

IATEFL Slovenia Newsletter  
Winter issue 2012, no. 57



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“European Language Day” Report

Reports on Courses in Britain and Ireland

Christmas Trip to London and Rochester

Hungarian Conference: “Inspired”

Cambridge Tests

Ivy Smith Comics

20<sup>th</sup> International IATEFL Slovenia Conference 2013

## “@informed Teacher”

Where? In Terme Topolšica.

When? From 7<sup>th</sup> March to 10<sup>th</sup> March 2013.

Why? Because of the key speakers that are coming:  
Shelly Terrell, Peter Dyer, Willy Cardoso, Mark Andrews and others.  
And because we always have a great time!

## Nagradni literarni natečaj za dijake 3. in 4. letnikov

iatefl Slovenia



Tema natečaja:

**F. Scott Fitzgerald:** *The Diamond as Big as the Ritz*

Naloga:

Dijaki v angleščini napišejo dodatno (zadnje) poglavje novele. Pri tem naj bodo izvirni, prav tako pa naj upoštevajo jezik in slog, ki ga Fitzgerald uporablja v ostalih poglavjih.

Rok za oddajo prispevkov je petek, **22. februar 2013.**

Prispevke oddajo dijaki sami preko elektronske pošte na naslov [diamond@iatefl.si](mailto:diamond@iatefl.si).

Nagrade:

1. mesto: izlet v London (nagrada turistične agencije Twin)
2. mesto: Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (nagrada Centra Oxford)
- 3.–5. mesto: knjižna izdaja Znanstvene založbe Filozofske fakultete UL

Razpis s podrobnimi informacijami bo objavljen do konca decembra.



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**Dear all,**

Again, everything smells like Christmas! People seem to be more cheerful, there's music and decorations everywhere... I like it! I know we usually publish some Christmas ideas at this time of to choose from in this issue.

First, though, we cannot get by without mentioning our next conference, which is coming up soon ☺ I know most of you are looking forward to being there again, to meeting your friends, talking to people you do not have the chance to see very often, listening to some great speakers and learning new tricks to help you become even better at what you do.

You still have time to become part of our family, which is getting bigger and bigger, so please feel welcome to join us! We try to give our members the very best help there is – useful information, the chance to take part in foreign conferences and further professional development.

I would also like to invite you to share your thoughts, so please send us an e-mail to info@iatefl.si. We enjoy reading your questions, ideas and all the rest – it all helps us to become even better.

This is our last issue for this year, so please allow me to wish you a great December, with lots of warm thoughts and everything that goes with this magical time of the year.



<b>BONNIE... and us</b> by Marša Meznarič .....	4
<b>Dear Santa, please bring me... ?</b> by Dolores Malić .....	5
<b>Give your students the advantage of taking the Cambridge ESOL YLE tests, KET for Schools, PET for Schools and FCE for Schools</b> by Karmen Feher Malačič, Cambridge Examiner and Young Learners Team Leader .....	6
<b>Ivy Smith</b> by Tjaša Lemut Novak .....	9
<b>The theme: “INSPIRED” The Pleasure of Learning and Teaching</b> by Barbara Majcenovič Kline .....	12
<b>European Language Day</b> by Andreja Lakner .....	20
<b>Pilgrims English language course dealing with difficult learners</b> by Janja Čolić .....	24
<b>Culture Course in Dublin</b> by Lea Sobočan .....	26
<b>Christmas Rochester and London with Twin</b> by Marša Meznarič, Lea Sobočan and Sandra Vida .....	28

# BONNIE... and us

by Marša Meznarič

## THE DREAM OF A PILGRIMS COURSE...

... had been there for a long time, since I first attended an IATEFL Slovenia conference and heard the Pilgrims trainers lecture and run workshops. I remember leaving the room amazed at how powerful their words were. But I knew that we do not change our teaching just by adapting activities: we change it when we change – when we internalise different views on life and learning.

Mojca Belak helped a classroom full of people fill out a COMENIUS form to apply for a Pilgrims course, and some of us got the grant. It was a happy day... I even did the victory dance (some of you might know “I am Weasel”, which inspired this tribal dance routine of mine), for the dream...

... CAME TRUE.

## THE JOURNEY...

... to Canterbury began by crashing at Stephanie's place. She's been to Slovenia numerous times as a lecturer for English in Action, and that is how our friendship began. She had to leave early next morning and I ended up observing a cat chasing a squirrel in a park somewhere in Canterbury. It was educational. After making some observation notes, I spent a few hours in a local cafe eavesdropping on the southern accent and reading. My next stop was Parkwood at the University of Kent campus. I made the room cosy and comfy and mine in the next couple of hours. The kitchen seemed just fine too. I was ready. Tomorrow could not come soon enough. Well, I did have an afternoon nap, something I had not had in about one thousand years. It...

... FELT SO GOOD.



## THE PEOPLE...

... at the course came from different parts of the world: China, Spain, Poland, Slovakia, Italy and Denmark. Bonnie said we were a good mixture of bridges, magnets and islands and that is why we got along so well. During the two weeks we became good friends.



Bonnie guided us through exercises that not only built vocabulary or developed certain language skills, but also laid great emphasis on group work and focused on developing skills of working in a team. We learnt about the effects of such tasks first-hand – we learnt to work together and trained our patience, but at the same time wondered at each other's amazing and exceptional personalities. We were thankful to Bonnie for creating an environment where such skills and insights are valued. I realised yet again that the point of education is teaching children to think by teaching them to compare and contrast, analyse, infer, generalise, interpret, explain, predict, define, make connections, classify, relate facts, assess, present evidence, diagnose, evaluate, create models, theorise, categorise, judge, decide and make analogies. They will thus learn about themselves and life and they will become good people...

... WHO LOVE THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

## BONNIE...

... possesses so much knowledge of different humanistic approaches to teaching languages (she also used to work with Dr Lozanov and Dr Gardner). She shares this knowledge warmly and is a walking proof of the saying “live and let live”. Her beliefs radiate through all the positive quotes up on the walls of the classroom, the heaps of arts and crafts materials on the classroom tables, the ever-repeating “OK, let's stand up”, her



serious “Yes, but WHY would we do something like this?”, her pace, her letting us do it our way, her laughter, her never being late, her handouts, her lessons’ structure, her books, her choice of music and children’s literature, and her way of communicating.

There is no way I could attach a lesson plan to this article to try to show you what she taught us – it would be way too long, because everything is connected to something else. Topics we dealt with are all a part of some framework, part of a larger context. We all walked out of the classroom on Friday determined to try to teach language that truly has some meaning to the children and to pass it on in context. I will never forget the story of a teacher that changed the prescribed coursebook into a scrapbook – she cut the coursebook up, glued the pages she liked into the scrapbook and added her own material to make it work for her students... Nor the story of a wise teacher from Turkey who started every school year by playing football with his students first. Bonnie showed us that wisdom comes from all parts of the world, from all the people in the world, as well as from the many theories and approaches to language learning. She...

**... BELIEVES THAT ONLY WHEN YOU CARE ABOUT THE STUDENTS DO YOU REALLY TEACH.**

#### **AND NOW..**

... I am ready to share. Come to the IATEFL events, read IATFEL and PILGRIMS newsletters, visit our websites and...

... LEARN ABOUT LEARNING A LANGUAGE.

## Dear Santa, please bring me...

by **Dolores Malić**

I think we are all familiar with difficulties Christmas brings sometimes - choosing the “right” gifts is not always an easy task. This year I had an idea that I would like to share, maybe you find it useful ☺. It turned out to be a really nice gift, the person who received it said it was the most original one she got in a long time.

#### **So, all you need is the following:**

- a jar and a lid (*I used a jar that holds 1 litre*)
- 300 g flour
- 100 g chocolate chips
- 100 g ground almonds or hazelnuts
- 130 g brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

You layer these ingredients into your jar. You then have to enclose a card with the mixing and baking instructions:

*Cookies in a jar  
Preheat oven to 180 degrees C.  
Add 2 eggs and 250 g butter to  
the ingredients from the jar.  
Mix the ingredients.  
Cool the dough for 30 minutes  
in the fridge.  
Roll it out and cut into shapes  
with cookie cutters.  
Bake until golden.*



I hope you like the idea ☺.

# Give your students the advantage of taking the Cambridge ESOL YLE tests, KET for Schools, PET for Schools and FCE for Schools

by Karmen Feher Malačič, Cambridge Examiner and Young Learners Team Leader

**Today it is vital that children start learning English at an early age: only then will they have a strong foundation which will help them achieve their full potential in later life.**

Teachers play an important role by encouraging their students and by using the right methods which make learning English fun, enjoyable and effective. Testing is only one part of formal learning, but it is one that greatly influences the students' attitude towards learning. If testing is not seen as an immediate threat, it leads to a more positive attitude towards learning and testing, and consequently to better results in one's language acquisition.

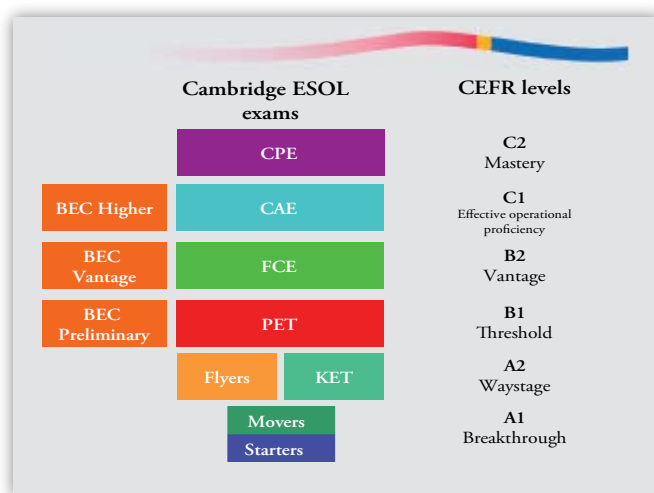
## Testing as part of learning

Taking tests represents a constituent part of learning and teaching a foreign language. We use them to measure a student's knowledge and skills. However, very often the results do not give a clear picture of what the student really knows about the subject. Test anxiety, which frequently accompanies the student when taking a test, can influence the student so much that he does not really show all his potential in the subject and therefore receives only an average or poor grade. In order to minimise test anxiety with our children and students and in order to build up their confidence in taking tests, we advise introducing the Cambridge Young Learners Tests into the primary school system. Cambridge Young Learners Tests are designed to make learning fun, to encourage children for further learning of English and for working towards more advanced levels.

The Young Learners Tests are completely positively orientated, as each and every candidate receives a certificate. Their performance is measured by the number of "shields" awarded rather than by "marks" as such. They are non-threatening and a good stimulation for further learning. Further tests, like the Cambridge Key English Test for Schools and the Cambridge Preliminary Test for Schools, which are also adapted to younger generations, can be their next step. Once they are older and more advanced, they can proceed to higher level exams such as the First Certificate in English and Certificate in Advanced English.

## The Levels of Cambridge Exams

The different levels of Cambridge ESOL exams are aligned to the levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).



Cambridge ESOL has adapted a number of these to pupils and teenagers in primary and secondary education. These are:

Cambridge First Certificate in English for Schools (i.e. FCE for Schools)	– Level B2
Cambridge Preliminary English Test for Schools (i.e. PET for Schools)	– Level B1
Cambridge Key English Test for Schools (i.e. KET for Schools)	– Level A2
Cambridge Young Learners Tests: Starters and Movers (i.e. YLES)	– Level A1
Flyers	– Level A2

These exams are set at the same level as their counterparts for adults (KET, PET and FCE) listed in the table above, but they have been adapted to the interests and experiences of school-aged learners older than 13. The certificates are identical to their adult versions, with no reference to the "for schools" version on them. From March 2013 students will also be able to

take FCE for Schools. The Cambridge YLES tests are suitable for younger pupils, aged 7 to 12.

### **The Advantages of YLES, KET, PET and FCE for Schools**

There are numerous and significant advantages for pupils and teenagers taking one of the Cambridge ESOL exams:

#### **Young Learners Tests**

- ☺ *all candidates receive a certificate*
- ☺ *all candidates receive an international certificate*
- ☺ *children are awarded for their effort, which gives them additional motivation*
- ☺ *tests provide a positive experience*
- ☺ *children do not receive a negative mark*
- ☺ *children are tested on what they know and not on what they do not know*
- ☺ *tests include pictures and are colourful*
- ☺ *tasks are interesting and fun*
- ☺ *tests provide the first stepping stone to other exams*
- ☺ *there are three levels: starters, movers, flyers*
- ☺ *tests test all four language skills*

#### **Ket for Schools and Pet for Schools**

- ☺ *candidates are awarded for their effort, which gives them additional motivation*
- ☺ *candidates receive an internationally recognised certificate*
- ☺ *exams focus on the practical use of English in everyday life*
- ☺ *tasks are adapted to teenagers*
- ☺ *exams are an interesting and a positive experience*
- ☺ *they are an important stepping stone to a higher level exam*
- ☺ *they test all four language skills*
- ☺ *candidates consolidate their communication skills*
- ☺ *candidates are encouraged to use their communication skills*
- ☺ *certificates enable greater mobility*
- ☺ *certificates boost self-confidence in speaking English abroad*
- ☺ *certificates give more chances to enrol in certain high school and/or university studies*
- ☺ *certificates give more chances to be awarded scholarships*
- ☺ *certificates give better job and promotion opportunities*

### **The Benefits for Schools and the Gains for Parents**

Acquiring an international certificate in English represents a turning point on the learning path of every student. In addition to this, schools and parents have also a lot to gain from them. Especially schools outside the major towns can provide an opportunity to their students to learn a foreign language in a similar way to that already adopted in the cities. Their students not only get extra teaching time, experience with exam taking in a foreign language, an insight into communicative and exam techniques, and an internationally recognised certificate, but they also get the opportunity to show what they know and are capable of when communicating in English. More importantly, as a result they are better motivated for their future learning. By the same token, teachers who carry out such preparation lessons need to get familiar with the tests and in so doing gain new insights and develop professionally. Hence schools offering the opportunity to prepare for one of these exams create added value for their school. They positively and effectively influence the future development of their students and also often contribute in so doing to the development of their region or community by bringing in an international dimension from an early age.

Parents are usually the ones who are the least familiar with such tests, and therefore they need to be presented with all their aspects. When presented to them by teachers, they generally whole-heartedly endorse them and welcome the external feedback on the progress of their child. They also appreciate the efforts of the school in encouraging their children in their learning of a foreign language by providing additional opportunities for them.

### **Preparation Courses/Lessons in State Schools**

Special preparation courses or additional lessons are necessary. Most frequently these are carried out in the form of extracurricular courses in language schools (which are paid for). These usually carry out programmes and use course books which are adapted to the CEFR levels and so integrate the preparation for these exams into their regular lessons. However, practice shows that mainstream primary schools and secondary education can successfully integrate it into their curriculum too. State schools which have experience and have been preparing students for years have introduced the exam preparation within their optional compulsory activities or compulsory electives in secondary education. In this way parents do not pay for the course and teachers carry out the lessons as part of their general work responsibilities. At the same time, the students get an opportunity to consolidate and expand their knowledge and communicative skills, especially those who are particularly interested in the English language and want to do more. Another possibility is to include it as part of a special programme for the talented or simply do extra lessons. Certainly the ground is open for schools to find their own solution as to how to enable the preparation and the registration of their students. If there is a will, there is also a way!

### **What do teachers of English need to know?**

In order to prepare young students for the tests, teachers of English need to know that it is not too demanding and that they will get a lot of personal and professional satisfaction from it.

There is a large amount of preparation material and test papers on the market for the YLEs tests and for KET for Schools, PET for Schools and FCE for Schools. Resources are also available on the Cambridge ESOL website at [www.CambridgeESOL.org/home/teacher.html](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org/home/teacher.html).

First, however, teachers need to get familiar with the format of the tests, their syllabus and the registration conditions themselves.

Practice shows that it is best to start the preparation course at the beginning of a school year (or even before – depending on the students, their level and on the school and its organisation) in order to register for the March, May or June sessions. Once they have familiarised themselves with the tests and the levels, teachers need to evaluate the level of their students in order to enter them for the right exam. Students in the same year might enter exams of different levels, for example. To do this, teachers can use past test papers and conduct a mock exam, they can compare school's syllabus with the one of the exam, they can use their own tests, they can choose textbooks that are in tune with the CEFR levels and similar. Once at their appropriate-level, students need to get familiar with the format of the test.

### The following can be used as useful examples:

**YLES** – extra lessons are needed to get the level and around 10–15 lessons to familiarise the students with the format of the test by going through the whole test using YL materials and past tests. It is important they get enough listening practice and are taught to speak up.

**KET, PET and FCE** for Schools – extra lessons are usually conducted to familiarise the students with the format of the tests. It is advisable to use KET, PET and FCE for Schools

materials and especially past tests, which are available in bookshops and at [www.CambridgeESOL.org](http://www.CambridgeESOL.org). It is important students get enough training in writing (tips like how to keep within the number of words they need to write, e.g. 35–45 words) and listening practice.

### Materials

A lot of materials are available in book shops and on the Cambridge ESOL website (see above). Some free past papers are available on the Cambridge ESOL website. Each school can buy a certain number of books and then lend them to the students in order to minimise costs.

### Where and when to register?

Students can register through a school usually approximately two months before the exam date. There are several dates possible, but in Slovenia the British Council usually organises YLEs in May (dates are agreed with the schools eight weeks before the exam) and KET, PET and FCE for Schools in March or June. Please refer to [www.britishcouncil.si](http://www.britishcouncil.si) for an entry form, fees and further information.

To conclude, I strongly recommend giving your students the advantage of taking the Cambridge ESOL exams as a means of achieving a significant threshold in their learning and hence encouraging them to go on learning and using English whenever they can.

Karmen Feher Malačič is a Cambridge examiner (KET, PET, FCE BECP, BECV and YLEs) and a YL Team Leader with the British Council Slovenia. She is a full-time teacher of English and the Head of the Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures at Pionirski dom. She is a former editor of IN-iatefl Magazine. She also holds international certificates in English, Italian, French, Spanish and German.

## V(ery) I(mportant) P(ages) CORNER

– here are some web pages that can be used for creative writing

<http://edudemic.com/2011/11/best-web-tools/> - links to various web tools that can come in handy

<http://www.englishcentral.com> - pronunciation practice using famous movies or talks, also gives feedback on your pronunciation

<http://www.lyricstraining.com/> - gap-fill exercises, songs with lyrics

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/>



## MY SMITH

<input type="checkbox"/>	JOB: English teacher
<input type="checkbox"/>	PLACE OF WORK: school
<input type="checkbox"/>	AGE: young at heart
<input type="checkbox"/>	LIKES: teaching English, sharing her experience, being informed, professional and understood
<input type="checkbox"/>	DISLIKES: feeling helpless and misunderstood





## CELTA - Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults

The CELTA teacher training certificate is your first step to getting a teaching job anywhere in the world. The CELTA course (like the Trinity TESOL) is internationally recognised and unlike so many others NOT a self-validated TEFL course.

This course provides speakers of English with initial training in teaching English as a foreign language, and leads to the internationally recognised qualification: the Cambridge CELTA (Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults). The course is also suited to those who are already in the profession, but who have no formal or practical teaching qualification. The courses are validated, and syllabus and assessment criteria are determined by University for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) of Cambridge English.

CELTA is accepted throughout the world by organisations which employ English Language teachers. The Cambridge CELTA has been accredited by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) at level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework. Cambridge ESOL also works with international ELT organisations to ensure the acceptance of CELTA globally.

You can take CELTA full time (typically four to five weeks), or part time (from a few months to over a year).

There are five main units of learning:

- Learners and teachers, and the teaching and learning context
- Language analysis and awareness
- Language skills: reading, listening, speaking and writing
- Planning and resources for different contexts
- Developing teaching skills and professionalism.

You will be assessed throughout the course, with no final examination. An external assessor, appointed by Cambridge ESOL, moderates each course. There are two components of assessment:

1. Teaching practice

You will teach for a total of six hours, working with classes at two levels of ability. Assessment is based on your overall performance at the end of the six hours.

2. Written assignments

You will complete four written assignments: one focusing on adult learning; one on the language system of English; one on language skills; and one on classroom teaching.

Cambridge ESOL is a division of The University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES). UCLES took over the RSA certificates and diplomas for teachers in 1988. Some people still refer to the 'RSA certificate' but they mean CELTA, which is now one of the Cambridge ESOL Language Awards. (Cambridge ESOL Teaching Awards is the English language teacher-training unit at UCLES).

## Gain a well-known qualification as an English teacher Cambridge CELTA

**The CELTA Course teaches you the principles of effective teaching:**

- provides a range of practical skills for teaching English to adult learners
- gives you hands-on teaching practice
- builds your confidence
- how to become a teacher who inspires
- enables you to work abroad

**Mint International House Ljubljana offers:**

- expert trainers
- excellent on-site facilities
- specialist teacher training resources

**Mint International House Ljubljana  
runs 2 full time courses per year:**

- 1st July - 26th July 2013
- 29th July - 26th August 2013

# CHRISTMAS TABOO

by **Lea Podkrajšek**, Mint International House Ljubljana

 <b><u>SLEIGH</u></b> Santa Claus travel vehicle	 <b><u>RESOLUTIONS</u></b> New Year better decision	 <b><u>FIREWORKS</u></b> explosive New Year colour	 <b><u>MULLED WINE</u></b> hot spices drink	 <b><u>CAROL</u></b> song sing church
 <b><u>MISTLETOE</u></b> kiss hang green	 <b><u>EGGNOG</u></b> drink alcohol eggs	 <b><u>CHRISTMAS CARD</u></b> send wishes merry	 <b><u>ORNAMENTS</u></b> decorations hang Christmas tree	 <b><u>STOCKING</u></b> presents hang fireplace
 <b><u>CHIMNEY</u></b> Santa Claus house roof	 <b><u>WRAPPING PAPER</u></b> colourful decoration present	 <b><u>FIREPLACE</u></b> stocking hang warm	 <b><u>PRESENT</u></b> gift give exchange	 <b><u>SNOWMAN</u></b> winter children carrot
 <b><u>REINDEER</u></b> animal Santa Claus Rudolph	 <b><u>NEW YEAR'S EVE</u></b> party champagne midnight	 <b><u>MERRY</u></b> happy Christmas wish	 <b><u>CANDLE</u></b> light decoration burn	 <b><u>POINSETTIA</u></b> red flower Christmas

## Teacher's notes

- Put SS in groups of four, two As (one team) and two Bs (the other team). Give out one set of cards to each group which SS place face down on a desk.
- Explain the rules of the game:
  - One A picks a card. He/she has to define in one minute the **underlined bold** word at the top of the card to the other A (his/her team partner), but without using any of the three 'taboo words' in the definition.
  - One of the Bs sits behind A looking at the card and making sure that he/she doesn't use any of the 'taboo words'.
  - The other B times the minute.
  - If A communicates the word successfully to his/her team partner within a minute, they keep the card.
  - Now one of the Bs picks a card and they continue as above, until all the cards have been used. The team who were able to keep the most cards are the winners.
- Demonstrate the game by getting one group to play with one card in front of the whole class.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> annual conference IATEFL - Hungary, taking place in Eger, at the ESZTERHÁZY KÁROLY FŐISKOLA, from 5 to 7 October 2012.

# The theme: “INSPIRED”

## The Pleasure of Learning and Teaching

by Barbara Majcenovič Kline

### INTRODUCTION

It was about mid-September when the Slovene IATEFL board sent out an invitation for one of its members to take part in the Hungarian conference as a representative from our country, a partner, who would attend the seminars, gather ideas and present them to other members. That evening, I was too tired to give it a second thought, but the following morning my (female as well as professional) curiosity just would not let it be. I had a better look and the word “Inspired” caught my attention, so I studied the program in more detail and thought I would give it a go. My hopes were not too high, though, since I thought there would be so many eager candidates who had jumped at the chance before me. However, imagine my surprise when I was informed that I was the first one to volunteer and that I would actually be able to go to Eger in less than three weeks’ time.

Thus, my Hungarian IATEFL experience began as a surprise, with mixed feelings and thousands of questions, such as where I was going, who I was going to meet, what to expect and what I was going to learn. I was, too, *Inspired*, just like the main theme of the conference, and the result is that I am now even more motivated to try new approaches in the classroom with my students. People from all over the world shared their ideas and views. Some of them were mostly agreed on, others less so, but they were all food for thought. The most important aspect of conferences such as this one is human contact, a chance to engage in genuine conversation and discussion, be it in the conference room, in workshops, during the breaks or in the more informal free time. The use of technology in the classroom was mentioned often, and it is technology that is keeping the conference spirit alive online, enabling those who could not travel the distance to have a look at the rich scope of events. But I still believe it is the people I met that weekend that made the biggest impression and inspired changes in my professional life. A well known Chinese proverb goes: “Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will eat for the rest of his life.” I must admit I had some good teachers in Eger who taught me how to fish, and with the materials now available online, I, together with all of you sharing this experience of mine through this article, should be able to keep some of those ideas fresh and make use of them in our classrooms.

### THE CHALLENGE OF BEING A TEACHER

Having taught for over 15 years now, I can see how times are changing for the worse and how being able to go into the classroom on a daily basis while maintaining the drive to teach well can be challenging at times. On the one hand, a decade and a half ago, teachers had some financial (however limited) resources to learn and progress in their profession, as well as create interesting lessons and keep their own motivation and that of their students at a high level. On the other hand, back then, students did not require that much “entertainment” in the classroom in order to acquire knowledge. A simple video or a song could wow them and attract their attention, while keeping them active and curious at the same time. As technology progresses, so do our students, quite often faster than we do, which makes it so much more difficult to inspire them and keep them interested. The following cartoon was presented at the Hungarian IATEFL conference by our colleague from Serbia, Mirna Vidaković (Using Humour in a Language Classroom), and I believe it sums it up perfectly:



The conference organizers therefore found a theme of inspiration challenging enough to invite speakers from all over the world to present their experiences and share their ideas with their colleagues. They believe that “teachers who feel themselves inspired will invest more in their teaching, even when conditions are far from ideal.” Yes, I thought, I agree, but I guess that

most of us feel the same when I say that we have been pushed to the point where we get to say: “Enough is enough.” Our professional world is becoming more demanding from two points of view, firstly from our students or pupils on the one hand, and



secondly from our employers and the educational system on the other. This means we have to work much harder than ever before, which would not be a problem were we not experiencing constant pay cuts and the devaluation or depreciation of our occupation. Having been able to attend the conference and talk to other participants, I discovered that the situation is similar throughout the EU, if not even further abroad, with some exceptions, of course.



What does, therefore, “inspire teachers in times when the general atmosphere in education is not inspiring? How can we stay positive and charismatic without giving in or giving up?” These were the main questions posed by the 22<sup>nd</sup> annual IATEFL conference in the beautiful town of Eger. The participants shared their thoughts, collected ideas and tried to cultivate inspiration and positive energy, however little there is left of it.

## GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE CONFERENCE

There were six plenary speakers: Steve Oakes, Scott Thornbury, Bonnie Tsai, Michael Carrier, Ken Wilson and Margit Szesztay. Not only are they well established and renowned as experts (mostly in teacher training), but some of their plenaries were held in the magnificent historical building of the college, where extra high ceilings with frescoes added to the thrill of being a part of something so special. In Slovene we would say, “Pašazaoči in ušesa.” They mostly covered issues in ELT/ESP, such as how teaching is both an art and a profession; how teachers of English go through different stages in their careers and what they can do to boost their morale when it reaches rock bottom. It was also interesting to discuss whether technology can (or ever will) replace the teacher in the classroom, how we can make use of technological developme-



nts and how we can make it work for us rather than against us. On the one hand, many of them favor the use of blogs as a means of communicating (sharing thoughts, ideas, suggestions, letting our daily frustrations out in the open, sharing materials which can instantly be used in the classroom if the need be etc.). On the other hand, blogs are also a great way of communicating with our students, so that we all become more computer-literate.

In order to be able to “accommodate” over 60 speakers, there were 9 simultaneous slots. Even though they were well organized according to fields within ELT or ESP, it was still very difficult to choose which one to attend, because there were several topics one was interested in at the same time. Somehow we formed smaller groups and managed to come up with a plan, whereby we would each go to a different presentation and then exchange the information. However, thumbs up to the organizers who uploaded several PowerPoint presentations and other links on the conference internet site, making it possible for us to become acquainted with the topics of interest we had missed “live.” You can find them at <http://egeronline.wordpress.com>, but I will give more detailed suggestions with each individual presenter later.

Since much can be found on the internet site above, and because of space restraints, I have decided to highlight some of my favorite sessions, even though the decision was not easy.

## MOTIVATION ZERO TO 2.0 HERO (Bren Brennan)

Yet another inspiring and attractive title, Bren Brennan is a well established speaker, a British EFL teacher, currently studying for the TESOL diploma, whose formula works not only for inspired students, but also for inspiring the teachers that attended his presentation.

I am not proud to admit that I was not that great of a fan of blogging and tweeting before I took part in the conference, but these creative speakers really inspired and encouraged me to start at least reading their blogs. It was only when I returned home from Hungary and visited their web sites and the conference one that I realized how much can be found there. So for those of you who are like me, Bren suggested HTML programming and starting blog writing (web log) with Word Press & Blogger, which is both free and easy. Furthermore, instead of being “PLN” – “*pathetic losers and nobodies*”, we can join “PLN” – “*personal (or professional) learning network*” and contribute our ideas in a global staffroom on Twitter.

Bren then showed us some wonderful examples of class materials that can be found



Bren Brennan during his presentation

on his blog and how we can change them to accommodate our needs. Let me give you just one example: something that might come in handy now, before the holidays, is the idea of a Christmas lesson. We can listen to the Queen's Christmas message (address). Before that, students guess what she would say to the world for Christmas and after listening, they could try and copy her RP accent. Then they could make their own speech for their own country and deliver it in class.

You can contact him at [bbrennan@stgeorges.co.uk](mailto:bbrennan@stgeorges.co.uk) or check his "Brenghish" at <http://my-english-now.blogspot.com/>

## TEN QUOTES TO MAKE YOU THINK (plenary) (Ken Wilson)

This presentation was definitely one of the best I have ever attended. Ken Wilson is a teacher trainer, a blogger, an author of ELT materials and course books and so much more.

He used ten quotes from famous people to help us reflect on what we do and started by introducing the following quote: *"Children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority and show disrespect to their elders. They contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble their food and tyrannize their teachers."*

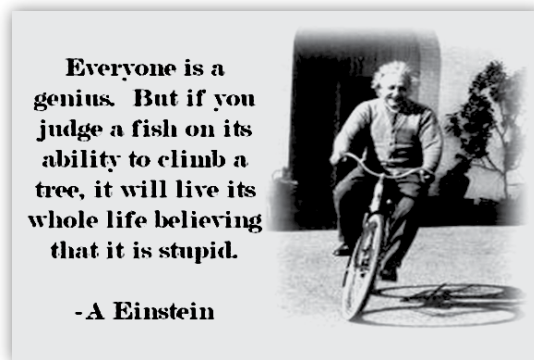
Now some of you might recognize it, but for those of you who do not and think this is very much true of today's youth, let me tell you that this quote is from Socrates, who lived from 470 to 399 BC. It makes us, therefore, wonder whether anything has changed in over 2000 years. If the above holds true for the pupils/students today and it was very much the same in times before Christ, have the teachers changed? Have their/our approaches and methods to teaching changed? Has the public perception of the teacher's role changed? If so, I wonder if there are any positive traits of this occupation from the past that we could still successfully employ today.

Another Socrates' quotation could be food for thought to us, modern teachers. He said: "I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think." Therefore, we should continue in our attempts to guide students towards becoming autonomous learners through sets of assignments which promote their independence. This idea complements the one from Bren Brennan, who says that we should let students know that they will not learn everything from us, or within the four walls of the classrooms. Instead, we should encourage them to exploit their capacities beyond the school premises and use the technology available, as well as their critical thinking. As much as the internet is a great source of information, students should also employ a critical approach and carefully select sources of information. This is where the teacher steps in as their guide and counselor and not simply as the only source of knowledge. That way we will certainly follow Einstein's words: *"Imagination is more important than knowledge."* or Mark Twain's claim that he would *"never let his schooling interfere with his education."* Most of all, we would avoid the following situations in the classroom, says Wilson:



*Mr Osborne, may I be excused? My brain is full.*

As I agree with Wilson's opinion that Einstein was one of the greatest minds in history, I would like to use one more of his quotations:



We have to accept students as individuals and bring out the best in them. Sure it takes much more time and effort, but it is worth it and this is exactly what, in my opinion, makes our occupation special and life-changing.

Moving on to more contemporary great thinkers, here is a more advanced, but anonymous quote: *"If you aren't using technology with your students, then you aren't teaching them the right way."* Here, one must continue and further develop this thought by using Bill Gates' words: *"Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the kids working together and motivating them, the teacher is much more important than the tool."* This is something we as a teacher should always remember: no matter how much technology progresses, I believe it can never completely replace us. However, as previously stated, we have to keep up and should be able to make it work for us rather than against us. Always keep in mind, therefore, that, as Steve Jobs said, *"When older people look at a new piece of technology, they ask: 'What is it?' Young people ask: 'What can I do with it?'"* So rather than prohibiting students from bringing their smart phones or tablets into the classroom, make them use them for all the right reasons: searching for vocabulary, researching information, finding answers and explanations, etc. This way, we can do all the fun activities in the classroom, rather than giving them for homework assignments and spending our time together for the boring "stuff".

Ken Wilson also quoted Mark Zuckerberg's words: *"A simple rule of business is – if you do the easier things first, then you can actually make a lot of progress."* and made them applicable for educational purposes. Therefore, follow them and teach your

students that *“A simple rule of education is – if you do the easier things first, then you can actually make a lot of progress.”*

If you have noticed that so far all the quotes have been from men, let me give you the last one, this time from the great American author and poet, Maya Angelou (1928). She said: *“I’ve learned that people may forget what you said, they may forget what you did, but they will never forget how you made them feel.”* Remember these words the next time you step into the classroom without a smile on your face. In my opinion, this is the hardest thing that teachers have to do: keep their problems outside the classroom and make students feel like you are happy to be able to be there for them and with them and learn something new and useful every day. Candy Fresacher agrees with this and states that *“within our classrooms we can improve the atmosphere by ensuring an optimistic attitude in ourselves and promoting it in our students.”* This was another presentation I attended and I will present it in more detail a little later.



*Ken Wilson during his presentation*

And remember, Ken believes *“it is outside our comfort zone where the magic happens.”*

## **OPTIMISM AND POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM**

**(Candy FRESACHER)**

Candy Fresacher is an American living in Vienna. She conducts seminars in Emotional Intelligence, Time and Stress Management, and she also teaches at the WerbeAkademie in Vienna. For the past six years, with an Austrian business partner, she has been managing her own company which assists commercial enterprises in various fields of communication and tourism.

In her presentation Candy tried to show us how to become more optimistic and positive, which may be quite difficult in these challenging times, but is of essential importance in the classroom if we wish to teach successfully. With the following formula:  $H = S + C + V$  she explains that happiness equals set range plus circumstances plus voluntary control. The first practical approach is therefore to follow one simple piece of advice: *“5 minutes of positive thoughts in the morning give you 6 hours of elevated immune system.”* It is as simple as that.

**In terms of classroom activities, on her handout she offers suggestions which encompass all four skills:**

**a) Speaking:**

- ▶ change automatic thoughts by practicing: i) Adversity, ii) Belief, iii) Consequences, iv) Disputation, v) Energization (the so-called ABCDE cognitive therapy);
- ▶ practice constructive dialogues;
- ▶ tell someone about your letter of gratitude to someone you really appreciate;
- ▶ sing a song together

**b) Writing:**

- ▶ Write down 3 things you are thankful for just before going to bed each night;
- ▶ Report on the altruistic event that took place in the week – how did your feelings differ from a fun event?
- ▶ Write a letter of gratitude to someone you really appreciate

**c) Reading:**

- ▶ Take VIA Significant Strengths test at: <http://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>
- ▶ Look for inspirational sayings on the internet and make copies of them to put around the room.

**d) Listening:**

- ▶ Look for funny YouTube videos to increase your capacity to laugh;
- ▶ Find jokes on the internet and memorize them to tell others;
- ▶ In Active Constructive dialogues be sure to give appropriate feedback from active listening.

Count your blessings, especially now when our profession is more devalued than ever, and contact Candy for more information at [candy.fresacher@gmail.com](mailto:candy.fresacher@gmail.com).

## **RE-DEFINING ACCESS TO LANGUAGE LEARNING: USING HANDHELD AND MOBILE LEARNING**

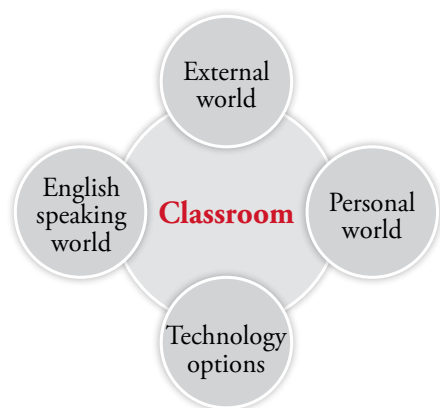
**(Michael Carrier)**

Michael has been involved in English language training for over 30 years as a teacher, trainer and an author. He is currently Head of English Language Innovation at the British Council in London.

His presentation was quite an eye-opener, as he started by quoting one of his students, who said: *“Whenever I go into class, I have to power down.”* Powering down is not something we want our students to do. Instead, we should refresh our classroom dynamics by introducing some 21st century activities, while keeping in mind that every child younger than 14 has never lived without Google, or anyone younger than 20 without the internet or e-mail. In TSL (Technology Supported Learning), therefore, new goals apply, such as digital literacy, global citizenship and interculturality. There are new pedagogical models for learning in a new age, and these introduce new activities, new content, new tools, and media. Nowadays,

1:1 learning no longer means 1 student and 1 teacher, but 1 student and 1 handheld device (smart phone, tablet, etc.) and there appears to be a general consensus that the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills involve critical thinking, problem solving, decision making, social leadership, smart use of ICTs, learning to learn, as well as creativity and innovation. These can be achieved by means of communication, cooperation and collaboration.

What is more, as Carrier points out, “*we need to break down the walls and bring in the real world with authentic materials,*” which is illustrated with the following diagram.



This way, our students can be inspired by English and what they are going to do with it. We, the teachers, need to be aware of the fact that we are teaching English because it changes people’s lives and not because it is on the curriculum, as it was 25 years ago.

Michael also suggested some very interesting reading materials:

- ▶ 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills: Learning for life in our times (authors: Bernie Trilling and Charles Fadel, published: Jossey-Bass, 2009). The authors not only list the P21 skills, but they also focus on what each of these skills means and add classroom examples.
- ▶ The Flipped Classroom (author: Russell Stannard, accessed at: [http://www.google.si#hl=sl&biw=1440&bih=731&client=psy-ab&q=Russell+Stannard+The+flipped+classroom&oq=Russell+Stannard+The+flipped+classroom&gs\\_l=hp.3..33i21.1464.6442.1.6579.21.18.0.0.0.0.616.4190.0j3j5j6j0j1.15.0...0.0...1c.1.dVwsNkLSOoQ&pbx=1&bv=on.2.or.r\\_gc.r\\_pw.r\\_qf.&fp=f07ee833199a8727&bpcl=38093640](http://www.google.si#hl=sl&biw=1440&bih=731&client=psy-ab&q=Russell+Stannard+The+flipped+classroom&oq=Russell+Stannard+The+flipped+classroom&gs_l=hp.3..33i21.1464.6442.1.6579.21.18.0.0.0.0.616.4190.0j3j5j6j0j1.15.0...0.0...1c.1.dVwsNkLSOoQ&pbx=1&bv=on.2.or.r_gc.r_pw.r_qf.&fp=f07ee833199a8727&bpcl=38093640)). The author explains how instead of formal lectures, the idea of a flipped classroom suggests that teachers put the content online, so that students do not have to come to classes at all. Now, what used to be done in lecture time can be done at home, and what used to be done at home (for example, working on assessed tasks or coursework, preparing for exams, discussing topics, etc.) can now be brought into the class. Thus, we avoid situations of not being around students when they actually need us most. In my opinion (and the author emphasizes this point, as well) a connected classroom would be more suitable for language classes than the flipped classroom mentioned above.
- ▶ Generation Y Learning Styles (Ashridge Business School) – more is explained at: [http://www.ashridge.org.uk/web/siteIC.nsf/wFARATT/Generation%20Y%20and%20learning/\\$file/GenerationYAndLearning.pdf](http://www.ashridge.org.uk/web/siteIC.nsf/wFARATT/Generation%20Y%20and%20learning/$file/GenerationYAndLearning.pdf)

New competences in digital teaching are as just as important and encompass qualities such as technology awareness and curiosity, operational skills, ideas on how to integrate digital content while planning our lessons, classroom management (how to coordinate formal and informal activities), classroom management online, digital tools and media awareness, to name just a few.

As I have already mentioned in my introduction, opinions varied widely on how to use modern technology, to what extent it should be incorporated into our teaching and how much our classrooms should be “*flipped*”. Furthermore, some participants expressed the opinion that this conference was actually not as “*ambitious*” about modernization, but reflected on some of the more “*old-fashioned*” yet efficient methods and approaches (remember the Socrates’ students). I am attaching his handout with his e-mail address and great reading materials suggestions at the end.

### OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

**Lenka Kroupová** showed us how to use Jing, software which enables us and students to record sounds and images and upload them onto the web for further work and analysis. For more detailed information, check her PowerPoint presentation at <http://egeronline.wordpress.com/category/sessions/>.

Steve Oakes talked about “*Bridging the Authenticity Gap.*” According to him, “*ambiguity tolerance*” means that if you can make students better deal with “*not understanding,*” they will become better learners. What is more, if we expose students to authentic material (even if they are beginners), they will become better listeners. The “*catch*” here is that teachers need to “*pull the students in*”: authentic materials have to be interesting to draw them in, even if they do not understand everything (this also means less focus on language and enough accessible (understandable) language), low-demand initial tasks (for example, the first task for the students would be just to watch, which enables them to have a more authentic interaction), and a heavily “*scaffolded*” second task (for example, recognition and guessing)).

If you are “*hungry for more,*” you can reach Steve Oakes at [steveoakes99@gmail.com](mailto:steveoakes99@gmail.com).

**David A. Hill** tried to emphasize how important it is to make students able to communicate with all sorts of people from different cultures; today, International English is the target language.



Thus he compared the educational goals and skills of two distinct ages:

Roman Age	Digital Age
fides, pietas, religio	visual and information literacies
disciplina, constantia	intercultural literacy and global awareness
gravitas, parsimonia	inventive thinking
severitas	self-direction
reading	curiosity, creativity
writing	teaming, collaboration
basic arithmetic	Interactive communication
grammar	
rhetoric (Latin, Greek)	

(Source: *enGauge 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills* at <http://pict.sdsu.edu/engauge21st.pdf>)

For further reading, he suggested *Intercultural Teaching and Learning* by J. Corbett (2009).

Remember, J. R. R. Tolkien said: “*Not all those who wander are lost.*”

**Mary Sousa** talked about “*How to teach students who don’t improve (and don’t need to).*” First of all, teachers should try to understand the background of the non-improver and be more of a partner than an invasive teacher. She suggested using technology in two ways: i) with the student (keeping in touch by e-mail, websites, games, vocabulary sites, etc.), and ii) personal learning networks (SIG’s, twitter, professional blogs, etc.). Teachers should customize their materials to closely fit the students’ needs and watch for small signs of improvement. Further, teachers should try out new activities and dust off some old lesson plans that worked well.

For more information, view her presentation on prezi.com at: <http://bit.ly/PKxEV5> or <http://prezi.com>; search for “*Mary Sousa’s prezis.*”

**Bonnie Tsai** was one of the six excellent plenary speakers. She is a freelance teacher and trainer, a Master Practitioner in N. L. P. and has trained in Suggestopedia. By asking the ultimate question, “*How to get the sparkle back in teaching?*”, her plenary “*Falling in Love With Teaching Again*” “*made us see our own worth.*” In order to achieve the results we desire, Bonnie says that we have to trust (in) our students and they will trust us. It is us, the teachers, who make the rules with the students, and we decide with them what they would like to learn. Students should, therefore, take part in each step of the teaching process.

She emphasized four main points for improving the teaching process:

- ▶ We should use more engaging materials (with reference to the students’ real world; we should ask them about their likes, heroes, music, etc. and thus enter into their world);
- ▶ Classroom layout;
- ▶ Lesson pacing (often we are too slow for our students, because they think much quicker; they want to create, solve

problems, be active, and they want to feel/see the connection with the real world; it is also important how we teach and what we bring into the classroom);

- ▶ Feedback (we have to beware of our non-verbal feedback). The feedback ladder thus looks like this:

Suggestion (what would improve the work)
Concerns (“I wonder if you thought of that ...”)
Value (what you appreciate, what shows the knowledge of the student, etc.)
Clarity (say what is clear and what needs to be clarified)

She concluded the plenary with the following words: “*A good teacher always makes students glad it is Monday.*” Now, be honest: can you do that?

You can find her PowerPoint presentation with accompanying notes at: <http://egeronline.wordpress.com/category/sessions/page/2/>

**Scott Thornbury**, who lives in Spain and is currently an Associate Professor of English Language Studies at the New School in New York, tried to convince us “*It’s Getting Better All the Time.*” We might not feel it, because of the marketization of education, which means that expressions from the world of business like “*outcomes,*” “*solutions,*” “*accountability,*” “*value-added,*” and similar are used to evaluate our work. This might push us, and our motivation may be low, on top of all the other requirements that limit us and do not allow us to grow and progress as we wish.

Therefore, Scott conducted a small survey on Twitter to see what keeps us going and he categorized the given answers into four categories:

- a) Good learner feedback and results,
- b) Peer support,
- c) External validation and
- d) The teacher’s own (personal) inner motivation.

It seems like most often it is the last one – inner motivation – that keeps us going, so we should nurture it the best we can. The answer can be found in Atul Gawande’s motivational book “*Better,*” where Scott found parallels between medicine (Gawande is a surgeon) and ELT and summed them up as follows:

1. Do not complain. Resist it, it is boring. It does not solve anything, and it will get you down. You do not have to be sunny about everything. Just be prepared and do something to “*keep the conversation going.*” You can find a forum or a blog and chat for positive solutions.
2. Ask an unscripted question. Ours is a job of talking to strangers. Why not learn something from them? Therefore, ask questions that are not directly linked to the lesson, like: “*What’s easy / difficult about English? When do you think you’ll next use English (writing, speaking, listening, etc.)?*”
3. Count something. For example, ask somebody to count your mannerisms. Count how many students’ names you used. How many times did each student speak? How many

times did you learn the learners' own language? How many times did you say: "Good." "OK."

4. Write something. This lets you step back and think through a problem. Maybe you could keep a blog?
5. Change. Look for the opportunity to change, but you do not necessarily have to embrace every new trend that comes along. Do, though, be willing to recognize inadequacies in what you do and to seek solutions outside your comfort zone.

For more information, go to Scotts website at:  
[www.thornburyscott.com](http://www.thornburyscott.com).

## CONCLUSION

There are two issues that cross my mind as I reflect on what I learned at the conference.

Number one, it seems to me that we are finally past that "*Beware, copyright!*" stage, where every teacher would jealously protect their materials. The general idea conveyed at the conference (as I perceived it) was that "*Together, we can be stronger and better.*" We can share our ideas and materials not only among colleagues of one school, city or country, but even abroad by means of posting materials on blogs, tweeting about current happenings, attending and organizing conferences, following technological progress and making it work for us. This way we progress ourselves and enable our students to make headway.

Number two, have we, the teachers of ELT / EST managed to keep the sparkle? Is there any inspiration left within us? I should certainly hope so, for poor is the man, nationality or mankind without knowledge; without knowledge there is no future.

Unfortunately, it has become quite a common and general misconception that teachers do not have a demanding job, that we do not work hard enough and that we earn more than we deserve. In order to illustrate the extensiveness of our work and influence, I would like to quote an American dedicated scholar, author, editor, pastor and teacher, William Arthur Ward: "*The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.*" Just like in every occupation, ours employs teachers who are mediocre, good, better, or great. One can call me biased, but for what it is worth, I believe that there is a higher number of the latter than the former. And in order to be able to inspire others, teachers have to be inspired themselves. I certainly gained my share of knowledge, inspiration and positivism from the whole conference experience, which I have tried to convey to all of you who wish to strive, grow, work well, be inspired and inspire.

I also hope I am and will still continue to teach my students the lessons for life, mostly with the knowledge I gather through my work experience, my research work and by attending conferences such as this one.

Finally, I would like to take the opportunity and thank again this year's IATEFL Hungary committee for their excellent organization and inspiration:

Zsuzsa Lindner, president ([lindnerzsuzs@gmail.com](mailto:lindnerzsuzs@gmail.com))  
Norbert Gálik, vice-president ([galik\\_norbi@yahoo.com](mailto:galik_norbi@yahoo.com))  
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Frank Prescott ([pompas@t-online.hu](mailto:pompas@t-online.hu))  
Beatrix Price ([bea.price@invitel.hu](mailto:bea.price@invitel.hu))

Thank you and thank you IATEFL Slovenia for giving me the chance to seize the opportunity, embrace knowledge and become wiser and even more inspired!



*The managing committee of IATEFL-Hungary and the SIG coordinators*



## Handheld Learning – IATEFL Hungary Conference 2012

Michael Carrier  
British Council



### Resources for Handheld learning - Books

Brooks-Young, S (2010) Teaching With the Tools Kids Really Use: Learning With Web and Mobile Technologies. Corwin Publishing

Danaher, P; B. Moriarty & G. Danaher (2009) Mobile Learning Communities: Creating New Educational Futures. London: Routledge

Kukulka-Hulme, A. & Traxler, J. (2008) Mobile Learning. London: Routledge

Metcalf, D.S. (2006) MLearning. Amherst: HRD press

Ng, W (2010) Mobile Technologies and Handheld Devices for Ubiquitous Learning: Research and Pedagogy. Information Science Publishing

Pachler, N; B. Bachmair; J. Cook; & G. Kress (2009) Mobile Learning: Structures, Agency, Practices. Springer Publishing

Rosen, L.D (2010) Rewired: Understanding the iGeneration and the Way They Learn. London: Palgrave Macmillan Publishing

Vavoula, G; N. Pachler & A. Kukulka-Hulme (2009) Researching Mobile Learning: Frameworks, Tools and Research Designs. Peter Lang Publishing

### Handheld Learning - Articles:

Cooney, G. & Keogh, K. (2007). Use of mobile phones for Language Learning and Assessment for Learning: a pilot project. mLearning Conference 2007.

Kiernan, Patrick J. & Aizawa, K. (2004). Cell phones in task based learning - Are cell phones useful language learning tools? ReCALL, 16, pp 71-84

Levy, M. & Kennedy, C. (2005): "Learning Italian via mobile SMS" in Kukulka-Hulme, A. & Traxler (eds): Mobile Learning: A handbook for educators and trainers, Abingdon: Routledge , pp76-83

Lu, M. (2008): "Effectiveness of Vocabulary Learning Via Mobile Phone" in Journal of Computer Assisted Learning 24 pp 515-525

Moore, Caroline. (2011) - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2011/mar/08/mobile-learning-technology-apps-moore>

Murat Saran, Kursat Cagiltay, Golge Seferoglu. (2008). "Use of Mobile Phones in Language Learning: Developing Effective Instructional Materials," wmute, pp.39-43, Fifth IEEE International Conference on Wireless, Mobile, and Ubiquitous Technology in Education

Peachey, Nik. (2010) - <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/sep/14/teachers-mobile-learning>

Reinders, Hayo (2010). Twenty ideas for using mobile phones in the language classroom. English Teaching Forum, Vol. 48, No.3

Reinders, H. (2006). Portable language learning: creating materials for the Ipad. English Teaching Professional, 46.

Reinders, H. (2007). Podquests. Language learning on the move. ESL Magazine, 58.

Song Y. & Fox, R. (2008): "Integrating Incidental Vocabulary Learning Using PDAs into Academic Studies: Undergraduate Student Experiences" in Lecture Notes in Computer Science 5169:2008 pp 238 - 249

### Handheld learning website links

<http://www.iamlearn.org/resources/papers.php>

<http://thinkingmachine.pbworks.com/w/page/22187713/Think-Mobile-Phones-for-Learning>

<http://www.pontydysgu.org/2009/11/25-practical-ideas-for-using-mobile-phones-in-the-classroom/>

<http://teachdigital.pbworks.com/w/page/19791019/cellphones>

<http://www.learnosity.com/files/learnosity-use-of-mobile-phones-for-language-learning-and-assessment-for-learning.pdf>

<http://www.slideshare.net/sgaer/using-cell-phones-to-enhance-language-learning>

### OLPC:

<http://one.laptop.org/>

<http://www.olpcnews.com/about.html>

### Intel Classmate:

<http://www.classmatepc.com/stories/>

### JISC case studies

<http://www.elearning.ac.uk/innoprac/practitioner/dewsbury.html>

<http://www.elearning.ac.uk/innoprac/learner/southampton.html>

### British Council sites

[www.learnenglish.org.uk](http://www.learnenglish.org.uk)

[www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)

[www.learnenglishkids.org.uk](http://www.learnenglishkids.org.uk)

[learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/mobile-learning](http://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/en/mobile-learning)

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[michael.carrier@britishcouncil.org](mailto:michael.carrier@britishcouncil.org)

# European Language Day

by Andreja Lakner

For the third year now, we celebrated European Language Day on 26<sup>th</sup> September. This year, primary and secondary school students together with their language teachers were invited to concentrate on false friends. Again the students were asked to participate in three groups, mainly according to their English speaking abilities:

- ▶ with their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year primary school classes, the mentors were asked to find some examples of false friends and to present them to their students. These were then asked to illustrate the examples.
- ▶ With their 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade primary school classes, the mentors were again asked to help their students find some false friends. These classes then had to use them in sentences in order to show the difference between the two words.
- ▶ 9<sup>th</sup> grade primary school classes and secondary school students were invited to find some false friends on their own. After that they were supposed to use them in sentences so

as to show the wrong usage of the word. Of course, the correct usage was to be added as well.

As usually, the mentors were asked to upload the projects onto our webpage.

This year eight schools participated and contributed their work; they were all primary schools. Their work was imaginative and creative, and some of the pieces were pretty amusing too. Proudly we can inform you that we did not receive only Slovene–English false friends, but also those in Croatian, Albanian, German, French and even Spanish! Quite a mixture, don't you think?

At this point we would like to thank all the mentors for their time and help. This day couldn't be carried out without you and your work. Together with your pupils and students you have done a brilliant job!

So here are some examples of what can still be seen at [www.iatefl.si/node/157](http://www.iatefl.si/node/157). Thank you again and we hope to hear from you on 26 September 2013.



There was a group of Americans. They went to Britain on a search for a mummy. In the group was a not-very-smart kid who heard a British kid crying and calling his mom: "Mummy, I want my mummy!" The American kid thought he was calling a mummy. So he dragged him to the rest of the group and said, "Hey, he is looking for a mummy! Maybe his mummy is the one we're looking for too!"

Nina Pavčič, 7.a,  
OŠ MIROSLAVA VILHARJA  
POSTOJNA  
Andreja Blažič Klemenc, *mentorica*

## A DIRECTOR vs DIREKTOR

Being a film director is a very interesting job.  
Stric Tomi je direktor velikega podjetja.

## AN OVEN vs OVEN

My mum usually bakes cakes in the oven at 180°C.  
Po horoskopu sem oven.

## KUNA vs KUNA

Last summer I was in Croatia. I had to pay in kunas there.  
Kuna zlatica je nevarna žival.

Alanis Štrukelj, Miha Likar, Greta Garbari, 8.a,  
OŠ ŠEMPAS  
Katarina Grmek, *mentorica*





**Hrv. Trudna**

**Hrv. Grad**

**Slo. Grad**

**False Friends / Lažni prijatelji**

**Slo. Trudna**

**Slo. zahod**

**Angl. zahod**



Italian boy: Last Christmas I received a lot of gifts, because my parents from New York came to Rome.

English boy: If your parents live in the USA, who do you live with?

Italian boy: With my mum and dad, of course!

Kim V., class 9,  
OŠ/SE DANTE ALIGHIERI,  
ISOLA/IZOLA  
Jadranka Mittendorfer, *mentorica*

**ALBANIAN-SLOVENE FALSE FRIENDS:**

**ALBANSKO - SLOVENSKI LAŽNI PRIJATELJI:**

ALBANIAN	SLOVENE	
mizë	muha	NE: miza!
mish	meso	NE: miš!

**ALBANIAN-ENGLISH FALSE FRIEND:**

ALBANIAN	ENGLISH	
bukë	bread	Not: a book!

Dorentina Kandrija, 6.r, OŠ COL  
Irena Saksida, *mentorica*

# Flexible activities

This series of articles from the British Council aims to help you think about *your* teaching and bring new ideas and activities into your classroom. The series covers topics including homework, working with large classes and finding resources. Today we look at **flexible activities**.

## Read these comments from teachers. Do you agree with them?

'We need activities to practise speaking, listening, reading and writing that we can use with all our classes.'

Kai, Kazakhstan

'Story telling, dictation techniques as well as songs and poems can be used with all ages and levels in the English classroom.'

Rafael, Argentina

Flexible activities that we can adapt to use with various levels and different ages are essential when we have limited resources and large groups. Here are some simple activities that can work at all levels.

A chain story involves your students working in small groups to invent a story.

- One student starts a story and the others listen. Then everyone take turns to tell bit more of the story.
- For lower levels, cards with pictures or words can help tell a story.
- Encourage your students to use their imagination. Telling stories is good **fluency** practice so don't worry if you hear mistakes.
- A referee in each group can make sure students take turns and speak in English.
- Set a time limit to control the activity then ask a few groups to tell their stories to the class.
- Students could write the story their group created, either in class or for homework.

A **dictogloss** is a very flexible type of **dictation** which involves listening to the teacher, speaking in groups, writing and checking.

- The teacher reads a short text to the students, who just listen. The teacher reads the text again, and the learners take notes. Then in groups they recreate the text from their notes.
- To check the groups' texts, volunteers can write the text on the board sentence by sentence while their classmates make any necessary corrections. The students don't have to use exactly the same words as the original text but their writing must have the same meaning and use correct language.
- For lower levels you can help students by giving them the text with words missing and they have to fill the gaps.

Songs and poems are usually very memorable and good fun. They can be used with older students as well as children.

- We can ask students to listen for specific words or grammar structures.
- Students can learn a song or poem, complete the words or discuss the theme and write down the story in their own words.
- Younger learners often enjoy singing along to songs with actions.
- Find out what songs your students like but check that the words are suitable before you use them in class.

Adapting these activities for your classes can help students at various ages and levels to practise different skills in English.

## What do you think?

Lyutfiya, who teaches in Tajikistan, writes:

A 'find someone who' activity is really versatile. It's a speaking activity that you can use to practise any language. The students have to try to find someone in the group who matches a description. I used this 'find someone who' to practise using the present perfect for experiences:

On the board I wrote:

- find someone who has been abroad
- find someone who has eaten something really strange
- find someone who has done a bungee jump

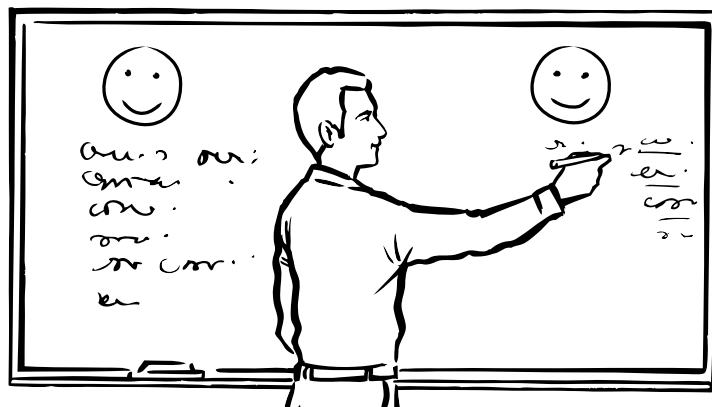
The students made questions ('Have you been abroad?' etc) and then in groups ask each other the questions.

You can choose the language you want to practise with lower or higher levels.

## A classroom activity - vanishing dialogue

The students invent a **dialogue** then try to repeat it from memory. This activity works well with all ages and levels.

- Draw two faces on the board, students invent names for them. Ask the class to invent a short dialogue between the two people. Write the dialogue on the board as you build it up with the students.
- **Drill** the dialogue. One side of the class takes the role of each person. Swap roles and drill again. With younger students add silly voices to keep it lively and interesting.
- Remove a word or phrase and drill again. Students have to remember the dialogue without the missing words.
- Gradually remove more words until all the dialogue has gone. Drill each time you remove a part of the dialogue.
- Put students into pairs. Can they remember the whole dialogue?
- In groups students write a similar dialogue. **Monitor** and help.
- Students could then act out their dialogues in front of the class.



## Glossary

A **dialogue** is a conversation between two people. In a **dictation**, the teacher reads a text. The students listen and write. In a **drill**, the students repeat the teacher's words. **Fluency** is how well a learner communicates meaning - mistakes are not important. **Monitoring** is watching and listening to learners while they are doing an activity but not leading them in the activity.

## Think about

- How could these activities fit with your teaching plans?
- What other flexible activities can you share with your colleagues?

# British Humour

by Andy Keedwell



© Mat Wright

Is it true that the British laugh at different things from people in other countries? Let's have a look at what we laugh at in Britain.

**1** To the British, the powerful and important are often figures of fun. It's not just politicians who make us chuckle but anyone whose job it is to tell other people what to do and who take themselves too seriously. We laugh at our class system too – especially those who try to present themselves as 'better' than they are.

**2** We giggle at authority, but also, sympathetically, with anyone who is downtrodden. We know they can't win, but if they do so occasionally, it's even funnier. Our clowns are often silly people doing silly things, while in America, they are often clever people doing clever things – and winning.

**3** The British laugh when other people might despair, one of the oddest things to appreciate about British humour. People say that the British are reserved and reluctant to show their feelings and this is expressed in our humour. I don't really think that's true but I know that we do have a strong sense of irony. 'Not very pleasant', we say after some terrible experience and that's perhaps why we sometimes laugh at things that should be taken seriously – accidents or funerals, for example. Coupled with this, is our love of understatement. 'It's a bit windy today' we might say in the middle of a typhoon, or 'There's a slight problem' when something has gone very seriously wrong.

**4** We are also known for a very 'broad' sense of humour. Traditionally holiday makers would send

'smutty' (rude) postcards back home. Many other nationalities find this kind of humour quite childish – but we continue to snigger. We laugh at what we ordinarily find embarrassing – perhaps we laugh because we are embarrassed.

**5** A stand up comedian (someone who tells jokes for a living) will often begin by saying 'Have you ever noticed.....?' We find humour in ordinary, boring life, especially its negative aspects. As well as this, we find it amusing to tell jokes about things that have gone wrong for us, rather than not mentioning them in case we look stupid. Our stories might start with 'I'm such an idiot, I did something really stupid yesterday'.

**6** Another thing that can make it difficult to understand 'British humour' is that we don't always laugh or even smile when we say something funny. We often 'keep a straight face' or use an unsmiling, 'deadpan' expression even when we're making a joke

**7** One final thing. Lots of British humour is based on word play. It is very easy to 'pun' in English because lots of words have more than one meaning or sound like other words. The results are often enough to make you groan. For example, what do you do if you feel hungry when you're on the beach? Eat the sand which is there. Get it? Sand which is there / sandwiches there. See I told you punning was groanworthy.

So, is the British sense of humour unique? Well probably not. It is the combination of all these features that make the British laugh and my friends from other countries ask 'Why is that funny?'

## Activity 1

Match the headings with the paragraphs in the article.

- a We laugh at authority
- b We laugh at losers – but we hope they'll win
- c We laugh at ourselves
- d We laugh at things that are rude
- e We laugh at word play
- f We sometimes don't laugh when we think things are funny
- g We sometimes laugh when others might cry

## Activity 2

Look at these verbs from the article. Which verbs are used to talk about something funny and which ones to talk about something sad or annoying? Write (F) or (S)

chuckle \_\_\_\_      despair \_\_\_\_  
giggle \_\_\_\_      snigger \_\_\_\_  
groan \_\_\_\_      find (something) amusing \_\_\_\_

Find the words in an English dictionary to check their meaning.

## Activity 3

Look at these two English jokes. Do you think either of them is funny? Which one do you prefer?

**1** Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson are on a camping trip in the countryside. Late at night, Holmes and Watson are lying on their backs looking up at all the stars in the sky. Sherlock Holmes says, 'Doctor Watson, look at all the stars and tell me what important question we have to ask.' Doctor Watson says, 'Well, OK. There are millions and millions of stars in the sky. No-one knows exactly how many. There are planets out there that no-one has seen with a telescope. Maybe there is a planet somewhere that is just like earth. I think the question we have to ask is, 'Is there life in another part of our universe?' And Sherlock Holmes says, 'Watson, you idiot! The question we have to ask is 'WHERE IS OUR TENT?'

**2** A rabbit walks into a butcher's shop and says 'Have you got any carrots?'. And the butcher says 'No. This is a butcher's shop – we don't sell carrots,' and the rabbit says 'OK' and goes out of the shop.

An hour later, the rabbit comes back. 'Have you got any carrots?' And the butcher says 'No, I told you, this is a butcher's shop – we haven't got any carrots'.

An hour later – it happens again, and an hour after that, it happens again. Well, the butcher's getting really annoyed. Next time the rabbit comes in – 'Have you got any carrots?' the butcher says 'Look, I've told you – we don't have any carrots here. If you come back to this shop one more time I'm going to take a hammer, take some nails and I'm going to nail your ears to the floor! OK?'

So, the rabbit goes away. But, guess what, an hour later, the rabbit comes back and walks into the shop. 'Have you got any nails?' 'No' says the butcher. 'Have you got any carrots?'

**ANSWERS**

Activity 1  
1 a, 2 b, 3 g, 4 d, 5 c, 6 f, 7 e

Activity 2  
Funny: chuckle, giggle, snigger, find something amusing.  
Sad/Annoying: despair, groan.

**Word of the week**

**Deadpan (adjective).**

If you tell a joke or a funny story without smiling or laughing you are being deadpan.

# Pilgrims English language course dealing with difficult learners

(Canterbury, England, 15<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> July 2012)

by Janja Čolić, OŠ Janka Kersnika Brdo

**It is still difficult to believe, but I was lucky enough to get the Comenius grant for one of the English Language Courses I wanted to attend. Thank you! In mid-July I went to England to learn about dealing with difficult learners, who may have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties; may be de-motivated and disengaged from learning; may be withdrawn and uncommunicative; or may already be diagnosed with a special educational need such as ADHD.**

When I was going to the university – quite some time ago – the focus was on the subject, the methods of teaching the English language and testing and marking. This worked perfectly well for some time. These days, a teacher's role is changing. One has to be a mentor, a helper, a child's assistant, a therapist, a pedagogue as well as a parent, a sibling, a police officer,... because many children's lives are marked by family crisis (either domestic violence, abuse and neglect, parental addiction and/or mental illness), poverty, trauma and loss, a migratory background or something else that makes it impossible for students to get through a normal school day without getting into trouble or they explode and turn against their friends and/or teachers for no obvious reason. A teacher walks into a classroom and the structure of students is often as follows: a couple of students have a teacher assistant sitting next to them due to their special needs, some are chatting somewhere in the corner not noticing that the lesson has begun, some are just entering the classroom because they didn't hear the bell ring and only some of them might be ready to listen to you. In a situation like this, a teacher feels a roller-coaster of emotions: frustrated, helpless, tired, confused, angry, incompetent ... I could go on, right? But there is help available! There are many good books to help us out with practi-

cal ideas to give us hope and help when behaviour strategies fail, when all else fails. And also, there are courses to attend. I am thankful to Marie Delaney, who was my teacher trainer in Canterbury. She is an Educational Psychotherapist, MFL /EFL Teacher and Teacher Trainer and NLP Master Practitioner. She has extensive experience of working with challenging behaviour and I have learnt so much from her! I have learnt about why challenging students cause me difficulties and how I can develop a better understanding for the underlying reasons for their behaviour. She has given me many tips for dealing with disruptive behaviour in the classroom, dealing with conflict as well as tips for motivating difficult learners.

Going to Canterbury was a wonderful personal experience, full of networking opportunities, quality training and great time spending with other European teachers of English.

To bring this short report about the course to an end, here are two jokes about what difficult students might answer to your questions.

- 1 *Canterbury form the Campus*
- 2 *The Olympic Flame in Canterbury*
- 3 *Learning about Canterbury's History*
- 4 *Marie Delaney*
- 5 *Seminar*
- 6 *Spending Time With New Friends*







3



4



5



6

*Teacher:* You missed school yesterday, didn't you?  
*Student:* Not really!

.....

*Teacher:* I wish you'd pay a little attention!  
*Student:* I'm paying as little as I can.  
*Teacher:* I wish you'd pay a little attention!  
*Student:* I'm paying as little as I can.

# Culture Course in Dublin

by Lea Sobočan

**Before I even begin the saga of our delightful days in Dublin (don't worry, I'll forgo the alliterative verse from now on!), here's some fun things you may or may not have known about Ireland:**

- ▶ The longest place name in Ireland is **Muckanaghederdauhaulia**, in County Galway.
- ▶ When Irish children celebrate their birthday, you lift them upside down and give their head a few gentle bumps on the floor for good luck, according to an odd tradition. (Explains a lot, this does!)
- ▶ One of the most popular radio shows in rural Ireland is still the weekly broadcast of local obituaries.
- ▶ In olden days, a pig was often allowed to live in the house with the family on an Irish farm. He (or she) was commonly referred to as "the gentleman who pays the rent". (Source: <http://www.ireland-fun-facts.com>)

Landing at Dublin airport came as a bit of a shock after a summer spent in my sister's adopted home country, Malta. Fifteen degrees if it was one, with a bit of rain and a bit of gloom and doom on the side. The first thing we were told at the beginning of our course the very next day was that you can experience all four seasons in one day in Ireland. To me, on that first night, freezing and wet, it seemed like Ireland had just one season – the rainy one.

But let's not put the cart ahead of the horse. How did it happen that I was freezing my kacks\* off in the middle of an Irish "summer"?

A few weeks before, I'd got a strange and mysterious phone call asking me whether I would be interested in taking a course in Irish culture and literature in Dublin. After a careful consideration of three seconds, I did indeed confirm this might be an interesting way of spending my summer. Our project leader, Erika Zorko Muller, got together a band of eleven English teachers and presented all the useful things we might learn in Dublin, and we were all aching to go as soon as she showed us that first picture of the green Irish landscape.

Before we departed for Dublin's fair city, where the girls are so pretty (bonus leprechaun\*\* points to whomever spots the song), we naturally had to do some preparation. We started off with a series of mini presentations of the methodology we use in our classes, from quizzes to get to know each other to vocabulary games to Irish-themed "guess the sentence" charades. I did a small presentation on the most useful sites I use in the classroom – feel free to download them from [prezi.com](http://prezi.com) ("Ten useful sites for educators"). We followed up with a book club, reading the novel *Breakfast on Pluto*, the collection of short

stories *There Are Little Kingdoms* and selected poems from Brendan Kelly's *Book of Judas*. The aim was to give us a preliminary insight into the Irish way of thinking and their culture, and I think we were unanimous in our observation that they are remarkably similar to Slovenians, especially in the short stories. We both seem to share the uncanny ability to focus on the doom and gloom and keeping up appearances.

The book club was followed by a night of contemporary Irish film and a screening of *Adam and Paul*, which continued the general theme of the short stories, that is doom and gloom. My gran always said if you don't have anything nice to say about something, you shouldn't say anything. So I'm moving on.

The long-anticipated first day of our course finally arrived and we departed for Atlas Language School in Dublin bright-eyed and bushy-tailed.

The two-week course was divided into morning classes, dedicated to Irish history and literature, and noon classes, dedicated to contemporary Irish culture. During the first week, our homework for contemporary culture was to follow a news story and report on how it developed and how different types of publications reported on it. Our daily routine therefore consisted of walking to school and arming ourselves with a myriad of newspapers, tabloids and magazines and swapping them across the dinner table in the evenings, while Thursday night found us frantically throwing together presentations, calculating and wondering how in the blazes we were going to say everything we needed to in 5 minutes. It turned out we couldn't, and the presentations with all accompanying debate took us the whole two-hour session to complete.

Our topics covered a wide range of Irish life. We discovered new things about the Galway horse races and corrupt politicians and we were enlightened by the fact that apparently cough syrup can make a prominent man so wild with desire he forces himself upon unsuspecting young girls. The exercise, along with the Irish we met during that first week, helped us realise what the modern Irish think about most.

The thing that had the biggest impact on me, personally, was the realisation of how deeply the Irish were in fact disillusioned with their government and how incredibly angry they were with the fact that the famous Celtic Tiger had seemed to vanish in a puff of smoke. Even if the numerous abandoned building sites didn't make a visitor a little suspicious, even a short conversation with any local turns to the abominable state the country is in and how the politicians should all be given a nice cigarette and a wall to stand in front of. The most prominent example I got of this was a bunch of easygoing par-



1



2



3



4



5

- 1 Cliffs of moher
- 2 Galway
- 3 Canal bank
- 4 Howth
- 5 Harcourt street

ty people, about my age, that I met in a pub. It took us all of 5 minutes before they started to analyse the current political situation. In their words: “This county’s completely banjaxed\*\*\*.” A bit depressing to hear on your trip, but no less true. However, where we Slovenians keep on telling ourselves “It could be worse”, the Irish tell themselves “D’youse remember how good it was? Whose fault is it?”

Aside from the slightly depressing insight into the Irish economy, we had loads of good times with the literature part of the course as well. Our delightful tutor, David, set a rather interesting homework for us – read a book and write a review. We unanimously decided on Irish authors and embarked on a warpath to the local bookstore. Each of us chose our own criteria for finding the right book for ourselves. Mine were:

1. Is it short enough to read in a week?
2. Is it interesting enough to stop me falling asleep in the evenings?
3. Is it something I don’t mind owning in physical form (*my library consists almost exclusively of eBooks*)?

The die was cast and landed on Brian Moore’s Catholics. When I saw ladies walking around with Roddy Doyle’s novels and Jamie O’Connell’s short stories, I almost regretted my decision.

The book I got was a handy excuse to go roving around Dublin’s parks in the afternoon, feeling a bit more productive, as I was actually doing my homework and not slacking off. I saw a very important cultural difference in my very first outing: rain is not something that sends you screaming for shelter and warmth, but an annoyance that at worst makes you open an umbrella while still lying or sitting on the grass in the park. Likewise, toddlers were sporting short trousers and going about oblivious to the fact that they should be catching their death of cold. As one of our more interesting tour guides enlightened us, the rest of the world are “a bunch of Southern pansies that can’t take a bit of rain and cold.”

Says a lot about the Irish character, that does.

Too much happened in those two weeks and too many great ideas were discussed and shared for me to detail them all to you in this short space I have available, so I’ll just share one lovely activity with you. On a bright and only slightly damp morning, we read a lovely poem by Patrick Kavanagh, Canal Bank Walk, then grabbed our cameras and away we went. We were taken to the very same spot where the poet had sat when he got his inspiration and proceeded to take photos. At home we combined these with the words and a beautiful composition was born. Please feel free to check them out on the Atlas Language School’s blog: <http://atlaslanguageschool.wordpress.com/>.

As for the rest of the experience, that may or may not involve distilleries, mummies, Vikings, Brazilian housekeepers, non-talkative fish, confused taxi drivers and over-confident Scots... Well, you’ll just have to go and see for yourselves!

\* underpants  
 \*\* mythological Irish creature, like a brownie but without the charm  
 \*\*\* not in a good state at all, ruined

# Christmas Rochester and London with Twin

by Marša Meznarič, Lea Sobočan and Sandra Vida

*Friday, 30.12.*

*The day started in working mode but despite this we were full of "great expectations" for what was to come. Checking BBC weather for London did not make me feel good as it promised to be freezing - and it was.*

*Friday was hectic for me too. I calmed down when we arrived to the airport. I realised I needed this trip with you guys.*

*Nevertheless, we managed to get to the bus in time.*

*Except for me. I can't believe it, in 7 years not a single student wanted to speak to me about grammar after class and that Friday, when I was counting every minute, someone decided he doesn't understand the Passive Voice well enough. In that second I could have drowned him in a spoon of garlic soup! We agreed that the office hours were the time and place to discuss such a complex matter and a race against time began! Luckily, my lovely fellow travellers were kind enough to wait for me.*

*How we immediately sat in the back row of the bus was fascinating to me - it was as if we were in a different mode from that point on. We did not even know the exact program of the trip. We trusted TWIN completely.*

*If it was not for seeing London again after a (too) long time, it would be all too easy to say - the long drive is not worth it. But London will probably never lose its attraction to me.*

*Good that UK is one hour behind, so when we arrived to the hotel, we still had time for a short walk around the area, just enough to breathe "fresh" London air and stretch our legs.*

*It was freezing outside...literally. But that did not stop the young London girls go for a Friday night out. But what those girls wear...*

*I am going to use this here to demonstrate our reaction - OMG. Seriously. I know I have not been out much lately in Slovenia, but that was just not healthy. Forget the men they are trying to get, think of their poor kidneys.*

*While we were freezing in our winter jackets and thermo underwear, they walked around outside clubs in summer dresses with heels so high they had to walk in pairs to support each other, fishing for good time and boys. I wonder if they ever think about what kind of mates they attract with such attire? Probably not the I-want-to-have-a-serious-relationship or I-will-respect-you-for-your-inner-values kind. But probably this is just me being old fashioned, not understanding the youth of today.*

*Nope, that is my opinion too, and those girls were in their middle twenties too :).*

*I like the expression "catch your death of cold", it seems fitting to the scenes we witnessed. Although, when thinking of what teenagers perceive as a "cool" way to shuffle loose this mortal coil, I see fainting maidens and dying of love or while fighting for a just cause, not hypothermia.*

*The realization that we are too old for this hit us hard enough to turn back to the hotel. we were in for an early wake-up call the next morning and we were looking forward to it already. Speak for yourself, getting up early hurts my lazy muscles and I was in for a serious muscle fever!*





## Saturday, 1.12.

When the room phone rang at 6.15 in the morning, we all agreed getting up in the morning is the most horrible thing that can happen to you.

Yes, enough of this granny talk. We were excited about Rochester and so woke up early, had a big breakfast and had a little nap again on the bus to be super ready for the Dickens festival.

Lack of coffee was successfully substituted by the most awesome cup of tea in the world! Or maybe it was only good because I appreciate any morning luxury. I'd like to recite an ode to morning tea at this point, but I can see Sandra frowning at my literary escapade.

But when we arrived to Rochester, we were grateful for Robert's merciless morning arrangement. We were met by two Dickens' characters (none I had heard of before, mind, but still) and taken to a round tour of Dickens related sites. After the round tour we had free time to enjoy the spirit of the Rochester Christmas festival, all themed to Dickens' life and work. Waiting for the parade, we strolled around the stalls with mulled wine and local specialties (which nowadays include everything up to the Chinese noodles, but still...

They were spicy! Roar! I was a fire-breathing dragon!). I feel nothing really can compare with mixing with the locals and sampling their local produce. No museum can offer the same experience. So, wherever you go, be sure to sacrifice a few hours of museum time for just sitting in a cafe and watching the world go by.

After the parade of Dickensian characters, we were off to Dickens' World, a themed "park?" that taught us even more about Dickens, his life and the characters he created.

I must admit that Dickens is not exactly my favourite author in the world, more close to my list of "least favourite". Despite this I enjoyed the experience immensely! My inner child was especially thrilled by the theme boat ride.

Dickens world was interesting. I loved the dark and dirty atmosphere. I wondered though - surely must have shone on the 1800s people too, right... One visit was enough though.

When we returned to London, we spent some free time enjoying the delicacies of the South Bank Christmas Market. We didn't buy too much and none of us lost her wallet, so even though it was cold as hell, I can say it was a successful afternoon, leading on to the musical *Singing in the Rain* in the evening.

I absolutely loved the film, but due to an exhausting day I must admit to my shame that I fell asleep during the second act.

*Singing in the rain* part of the trip was my absolute favourite. Yes, yes, yes (imagine me saying it with a man's voice). Loved it, really. We were sitting pretty high up... But, oh my god, they were actually dancing and singing in the rain.

When we got back to the hotel, we were "knackered" and fell into bed immediately, looking forward to the shopping in Camden the following day.

We fell asleep after a friendly visit from the receptionist who agreed that the air conditioning they use for heating is not serving its purpose in winter time. Huh. He brought blankets at least.

## Sunday, 2.12

How do you describe shopping without limits in Camden? I am not sure if there are words for it but I am sure most of you will know what I am talking about.

We actually had a very exciting day planned, including a visit to the Portrait Gallery and Notting Hill, but only Marša was organised enough to actually leave Camden on time. I was too engrossed by the Greek lady who painted flowers on my nails. We had an incredible conversation about the current economic situation in Greece and how she likes living in London (to sum up: cold bad!)

Yes - after buying a few Banksy T-shirts I visited the Portrait Gallery. Glad I did that (the amazing exhibition Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize 2012).

Needless to say that we left London happy and satisfied. Robert, who organized the whole thing, didn't have to go to all that trouble to make us happy, he could have only let us go shopping all day. But he did go to all that trouble and we like him for that (even though he probably had bad hiccups at approx 6.16 a.m.)



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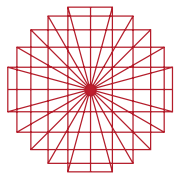
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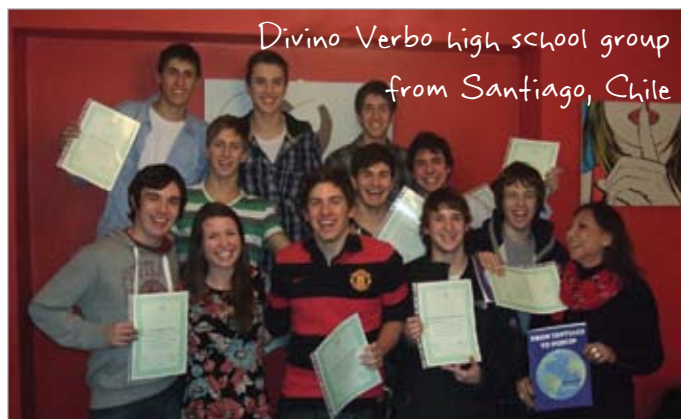
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