 'sit down', 'put up your hand' and 'open your books'. These classroom commands are essential to offline classroom management. Online classroom management is just as important, but the language of classroom management is different. Learners need to know 'click', 'circle', 'find', 'move your webcam', 'ask your Mum', 'show me a ...', etc. from the

“ As teachers around the world get used to teaching online, it's easy to focus on the drawbacks: the things that we used to be able to do offline but can no longer do online. Far less attention is paid to what we can do online that was never previously possible offline. ”



beginning of an online English course if they are to fully participate in English. Anyone reading who has participated in a Zoom meeting recently will also have noticed how 'Can you hear me?' has become a greeting in the same way that 'Hello' is used to answer the phone.

Learners need to learn this language of online communication, and there is no better context in which to learn it than in online language classes. As Richards and Lockhart say, 'The kinds of functions for which learners use language within a class will vary according to the age of the learners, the content of the class and the kinds of activities and learning arrangements that are used' (2000, p. 195), and we must vary the language we teach accordingly.

### Teacher supervision and evaluation

Most online lessons are recorded, making them available for viewing at a later date. This has enormous potential advantages for teacher supervision. Observations in offline contexts are often hampered by the observer's paradox, where the presence of an observer changes what happens in class. This can result in supervisors observing lessons which bear 'little or no resemblance to what happens between teacher and class on a day-to-day basis' (Bolitho, 2013, p. 10) and teachers being evaluated on these outlier classes. Needless to say, evaluating a teacher on such a class is about as meaningful as writing a music review based on an album cover.

Online, supervisors often have the ability to search through a database of recordings of classes. This can allow managers to evaluate teachers using a wide range of data rather than on one single, high-stakes lesson, making evaluation more representative of 'real' teaching and learning and also taking the pressure off teachers from 'performing' a flawless lesson for an observer. Teachers could also be granted more autonomy in the supervision process, choosing some of the

“ Moving classes online means students can screen share their stories, drawings, photos and answers with the rest of the class. This opens up possibilities for personalisation... ”

lesson recordings they wish to be evaluated on, making a sometimes stressful and unfair process less traumatic and fairer.

### Conclusions

The recent exodus from face-to-face classrooms may have been one of the largest changes in education in the past century. As with any change of tectonic magnitude, those caught up in it will need time to adjust. And adjusting to online teaching will mean identifying the unique opportunities afforded to us by the online classroom and taking advantage of these.

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# Subscribe and share, part 3

## In the third part of this series, Hall Houston encourages teacher development through YouTube channels

This series of articles for *IATEFL Voices* aims to introduce some YouTube channels that can help you increase your professional knowledge. I encourage you to take a few minutes and explore the videos on these channels. If a channel takes your interest, you can subscribe to get updates of the latest videos, and share with other teachers in your PLN.

### Rania English

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/essar1979>

**Website:** [raniaeng.com](http://raniaeng.com)



Rania from Rania English

Rania English is a very impressive channel containing over 200 short videos for English teachers. The videos, created by Rania Essa, are visually appealing and offer a wealth of creative teaching ideas. The teaching material she introduces is ideal for teaching young learners and teenagers. Rania covers many aspects of English teaching, such as vocabulary, grammar, speaking, listening, reading and writing. In addition, she shares her favourite digital tools, such as Chatterpix and Wheel of Names. Recently, she has added videos



**Hall Houston** teaches at National Taipei University of Nursing and Health Sciences in Taiwan. He has a master's degree in Foreign Language Education from The University of Texas at Austin. He has given

presentations and workshops for Cambridge Assessment and the British Council. He is the author of articles and books about ELT, including *Provoking Thought* and *Creative Output*.

about online teaching. I like the videos on her 'Creative teaching ideas' playlist, especially the video entitled "'Would you rather'" questions fun warm up'.

### ELT Experiences

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/ELTExperiences>

**Website:** [eltexperiences.com](http://eltexperiences.com)



Martin from ELT Experiences

Martin Sketchley is the man behind the ELT Experiences YouTube channel and website. The videos here contain a lot of useful information on subjects ranging from taking the CELTA to teaching online to giving praise and criticism. Martin also provides book reviews of ELT titles and has interviews with other ELT experts. I enjoyed his two videos about teaching reading: 'Ten reading tips' and 'How to make reading more engaging'. These two

videos have some great ideas for making a reading class more interesting, such as dictogloss, gap fill and mastermind. I highly recommend his videos on CELTA to anyone who is taking the course, as he has 16 helpful videos on this subject.

### etacude

**YouTube:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFTdQsjZCVXDyB8jkCZPxZQ>



Eric from Etacude

Etacude is produced by Eric, who has been teaching in South Korea for several years. His videos contain a lot of games and activities, including speaking activities, writing activities and flashcard games. In addition, he has a number of holiday-themed videos, such as 'Birthday ideas', 'Halloween games', 'Valentine's Day games' and 'New Year's activities'.

I was intrigued to see a few topics that I don't see covered by other ELT YouTubers, including teacher confidence, handling a noisy class and project-based learning. Eric also includes some helpful information for teachers who are now teaching online. He gives tips on how to use Zoom and suggests some activities for teaching online.

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# Materials reviews

## Edited by Ruby Vurdien

In this issue of *Voices* we have four reviews of different themes. Hilary Livingston appreciates the fact that the research presented in *Teaching Business Discourse* gives the book an authentic global perspective of what teaching business discourse means. Eleni Nikiforou finds it interesting how research discussed in *Energizing Teacher Research* can motivate teachers to conduct investigation. Pete Clements says that *The Routledge Handbook of Teaching English to Young Learners* is a great resource for any young learner teacher. Clare Maas points out that *Professional Development of CLIL Teachers* is relevant for training teachers in any variant of CLIL. Enjoy your read!



**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.

## Teaching Business Discourse

Cornelia Ilie, Catherine Nickerson & Brigitte Planken  
Palgrave Macmillan, 2019  
197 pages  
ISBN: 978-3-319-96474-4



*Teaching Business Discourse* is a recent addition to the 'Research and Practice in Applied Linguistics' series. As the authors mention in the preface, this book is aimed at 'MA or PhD. students in Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Communication Studies and related fields and for professionals concerned with language and communication who are keen to extend their research experience.' As such, this book reads like a postgraduate text and assumes an audience that has teaching experience, or an interest in Applied Linguistics and discourse analysis.

The book presents an in-depth look at current research surrounding numerous aspects that influence the field of 'teaching business discourse', such as approaches and methodologies, projects and materials and the practice-classroom interface. It is clearly outlined into sections and chapters, with each chapter concluding with a further reading, case study and tasks piece. It is this sequence at the end of each chapter which really helps to link the understanding of the research with the goal of influencing best teaching practices. The case study introduces an activity or task that was presented to a group of business discourse students. This is followed by a 'task' for the reader, which involves applying what they have understood from the research presented, and analysing or discussing some key feature of the case study. For example, one of the case studies outlines a real-life business scenario in which students had to write an email to their supervisor. The related task was to compare two written student samples

from the case study in terms of genre analysis, feedback and cultural context.

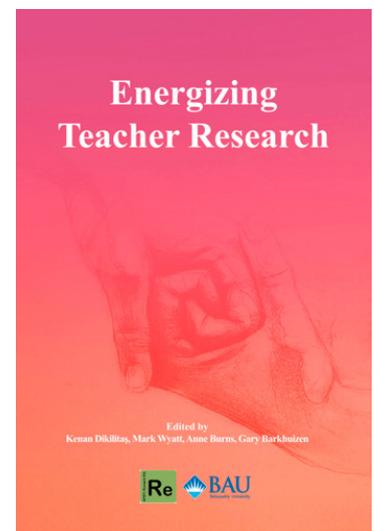
I think the format of this text would lend itself nicely to an online university course, where the case studies and tasks at the end of each chapter could be used as discussion points. Overall, I found the research and case studies presented in this book intriguing, to the extent that I went in search of an answer key at one point, only to be disappointed. I did appreciate the deliberate intent of the authors to include research and case studies from all around the world, giving this book an authentic global perspective of what teaching business discourse entails.

**Hilary Livingston**

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## Energizing Teacher Research

Kenan Dikilitaş, Mark Wyatt, Anne Burns, Gary Barkhuizen (Eds.)  
IATEFL Research SIG, 2019  
198 pages  
ISBN 978-1-912588-25-1



*Energizing Teacher Research* is the fifth volume of teacher research collections of the IATEFL Research SIG annual Conferences in Turkey. As the editors maintain in the introduction, the edited volume offers the opportunity to authors from Turkey and beyond to showcase their work, which focuses on ELT research and teaching. More specifically, *Energizing Teacher Research* concentrates on research carried out by English language teachers to have an insight into their own teaching; the motivation and enthusiasm that drive the teachers to conduct the research is what the editors define as 'energizing'.

The book is divided into four sections: Section 1: Mentoring teacher-researchers and teachers; Section 2: Developing as a pre-service teacher through research; Section 3: Supporting teachers' continuing professional developmental needs; and Section 4: Supporting learners and learning. It has a total of 25 chapters that fall under the four aforementioned sections. The chapters showcase a wide variety of methodologies and topic areas investigated by the teachers in specific contexts.

Particularly interesting to me is how the research discussed in the book was the result of energising teachers to do research, as the editors explain in the introduction, while reading the book and the research presented can function as an energiser for teachers, especially novices (to both teaching and research), to conduct research in their own practice with their students. The fact that this research was mostly local can also function as motivation for people in other contexts to use research in their English language teaching.

Another insightful aspect is that most chapters first describe the research and then discuss the reflections of the teacher. I find this to be useful for teachers who would like to start conducting research into their teaching practice.

On the whole, *Energizing Teacher Research* provides a collection of research undertaken by English language

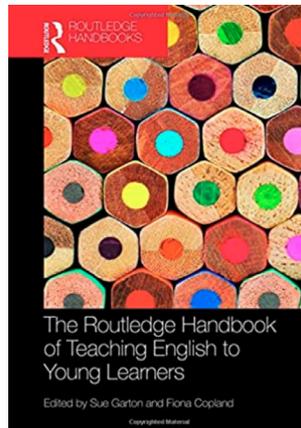
teachers in their own classrooms. The book is useful for ELT practitioners who want to apply research in their own practice, and also for those who would like to find out more information about the topics each teacher-researcher discusses.

**Eleni Nikiforou**

*English Language Instructor, University of Cyprus, Cyprus*  
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### The Routledge Handbook of Teaching English to Young Learners

S. Garton & F. Copland (Eds.)  
Routledge, 2018  
544 pages  
ISBN 9781138643772



This handbook provides an overview of teaching English to young learners across a wide variety of international contexts. The editors state that the volume outlines key issues in young learner teaching and offers a 'plausible research agenda moving forward'. It achieves this for the most part, although there will inevitably be gaps given the scope of the book.

The handbook is divided into six parts. It begins by framing 'macro issues' in the teaching of young learners, which include language policy, debates about a critical period for language learning and teacher education. The volume then summarises issues in a YL classroom context, notably classroom management, translanguaging and differentiation. These are covered in detail, and suggestions for further reading are a useful inclusion.

Part 3 includes summaries of research into young learner pedagogy. These include skills development and selected approaches such as project-based learning. There is also a welcome overview of critical pedagogy and teaching English to children. Overall, the topics have been well chosen, although the chapter on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) could have framed the method in relation to connected approaches such as English Medium Instruction (EMI).

Part 4 explores technology and the young learner curriculum. Technology-related chapters focus on gaming, classroom technology and mobile learning. A chapter focusing exclusively on low-/no-tech environments may have added balance. The chapters on materials evaluation and assessment are particularly useful for practitioners.

Part 5 focuses on researching young learners. It would be useful for those doing further studies or training courses on teaching young learners. Part 6 offers regional perspectives on the teaching of young learners in Africa, East Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Pacific. This section could stretch to a handbook in itself, but the summaries are well-collated and provide useful insights into each context.

This is a great resource for any young learner teacher, especially those undertaking further studies or research in this field. It is a relatively comprehensive volume, although it would be good to see further contexts covered in a second edition. For example, teaching English to young learners in international schools is rarely mentioned despite being relevant in various chapters.

Nevertheless, there are plenty of useful and engaging

summaries in this handbook, which is well-organised, current (pre-Brexit, pre-COVID) and accessible.

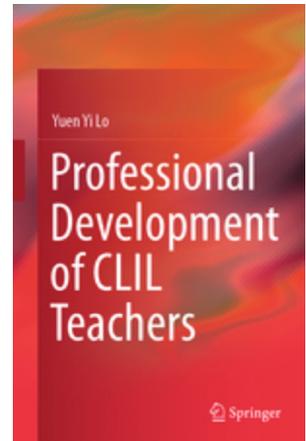
**Pete Clements**

*Freelance*

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### Professional Development of CLIL Teachers

Yuen Yi Lo  
Springer Singapore, 2020  
154 pages  
ISBN: 978-9811524240



This book discusses research-supported frameworks for CLIL teachers' professional development (PD). Accordingly, it is not an entirely practical resource, but takes an academic approach, dividing contents into four parts.

Part I, 'Fundamental issues', defines CLIL and justifies being 'inclusive' with the terminology. Thus, the book is relevant for training teachers in any variants of CLIL (e.g. EMI, immersion). The introduction provides a literature review which highlights underexplored questions regarding training syllabi for CLIL teachers.

Part II Model 1, 'Professional development through cross-curricular collaboration', reviews teacher collaboration, synthesising research (mainly from Hong Kong) into various forms of implementation, with a focus on cooperation between subject and language teachers. It also presents two empirical studies in detail. These illustrate benefits of collaboration for CLIL teachers' PD and suggestions for overcoming potential problems, including guidance from authorities/leaders, extra personnel and more training.

Part III Model 2, 'Professional development programme for CLIL teachers', discusses CLIL training workshops and aspects reported to make them effective. The focus is on training subject teachers to integrate language teaching into their lessons, perhaps less relevant for language teachers moving into CLIL. The ideas include observations and planning sequences. Yi Lo also presents an in-depth study from Hong Kong on the effectiveness of a training course incorporating these points. The results endorse tailoring PD to teachers, context and discipline.

Finally, Part IV, 'An integrated model for CLIL teachers' professional development' proposes a holistic model for CLIL teachers' PD, combining the two previous models. This may be the most useful part for trainers seeking an effective all-round approach to preparing teachers for CLIL. It summarises the models from Parts II and III, including their benefits and drawbacks, and some readers may wish to go straight to this chapter. This model comprises three components (workshops, school-based collaboration, and sharing sessions) which are described in suitable depth, with practical ideas and specific examples of each component.

To summarise, Parts I to III detail theoretical models of PD and empirical evidence supporting their efficacy, which may not appeal to everyone. However, Part IV is an interesting and shorter read, which gives practical input on a model supported by the author's research, and which could be useful to teacher trainers or school authorities in CLIL contexts.

**Clare Maas**

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# Spotlight on the Business English SIG

**Evan Frendo and Dana Poklepovic, BESIG Joint Coordinators, outline the activities of the SIG**



BESIG's mission is to link, develop and support Business English language teaching professionals worldwide. We do this in a number of ways, all of which are explained in detail on our website, [www.besig.iatefl.org](http://www.besig.iatefl.org).

## Members-only area – a serious place for professionals

If you have been a BESIG member for a while, going into the BESIG members-only area on the website is a bit like going down memory lane. It is so easy to start browsing and just drift from memory to memory: that amazing Conference venue in Monaco in 2005; that wonderful plenary talk by **David Graddol** at the 2007 Berlin Conference; influential names like **David Cotton** and **Nick Brieger**, now sadly no longer with us, who contributed so much to the way we think about Business English; countless friends and colleagues who shared their ideas and their experiences over the years.

But it is not only about memory lane. This is also a serious place for professionals. It is a place to learn, to explore, to discover, to find out about Business English. There are so many resources, so many perspectives, so many suggestions, that it is hard to know where to begin. *Business Issues* (our newsletter); *Conference Selections* (summaries of selected Conference talks); slides and handouts from Conference presentations; webinar recordings... they are all there. I suggest you have a look. If you are serious about Business English, you will not regret it.

## Break room

BESIG has members all over the world who work in a variety of quite different contexts. Many never manage to make it to a face-to-face event, but there are other ways to interact. Open to anyone with an interest in Business English teaching (not just members), the Break Room is a place to come if you would like to meet up online in an informal



**Dana Poklepovic** is a communication skills, Business English trainer and certified ontological and executive coach. She runs a consulting firm that provides training and coaching services to companies and freelance professionals in Argentina.



**Evan Frendo** has been active in Business English and ESP since 1993, mostly in the corporate sector. His *methodology* book for teachers, *How to Teach Business English* (Longman, 2005), is used in teacher training all over the world. Email: [evan.frendo@e4b.de](mailto:evan.frendo@e4b.de)

setting. The system is quite simple. Every couple of weeks a link is posted on the website. Just click the link and you will join a group of BE people chatting about whatever they want – there is no set topic. Sometimes the group is quite big and splits into smaller groups. The Break Room is normally open for an hour, but people come and go as they please – some stay for ten minutes, just to say hi, and some stay on after the room is 'officially' closed and continue to catch up with friends or make new ones.

## 'Meet a member' blog – showcase what you do

Another way to meet BESIG members is via the blog, and here our 'meet a member' blog post is ideal. If you are interested in finding out more about the sort of people who join BESIG, this is a great place to start. And if you would like to tell people about what you do, just get in touch. This is your chance to showcase what you do.

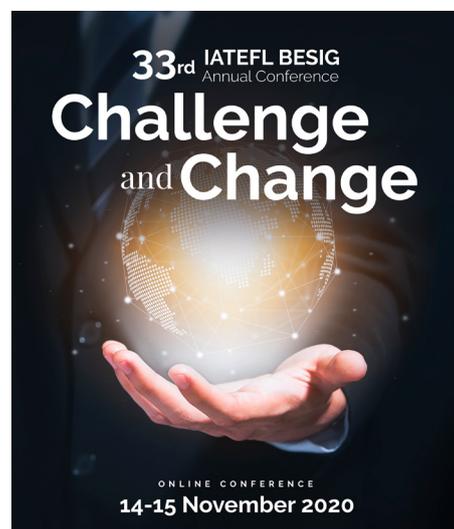
## Annual Conference 2020

A lot of BE professionals have been wondering about this year's BESIG Annual Conference, and it will probably come as no surprise that due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the BESIG committee has decided to replace this year's Annual Conference with an online Conference. The details are as follows:

- Dates: 14–15 November 2020
- Format: a variety of concurrent slots will be available, including invited plenaries, talks, workshops, panel discussions, sponsored sessions, and informal break-out rooms.
- Call for papers: See the website.

Priority for slots will be given to members and sponsors.

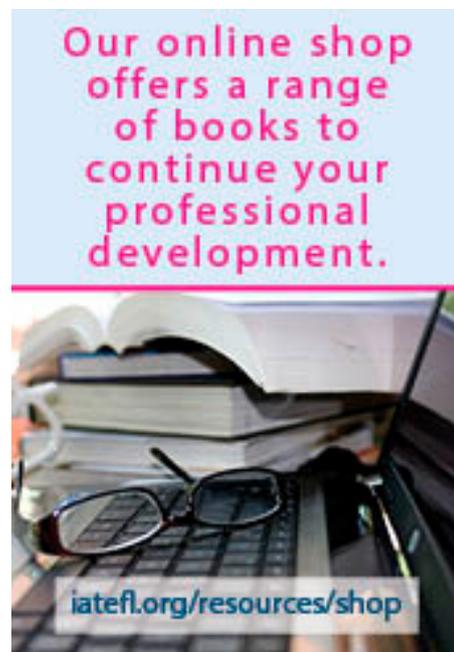
- Scholarships: The Maria Keller Scholarship for first-time speakers at a BESIG Conference, which includes a one-year membership to IATEFL, will be awarded as usual.
- Registration: All participants will be required to register for the Conference, and access will require a password. IATEFL members' registration will be free, whereas non-members will be required to pay a small fee of 10GBP. Please note that as we go ahead with the planning for this Conference, we will be placing regular updates on the IATEFL BESIG website.



Register online by: 01 November 2020  
[besig.iatefl.org](http://besig.iatefl.org)



[besig@iatefl.org](mailto:besig@iatefl.org)



# Spotlight on the Teacher Development SIG

**Tyson Seburn, TDSIG Coordinator, outlines the activities of the SIG**

## TDSIG

I've been lucky as Coordinator of the Teacher Development SIG for three years to collaborate on many TDSIG projects alongside some extraordinary people. Our TDSIG committee includes **Serkan Aras, Fiona Mauchline, Cecilia Lemos, Chris Farrell, Christian Tiplady, Tania Meridew, James Taylor, Mike Harrison, Adam Simpson, and Irene Varela.**

We're into individualised, localised and sustainable teacher development. Our community encourages us all to undertake activities that work for us, our individual contexts and our individual spaces on the teaching continuum. Like most educators, we struggle with the duality of value for membership and open-access resources, though I believe we mitigate this challenge in a fair way. Having said this, we continuously reflect on and re-evaluate our choices to remain current and relevant for our evolving membership. Here are some.

### TDLinkup, our curated ezine



Our newly redesigned and relaunched digital zine, delivered to member inboxes four to six times

per year, connects our present with our future by examining themes (for example, July was 'Teacher well-being', while September is 'Teaching online revisited') and collecting the most engaging and relevant articles, videos, podcasts, and social chats for you to browse through at your leisure. For more info: [tdsig.org/publications](https://tdsig.org/publications).



**Tyson Seburn**, Coordinator of IATEFL TDSIG, is an EAP instructor and Assistant Academic Director at the University of Toronto. He holds an MA Educational Technology & TESOL (University of Manchester). His interests include critical and inclusive pedagogies, particularly in materials.

### TDAJ, the Teacher Development Academic Journal



To fill the gap in open-access research on teacher development, the TDAJ publishes original and accessibly written

peer-reviewed articles from first-time and more experienced teacher-writers. We aim to make publishing your article a process that you can value and learn from – rather than feel scared of – as part of your teacher development. The content covers a rich cross-section of current themes in TD for when we want something a bit more academically focussed to bury our thoughts in. For Volume 1: [tdsig.org/tdaj-v1n1](https://tdsig.org/tdaj-v1n1).

### Developod, our TD podcast



Listen to discussions about ELT with a TD focus between our engaging hosts, our members, and sometimes well-known guests.

Recent episodes feature suggestions about teaching online (Episode 19); conversations on teacher well-being and burnout (Episodes 20 and 21); and interviews between TDSIG membership winners (more on that later...) and ELT practitioners they look up to (Episodes 22, 23 and counting). Subscribe wherever you get your podcasts. For more info: [tdsig.org/developod](https://tdsig.org/developod).

### TDLIVE, our online chats



Our online community meets up to chat synchronously about different aspects of teacher development.

Most recently, as the pandemic began and redefined our affordances, we met every Tuesday on Twitter using the hashtag #SIGtweetmeet to connect with each other over a brektime chat about themes from goals to EAP pre-sessionals to keeping everyone engaged. Our TDLIVE is a community-driven experience. Find out more: [tdsig.org/tdsiglive](https://tdsig.org/tdsiglive).

### Scholarships, our giveaways

Every year, we provide scholarship opportunities to members (and a few lucky non-members). For 2021, we're offering two full scholarships to the IATEFL Conference in Harrogate, one for TDSIG members and one for early-career teachers who are non-members. The winners receive £1,000 and tickets to attend our PCE and the Conference itself, in exchange for being our eyes and ears on the ground. Additionally, we run annual competitions to win individual IATEFL and TDSIG membership (I mentioned some of what this involves in the Developod section!) and usually free spots for members at joint events on which we collaborate with different associations (e.g. InnovateELT 2019 and next year's ELT Malta Conference). For more info: [tdsig.org/scholarship](https://tdsig.org/scholarship) and [tdsig.org/tdsiglocal](https://tdsig.org/tdsiglocal).

### PCE 2021, on alternative forms of TD



Our annual IATEFL Pre-Conference Event was deferred like everything else to 2021, so there is plenty of time for you to get up-to-date about

what we're offering and register for this event. We're truly connecting to our roots by exploring alternative forms of TD and addressing localised, teacher-driven, sustainable TD. For more info: [tdsig.org/pce](https://tdsig.org/pce).

[tdsig@iatefl.org](mailto:tdsig@iatefl.org)

# Spotlight on the Young Learners and Teenagers SIG

The members of the YLTSIG committee outline the activities of the SIG



Linking, developing and supporting YL ELT professionals worldwide during the pandemic

The IATEFL Young Learners and Teenagers Special Interest Group (YLTSIG) Committee is a geographically dispersed team of volunteers with members in Brazil, Chile, France, Malta, Morocco, Norway, Poland, Thailand, Turkey and the United States. During our YLTSIG virtual planning meeting in early April, it was particularly sobering to share the impact of the pandemic and lockdown in these different contexts. With this in mind, we set about brainstorming ways to link, develop and support the global YL ELT community during this highly challenging period. This brief article shares what we have been doing over the past few months and hopefully provides inspiration and ideas for your own ELT work with children and teenagers.

## Emergency remote teaching mini interviews

We were contacted in early April by primary ELT specialist **Claire Venables** to provide feedback on an excellent new playbook for teaching English to primary-aged children in an emergency remote context. This had been rapidly developed by Claire and some of the Active English team in Brazil, with additional essential e-safety content by **Jan Dobson**. You can freely download the digital version here.

The playbook inspired the YLTSIG Committee to engage with practitioners around the world via short interviews, sharing their experiences, advice and tips for emergency remote YL English teaching. This uplifting initiative was spearheaded by YLTSIG Social Media Coordinator, **Stephanie Xerri Agius** with superb support from YLTSIG Digital Coordinator **Sinem Daridere**, outgoing YLTSIG Public Relations Coordinator **Bruno Andrade** as well as

YLTSIG Joint Events Coordinators **Helen Chapman** and **Maria Jesus Inostroza**. Together, they interviewed 30 YL English language teachers and teacher educators in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, Iran, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Morocco, Spain and the UK. The images on this page capture some of the interactions and you can watch all of the interviews by visiting the YLTSIG YouTube channel. Please subscribe, like and comment if the interviews resonate with you and your own context.

YLTSIG Emergency Remote Teaching. Interview with Claudio Puentes



YLTSIG Emergency Remote Teaching. Interview with Jen Dobson



YLTSIG Emergency Remote Teaching. Interview with Kawtar Jannane

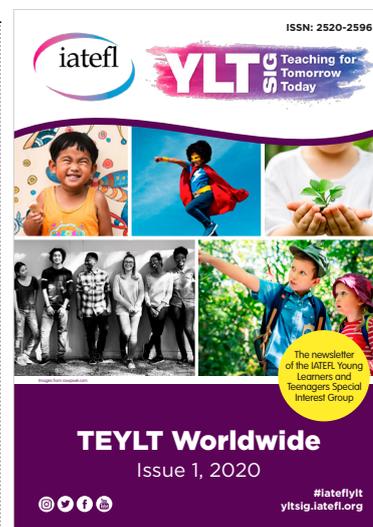


YLTSIG Emergency Remote Teaching. Interview with Claire Venables



## TEYLT Worldwide special open access edition

The YLTSIG Committee unanimously agreed to make a special edition of *TEYLT Worldwide* open access, to provide a key source of professional development for YL ELT professionals. Feeling invigorated by recent webinars and blog posts by our sister SIG, the IATEFL Materials Writing SIG, on better reflecting realities of marginalised groups, YLTSIG Coordinator **David Valente** contributed a special appendix of materials for upper secondary ELT, the goal being to help address this major gap in secondary ELT classroom practice in a concrete way. You can also download the publication and the teaching materials appendix from the



Resources page of the newly designed and fully updated YLTSIG website.

## Web Conference for early-career YL teachers

During the pandemic period, we had several requests for support from YL English language teachers in the initial years of their careers. The YLTSIG Committee therefore decided to focus this year's YLTSIG annual Web Conference on the needs of this group of ELT professionals. The theme is 'Ages, life stages and educational spaces: supporting early career teachers', and the dates of this free online event are **27–29 November**. We are thrilled to share that the plenary speakers are **Paula Rebollo, Vinnie Nobre, Katherine Bilsborough, Jayaprakesh S. and Dan Vincent**. Please visit the YLTSIG social media channels for more information about the conference and how to register.

**Web Conference 27 - 29 November 2020 – Call for speakers**  
Ages, life stages and educational spaces: supporting early career teachers

Are you an early career teacher (ECT) or a highly experienced teacher (HET)?

YLTSIG is looking for speakers to give 30-min talks (25 mins input + 5 mins Q&A) who are either:  
ECTs - sharing a TEYL area they have been focusing on  
or  
HETs - sharing a TEYL area that would especially benefit ECTs

- Please submit a title (max 10 words) and abstract (max 60 words) for your proposed talk in Word to [yltsigevents@iatefl.org](mailto:yltsigevents@iatefl.org) by 15 August 2020
- Speakers who presented at the 2019 YLTSIG Web Conference are not eligible to present in 2020
- Each talk must focus on one age range (early years or primary or lower secondary or upper secondary)
- Speakers are required to attend a rehearsal in early November
- Slides and digital handouts must be submitted a week in advance of the event
- Promotion of a product or service is not permitted (with the exception of the event sponsor)
- Proposal decisions made by the IATEFL YLTSIG events team will be considered as final

[yltsig@iatefl.org](mailto:yltsig@iatefl.org)

# Spotlight on the Research SIG

**Ana Inés Salvi, ReSIG Coordinator, outlines the activities of the SIG**



We hope you are well. We'd like to share the latest ReSIG news, initiatives and developments with you. First of all, a big welcome to **Richard Smith**, who has joined the committee as Publications Officer. We are delighted to have him back on board. Next is a list of news regarding events and publications, and a call for contributions.

## China BC webinar in partnership with IATEFL SIGs

In July, ReSIG took part in a webinar organised by China British Council in partnership with IATEFL SIGs. ReSIG's session, delivered by **Celia Antoniou**, focused on 'Tips for developing engaging online pedagogic tasks'.

## MA ELT Dissertation Quick Fire Presentation Event online

The MA Dissertation Quick Fire Presentation Event was held online this year via the IATEFL Adobe Connect platform. This was a great opportunity for MA ELT students to share their work with fellow students from a wide range of universities in an informal way, to network and to learn more about how ReSIG can contribute to staying connected and up to date in the field.



**Ana Inés Salvi** is Lecturer in Education (TESOL) at the University of East Anglia, UK. Her research interests include pedagogy for autonomy, practitioner research, exploratory practice, criticality development, and arts-informed research methods.

## Online discussions

ReSIG is planning a number of online discussions for 2020–21, hosted on our Yahoo group discussion list. The first, from October 5–16, will ask '(How) do teachers engage with published research?' We will consider questions such as why teachers do or don't read research, what kind of research teachers might find useful ... and what might need to change.

A second online discussion, from 18–29 January, will examine 'Teachers becoming researchers'. In this discussion, we'll look at how teachers might manage and navigate new roles and identities. More to follow about these, and subsequent discussions, on the ReSIG website.

## Publications

In July, ReSIG, in collaboration with the British Council, published a new e-book: *Horizontes 1: ELT Teacher-research in Latin America*. Edited by **Darío Luis Banegas, Magdalena De Stefani, Paula Rebolledo, Carlos Rico Troncoso** and **Richard Smith**, this is a collection of teacher-research reports by teachers from Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, together with a report on the ReSIG-supported 'Teachers Research!' Conference in Santiago

de Chile. Beginning the collection is 'A very short introduction to action research for teachers of English as a second language' by **Julian Edge** and mentors on the British Council's Aptis for Teachers Action Research Award Scheme. The book is free to download from the ReSIG website <http://resig.weebly.com/books.html>.

ReSIG is delighted to announce its new publication, *ELT Research in Action: Bringing Together Two Communities of Practice* (Mackay, Birello & Xerri, 2020), a collection of essays based on presentations at the 2019 ELTRIA Conference in Barcelona. It covers a diverse range of topics relevant to practising teachers, from coursebooks to teacher self-perceptions, and is available to download, free of charge from the ReSIG website via this link: <http://resig.weebly.com/publications.html>.

## Call for papers for ELT Research newsletter

We are happy to announce that a new call for contributions for the *ELT Research* newsletter (IATEFL ReSIG publication) is out. We welcome articles at the intersection of pedagogy, reflective practice and teacher research. If you are interested or would like to share this call with your colleagues, please visit our website at: <http://resig.weebly.com/write-an-article-for-elt-research.html>.

## Supporting teacher research in Africa Online

To find out more about this project and watch the teacher-researchers involved in the project sharing their stories (NEW) please visit our website at: <http://resig.weebly.com/resig-sig-project-with-africa-tesol.html>.

## ReSIG presence on social media

Stay updated with our regular news and initiatives by following IATEFL ReSIG official accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



The annual MA Dissertation Quick Fire Presentation Event, normally held at the University of Warwick, moved online for 2020.

# Teacher Associations and ELT research initiatives: who and how?

**Elena Ončevska Ager and Loreto Aliaga Salas outline research initiatives around the world**

## The work of IATEFL's Research SIG: What else is there?

Teacher research (TR) is a professional development route which has been attracting more attention recently, with a number of TR projects taking place globally. By TR we mean a systematic exploration of teachers' own professional contexts, aimed at improving teachers' understandings of their work (Borg, 2013) and, by extension, the quality of their students' learning. Some of the more popular forms of TR include action research (Burns, 2010), exploratory practice (Hanks, 2017) and exploratory action research (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018).

IATEFL's Research SIG has gone a long way towards promoting TR as a valuable form of teacher learning by offering appropriate mentoring for teachers via the global Electronic Village Online (EVO) scheme, and by creating fora for teachers to discuss their TR projects (for example, TR conferences have been held in Argentina, Chile and Turkey) and to network with like-minded professionals. A good amount of this activity has been recorded in publications freely available on the Research SIG website.

As part of our outreach activity within the Research SIG, we were curious to learn about other ELT research initiatives taking place globally, especially those led by teacher associations. As outgoing outreach co-coordinators, in this piece we report on ELT research projects led by or embedded in the following teacher associations: AINET (India), NATE (Russia), INGED (Turkey), APIBA (Argentina), RICELT (Chile) and Africa TESOL. We also review a TR SIG recently established as part of the BBELT international teacher conference (Mexico).

### AINET (India)

AINET is in its third year of running year-long projects to support



**Elena Ončevska Ager** is co-editor of IATEFL's Research SIG newsletter *ELT Research*. She teaches language teacher education courses at Ss Cyril and Methodius University, North Macedonia. Her research interests also include motivation and professional well-being.



**Loreto Aliaga Salas** is IATEFL ReSIG's PCE and Events organiser. She is a teaching fellow in TESOL at the University of Leeds. Her research interests include in-service teachers' professional development and curriculum innovation.

teachers in carrying out teacher research as part of their Teacher Research Initiative (TRI). According to AINET's representative, Krishna Dixit, more than 120 teachers from various parts of the country have signed up to TRI to receive support in conducting exploratory and action research, writing up their reports (compilations of these will be published on AINET's website) and presenting them at conferences. The teachers have carried out research in a range of ELT topics, including teaching grammar and vocabulary, using textbook materials and preventing cheating in examinations. AINET received partial financial support for the first two years of TRI from two British Council schemes: English Language Teaching Research Partnerships (ELTReP) and Aptis Action Research Mentoring Scheme (AARMS).

AINET also offers ELT research support to pre-service teachers based in India, by helping them identify and access appropriate literature and develop their research methodologies. Expert research advice is also in place for in-service teachers through mentoring schemes specifically designed to support teachers to prepare, deliver and write up their conference presentations. The outcome of these efforts are two AINET conference proceedings volumes: Mane et al. (2015) and Dixit et al. (2016).

### NATE (Russia)

NATE's representative, Aida Rodomanchenko, reports that their

Association is affiliated with a number of independent associations across Russia which have been involved in research initiatives. Most of these are undertaken by university teachers of English, often with limited funding.

Novosibirsk Association of English Language Teachers (NOVELTA) explored university-based writing instructors' skills. The outcome of this research project was an in-service training course on developing EAP writing skills in Russian and in English, as well as an online course entitled *English for Writing Research Articles*.

Omsk Association of English Language Teachers (OmELTA) investigated university students' media literacy by piloting an integration of media literacies content in an ELT course. The students were supported in analysing different kinds of British and American mass media content.

Finally, Saratov English Language Teachers' Association (SELTA) is currently involved in a research project aimed at understanding the struggling (i.e. the so-called 'bad') language learner. A group of teachers are involved in researching practical methodologies that might aid the learning of less-successful students. They try out various activities and share their insights with a larger teaching community, creating a bank of resources that other teachers can borrow from and/or be inspired by.

### INGED (Turkey)

Sponsored by the US Embassy Ankara Office, INGED were able to use a small grant to run a project to support a group of pre-service teachers in the final year of their studies. INGED's representative, Nazlı Güngör, reports on the different sociocultural settings across the country, which result in very different quality and range of support for prospective teachers. This is why they approached pre-service teachers based in diverse sociocultural environments, selected a group of 24, and got them together for a two-day face-to-face professional development event.

To prepare for the event, INGED

conducted a needs analysis to learn about the types of support the group expected to get. They learned that the group needed more practical teaching experience in the diverse sociocultural K–12 settings in Turkey. They also appeared to need support with developing their (teacher) language proficiency, as well as with syllabus/lesson plan/materials design.

INGED invited local and international ELT academics and experts to deliver group discussions, individual Q&A sessions and whole-class activities on a range of topics. Participant feedback suggested that the pre-service teachers appreciated the opportunity to engage with peers and experts in the area, while being able to practise their English throughout the event.

To follow up on this project, INGED are considering studying the participants' development as newly qualified teachers. They are also thinking about carrying out a similar project for different and/or larger pre-service teacher populations.

In line with their belief that collaboration is central to (professional) learning, INGED are determined to continue creating such opportunities for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

### APIBA (Argentina)

Lidia Casalini and Maria Marta Mora report on a research initiative undertaken by APIBA – the setting up of their Teacher Research special interest group (TR SIG). For them, it all started with their participation in IATEFL Research SIG's 2017 series of online workshops entitled 'Classroom-based Research Electronic Village Online' (EVO), led by Richard Smith and Paula Rebollo, together with a team of ten volunteer mentors.

Later that year, the topic of classroom-based research attracted English language teachers from Latin America to the Second Annual Conference for Teacher Research in ELT, held in Argentina. It was then that the idea to create a platform for ELT professionals to share their TR experiences, for their own and for their students' benefit, came into being.

In 2019, the first Argentinian TR SIG was created as part of APIBA. The committee comprised Lidia

Casalini and Maria Marta Mora as joint coordinators, and three experienced teacher-researchers: Rubén Mazzei, Mariana Serra, and Mercedes Foligna. This initiative was supported by members of IATEFL's Research SIG (Richard Smith, Darío Banegas, Kenan Dikilitas and Ana Salvi), who made themselves available to the SIG via live streaming.

The SIG attracts in-service and pre-service teachers from Buenos Aires and from other Argentinian provinces; 16 teachers were actively involved in 2019. Taking into consideration teachers' busy schedules and the distance constraints, the SIG organises monthly videoconferencing meetings. There's also a website for members to share content in supportive ways beyond their real-time sessions.

### RICELT (Chile)

Founded in 2014, RICELT is a network of Chile-based ELT professionals: undergraduate and postgraduate students, school teachers, teacher educators and researchers. Its aim is to identify and consolidate local expertise while bridging the gap between ELT research and practice.

RICELT's work has included organising national teacher conferences and national MA student conferences, as well as supporting TR initiatives across the country. More recently, working in collaboration with the British Council, they ran a mentorship scheme to help develop teachers' skills in writing for publication so that teachers can join more international ELT debates.

RICELT are active on Twitter and Facebook, promoting their upcoming projects. Their website contains reports of past events as well as a wealth of references to ELT research conducted in Chile, including a database of MA and PhD theses.

One of RICELT's main challenges is providing funding so their events can continue to be accessible to their growing membership. Also, their non-hierarchical structure has proved to be difficult for some prospective members to buy into.

### Africa TESOL

Working together with IATEFL's Global Issues SIG and Research SIG, in 2019, Africa TESOL, the international association of English teachers in Africa, organised a pre-conference

event (PCE) on the topic of classroom research.

As a follow-up to the PCE, Amira Salama, Africa TESOL Vice President, reports that a Research Project Group was formed as part of Africa TESOL, which resulted in 26 teachers from eight African countries conducting research in their respective classroom contexts. The teachers were previously mentored by Africa TESOL and the Research SIG; this included attending webinars and working closely with assigned mentors.

Most of the participating teachers were new to TR and reported satisfaction at being part of the project. Four teachers' video testimonies are available on Africa TESOL's webpage. Africa TESOL and the Research SIG are preparing a joint publication of the teacher researchers' accounts of investigating their contexts and the professional development which ensued in the process.

### BBELT (Mexico)

Unlike the above teacher associations which are or have been involved in promoting ELT research, BBELT is an international conference hosted in Mexico, within which, in February 2020, a Teacher Research SIG (BBELT-TRSIG) was established. In fact, the establishment of BBELT-TRSIG was envisaged as a follow-up to the joint initiative between British Council Mexico and the Mexican Ministry of Education entitled 'Champion Teachers'. This programme supported school teachers in developing exploratory action research skills.

The aim of BBELT-TRSIG is to create an exploratory action research community of practice, within which ELT practitioners could share insights and develop together. BBELT-TRSIG is sponsored by British Council Mexico and coordinated by Sergio Durand. The committee also includes Claudia Brieño, Alejandra de la Rocha, Omar Rugerio, Laura Sagert and Elias Olvera. BBELT-TRSIG has so far attracted more than 200 teachers from across Mexico, working in a variety of contexts; membership is free.

So far, this SIG has organised an initial webinar led by Richard Smith and entitled 'An invitation to research'. They are in the process of publishing their second newsletter

and are negotiating collaborations with other TR SIGs, such as IATEFL's ReSIG and Argentina's APIBA Teacher Research SIG. They are planning to run a webinar series during the pandemic and are hoping to be able to organise a pre-conference event at BBELT 2021.

### Moving ahead

All the ELT research initiatives above emerge from the need for contextualised professional development. A common theme among the projects seems to be that they operate in contexts of limited funding, and very much in bottom-up fashion, i.e. recognising the importance of localising research, and using local expertise to tackle issues relevant to their unique contexts (Banegas, 2018; Smith & Kuchah, 2016). These projects give voice to those who would otherwise remain unheard and make it possible for local research to inform their

local contexts.

We hope that this report will inspire other associations to start their own ELT research projects or research SIGs and/or publicise their existing ELT research-related projects. There may well be ELT research initiatives within other teacher associations that we are currently not aware of. If so, IATEFL's Research SIG would be delighted to hear about them and embrace any networking prospects that such encounters may result in.

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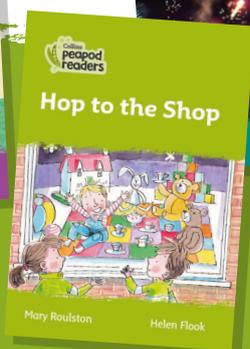
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# From the Associates

## IATEFL's Associates Representative Lou McLaughlin brings Associate news



Welcome to the Associates section of *Voices*!

We hope this finds you all safe and well during these strange and challenging times as we all feel the effects of the pandemic irrespective of where we are in the world. We asked our Associates how they have been responding to the impact of this crisis and we will be sharing their stories over the next few editions.

As always, if you would like to share updates and reports on the work that your Associate is doing, please get in touch with me at [associaterep@iatefl.org](mailto:associaterep@iatefl.org).

## APC-ELI (Cuba) responds to COVID-19

The Cuban Teachers' Association, APC-ELI, has been as active as possible within this pandemic period, complying with its association motto, 'Committed to professional development and opportunities for all Cuban EFL teachers'. This short article will outline what the Association has been doing during the pandemic period.

### Workshops

When the first rumors about the possible extension of the pandemic began, the APC-ELI board had already met to discuss rescheduling the planning for the implementation of the Hornby Trust Teaching Association Project Scheme Award 2019–2020 which was granted to APC-ELI by the A. S. Hornby Educational Trust.

The aim of the project was to contribute to the CPD of Cuban teachers of English, as well as increasing APC-ELI membership. Three workshops were developed in three provinces: Artemisa in the western part of Cuba, Ciego de Ávila in the central part of the country and Granma, one of the provinces in the eastern region. The workshops were carried out between 23 January and 11 February 2020.

The objectives for the three workshops were achieved. There was good attendance of Cuban EFL teachers, coming from different educational levels – primary, secondary and university. The

PNI (positive, negative and interesting) questionnaire, given at the end of each workshop, yielded satisfactory opinions from the participants, and as a result of the workshops, 56 new members joined the Association.

It was a singular event that provided opportunities for both professional development and English language practice among local colleagues and with native speakers, and it contributed to the growth of the APC-ELI membership.

It was also an opportunity to thank British Council Cuba for their help in transferring funding to APC, as well as for their help in communications and the publicity of the event. It was also an opportunity to express gratitude to Professor Michelle Laufer, formerly of the University of Westminster, and Dr Greta Akpeneye, a former UK primary school head, for sharing their knowledge and expertise.



APC-ELI workshops

### Sharing resources

With limited and expensive Internet access, together with the prohibition on Zoom in Cuba, the board then decided to join the Linking TEAs in America and the Caribbean WhatsApp group, created in March 2019. The Association re-sent most of what the group shared, such as opinions and views on online teaching, various surveys, learning resources and webinars, and published articles. Some articles were sent by email to teachers of English around the country;

these included articles related to CPD, such as 'All about change' and 'Use it or lose it: how to activate professional knowledge', both by Kirsten Holt, Head of Pavilion ELT, and 'Teacher growth' by Kat Robb. Teachers were asked to discuss the contents with teachers in their own regions.

### Publishing

Another important development was that several EFL teachers had the opportunity to publish their articles. This initiative was coordinated by Zoe Dominguez, the Matanzas province APC-ELI representative, who organized a team dedicated to writing, collecting and proofreading articles, which were sent to Pilgrims' *Humanizing Language Teaching* magazine for publication in the June issue.

### Television broadcasting

Since some members of the APC-ELI board are part of the English by Television team, they contributed lessons which were broadcast on TV, as part of the Ministry of Education's effort to provide English lessons on TV for primary schools, high schools and teacher training colleges.

### Newsletter

Finally, the APC ELI published its quarterly newsletter. It not only gave suggestions on what to do during the pandemic, it also highlighted the work done by several Cuban teachers of English who work in the country's medical schools. They voluntarily joined front-line healthcare personnel, accompanying medical students in their door-to-door health screening during COVID-19.



APC-ELI Newsletter, May 2020 issue

# Coming events

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

## 2020

### SEPTEMBER

**12 Switzerland**

**ETAS Professional Development Day, Gümligen**

<https://www.e-tas.ch/events/conferences-agms>

**18–19 Poland**

**IATEFL Poland On-line Meet-Up: HighTech – A Teachers' Promised Land**

<https://iatefl.org.pl/conference/>

### OCTOBER

**3**

**World Teachers' Day IATEFL & British Council joint conference**

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/world-teachers-day-web-conference-2020>

**8–11 Slovenia**

**IATEFL Slovenia Conference, Moravske Toplice**

<http://iatefl.si/next-conference/>

### NOVEMBER

**13–15 Croatia**

**HUPE Croatia 28th Conference, Valamar, Poreč**

<http://hupe.hr/>

**14–15**

**IATEFL BESIG 33rd Annual Conference (online)**

[besig.iatefl.org](https://besig.iatefl.org)

**20–22 France**

**39th annual TESOL France Colloquium, Paris**

<https://www.tesol-france.org/en/>

**27–29**

**IATEFL YLTSIG Web Conference (online)**

<https://yltsig.iatefl.org/events/>

## 2021

### APRIL

**16–17 Ukraine**

**IATEFL Ukraine Annual Conference, Kyiv**

<https://ukraineiatefl.wixsite.com/iateflukraine>

### JUNE

**19–22 UK**

**54th IATEFL Annual Conference, Exhibition and Careers Fair, Harrogate Pre-Conference Events (PCEs)**

**18 June**

<https://www.iatefl.org/conference/conference>

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



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## Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

Please visit the individual SIG website for a list of current committee members

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**English for Speakers of Other Languages (ES(O)L)** https://iateflsolsig.wordpress.com

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(as of August 2020)

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**AINET (India)** www.theainet.net

**AMATE (Czech Republic)** www.amate.cz

**ANELTA (Angola)**

**APC-ELI (Cuba)**

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**ATECR (Czech Republic)** www.atecr.weebly.com

**ATEF (Finland)** http://www.suomenenglanninopettajat.fi

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**FORTELL (India)** www.fortell.org

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**SELTA (Senegal)** www.selta.sites.google.com/site/englishlanguagecell

**SLTA (Sweden)** www.spraklararna.se

**SPELT (Pakistan)** http://www.spelt.org.pk

**SPELTA (Russian Federation)** www.spelta.stormway.ru

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