

**Critical thinking
in practice**

by Nada Đukić

**Visible Thinking Routines
in Thinking Classrooms**

by Leopoldina Poli Hočevar Eve

**Across literary
landscapes –
Ivan Cankar,
William Butler Yeats
and Oscar Wilde**

by Helena Miklavčič

**Using technology
in the English
language classroom**

by Breda Jesenik Kolar

Notes to self

by Jasna Šebez





Critical thinking at a glance (5)

Case Study: Who's afraid of critical thinking?

Nada Đukić

Critical thinking includes questioning, but not questioning for the sake of questioning. Usually, it means that a person is attentive and precise enough, and they want to know all the relevant details and the underlying bits of information. Those might at first appear obvious, but often they are not. If this questioning seems to be disruptive on the one hand, and thus viewed as negative, it is in fact very useful and rewarding in the end, as it gets to the very core of the issue at hand, and there are no misunderstandings later. In such a way, clarity as one of the critical thinking virtues is gained, and all parties involved are on an equal footing.

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Editorial

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New Year is celebrated in January, of course, but for all of us working in education, there's also another new year's event with the coming of the new school year. Unfortunately, we don't have Father Christmas to bring us fabulous gifts beforehand, but I think that each of us tries to give ourselves some little gift for the beginning of this new year too.

For some of us it may be new stationery – I know many of us still love that feel of new pens and collect novelty erasers and even cute paperclips. One of my teacher friends confided in me that she loves stationery shopping even more than Christmas shopping. I can't blame her – I'm partial to that new notebook smell myself.

For others, more civic minded, the gift is the new experiences they're looking forward to having and the new people they're looking forward to getting to know.

As with every new year and new beginning, there are some ups and some downs. Some may experience nasty shocks while others see all their professional dreams come true. What I have noticed, however, is that there is an ever-increasing chunk of people who start the school year already exhausted. Research shows that the effect of vacations, no matter how long, lasts for some three to four weeks, after which happiness levels drop back to base level¹. And if your base level includes constant stress and exhaustion, worrying, even burnout, it's no wonder that we're back to our old tired selves by mid-September at the latest. I do know that our Father Christmas isn't real, but if he's listening, I hope he brings us all a less stressful work environment and superiors with a sympathetic ear.

However you've started, I do hope that you take this issue as a little gift to yourself. There are articles here from selected talks and workshops from our last conference, along with book reviews, musings on teacher authority and a trip across literary landscapes. May it help make your Educator's New Year a successful one!

¹ Source: Nawijn, J., Marchand, M. A., Veenhoven, R., & Vingerhoets, A. J. (2010). Vacationers Happier, but Most not Happier After a Holiday. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, 5(1), 35–47. doi: 10.1007/s11482-009-9091-9



A Project-based Approach to Learning for Life

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It is often difficult to engage learners of English (or any other foreign language) in “outside the classroom” activities that provide them with real-life experience as well as practical knowledge and skills. A project-based approach can be enormously beneficial in addressing this issue. In the project we present below, the participants had the opportunity to learn by means of researching, translating, proof-reading, acquiring field-related terminology, and more. They worked individually, in pairs or smaller groups, and cooperated with each other and with teachers and other project partners. The participants also acquired other competences that might be useful in their future work environment and attractive to potential employers.

The PREZDRAV Project

In order to meet some of the goals outlined above, we decided to apply for a PKP¹ project in December 2017, financed through the Public Scholarship, Development, Disability and Maintenance Fund of the Republic of Slovenia, The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, and the European Social Fund. PKP projects encourage project work among university students and private and public sector institutions in their local and regional environments. Through such projects, the participants are given the opportunity to acquire practical experience and skills that are important for them to enter the labour market.

The main idea for our PKP project was derived from a presentation delivered in May 2017 at the 1st International Conference of the Slovene Association of LSP Teachers Languages for Specific Purposes: Opportunities and Challenges of Teaching and Research. As the authors, Katja Krope and Karmen Erjavec, state in their introduction, they “looked into the quality of information published in English language on Slovene hospital websites”. In September 2016 they analysed the English website content of ten Slovene general hospitals and two university medical centres. The research showed that if hospitals actually have an English version of their website, the

quality of language is poor, especially when it comes to the use of English for specific purposes (Krope, Erjavec, 2017: 30).

Their findings encouraged us to take action and research the online contents of health centres around Slovenia in English. We entitled our PKP project PREZDRAV – Prevajanje zdravstvenih informacij za potrebe tujcev (PREZDRAV – Translating Medical Information for Foreign Visitors). Under the auspices of PREZDRAV, teachers and students of English language and translation from the Faculty of Arts in Maribor partnered up with students and teachers of healthcare sciences from the Faculties of Health Sciences in Maribor and Novo mesto, management level staff of the Dr. Adolf Drolc Health Centre in Maribor, and the *Pretolm* Translation Agency in Maribor.

All in all, the project had 14 participants: 8 students (of which 6 were students of translation and English language and literature, and 2 were healthcare students), 4 pedagogical mentors, and 2 working mentors. The beneficiary of the project was the Dr. Adolf Drolc Health Centre in Maribor whose web pages we were “translating” into English.

Project Aims

Following acceptance of the project proposal in March, the actual work began in April 2018. The main aim was to provide health-related information for

¹ PKP = Po kreativni poti do znanja / Following the Creative Path to Knowledge

foreign nationals in the English language, as the numbers of tourists, business people and students in Maribor are increasing, while research has shown that existing healthcare-related information in English is often inadequate and misleading (which may be due to poor translation). This is not only inappropriate for health care institutions, but it can further result in either a lack of medical treatment, wrong treatment or more serious, even life-threatening situations.

In order to obtain a reliable and relevant snapshot of the current situation, a short online questionnaire was put together in the 1ka² open source application for online surveys in May 2018. The questionnaire, which was addressed to the University of Maribor's incoming foreign students, set out to ascertain what information is required for easier access to medical and health-related services while staying or living in another country. The survey was widely circulated and answered by 92 students. Their answers revealed that they most frequently needed and searched the internet for information about opening hours and location of pharmacies, followed by emergency help (in the cases of accidents, allergies, etc.) and the nearest doctor or hospital, particularly opening hours and location. Their online searches were also directed at finding out where and how to get (prescription) drugs, the different modalities of paying for medical services and, last but not least, insurance coverage.

Based on these results, we decided to create a template for the web pages of the Dr. Adolf Drolc Health Centre in English, which would a) provide a fundamental understanding of the healthcare system in Slovenia, and b) enable appropriate and adequate communication between the healthcare institutions that offer medical treatment and the beneficiaries, or their patients. This should not, however, be merely a translation of their existing web pages in Slovene, but a thoroughly thought-out text providing essential information for those foreigners who require medical attention. We reasoned that such a

template may also be used by several other health centres around Slovenia, requiring minimal modification (contact numbers, addresses, etc.).

The pedagogical aim of the project was to encourage students to work outside the classroom and to participate in a "real-life" working experience. By taking part in the project they acquired field-specific (i.e. healthcare-related) and subject-specific knowledge (i.e. English language and literature, translation), as well as soft skills (i.e. organizing, delegating and distributing work, communicating with other project members, etc.). In doing so, the students became the actual drivers of the project, while the mentors were there to provide support, additional ideas as well as field- and subject-specific information and knowledge.

Project Organization

The project was organized in three consecutive steps. Step one included researching web pages in the English language of relevant, i.e. similar in objective and function, healthcare institutions in Slovenia and abroad for content and structure, followed by the writing of texts in Slovene. Again, the search revealed a general lack of web pages with relevant information and, moreover, a lack of ideas and/or knowledge of how these should be conceptualised and presented online. Based on this, the students formulated a proposal for an "abridged" web page that offered answers to the ten most frequently asked questions, such as "How do I make an appointment?", "How do I request a home visit?", "How do I get a referral to see a specialist".

This step involved cooperating with the working mentor from the Dr. Adolf Drolc Health Centre. After deciding on the most important information for the English version of their web pages and after several consultations with him and the resident IT-specialist, a decision was made to produce two final documents: a) a complete website proposal and b) a patient manual which should be based on the abridged version. The working mentor also assisted with his insider knowledge on the healthcare system in Slovenia and specific informa-

tion pertaining to the organization and functioning of the centre. He also offered advice on the relevant literature and field-related terminology, and provided other professional support.

Once this decision was taken, it was relatively easy to proceed with step two. This included translation of the Slovene documents, which was carried out under the observant eye of the working mentor from the *Pretolm* Translation Agency. He introduced students to translation techniques and procedures related to translation of specialized documents, and offered advice on website translation and adaptation, working with translation tools, and website design and development. The translations were carried out with MemoQ translation software, which is a CAT (Computer Assisted Translation) tool allowing for faster and more consistent translations and teamwork among translators.

Step three involved proofreading and finalizing the texts. During the entire process, pedagogical mentors advised the students on the nuts and bolts of the English language, field-related vocabulary, and helped by proofreading the texts prepared by students.

Benefits, acquired knowledge and competences

After the project conclusion, both students and pedagogical mentors reported on the perceived benefits of student participation. In terms of language, the students felt that they were able to recognize, and had indeed acquired, more complex grammar structures in both the source and target language as well as improving their field-related vocabulary (health care) and terminological and lexicological competences. Through organising their work in groups, the students developed their team and project management skills, as they also did through working with project partners, while those who had been given responsibilities for coordinating the work felt that they had also developed their leadership potential. Time management was vital to the project success, as students were required to respond promptly and in accordance with deadlines.

² <https://www.1ka.si>

In terms of specific translation skills, valuable experience in working with authentic texts was provided, especially in the translation of field-related texts for lay persons. The students feel that they benefited enormously from participating in the each step of the professional process: from researching appropriate medical and healthcare terminology, to translating the texts and proofreading them, and also presenting them to the “customer” as the final step. The “product” they presented took the form of two documents: a shorter PDF document with basic info for foreign visitors, business people and students seeking medical help as well as a translation of the of Dr. Adolf Drolic Health Centre’s website, whereby only information necessary for foreigners was retained.

Conclusion

The main aim of the project, as stated, was to provide students with the opportunity to “learn for life”, engaging them in “outside of the classroom” learning, consolidating and furthering their practical (translation and workplace) skills and competences. According to participants’ reports and our observations as pedagogical mentors, this aim was more than met: our learners undertook a professional task, for which they were paid, and met all the obligations and standards (in terms of time and quality) set for them by the “beneficiary”, producing a medically and linguistically accurate translation which can be used by health centres throughout Slovenia.

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Using the vocabulary lists in the textbook

by **Karen White**

For students to be able to remember and use a word, they need to be exposed to it many times. It is important, therefore, that our students have a lot of opportunities to encounter again and again words previously taught. One resource, which is often neglected, is the word lists in the students’ textbooks. Here are five activities which you can do using these lists. They can be used with any age group and level.

(If your students don’t have a textbook, they could use lists from their own vocabulary notebooks or you could make a list of words learnt over the previous few lessons.)

1. Questions and answers

First of all, divide the students into groups of between four and six people. Each person needs their textbook opened at the word list. Depending on the textbook, this is either at the back of the book, after each chapter or in the workbook.

For this activity, the words are used alphabetically or in the order they are written.

Imagine the first twenty words are:

country	crowds
countryside	cuff links
course	cup
court	cupboard
cousin	curtain
cover	cushion
cream	cylinder
cross	cycle
crossing	dancer
crowded	dance

The first student chooses a word from the first three words in the list and uses it to ask another student a question.

For example, if the student chooses the word ‘course’, they could ask, “How did you come to the English course?”

The student asked, replies.

The next student must choose a word that comes after 'course' in the list to ask the next question. The word cousin could be chosen, for example, but they wouldn't be allowed to choose 'country-side' because it is before the word 'cousin' in the list.

If you want to make it more difficult, the student answering the question has to use a word that comes after the word used in the question, to answer.

For example: Student 1 asks, "How did you come to the English course?" Student 2 chooses the word 'crossing' because it comes after the word 'course' and answers, "By crossing a very busy road."

Here is one more example to make it clearer.

Student 1 chooses the word 'curtain' and asks, "What are the curtains like in your bedroom?"

Student 2 has to answer with one of the following words: cushion, cylinder, cycle, dancer, dance.

They choose dancer and reply, "They are pink with pictures of dancers on them."

2. Dough words

For this activity, divide the students into groups of four to six people and give each group some dough. The first student chooses any word from the list, without telling the others, and makes it from the dough. The others in the group have to guess the correct word. Then the second student does the same. Even older students and adults enjoy this activity. It can be a real challenge to represent abstract words.

3. Headlines, books, films and songs

This activity uses the words in the list to make a headline, title of a book, a film title or song title.

a) Newspaper headline

The students, in pairs or groups, put some of the words together to make a newspaper headline. Other words

can also be added. A couple of examples could be: Crowds watch dancer on court! Cuff links found in cream!

This could then be developed by asking the students to write a short newspaper article to go with the heading.

Alternatively, the headlines from each pair or group could be collected on the board. The students then choose a headline and write the article to go with it.

Afterwards, the students read out their article and the others have to guess which headline they chose.

b) Book title

As above, the students choose some words but make them into a book title rather than a headline. The students could either write a short story to go with their title or design a book cover.

If they design book covers, these could be displayed around the walls. The students could then look at the covers and choose a 'book' they would like to read. They can then either tell the others what made them choose their particular 'book' or they could write a blurb to go on the back of the book cover.

c) Film title

Again, the students choose some words from the list to make the title of a film. Afterwards, the students could either write the story for the film or a plot synopsis. This could be further developed by writing descriptions of the main characters, describing places where the film could be shot or drawing the different scenes needed. A further idea would be to design a poster advertising the film. Similar to the idea of the book cover, these could be displayed and the students asked which film they would like to see and why.

d) Song title

After the students have used words in the list to invent the title of a song, they could either try writing the song or working out a storyline for the song and then the scenes they would need for a song video.

4. Picture stories

In groups of four to six, the students choose '6' words from the list (you can choose how many words they should use) and write a short story with the words (6 – 10 sentences).

Give each group 6 – 10 pieces of paper. On these pieces of paper, they draw a picture for each sentence of their story.

The pieces of paper are then collected from each group, mixed up and redistributed. Now the students have a new story to write.

5. Collocations

This final activity practises collocations. Either the teacher or each group of students chooses '10' nouns from the list and writes them on '10' pieces of paper. Again, you can decide how many words the students will use for this activity.

Then on another '10' pieces of paper, they write an adjective that goes with each noun.

For example: If they chose the nouns cousin, cream and cupboard, they might write tall, delicious, old.

Then on the next '10' pieces of paper, they write a verb for each noun.

Using the example above, they could write runs, eat, look at.

Finally, new nouns are written on another '10' pieces of paper that go with the verbs. Using our example again, they might write dog, chocolate, picture.

Last of all, the words are used to make sentences. For example: I love to eat chocolate cake with some delicious cream.

The pieces of paper could also be collected, mixed up and redistributed. Then the students write sentences with the new words they have.

I hope you have a lot of fun trying out these activities and that your students will not only enjoy them, but also increase their pool of active vocabulary.

Critical Thinking in Practice

by **Nada Đukić**
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Introduction

The author enrolled in a US Department of State's E-Teacher Scholarship Programme entitled *Critical Thinking in Language Learning and Teaching*, delivered by the American English Institute, which is part of the Department of Linguistics at the University of Oregon. In this paper, how some formative assessment techniques can be used to support critical thinking objectives and assessment are presented. A 90-minute lesson plan in teaching English as a foreign language to adult learners is redesigned to integrate critical thinking. In this lesson, learners will have responded to a stimulus in the form of a case study, and as part of cognitive activity, they will have built a silent conversation on little papers and will have discussed the question and ideas in order to design a feasible plan of action. They will have reflected on their active participation in the process, following a checklist that the teacher has displayed as a PowerPoint slide.

Instructional Critical Thinking Objectives

In the *Cognitive Focus* of the lesson, the following objective will be pursued: having identified nine timely tips and evaluated possible solutions in managing our time, learners will be able to design a feasible plan of action to solve a single mother's time-management problem. In terms of revised Bloom's taxonomy, we are dealing with the cognitive domain and the level of creating. In terms of Paul's strategy list of 35 dimensions of critical thought, we are dealing with comparing and contrasting ideals with actual practice (S-27) and generating or assessing solutions (S-19).

In the *Affective Focus* of the lesson, the following objective will be pursued: hav-

ing designed a feasible plan of action to solve the single mother's time-management problem, learners will be able to report about the level of their active participation in the process measured by an affective checklist. In terms of revised Bloom's taxonomy, we are dealing with the affective domain and the level of responding to phenomena. In terms of Paul's strategy list of 35 dimensions of critical thought, we are dealing with exercising fair-mindedness (S-3), and developing insight into egocentricity or sociocentricity (S-2).

Supporting Activity for these Objectives

The chosen activity is *Little Paper – Building a Silent Conversation Based on Creative Scenarios and Simulations*. *Short background:* Individually, learners read the article on how to manage their time efficiently, matched nine headings to nine tips and answered five questions concerning their time management. In group discussion, they evaluated nine suggested tips from the article. I, the teacher, wanted the learners to internalise possible solutions when it comes to managing our time. To do that, they needed to understand the relationship between thoughts and emotions (through critical thinking and self-awareness), break habits, and see many possibilities (by thinking imaginatively or critically).

Set-up and/or Start of Activity: Before building a silent conversation, the teacher will select the "stimulus" – the material that the learners will respond to, i.e. a case study, to encourage the learners to extrapolate beyond the information they receive in class, to make them more active in their learning, and to increase their research skills:

A 36-year-old single mother of a 5-year-

old boy and an 11-year-old girl decided to continue her university study and to obtain a degree that would enable her to get a promotion at her current job. Her study is in her firm's interest, so it will be financed by them. She can have her children baby-sat either by her parents or her ex-husband's parents. Her husband died two years ago. She works 56 hours per week. She will need to invest at least 30 hours per week in her study for a period of two years. She values her time with her children, family and friends greatly. Her free-time charity work is also a source of fulfilment for her.

- How is she going to manage her time?
- You are an expert on time management that she turned to. Help her to design a feasible plan of action.

What will students do to help them achieve the cognitive critical thinking objective?

In the support activity for the cognitive objective, the teacher will place the "stimulus" (a case study) in the centre of a regular sized piece of paper. She will inform the class that this activity will be completed in silence, all communication will be done in writing and the learners will have time to speak in the group later. She will go over all of the instructions at the beginning, so that they do not ask questions during the activity. Also, before the activity starts, the teacher will ask the learners if they have any questions to minimise the chance that the learners will interrupt the silence once it has begun. She can also remind the learners of their task as they begin each new step. Each learner will begin by commenting on the stimulus on their little paper. After a few minutes, the little paper will be passed to the learner on the left (or right). This process will be repeated until all learners

have had the opportunity to comment on every little paper. All of this will be done in silence. Then the learners will review the little paper they had first, noticing comments made by their peers. Finally, a small group will have a discussion about the questions and ideas that strike them from this exercise.

What will students do to help them achieve the affective critical thinking objective?

In designing a feasible plan of action to help a single mother in her situation, the learners will be encouraged to think independently, to be fair-minded when it comes to different points of view and to be courageous enough to take a stand, even though they might need to modify it later. The teacher will point out that it is not important, or even possible, to find a “one and only” (i.e. ideal, right) solution, as long as the learners explore the topic in-depth and have an opportunity to focus on the views of others.

The learners will reflect on their active involvement in the process, following a checklist that the teacher will display as a PowerPoint slide, including the following questions:

- Am I satisfied with my contribution to the group's work? If yes – why? If no – why not?
- How can I prove that my comments to my peers' ideas were valuable?
- To what extent did I find this activity demanding or easy in terms of activating my reasoning and empathy?
- What benefits do I see now as a result of such an in-depth topic exploration?

Assessment Methods/Techniques and Alignment with Critical Thinking Objectives

The chosen assessment possibility for cognitive objective is *Peer Assessment with the Use of Paul's Intellectual Standards*. The following critical thinking criteria will be used in the assessment.

In pairs, learners will measure the quality of their peers' (1) responding to a stimulus, (2) building a silent conversation, and (3) discussing the question and ideas by the use of appropriate intellectual standards selected in advance by the teacher. They will be organised in a rubric that will contain a checklist:

	Clarity	Relevance	Depth
Responding to a stimulus	Is a response to a stimulus clear? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)	Is a response to a stimulus relevant? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)	Is a response to a stimulus deep? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)
Building a silent conversation	Is a comment on a peer's response to a stimulus clear? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)	Is a comment on a peer's response to a stimulus relevant? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)	Is a comment on a peer's response to a stimulus deep? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)
Discussing the question and ideas	Is a peer's reasoning clear? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)	Is a peer's reasoning relevant? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)	Is a peer's reasoning deep? Why? Why not? (0-3 points)

The teacher will give oral feedback on each pair's evaluation, selecting a few interesting points to discuss with the whole class. Thus learners will learn both from their own pair's evaluation and from those of the other pairs.

Before beginning the formative assessment activity explained above, the teacher will explain expectations clearly to learners, so that they have a clear understanding of what they are to look for in their peers' work. She will give a practice session by providing a sample rubric. As a group, learners will identify what is supposed to be assessed, and they will give their solutions for successful completion of the task. Then the teacher will give a sample completed rubric. Learners will use this as a model, so that they internalise how to convey feedback clearly to a fictitious learner.

Learners will do this assessment activity immediately after they complete discussing the question and ideas. The chosen assessment possibility for affective objective is *Think-Pair-Share with the Use of Paul's Intellectual Traits*. In the assessment, the teacher will use critical thinking criteria in such a way that she will select appropriate intellectual binary traits to measure the quality of learners' attitudes, values, beliefs and dispositions in the process of their participation in the activities. This will be done in an indirect way.

The teacher will provoke learners' thinking with a short questionnaire:

- 1) Do you believe it is possible to always know all the answers, or do you believe that we spend a lifetime finding answers? (An affirmative answer to the first part of the question shows a tendency towards intellectual arrogance. An affirmative

answer to the second part of the question shows a tendency towards intellectual humility.)

- 2) What do you do when you do not know the answer? Do you try to find it by using all sources at your disposition, or do you tend to give up? (An affirmative answer to the first part of the question shows a tendency towards intellectual perseverance. An affirmative answer to the second part of the question shows a tendency towards intellectual laziness.)
- 3) Would you rather provide an answer to your peer by your own individual reasoning, or by collaborating with them to find out how they reason? (An affirmative answer to the first part of the question shows a tendency towards intellectual close-mindedness. An affirmative answer to the second part of the question shows a tendency towards intellectual empathy.)

After think-and-pair sequences, the teacher will record their responses on the board in a share sequence. She will give feedback by selecting a few interesting points to discuss with the whole class. Thus learners will learn from their own evaluation as well as from those of others. Before beginning the formative assessment activity explained above, the teacher will provide a handout for learners giving examples of binary intellectual traits. In a group discussion led by the teacher, learners will have an opportunity to ask questions regarding the accuracy of their understanding of these traits and to clarify any misunderstandings. Learners do this assessment activity immediately after completing their reflection on their participation in the activity.

Visible Thinking Routines in Thinking Classrooms

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Why Visible Thinking?

Visible Thinking Routines have become an increasingly important part of lessons at our school over the past few years. Visible Thinking enables teachers to see what and how students are learning and where they need help; it reveals key relationships between claims and evidence, facts, questions and (un)certainties; it helps students build authentic knowledge instead of just memorising facts. Students generally work in pairs or share ideas in small groups, eventually adding their thoughts to a larger pool of class ideas. Through this, students give a collaborative conceptual take on a topic which is broader and more complex than any individual conception. And as Visible Thinking emphasises the students' own questions and ideas, it tends to draw many students into discussion, even the shy and more introverted ones.

When, Where and How did Visible Thinking Appear?

Visible thinking routines first appeared at the Lemsaga Akademi in Sweden as part of the "Innovating with Intelligence" project, which focused on developing students' thinking dispositions in areas such as understanding, fairness, truth-seeking and imagination. It also began as an initiative to develop a research-based approach to teaching thinking dispositions. It emphasised three core practices: thinking routines, the documentation of student thinking and reflective professional practice. Now it puts emphasis on thinking through art and the role of cultural forces. It has informed the development of "Project Zero", founded by philosopher Nelson Goodman in 1967 at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Today, research at Project Zero carries on with exploration of how schools can create access and personalise learning for a diversity of students, how students can develop 21st century skills (e.g. life-long learning, critical thinking and creativity) and how teachers can recognise and develop each child's full intellectual potential.

What is Visible Thinking?

Visible Thinking is described as a flexible and systematic research-based conceptual framework which aims to integrate the development of students' thinking with content learning across subject matters (<http://pz.harvard.edu/projects/visible>). Visible Thinking routines can be applied to every subject and every age and invite students to do something in a certain way. They are designed in a way that makes uncovering complexity regular, habitual, normal – a routine. The goals of Visible Thinking are to enhance students' thinking skills and attitudes; to look beyond content learning; to integrate the development of students' thinking with content learning across subject matters. Visible Thinking routines are short, easy strategies/routines which broaden and deepen students' learning and can become a part of everyday learning. In light of this, routines should be easy to teach, learn and remember, contain only a few steps, be used on a regular basis, and be useful in many contexts. They are public and private in nature and activate specific types of thinking moves. Visible Thinking routines are simple structures, for example a set of questions or a short sequence of steps that can be used across various grade levels and content. What makes them routines rather than strategies is that they get used over and

over again so that they become part of a classroom's culture. The routines become ways in which students go about the process of learning. More than one routine can be used in a lesson; it should enhance what you are trying to do in a classroom.

How can We Make the Invisible Visible?

Visible Thinking refers to any kind of observable representation which documents and supports the development of an individual's or group's ongoing thoughts, questions, reasons and reflections. Mind maps, charts and lists, diagrams, and worksheets all count as Visible Thinking if they reveal the learners' unfolding ideas while they think through an issue, problem or topic. Making students' thinking visible requires a sort of "organising structure", a "thinking routine" to loosely guide students thought processes, and encourages what cognitive psychologists call active processing. Instead of asking students to list facts, the Visible Thinking Routines encourage them to actively engage with a topic by asking them to think with and beyond the facts they know (Tishman and Palmer, 2005).

To make students' thinking visible, we should try to name and notice it as it occurs and create opportunities for thinking, pose questions that are likely to create more opportunities for thinking (open-ended, authentic, higher-level questions), model an interest in ideas, where students can see teachers as learners and foster a community of inquiry, construct understanding by posing constructive questions, connecting and extending ideas, making interpretations, etc., facilitate and clarify thinking, listen actively, and document students' thinking.

Thinking routines can operate as tools for promoting thinking, as support and structure for students' thinking, or as patterns of behaviour.

Examples of Visible Thinking Routines

Visible Thinking Routines may be organised in different ways. One of them groups them into three major categories: Introducing and Exploring, Synthesising and Organising, and Routines for Digging Deeper. I am going to describe four examples of each routine.

Routines for introducing and exploring ideas

- a. *See-Think-Wonder* is ideal for inquiry-based, close observations of photos, texts, artwork or other stimuli, used to find out about students' pre-knowledge or to encourage in-depth thinking. Steps: set up and present a chosen image so that students can observe it in detail. Ask the students: What do you see? Then ask them: What do you think (is going on? What does it make you think?) In the end ask students: What do you wonder about? (based on what they have seen and have been thinking). Students generally share their thinking at each step along the way before moving to the next one.
- b. *Zoom in* calls for close examination of a portion of an image to build a deeper understanding, careful observations and thoughtful interpretations as well as formulating a hypothesis, stimulating curiosity and setting the stage for inquiry. Steps: Invite students: Look closely at a small bit of the image that is revealed; ask: What do you see or notice? Reveal more of the image. What new things do you see? How does this change your previous hypothesis or interpretation? What new things are you wondering about? Repeat the reveal until the whole image has been revealed. What other questions do you still have about the picture/image?
- c. *Chalk-Talk* asks learners to consider ideas, questions or problems by silently responding in writing to the prompt and to the thoughts of others. Steps: Write each prompt on a large sheet of paper and place on tables around the room.

Place markers on each table. Decide whether you want to assign students to groups or want them to move freely about the room. Decide how much time you will give for a round of Chalk-Talk. Present the prompt. Invite students to think and record their ideas. Circulate. Share the thinking.

- d. *Give One, Get One* is a technique used to initiate physical movement to promote students to think divergently and to generate many ideas quickly. Steps: The teacher poses a question and asks students to record two responses. The teacher establishes a goal (number of ideas and a time-limit to collect ideas). Students stand up and "connect" with another student only to give an idea and get a new idea. If they both have similar ideas, they need to brainstorm together to generate a new idea. Students return to their seats; they can share ideas in small groups and try to generate two or three additional new ideas. The teacher collects and records ideas to be examined and explored.

Routines for synthesising organising ideas

- a. *CSI: Colour, Symbol, Image* taps into students' natural creativity and desire for expression; it captures the core of an idea using visual connections; it also pushes students to make connections and think metaphorically. Steps: The student thinks of the big ideas and important themes in what s/he has just read, seen or heard. Ask students: Choose a colour you think best represents the essence of that idea. Create a symbol you think best represents the essence of that idea. Sketch an image that you think best captures the essence of that idea. Share the thinking with a partner or in a group.
- b. *I used to think ... Now I Think ...* is a self-reflection tool used to examine how one's thinking has changed or shifted over time. Steps: Explain to students what the essence of this routine is: reflect on your current understanding of the topic, and respond to each of these sentence stems: I used to think ... Now I think ... Students share and explain their shifts in thinking.

- c. *The 4C's* is text-based discussion that identifies key concepts in the text. Steps: After reading the text, ask: What connections do you draw between the text and your own life or your other learning? What ideas, positions or assumptions do you want to challenge or argue with in the text? What key concepts or ideas do you think are important and worth holding on to from the text? What changes in attitudes, thinking, or action are suggested by the text, either for you or others? Students share their thinking at each stage of the process.
- d. *Headlines* is used to summarise the theme of a lesson, text, image or topic. Steps: Think of the big ideas and important themes in what you have been learning. Write a headline for this topic or issue which summarises and captures a key aspect that you feel is significant and important. Share the thinking.

Routines for digging deeper into ideas

- a. *What makes you say that?* is a question that teachers can weave into discussion to push students to give evidence for their assertions. The goal is to elicit and support students' attempts at justification, so we may even ask: So, what do you know that makes you say that? Students share their thinking.
- b. *Step inside* is used to explore different viewpoints and perspectives. Steps: think about a person or an object that is a part of or connected to the event or situation you are examining. Place yourself within the event or situation to see things from this point of view. Some questions to consider: What can this person or thing see, observe or notice? What might the person or thing know, understand, hold true or believe? What might this person or thing care deeply about? What might they wonder about or question? In the end, share the thinking.
- c. *Sentence-Phrase-Word* is a text-based routine to identify what was important or meaningful. Steps: In discussion groups, review the text you have read and each select your own sentence that was meaningful to you,

that you felt captures the core idea, phrase that moved you, or word that struck you as most powerful. As a group, discuss and record your choices; explain your choice. Then reflect on the conversation by identifying: What themes emerge? What implications can be drawn?

- d. *Beauty and Truth* supports students' critical engagement with representations of global themes in the media and through aesthetic means. It stems from our exploration of global competence development through the domain of journalism and speaks to the ways in which we can help young people navigate through overwhelming quantities of accessible information in an increasingly visually informed world. Steps: Read/study the article, work of art... Ask: Can you find the beauty in this story/image/photograph? Can you find the truth in it? How might beauty reveal truth? How may beauty conceal truth? Student share opinions.

What Next?

In an ongoing process of teaching and learning, new visible thinking routines are emerging and developing. By trying to create thinking classrooms, teachers are trying to raise lifelong learners who actively use information to produce new ideas and solutions, where students engage with problems and use creativity throughout the process. The displays of students' questions, thoughts, ideas, etc. sends a message that thinking is highly valued. Students have a lot of opportunities to express and explain their ideas. They think things through for themselves and this helps them to become active, curious and engaged learners.

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Across literary landscapes – Ivan Cankar, William Butler Yeats and Oscar Wilde

By **Helena Miklavčič**, *Gimnazija Koper*

Helena Miklavčič is a graduate of the University of Ljubljana and has been a secondary school teacher since 1996. She has taught courses to all ages and levels at the language school Eurocenter. Presently she is teaching at Gimnazija Koper. Her pet subject is English, of course, but especially teaching and discussing literature. She loves working with teens and embraces the unique set of challenges that this entails. While (more or less successfully) grappling with raising two teens at home and engaging with those in the classroom, she also finds time to read, travel, go to the theatre, hike and run.

As 2018 was declared to be Cankar's Year by the Slovenian Government, it seemed relevant to establish a powerful connection between Cankar and two English Matura authors that belong to the same literary period as the great Slovenian writer in my higher-level Matura class. It is my belief that interdisciplinary teaching enables all involved to develop meaningful connections among different disciplines and goes beyond mere

evaluation and memorisation of facts related to a topic. This is why it has been dubbed "the teaching of thinking". It empowers both the educator and the students to analyse, synthesise, make comparisons that bridge disciplines and apply their knowledge, which are higher-order thinking skills. We, as educators, have a duty to challenge our students and provide tasks that go beyond the mere memorisation and repetition of data.

In a 6-lesson workshop for higher-level English Matura, the participants had the opportunity to find what works by William Butler Yeats, Oscar Wilde and Ivan Cankar have in common. In this way, they were able to understand better the fin de siècle literature and literary movements of the time. Seeing that Ivan Cankar could be as decadent as the cosmopolitan Wilde and was as distraught by WWI as Yeats made us better aware of the greatness of the Slovenian author, who captured so well the spirit of the era. I created materials and gave ideas for creative tasks in which the students explored how the problems of prostitution, declining moral standards, duplicity, fake morality and the horrors of war were dealt with by the two Irish writers and our Slovenian master.

The workshop began with a visual stimulus – three images of the authors depicted on postal stamps, thus establishing their importance as national figures in Slovenia and Ireland – both small nations whose national identity is shaped by their literary icons. It could be observed that, at least partly, they belong to the same literary period – i.e. the fin de siècle.

In a five-minute web-quest and group discussion, the students tried to find similarities between Ivan Cankar and Oscar Wilde, which were surprisingly many – or at least the students thought so. Both of the authors started by writing poetry, which was later abandoned for other literary forms: plays, novels, short stories and vignettes, essays and, in Oscar Wilde's case, even fairy tales. They were both extremely prolific, led decadent lifestyles, were imprisoned and died in their forties in somewhat mysterious circumstances. Some of their works were criticised and even banned for being fearlessly direct in expressing political views, talking about sexuality or judging social hypocrisy, which led to them being even more embittered and critical. Last but not least, Wilde and Cankar were both extravagant dandies who led bohemian lifestyles, generous in giving, frequently spending more than they had, and thus ending up in debt.

To make later analysis of poetry and literary extracts easier, the students drew on their knowledge of the period of decadence gained in their Slovene classes while studying world literature. It was pointed out that the period of decadence was characterised by a moral, spiritual and cultural decline and an excessive indulgence in pleasure and luxury. The artists were in pursuit of a full sensual expression, unafraid to depict graphic violence and explore twisted ideas and experimental sexuality. They expressed their frank pessimism, frequently disguised under a fashionable veil of ennui. Expressions such as dissipation, degeneracy, corruption, depravity, vice, sinfulness, perversion, moral decay, immorality, lack of morals, lack of principles, lack of restraint, lack of control, lack of self-control, wantonness, self-indulgence and hedonism are listed as near-synonyms in an online thesaurus

The viewing of **Wilde**, a 1997 biographical film based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Oscar Wilde by Richard Ellman, starring Stephen Fry in the title role, served as a vivid depiction of the decadent era. The students were instructed to look for signs of decadence in Wilde's life and of duplicity and hypocrisy (one of the main themes in the Matura work **An Ideal Husband**) and to take notes of some of the witty remarks used by Wilde, which are his trademark stylistic feature, especially in social comedies, including the Matura text. It was easy to establish Wilde as a typical decadent icon – excessive, daring in his sexuality, extravagant, unprincipled and immoral according to the standards of the time, he might be considered almost a dictionary definition of decadence. Slightly paradoxically, his life is as duplicitous and hypocritical as the life of Sir Robert Chiltern, the protagonist in **An Ideal Husband**, making the author no better than those he criticises in his work.

Having established the cultural milieu of decadence, which crossed geographical and political borders, the students were divided into three groups to explore, analyse and do a creative task based on poems and literary extracts by the three authors. The aim was to show that even though Ivan Cankar might seem much less of a noteworthy literary figure than the dandified Oscar Wilde or the Nobel Prize-winning Yeats, he had his finger on the pulse of the literary movements in Europe. In fact, he was able to create as much of a stir and raise as many eyebrows as Oscar Wilde, who is frequently admired for his rebelliousness by teenagers, while Cankar is often dismissed as a bore with unresolved mother-son issues.

The first group analysed two early poems by Wilde: **The Harlot's House** (1881) and **Impression du Matin** (1881) and two untitled poems from Ivan Cankar's collection *Erotika* (1889). Images of Lautrec's painting "In the Salon at Rue des Moulins" and Manet's "Olympia", depicting Parisian nightlife and prostitution, were also given to the students to establish the fact that the same themes were present in visual arts and literature. It was observed that prostitution and lust were the common theme. In spite of the fact that both the authors did not judge, but merely presented the occur-

rence of cheating and brothels, it is obvious that they perceive this kind of sexual behaviour as wrong. Wilde, for example, describes the figures in **The Harlot's House** as ghostly, skeletons, even calling them "the dead dancing with the dead", while the prostitute in "Impression du Matin" is pale, has "lips of flame and a heart of stone" and loiters aimlessly in a waking city. In a very similar vein, the locale in which Cankar's prostitute poem is set is filled with "heavy, fuddled" air. Her face is pallid, the faces around her are greyish and blue (reminding the reader of the skeletons in Wilde's poem) and he mentions her "soul's dark tragedy". In spite of depicting prostitution as sad and life-draining, both authors seem to be irresistibly drawn to it. Cankar describes the "royal mantle of the splendour of sin" around her and the "beauty of ruin", while in Wilde's *The Harlot's House*, one of the lovers observing the scene in the brothel from the outside abandons her partner to enter the establishment and join the "mechanical grotesques" dancing inside: "Love passed into the house of lust".

The second group received extracts from Ivan Cankar's farce **Scandal in the St. Florian Valley** (*Pohujšanje v dolini šentflorjanski*, 1908) and Oscar Wilde's social comedy **An Ideal Husband** (1895). Both works expose the hypocrisy of a society that cannot live up to the high moral standards it sets and thus is forced to maintain a façade of propriety and morality which only thinly covers its corruptness and sinfulness. Peter, the con-artist who pretends to be the orphan of St. Florian Valley – the illegitimate child abandoned by the stream under a willow twenty-five years before – is able to successfully blackmail the mayor, his wife and the tax collector – the pillars of society in the supposedly moral and incorruptible valley, proving that they all have a sin to hide as they all feel they may have been responsible for the illegitimate baby. Just like Peter, Mrs Cheveley comes to expose the political sin committed by Sir Robert Chiltern, the political pillar of British society, committed some twenty years before. In both cases, outsiders prove that societies and individuals that claim to be morally superior are, in fact, only self-righteous. Their pasts are not as unblemished as they would want us to believe. Just like

the devil in St. Florian's Valley, Mrs Cheveley proves to be almost less sinful than the supposedly "sinless" individuals. Both Mrs Cheveley and the devil are outmanoeuvred by the "moral society".

In the third group the students were given Yeats' poem "The Second Coming" (1919) and two vignettes from the collection *Dream Visions* (*Podobe iz sanj*, 1917) by Ivan Cankar. Both authors were deeply affected by the chaos and horror of the First World War. This is evident in the often quoted lines from "The Second Coming", which show that the situation is out of control, such as:

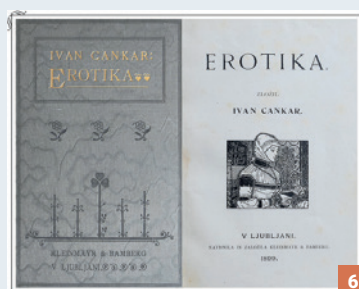
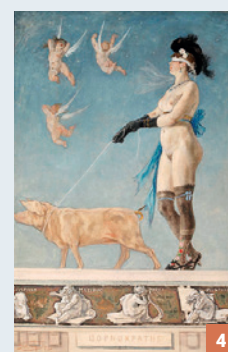
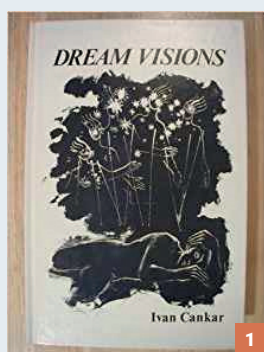
*Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and
Everywhere the ceremony of innocence
is drowned.*

By the same token, Cankar's vignettes "The Extinguished Lights" (*Ugasle luči*) and "King Matthew" (*Kralj Matjaž*) give the reader a sense that "time is out of joint" and there is no one to set it right. King Matthew, who is waiting in a semi-dormant state in a subterranean hall until tyranny and injustice become unbearable to come forward with his warriors and deliver mankind from the iniquities, seems to be oblivious of the fact that the time is ripe for his intervention. Strangers representing the victims of war, limbless, ragged, dirty, drenched in blood, one even

grotesquely carrying his own head, turn from individuals into endless streams, thousands upon thousands of mute shadows appear in front of the monarch, but he does not move, nor does he raise his hand or blink an eye. The writer sees them as a great army onto whose hearts "the living memory of all the dreadful crimes perpetrated against them" was written. Only at the end of the vignette does Cankar offer a vision of a possible day in the future when the ceiling of the hall will burst asunder and the Monarch will arise from his throne. Just like Yeats, awaiting a questionable Second Coming, mentions the discomforting figure of a "rough beast slouching towards Bethlehem to be born", Cankar seems to be asking when and where King Matthew will intervene. In the vignette "The Extinguished Lights", the title alludes to the lost lives as well as the loss of enthusiasm, proud exuberance and that "sacred wonder-working fire which burns in one's breast and makes the eyes gleam". A soldier returning from the war is cynical at those gaping at him curious to hear about the life in the trenches. There is no glamorous bravery and there are no noble patriotic sentiments, nothing grand and holy – according to him, war is "plain, ordinary filth"; it gives you an "incomparable emptiness in your breast, a complete vacuum" and makes you feel that you are "simply – nothing" At the end of the vignette, Cankar looks to the heavens for hope and summons the angels of Heav-

en to "keep a watchful eye over him until this dreadful night of shame passes away." It can be seen that Yeats and Cankar had a similar view on war and seemed to have equally little hope about a clear solution, though they did not abandon hope completely.

Upon reading the extracts, poems and vignettes, the students prepared their analyses and observations about the similarities and differences that the works exhibited. In addition to analysing and comparing the works, they had to do one of the creative tasks offered. These included translating, reciting, creating a role-play, rewriting the text/situation to make it relevant to the contemporary situation, recording their reading or a short scene/film, drawing or painting the scene depicted in the literary work, or creating a short comic strip. During this stage, the role of the teacher was to monitor the process and offer guidance and support. The results of their research and creative work were presented to the entire group. Their presentations showcased an insight into the works of the authors that were studied in groups and an understanding of common concerns, stylistic features and literary movements. Hence they were able to place the works by Ivan Cankar on an equally prestigious footing as those by Wilde and Yeats, which seemed appropriate for the year dedicated to the Slovenian master.



In conclusion, it has to be mentioned that this kind of work is challenging not only for the students, but also for the teacher who undertakes a project of this kind. It requires stepping out of your comfort zone by studying authors and topics that might not be very familiar (in my case Ivan Cankar and his works). It also entails co-operation with colleagues who are experts in other fields (in this project it meant consulting teachers of Slovene). A careful selection and preparation of materials is time-consuming, as the parallels between the studied authors are not immediately apparent and finding extracts, poems and vignettes that lend themselves to comparison is not an easy task. Nonetheless, the challenge made the whole journey onto which I embarked, prompted by my colleague from the Slovene department, rewarding and enriching, as it definitely made me better appreciate Cankar's grandeur.

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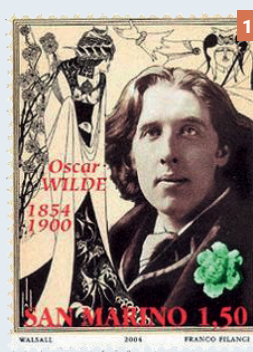
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Classroom authority

by Mag. Sandra Kozorog-Košuta

Authority is the key but increasingly neglected component of every educational process. This article presents the elements of building the authority, explains what the teacher-learner relationship depends on, and suggests how teachers can create authentic, comfortable, yet respectful atmospheres in their classrooms.

The challenge that probably every single teacher has faced already is how to build a respectful yet relaxed relationship with his or her students, i.e., a relationship based on authority and not on authoritarianism. Nowadays these two terms are frequently misunderstood as synonyms, and that is damaging to authentic, genuine authority. The fact is that great changes have occurred in our educational system as well as in our families in a very short time.



The old equation 'a teacher = an authority' is no longer self-evident, making the need of searching for authority even more reasonable and necessary but also more difficult. The teacher should, just because of the role that he or she is playing, have a certain degree of authority. Unfortunately, the once so highly hailed model of permissive education has destroyed the system of clearly defined rules and has thereby marginalized the concept of authority. The lion's share of responsibility for the current situation is the environment wherein the child is growing up, since children nowadays are allowed much more freedom than ever before. It is not unusual for parents to criticize openly different authorities in conversations in which the children and the young can freely take part, something which was never acceptable in the time of our grandparents. Parents are, unfortunately, unaware of the fact that such criticising will, like a boomerang, come back to them and that as we are demolishing the authority of teachers (and also doctors, priests, other parents, and grandparents, among others), we also demolish the very grounds we ourselves are standing on. "What?!! She gave you that much homework?!" is seemingly an innocent comment, which, however, seriously destroys the respect for persons trying to do their best for the child's sake. In a world like that, parents and teachers must work even harder for things that used to be self-evident.

Authority in the process of parenting and educating is a must. The first and the most important figures of authority for a child are his or her parents. But the second, yet equally important one are all those who are in one way or another involved in the child's educational process. Parents who do not present an obvious authority to their child will have considerable difficulty carrying out their own work as well. The same is true for a teacher, who cannot be a good teacher if a child does not see him or her as an authority. Everything starts with the simplest educational asset, namely, setting a good example. If we want children to respect us, we must respect them. When children perceive their parents/teachers/professors as human beings who respect every single individual, they will start opening their hearts and thus making a firm relationship that will enable a valid life and a true bond between them. It is therefore clear that respect must be

mutual, a fact that a lot of parents and teachers are unaware of. In such a respectful relationship the child will satisfy his or her need for security, which is one of the basic needs and an essential stage in the healthy development of a child. Teachers must, therefore, not carry out their tasks automatically, but must appreciate their students as responsible and compatible beings and must also have, at the same time, high expectations from them.

Those expectations are the second and equally important element in building our authority. There are especially strong relationships between the teachers' expectations and their students' reactions. The higher the expectations the teacher has for his or her students, the more the students will engage; and vice versa, the lower the expectations, the more passive and also the less respectful the students will be. The logical conclusion is also the teacher's expertise. A frequently neglected fact nowadays is, unfortunately, that the young perceive the world differently than we do. They learn differently. Passing on bare facts, even though they are confirmed, does not suffice for today's youth. It is their curiosity and their need for challenges that motivate them.

As we are building a relationship between ourselves and our students, we must, however, be careful not to be misled by a relationship based on friendship. It is surely wrong to deduce that we can only be good teachers if we are friends with our students. A teacher and a student, the same as a mother and a daughter, cannot be friends. As stated above, a warm relationship is vital, but it cannot be equal since such a relationship, with the current emphasis upon human rights, is likely to become unequal—with the teacher being inferior. In such a relationship a child can challenge everything, whereas a teacher is extremely limited. Authority always implies some kind of superiority, leaving no room for equality. It is therefore obvious that authority is a multifaceted concept, one which is not related only to an individual's personality but also to external circumstances. One prevailing opinion is that authority is simply the personal charisma that a teacher has or does not have. But that is not really so. It is true that a teacher's person-

ality can help regain lost authority, but much can be done even before we actually risk losing it. Moreover, not everything depends on the individual. A teacher must have a clear picture of what the concept *authority* actually includes.

Strengthening one's authority with shouting, intimidating, and/or even threatening does definitely not guarantee any authority, but rather leads to authoritarianism, which is much more harmful than essential in the process of education.

The second aspect is the awareness of the important mission and privilege that we teachers have when working with children. Only those who believe in the importance of their own personal involvement and who of course believe in those children who have been entrusted to them will be able to carry out their noble mission well. A teacher is like a mirror: the eagerness of a teacher = the eagerness of the child. The belief in oneself, in one's own mission, and in the children alike are the components of the teacher's charisma, eagerness, and plausibility.

Last but not least, an essential part of building a teachers' classroom authority is their authenticity. Teachers who are not genuine at their work or who merely play their role cannot build a natural relationship with their children. This means, of course, that we might even bring our own anguish or problems to the classroom from time to time. There is nothing wrong with that. We are all human beings, we all have a bad day from time to time, and we can all learn from one another. Pretending in front of the children that there's nothing wrong will make a teacher seem disingenuous, but we can, in such moments, become aware of the importance of our mission. We can decide to dedicate the lesson solely to our students and put our troubles off for a while. The children are not responsible for our anguish, and the problems can wait anyway.

To sum up, I would emphasize that a child's development will be mentally healthy only with firm, clear authorities. Where there are no such authorities, students' personal development is hindered. We must be aware that the young do not reject their teachers' authority. In fact, they are eager for it. What they do reject, however, are mighty, omniscient divinities who refuse to let anybody enter their personal space.

Using technology in the English language classroom

by **Breda Jesenik Kolar**

Breda Jesenik Kolar is an English teacher at Prva Gimnazija Maribor and the Conservatory of Music in Maribor. She has been teaching secondary school students for over 20 years. She is interested in implementing modern, contemporary teaching methods in her classes. In this way learning (as well as teaching) becomes engaging and fun when expanding one's knowledge and acquiring new skills.

Undoubtedly many teachers are aware of the benefits of using technology in their classes, but, there are still concerns, skepticism and hesitations when it comes to using digital tools.

It is often thought that Slovene teachers use less technology in comparison with teachers in other European countries. Given the fact that already very young children use various electronic devices in their daily lives, it seems inevitable that also teachers who are not digital natives and may not be that proficient in the use of technology start using various web tools.

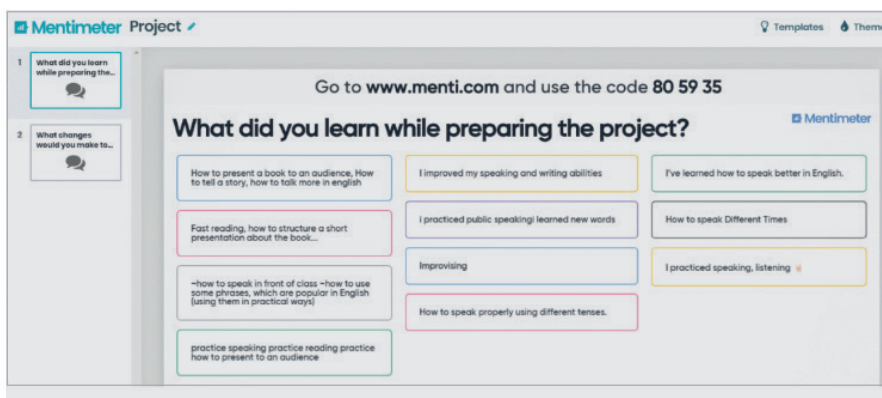
Apart from that, digital tools also motivate students, increase their engagement and participation, and offer opportunities for collaborative and active learning. There are numerous tools to choose from and the tools presented here are well known, easy to use and, generally, free of charge.

MENTIMETER <https://www.mentimeter.com/> is a tool I often use for brainstorming. Below is an example from one of my classes where I elicited vocabulary related to food.

Look at the text and write three words / phrases related to food.



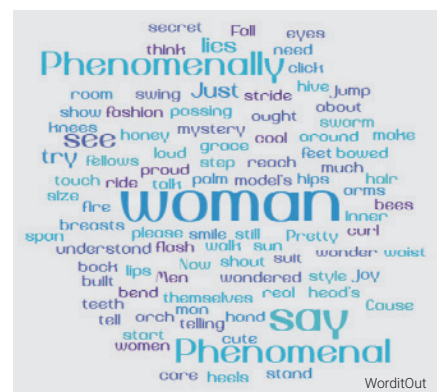
The same tool can also be used for formative assessment, as you can see in this example:



After presenting a book of their choice, my students were asked to evaluate their work. They noted down what they had learnt and suggested improvements. By doing so, not only did they reflect on their learning, but they also developed their critical thinking skills.

I also like to use different word clouds like WordSift <https://wordsift.org/>, WordItOut <https://worditout.com/> and WordArt <https://wordart.com/>.

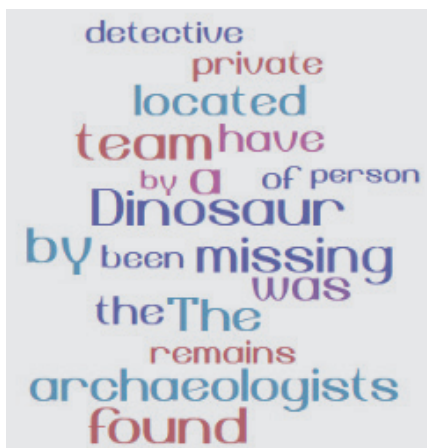
Word clouds offer a wide spectrum of usage: one possibility is to show the word cloud to students and ask them to predict what the topic of the lesson will be, what kind of text the words might come from or to write a text including the words, to name just a few options. Here is an example I used when teaching a poem by Maya Angelou called *Phenomenal Woman*:



Another possibility is to ask students to create a word cloud presenting themselves at the beginning of the school year.

Word clouds can also be useful if you want to revise a certain grammar structure (let us say passive voice); in that

case students are given words from which they have to form sentences: <https://worditout.com>.

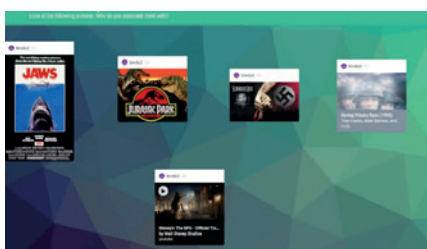


(Suggested answers: The missing person was located by the private detective. Dinosaur remains have been found by a team of archaeologists.)

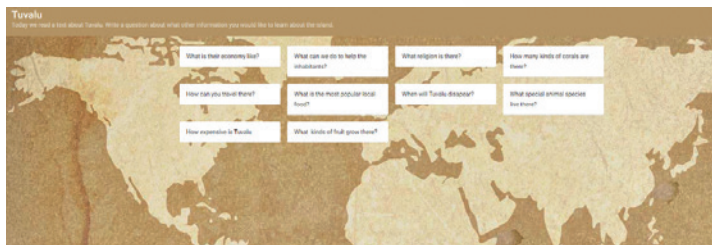
Another option is to use word clouds as a wrap up exercise: students call out words they learnt during the lesson (for example on the topic of driving) and create a visual representation. They could do a similar task by themselves for homework, for example. <https://wordart.com>



Padlet (<https://padlet.com>) is another useful tool, which could be seen as digital sticky notes or an online notice wall. It can be used for sharing information, uploading videos, pictures and recordings. A teacher can use it as a warm-up, guessing game activity (for example you can present photos, video clips, posters, etc. related to a certain person and students have to predict who the mystery person is).



I used the example below as an activity at the end of the lesson. After discussing a text on Tuvalu, an island in the Pacific Ocean, which is about to disappear due to climate change, the students were asked to think of some questions they would like to investigate. After posting their questions they were asked to find the answers.



Kahoot <https://kahoot.com/> and Quizlet <https://quizlet.com/> are two established tools students enjoy using. Both of them are game-based and often used for revision and recycling inside and outside the classroom.

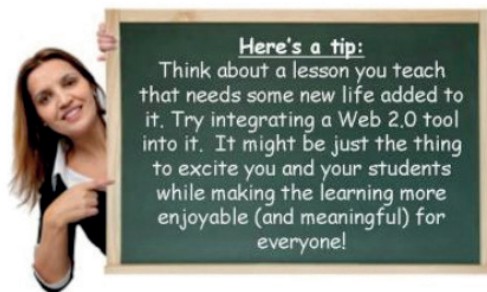
Quizlet – a digital flashcard tool – offers various options, from studying flashcards with pictures, definitions and translations to playing games and testing. Kahoot – a well known formative assessment tool – offers multiple choice quizzes on various subjects. Students can play individually or in teams, where not only competition but also cooperation plays an important role.

Last but not least, the mobile phone itself is a useful gadget, which we constantly resort to, but students do not often use it for educational purposes. So let me introduce some ideas on how we teachers can make use of the device. A task where students are instructed to use their phones and share a photo they took during their holidays or a photo of a family member or a friend can generate a lot of discussion and fun. It's simple and students usually enjoy talking about themselves and their personal experiences. Students may work in pairs describing their photographs and the student who is listening to the description may be instructed to ask some follow up questions or tell the rest of the class one fact that (s)he found interesting about their partner.

Another engaging activity is to give students a topic, for example transport, and



ask students to take three photos which they associate with the topic and post them on Padlet. This could be also done for homework. Later in class, students might be asked to describe their photos, explain why they had taken them or label them and create a kind of electronic dictionary. In this way a connection between learning in the classroom and outside it is established. Students seem much more engaged in such an activity, which also allows them to do things autonomously. So instead of a summary...



<https://sites.google.com/a/wfbschools.com/whitefish-bay-technology/homework>

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Reflect, Reshape, Refresh

by Lucija Šljuka Novak

Nearly twenty years have passed since I attended an IATEFL conference as a freshman teacher desperately trying to learn about the new teaching methods, collect as many ready-for-classroom-use materials as possible, and of course meet fellow teachers, exchange ideas and at the same time have fun. A lot has changed in the years that have passed since, yet something I was unaware of as an enthusiastic, zealous “wannabe” perfect teacher has not changed and that is being present or presence.

The IATEFL conference in Tuzla from 14 to 15 June made it painfully obvious what I sort of knew but had ignored for a long time. Attending a conference not only enriches our teaching styles; it is also a sociable occasion at which experts share and exchange ideas and can finally talk to others who have similar ideas and ideals. They can discuss solutions to challenging students and are able to mingle with like-minded people. Rare are the occasions at which so many extraordinary good people assemble!

I enjoyed being present at the conference and I found staying in Tuzla delightful. Although it was “rather” hot, as the English would put it, I liked all the plenary talks and the workshops I chose to attend and during which I did my best to participate in the activities the facilitators had set for us. They were inspiring and engaging as well as informative.

First I have to mention the workshop facilitated by Slovenian IATEFL members Lea Koler and her colleague Nina Dekleva entitled **English Book Club As a Portal to Reading for Enjoyment**. As it is my firm belief that reading is one of the most important activities in the process of acquiring a foreign language and without it the learner simply cannot achieve a high enough level of English, I try to get my students to read. The presentation of the English book club gave us many ingenious ideas on how to get students motivated and interested in reading. One of the activities I especially enjoyed was trying to guess the origin of the short paragraphs shown on the board. Afterwards we had to discuss

which ones we liked best (and least) and based on that decide which book we would like (or not) like to read. It was obvious that the presenters are doing a great job getting the students to read, which they achieve not only by setting the students stimulating tasks, but also by creating a friendly, relaxing and welcoming atmosphere in their library.

The second conference day started with a plenary, after which I chose to get to know **Zero Prep Activities in the ELT Classroom**, presented by Natalija Savićević Mrvaljević and Tanja Đonlaga, ELTAM, Montenegro. Although a few participants voiced their doubts on the usefulness of the activities, I have to say that such activities make the students concentrate and really listen, which as many of you have probably noticed, students frequently do not consciously do. The activity that I think was most useful was called “pass the peg”. Students form a circle and each is given a peg (a teacher can choose any other similar small object to be passed around). The instructions ask the stu-



dents to pass the peg to the student on their right when they hear the word “right” and pass it to the student on their left when they hear the word “left”. The teacher then reads a text in which both words are often used. After the teacher has read the text, each student should have just one peg in their hands. The teacher then reads the text again; the instructions are the same just that the students should also pay attention to the content of the text as they will be quizzed on it afterwards. The activity can be adapted to any level of students and the choice of words the students have to pay attention to can also be different. Teachers can simply use the texts that they already have either in their textbooks or from other sources.

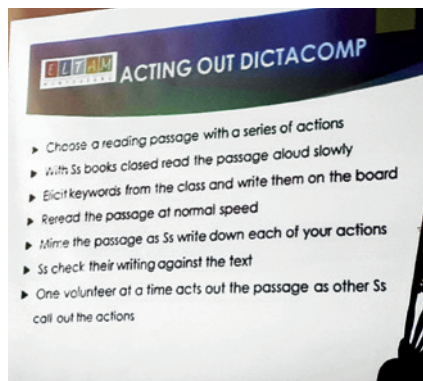
Colin Vandergraaf held a plenary titled **Ways with Words: Beyond Vocabulary and in Search of Curiosity** and a workshop called **Working with Words: Doing More with Vocabulary**. There is more to vocabulary than just creating long lists which need to be memorised! Most teachers already make students explore different kinds of word combinations and collocations. What they probably do not do is explain the origin of words or expressions. But by doing this the learners are more likely to remember the meanings of the words and expressions. Another creative way of acquiring new vocabulary is making sketches or illustrations and making videos explaining the vocabulary that has to be learned. These are done in groups of various sizes and then shared with the whole class. Such an activity is appropriate for the classroom; it can be set as a group project or even homework.

Teachers today cannot ignore the development of new technologies and applications that can be utilised in the classroom. Slobodan Kelečević presented several such tools at his workshop **Digital Starter Kit for Teachers**. Some of these tools are free, some can be used for free for a month and some need to be purchased. His advice is to make the most of the Cyber Mondays, which are similar to Black Fridays. Of the numerous tools mentioned, I think the most useful one would be the online white-board called AWW. Whatever is once created on the board can be edited at any time and is ready to be reused whenever needed. Teachers who have

to organise many classes themselves and fill in their own schedule will find the application called Doodle useful. The learners can access it and put their names in the available slots.

There are two more things worth mentioning here, one of which is Zoom, which is similar to Skype but enables different rooms for group work and making videos. The second is the educational platform named Edmodo, which has some similarities with Facebook and is definitely something teachers should try to find more about.

In conclusion, I feel I have to point out again what I mentioned as important in the introduction – it is crucial that teachers are present at conferences like this one and that they as speakers have presence, as this is one of the most effective ways to involve all the listeners. All the presenters at the conference shared that quality. They were the personalities that controlled the classroom, and not only that – they showed enthusiasm which attracted the audience to listen more attentively. With teachers like that, who can resist learning?



Obituary Eleonora Marendić (1960–2019)

by Mojca Belak



Who remembers a teacher when they die? Like acting teaching is art that needs to be experienced directly or else it cannot be appreciated. Richard Burbage was supposed to be a great actor in Shakespeare's time, but nobody now living has seen him act, and repeating from generation to generation that he was really good at what he did remains just that, repeating. Camera has now solved this problem for actors: even young Slovenians know that Duša Počkaj, say, was a great actor, because she also appeared in films. However, when it comes to teaching, no camera can help. A teacher needs to be experienced, and only their learners know the magic that happened in the classroom.



I've included theatre in the introduction because it was one of Eleonora's great loves. She primarily mixed with theatre folk and artists in general. She was highly artistic herself, but her art was teaching. Rarely does one meet a more dedicated instructor, a more caring leader, a more sensitive soul. Besides, her usually white-blond hair, big eyes and deep coarse voice of a heavy smoker made those she got in contact with remember her well. She had a lot of friends, but because of her eccentricity, she, like all charismatic people, was also often misunderstood and criticised. One of her hobbies was astrology, which she took very seriously – not on the popular magazine level but much deeper, involving birth charts and all. She even said she was an *astroschauvinist*, by which she meant that she preferred people of certain zodiac signs over others, and she was quick to ask a new acquaintance their birthday. She particularly appreciated Aquarians because being one herself, she tended to get on with them (us) better than anybody else.

She and I met at the Centre for Foreign Languages in Ljubljana, where we both taught in the late eighties. In those times team teaching was practised in the school, so every group of learners had two teachers alternating sessions throughout the course. We shared many groups, and among other students we taught a relatively young researcher by the name of Zdravko, who wanted to be addressed as "Zdravc". Eleonora being from Rijeka found this variant of the name strange and couldn't remember it at the start of the course, so once instead of "Zdravc" she called him "Zvonc". He

never forgave her, she got very unhappy because she had caused offence, while others, who saw the humorous side of it, just had a good time. In that case she re-named a student by mistake, but among her friends she also called another teacher of English differently from what his name is simply because she found his first name "too peasant-like".

She co-authored and later wrote books for learners of English: *Angleški jezik 4 – Touchstone 4* with Janez Skela (1998), its third edition (1994) with Alenka Gvardjančič, Janez Skela and Rastislav Šuštaršič, and *Touchstone 4 Workbook* (1998) with Janez Skela and Lori King-Videtič. She wrote *English 3* (2003) for her Gea College learners and *English for You* (2015) for students of Biotechnical Faculty.

We parted ways not because we would not like each other, but because my path went in one direction and hers in the other: as a single mother of a small child I had a lot to do at home, while Eleonora went on hanging out mainly with her artistic NSK friends.

She last worked as a lecturer of English at Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana, where she was very much liked and respected among the students.

In the minds of the young and the middle-aged death doesn't seem to exist, and we think that when it happens, those who go are older than us. This is why it is so hard to accept when a life of a member of our generation comes to a close. Someone in her late fifties shouldn't die. But she did. Suddenly. Rest in Peace, Eli.

Notes to Self

by Jasna Šebez

Three months ago a friend very close to my heart had a serious bike accident. I promised to send her daily affirmations to support her recovery and lift her spirits, especially on days she was/is feeling the blues after her life had in a way been put on hold.

In the following days and weeks, while searching for appropriate thoughts, mood generators, lifter-uppers, energy boosters and pep-talks, I realised I was subconsciously choosing the ones that felt fit for my state of mind as well. (And it makes me think about the everlasting debate about selfless good deeds if this has started to be therapy for me as well...) I, too, was in desperate need of some affirmations, trying to figure out my (inter)connection with and to the world. So I embarked on a journey of making Notes to Self.

Being on parental leave since April basically forced me to stop for a moment (a year, actually) – which I rarely do – and (re)set my priorities. As someone who hates routine and is constantly on the move and doing something – if not in fact many things at once! – motherhood definitely turned my life around more than I had anticipated. Being considered a reliable person, I had to consciously stop myself from being available to everyone at any given moment. I realised I was the one steering the boat this time (or was it always like that?) and that... *Note #1: I have the power to choose.* I have the power and the opportunity to give myself a chance to be “just” a mom or at least try to be. This means I had to allow myself not to answer every phone call or reply to every email (or even to reply to none whatsoever...). However, it made me wonder: can we ever put the rest of the world (and work) on hold and be “just” moms, “just” dads, “just” individuals dedicating time only to our families and ourselves rather than trying to fulfill the wishes and expectations of others (knowing that the thankyou's often do not

follow)? (So... *Note #2: Not everyone you meet will see your magic.*) When are we going to allow ourselves to... *Note #3: Just be.*? Disconnect from the crowds and connect to the inner-self? How far away do we need to go to find the way back to ourselves? Or is the Self just around the corner, patiently waiting for us to... *Note #4: Stop and smell the flowers.*? My friend told me that prior to the accident she had wanted to take half a year off to do the things she always wanted to do but never had enough time to. Now, though the hard way, she got the time. So... *Note #5: There is a silver lining to everything. or What you think, you become; what you feel, you attract; what you imagine, you create.* One way or another...

I am a firm believer that... *Note #6: Everything in life happens for a reason. Trust in divine timing. The universe always has your back.* This is sometimes difficult to come to terms with, but it certainly helped me go through some of the most difficult situations I've found myself in so far. Trusting that everything happens when the timing is right made me more calm and patient, though I am still learning and there is still lots of room for improvement. *Note #7: Some days you just have to believe a little harder.* All this led me to another realisation – every crucial point in our lives, be it the birth of our child(ren), an accident, a death in the family, important decisions, etc., forces us to take a look at our own lives and (re)evaluate the quality of them. Are we satisfied with what we find and see? Is this what we wished for? Was our answer to the infamous “Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?” question correct? I know that I still have a long way to go before I am completely satisfied with my life as a whole (if that's even possible in the life of a perfectionist), that all the pieces of the puzzle still don't fit. And that's fine. *Note #8: Let go of any illusions of total control and stop carrying unnecessary burdens. It's not all in your hands – and that's OK.* And *Note*

#9: Don't worry. Va tutto bene. (as my affirmation sweater says ☺).

Through this affirmation journey with my friend, I am learning to take it step by step and... *Note #10: Be patient – see the bigger picture.* I now know that the Italians have the saying “*dolce far niente*” for a reason and that there is nothing wrong with doing nothing sometimes. I am learning to dedicate my complete attention to my kids and family, and to my friends when I have the opportunity, and to really make it quality time. Everything else can (and will) wait. *Note #11: In the dew of little things the heart finds its morning and is refreshed* (K. Gibran).

PS: The affirmation journey took a wild turn: my friend is sending them to me now. ;) Life is full of surprises, right?

PPS: I am sure the affirmations come in handy in any field of life, including our jobs. An affirmation a day keeps the bad mood away! For you and for your students as well. ☺

Would you like to share your views in the Teacher Thoughts column? Write to lea.koler@iatefl.si!



Review of Chris Mares' *50 Ways to Be a Better Teacher: Professional Development Techniques*

by **Dolores Malić**

This book is very useful for teachers who do not have a lot of experience. It gives simple but clear examples and ideas to improve one's teaching style.

I like the fact that advice is not given in a "Tolkien-esque" way of describing things: it is short and to the point. ☺

The names of the techniques, written in the table of contents, already give a hint to the reader before he or she starts reading.

All in all, I would recommend this book to students, to teachers who have not got a lot of experience and also to teachers who would like to refresh the way they think.



The book consists of five chapters:

- The first part gives quite a lot of techniques, especially useful for new teachers.
- The second part talks about personal development. The texts are a bit longer, but still very easy to use.
- The third part is about attitude. We are shown the importance of positive behaviour. The teacher is advised to show him or herself as a human being without any superpowers or worrying we have to know everything there is to know in this world.
- The fourth part describes the ways we, the teachers, have to take care of our physical selves. The author suggests working out regularly in order to relieve stress and emphasises taking good care of our voices.
- The last part is about finding our inner selves. Of course we can improve and get better, but we also have to accept ourselves as we are.

Some quotes from the book:

- "Make a difference in a positive way."
- "Teaching is a complex art."
- "Don't over-prepare." The recipe is simple: pay attention to the final outcome of the lesson.
- "Clarity is crucial." Think about the way you give instructions – sometimes the instructions are too confusing for the students to follow.
- "You are enough as you are."
- "We make a difference!" – Sometimes we do not see the influence we have but this does not mean it is not there.

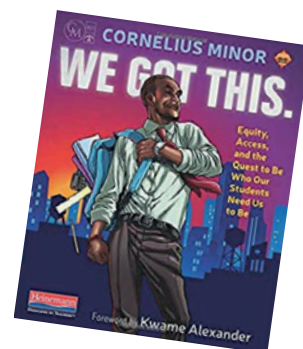
The book is available as an e-book and also paperback. If you're interested in it, you can find it here:

<https://wayzgoosepress.com/authors/chris-mares/#betterteacher>



Review of Cornelius Minor's We Got This: *Equity, Access and the Quest to Be Who Our Students Need Us to Be*

by Sara Bezjak



I have to admit that it's been a while since I read *We Got This* by Cornelius Minor; however, it's failed to leave my mind and I still think about it.

It's a book written from a teacher to other teachers and it's been one of the most practical teaching books I have read in a while.

It discusses teaching that starts with **listening to our students**, not speaking to them or lecturing them. Cornelius uses the analogy of teacher as superhero, which makes listening our most powerful tool. He emphasises that listening won't make teaching easier, but it will give us the ability to create or adapt lessons that speak to what our students say they need. When a change like that occurs, because a teacher took some time and listened to a student, something almost magical happens. The children realise that their voices can bring about changes, at first in their classrooms and later in their community or even country. If we, as teachers, can send a message to our students that their voices are heard and matter, simply because they are human, we will have used our superpower for the better.

Although Cornelius is not an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher, many concepts and graphic charts he uses can be adapted to fit classrooms in many contexts. Admittedly, the context that this book was written for is primarily American, which has to be taken into consideration. However, it doesn't mean that it has nothing to

contribute to my or your teaching context. Perhaps it just means we have to take some time to reflect on our classrooms and lessons to see how we can use our superpower for the better. Because, as Cornelius says, **we all want better**, regardless of our geographical location (my own addition). And remember, you've got this.

Some quotes from the book:

"Our journey starts with an understanding that no great good can be done for a people if we do not listen to them first. Powerful teaching is rooted in powerful listening." (p. xi)

"[k]ill the assumption that children and their understanding of the world are flawed without us." (p. 17)

"I want to build a bridge for children – a bridge between what we are doing in class and the lives that they lead outside of class. I want to be able to show kids how each skill I teach in class makes life right now better outside class" (p. 33)

"My job as a teacher is not to teach the curriculum or even to just teach the students; it is to seek to understand my kids as completely as possible so that I can purposefully bend curriculum to meet them" (p. 101)

"We are not victim in a dysfunctional system; we are agents with the vision to imagine new systems – even if they exist only in our individual classrooms or departments for now." (p. 115)

27th

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All participants of the conference are invited to enter the competition with poems written prior or during the conference. Each participant may submit one original poem, written in English. The poems will be submitted on the venue itself, during the course of the conference.

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Turistična agencija TWIN se s kulturno-izobraževalnimi potovanji ukvarja že 20. leto. Ker v Veliko Britanijo potujemo pogosteje kot večina ostalih slovenskih organizatorjev potovanj, ponujamo odlično in preverjeno izvedbo. Naše cene tudi že vključujejo javni prevoz in obvezne vstopnine. Cene so odvisne predvsem od termina odhoda in vaše fleksibilnosti pri prihodu.

1995 - 2015



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Zakaj s Twin-om v London:

- 1 Pogosti in redni, zagotovljeni odhodi v London.** Twin organizira šolska potovanja v London že 20 let, v povprečju imamo na mesec vsaj 3 zagotovljene odhode v London.
- 2 Odlično vodstvo.** Pri Twinu se zavedamo, da je odlično poznavanje običajev in turističnih znamenitosti Londončanov le prvi korak k odlični izvedbi. Naši vodniki imajo dolgoletne izkušnje pri vodenju šolske mladine, zato odlično poznajo vse sestavine programa, saj jih sami pripravljajo. Tudi zato je vodenje/izvedba toliko bolj fleksibilna glede na želje skupine. Naj še omenimo, da boste v Sloveniji težko našli vodnike, ki v London vodijo tako pogosto kot Twinovi vodniki.
- 3 Nastanitev, ki presega običajno turistično kategorijo.** Pri Twinu se zavedamo, da je dober spanec pomembna sestavina izleta. Vsi naši hoteli so hoteli s 3* in pri večini udeležencev presežejo njihova pričakovanja. Kot specialist za London lahko zagotovimo vsaj en bogat angleški zajtrk (običajnih zajtrki v Londonu so skromni kontinentalni).
- 4 Nikoli naknadno ne spreminjamo pogojev.** Naša cena je vedno znana že ob prijavi in se nikoli ne spremeni zaradi spremembe cen dobaviteljev, goriva oz letalskega prevoznika.
- 5 Vedno ponudimo kakšno dodatno storitev – brezplačno.** S program zagotavljamo minimalni obseg storitev oz. ogledov, vendar nikoli ne izvedemo samo minimalnega obsega – vedno, pri vsaki skupini dodamo nekaj posebnega, kar ni zapisano v programu. Prav tako v naših programih nikoli ne zapišemo "če bo čas dopuščal", kajti vse naše programe vedno v celoti izvedemo. In ker si London zelo pogosto ogledujemo, poznamo tudi optimalno zaporedje ogledov brez nepotrebnega hitenja.
- 6 Vsaj 183 osnovnih in srednjih šol je že potovalo z nami. Z nami zelo malo šol potuje samo enkrat.** Če želite neobvezujoče vzpostaviti stik z organizatorjem na eni od šol, ki je že potovala z nami, vam bomo z veseljem posredovali kontakt.
- 7 Ponujamo 3-dnevni program, kjer za izvedbo ni potrebno delovnika.**

Več informacij na www.twintur.com ali na 040 187 830 ali v poslovalnici na Zemljemerski ulici 12 v Ljubljani.

Osmisliti učenje je osnovna naloga vsakega učitelja in ni boljšega načina, kako priljubiti angleščino, od tega, da učence popelješ po svetu. V današnjih časih to ni enostavno. Šole in učitelji se bojijo odgovornosti, mnogi starši pa ne zmorejo ali znajo otrok odpeljati sami. Ni bilo lahko pred 15 leti prvič sestiti na avtobus in se podati z agencijo, o kateri nismo vedeli ničesar, na večdnevno potovanje v Veliko Britanijo. Bilo nas je strah pred odhodom, a takoj ko smo se podali na pot, smo vedeli, da je bila odločitev prava.

Po tistem, ko smo prvič potovali s TWinom, smo vedeli, da nas ne bo več strah. Lani smo že deseti odkrivali Evropo in vsakič smo se vrnili ne samo zadovoljni, ampak tudi hvaležni za TWinovo strokovnost, prijaznost, ustrežljivost ... Hvaležni smo celotni ekipi in nikoli ne bi izbrala druge agencije, saj sem prepričana, da niti cenovno niti strokovno potovanja ne bi mogla biti ugodnejše in bolj izpeljana.

Ta ekskurzija je postala stalna praksa naše šole in učenci komaj čakajo, da bodo dovolj stari, da se je bodo lahko udeležili. Nam, spremljevalcem, pa je v neizmerno veselje, ko jih opazujemo, kako polni vtisov in lepih doživetij še dolgo pripovedujejo o potovanju.

Ksenija Tripkovič, OŠ Selnica ob Dravi