

**Fake News and Alternative Facts:  
Critical Digital Literacy  
in the Classroom**

by Kirsten Hempkin

**Successful foreign language  
learners and use of learning  
strategies: at the crossroads  
between theory and practice**

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of classic novels**

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**They Call This (C)rap!**

by Hazelynn Anak Rimbar

**My immigration story  
(TED Talk Lesson)**

by Klavdija Kreml Slana

**Student Showcase**



# Case Study: When the fake news is the news

Nada Đukić

Contemporary British and American media discourse is very productive and rich in terms of its range of catchy or at least interesting phrases. One of these is “fake news”, which became extremely popular and widely used after being repeatedly used by a certain world leader. But what is really at the core of this phrase? Through the lens of critical thinking, we can at least “detect” an extremely important distinction that needs to be made, i.e. the ability to point out what facts (“truth”, “reality”) are and what opinions (“interpretations”) are, and especially not to mix them up...!



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# Editorial

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## We all know the drill.

New Year rolls around and we all make our lists, promising ourselves that this year – *this year* – will be different. This year our New Year's resolutions will stick. This year we'll make time for our hobbies. We won't be left looking sheepish sometime in May, not a book read nor a hill climbed nor a new country visited. We'll enrol in that pottery class and we just noticed those language classes they do just round the corner...

According to the University of Scranton's study on New Year's resolutions, only 8% of people who make them stick to them for the entire year. Some sources claim that 80% of all resolutions fail by February, which should be when you're reading this. That is, if I kept to my New Year's resolution to organise my time better and learn to prioritise tasks...

So, what can we do to stick to the resolutions to live our best life this year?

Perhaps, instead of New Year's resolutions, we could try making more everyday resolutions? Of course, we can resolve to be better people, better thinkers, better teachers every single year. That, after all, is the whole purpose of these resolutions – to take some time to look back and reassess our lives. However, something a bit more short-term might be a better choice for most of us. Instead of making life-changing decisions, we might just change one little thing a month.

If you are looking for ideas on tackling your resolutions with regard to work, perhaps you might consider attending a conference, reading some research on teaching issues (see the second instalment of the articles on successful language learners by Urška Petrevčič), or trying out a new approach or idea (some ideas in this issue include using rap, literary maps and TED Talk lesson plans). Or maybe you could embrace your inner writer and send us an article for our next issue?

Whatever you decide, I hope you enjoy our dose of motivation to be an even better teacher.

**Lea Koler**, Editor

**Source:** Ali, S., Ph.D. (2018, December 5). Why New Year's Resolutions Fail. Retrieved January 14, 2019, from <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/modern-mentality/201812/why-new-years-resolutions-fail>

# Fake News and Alternative Facts: Critical Digital Literacy in the Classroom

by **Kirsten Hempkin**, Filozofska fakulteta, Univerza v Mariboru

**Kirsten Hempkin arrived in Slovenia from Scotland in 1996. She has made her home in Maribor, raising her kids (and dog) with her husband in a bilingual household. She is a *lektorica* at the Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, where she teaches a wide variety of courses in speaking, writing and general language development. Her research interests include intercultural issues and language teacher identity. When she is not working, she loves running, reading and supporting her favourite football team. Her ultimate ambition is to learn how to *sklanjati* in Slovene.**



I'm sure that many of you will be familiar with the story of the so-called Brexit bus. Employed by the leave campaign prior to the U.K. referendum on European Union membership, the bus drove around with a sign on its side claiming that by withdrawing from the E.U., the UK would save 350 million euros a week (which could then be spent on the National Health Service). The only problem, however, was that the claim was entirely false - which was admitted by one of the main campaign figures, Nigel Farage, the very day after the vote. The Brexit bus story is an example of what we've come to identify as "post-truth", the Oxford Dictionaries 2016 Word of the Year, which they define as "relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief".

If you take an interest in American politics, then you are sure to have heard President Trump using the term "fake news" to attack media outlets he feels are trying to discredit him. Collins Dictionary, who selected this as their 2017 Word of the Year, define it as "false, often sensational, information disseminated under the guise of news reporting". And while we're on the subject of the White House, we cannot overlook the (in)famous "alternative facts" (or, in other words, untruths) provided by Sean Spicer, then press secretary, in the row over attendance figures at Trump's inauguration.

Politicians and the media have often been accused of being "economical with" or distorting the truth, but it seems in today's world being downright untruthful is commonplace - which presents a challenge to the educational community and to us, as teachers of English, in particular. English language classrooms have long been the site of other types of learning, such as intercultural and human rights,<sup>1</sup> which go hand-in-hand with language education. Although they differ to some extent, the content and aims of these educations are similar in that they focus on developing the skills and competences our learners need to function in a globalised and democratic society, especially how to live in peace and tolerance with others (Audi-gier 2000; Tibbets 1996; Byram 2008; Starkey 2002). This is also one of the core values embodied in the White Paper on Education in Slovenia (1996), on which the current Slovene education system is based.

However, it seems that fulfilling our responsibilities as members of a democratic society is becoming more challenging as a result of the proliferation of misinformation (fake news, alternative facts) we encounter in our post-truth world. As researchers from Stan-

<sup>1</sup> Citizenship education is closely related and has shaped and informed both intercultural and human rights education, although it usually takes place in the mother tongue.

ford University point out,<sup>2</sup> it is becoming harder for citizens to make the types of informed and reasoned decisions that underpin democracy, going as far as to suggest that democracy is under serious threat. How do we decide, for example, who to vote for if we cannot be sure that the information about the candidates is accurate? In the USA-wide research the Stanford researchers undertook, they investigated school children's ability to reason about information available on the internet, with their findings making sobering reading. They describe the ability of the participants to reason about the information they access on the internet as extremely poor, while the students themselves are often easily misled.

We may like to think that the picture is different in Slovenia, and I would certainly agree that this question has yet to be systematically researched, but if you ask your learners – as I frequently do – not just what they know about the world around them but how they come to this knowledge, you might begin to think differently. When we discuss news events and news sources and resources, my learners (students of English at university level), often tell me that they get no further than the news alerts that they receive on their phones or stories that are shared on Facebook, and, equally worryingly, that they rarely question the validity or credibility of the information they are receiving. It seems that if we are to truly prepare our learners for modern life, then we must also work with them to develop the necessary critical skills to reason online, i.e. incorporate critical digital literacy into the (language) classroom alongside or as part of citizenship, intercultural or human rights education.

One of the ways in which we can begin to include critical digital literacy in our classrooms is to question the news sources I mentioned above. Often what we receive from such sources is not so much “fake news” but a distortion or distraction from “real” issues and events. To illustrate this, I've used two main activities. The first task is to com-

pare news stories on the same day from a variety of sources. I list the top five stories as presented by the “news suite” app on my phone. For example, on 15<sup>th</sup> Nov. 2017, my top five were: 1. Johnny Depp starring in a Marilyn Manson video; 2. Nicky Minaj in a very daring outfit; 3. Caroline Flack (a British TV presenter) poses topless; 4. Meghan Markle co-star poses on red carpet; 5. South Korea hit by 5.5. magnitude earthquake.

What is immediately clear is that the first four stories are celebrity-based, while the first story with any “real” news content comes fifth. Comparing my news stories with my students' illustrates how the featured stories differ – a selection is made for us based on personal preferences we have either stated or which are assumed for us. The second step is then to compare our news sources with others. *The Guardian* headline on that day, for example, reported that Robert Mugabe, long-ruling Zimbabwean

head-of-state, had been deposed in a military coup.

In the same way, comparing Facebook news feeds reveals how we only receive a limited stream of information, sometimes referred to as the “social media bubble”. If I look at my news feed from Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>, for example, there are commercials inviting me to buy Harry Potter merchandise (because my daughter has been using my laptop to look at HP sites), while there are stories reflecting my interest in football and notifications from sites I have “liked” such as Liverpool FC and Oh My Goal. There are politically flavoured posts also: my husband shared a *New York Times* article on how the rich avoid tax; a colleague shared a post critical of a decision to deport a Syrian refugee from Slovenia; another colleague shared a newspaper article on Russian tweets from fake accounts during Brexit; Michael Moore (the documentary-maker/activist) was again critical of Donald Trump.

✂ CUT OUT AND TAPE NEAR YOUR COMPUTER OR TV

## BREAKING NEWS CONSUMER'S HANDBOOK

### FAKE NEWS EDITION

1. **Big red flags for fake news: ALL CAPS, or obviously photoshopped pics.**
2. **A glut of pop-ups and banner ads? Good sign the story is pure clickbait.**
3. **Check the domain! Fake sites often add “.co” to trusted brands to steal their luster. (Think: “abcnews.com.co”)**
4. **If you land on an unknown site, check its “About” page. Then, Google it with the word “fake” and see what comes up.**
5. **If a story offers links, follow them. (Garbage leads to worse garbage.) No links, quotes, or references? Another telltale sign.**
6. **Verify an unlikely story by finding a reputable outlet reporting the same thing.**
7. **Check the date. Social media often resurrects outdated stories.**
8. **Read past headlines. Often they bear no resemblance to what lies beneath.**
9. **Photos may be misidentified and dated. Use a reverse image search engine like TinEye to see where an image really comes from.**
10. **Gut check. If a story makes you angry, it's probably designed that way.**
11. **Finally, if you're not sure it's true, don't share it! Don't. Share. It.**

ON **THE MEDIA**

ONTHEMEDIA.ORG

<sup>2</sup> Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning” (Stanford History Education Group, November 2016).

Again, what is striking here is that I receive only limited content on Facebook. I have chosen my friends on the site (who mostly have similar political views to mine), while Facebook has made an educated guess at what I would like to see by following what I've previously liked and clicked. This semester we will try out a game in class – trying to guess a classmate's identity based on the content in their Facebook feed. For further reading, there is an excellent article in *The Guardian*<sup>3</sup> on what happened when a Republican and Democrat supporter swapped newsfeeds: <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/16/facebook-bias-bubble-us-election-conservative-liberal-news-feed>).

As for fake news, it is extremely difficult at times to identify false stories, but there are several excellent resources available to draw learners' attention to the issue. The BBC news site, for example, contains a quiz to test how adept learners are at guessing fake news stories: <http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-38005844>. (I of course tried the quiz before I gave it to the students, and despite being a fairly sophisticated reader, I managed to identify only 4 out of

<sup>3</sup> "Bursting the Facebook bubble: We asked voters on the left and right to swap newsfeeds" November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

the 7 "fake" stories.) The quiz not only tests but also educates, suggesting the reasons behind the production of fake news, which can also be a helpful introduction to the topic of language and power. We see how language can be used to mislead or manipulate for profit or political and ideological gain.<sup>4</sup> Another tool in developing critical online awareness is the following visual guide, which is one of the many extremely helpful resources at <http://www.teachhub.com/teaching-strategies-detect-fake-news>). It's a cut-out-and-keep aid which, according to its creators, should be stuck on the learner's computer and consulted on a regular basis. The advice is practical and systematic, encouraging students to begin by following their gut instincts. To paraphrase number 10, if you feel angry, you're probably supposed to – so check the story further!

If we are to truly help our learners negotiate our globalised, post-truth society, we need to incorporate critical digital literacy into our classrooms alongside (inter)cultural and human rights educa-

<sup>4</sup> Critical digital literacy exercises of this nature ideally complement traditional critical discourse activities, which guide learners to uncover the ideologies and social meanings contained in texts (see, for example, Fairclough 1996). Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) make use of critical discourse activities to develop intercultural skills.

tion. The exercises I've suggested here that I use – and the others that I've provided links to – are a solid start in guiding our learners to not only think about world events but also to evaluate their sources of knowledge about them. Talk to your students about their online habits, test their ability to reason online and – or at least try to – uncover the truth together!

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26<sup>th</sup>

International IATEFL Slovenia Conference 2019  
7<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> March 2019 - Terme Topolšica

#empowerED

## POETRY COMPETITION

As a part of our 2019 conference, we are organizing a poetry competition. All participants of the conference are invited to enter the competition with poems written prior or during the conference. The best three poems will win prizes. The winners will be announced on Sunday, after the main plenary. Each participant may submit one original poem based on the theme of our conference and/or its title, written in English. An independent jury of 3 participants will be appointed on the first day of the conference. Please collect a code when you submit your poem at the registration desk and write this on your entry instead of your name. Leave your poem at the registration desk by 6 pm on Saturday.

# Successful foreign language learners and use of learning strategies: at the crossroads between theory and practice

by **Urška Petrevčič**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the article "Successful foreign language learners and use of learning strategies: A theoretical overview", which was published in the previous issue, I dealt with the complex issue of language learning strategies from a theoretical viewpoint.

As a foreign-language lover and teacher, I am constantly meeting a wide variety of learners of foreign languages. There are many learners who enjoy learning foreign languages and meanwhile also experience the various benefits of mastering them; however, there are also others who find language learning frustrating and even in some cases seemingly impossible. This means that if we take the two extremes, we can divide learners of a foreign language into two broad groups (although there are also a lot, of course, who fall in between): "successful" and "unsuccessful". However, in my opinion, there are too many learners who could do much better at learning languages if only they knew how to study them and what techniques and strategies to use. Knowing how to deal with language learning in a successful way could help reduce or even avoid a

great deal of frustration and failure and could help push learners towards the "successful" end of the scale regardless of their previous experience or aptitude. This is the reason why I decided to study successful and unsuccessful language learners, their profiles and their use of language learning strategies.

This empirical part thus tries to connect the theoretical knowledge with practice and get some useful results. The main purpose of this section is to find effective ways to help unsuccessful language learners become more successful and give them concrete suggestions on how to approach the study of a foreign language in a meaningful and productive way.

## **PART 1: THE USE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES: SUCCESS AND FAILURE IN MASTERING THE FOUR SKILLS (CASE STUDIES)**

This part of the research was carried out with four foreign-language learners. Two of them are considered successful language learners, while the other two constantly experience failure and

frustration. The learners were chosen according to their success or failure at school and in afternoon language courses. All of the learners are Slovenian high school students and study either English or French as a foreign language.

There are key connections to be made among the learners, which is why they are divided into two pairs. The first pair is formed with the focus on the learners' success in listening comprehension and oral expression and consists of a successful and an unsuccessful learner. The other pair is formed according to the learners' success in reading comprehension and written expression.

The names of the learners have been changed in order to preserve their anonymity. The four learners were asked to perform either a speaking or a writing task. After completing the task, they were invited to describe what they did before, during and after completing it. They could help themselves explain the process with the help of a questionnaire about the strategies proposed by Chomot *et al.* (1999).

## THE PROFILES

### Anže

Anže is a high school sophomore (16 years old). He enjoys English, especially when students have to prepare a presentation on a topic they like. For such presentations he always picks a topic he really likes or is genuinely interested in and dives into it completely: he reads books about it, watches videos, films or television programmes, and even posts questions about the topic on various internet forums. His pronunciation is excellent, his use of vocabulary extremely rich and varied. He is fluent in English, and if I talked to him in the centre of Ljubljana or somewhere abroad, I would have probably mistaken him for a native speaker. Anže also likes reading books and online articles about the topics he is interested in, listens to English and American music, and has some foreign friends with whom he always talks in English. He is genuinely interested in English, motivated to improve it even more and enjoys using the language.

### Alja

Alja is Anže's classmate. She has always had problems with learning English and says that her grades at the end of a school year are always a question of "to be or not to be, to pass or not to pass". She is a reserved student who regularly does her homework and listens to the teacher but has problems with following the lectures and understanding them. She does not speak in class, even when there is group work, but only listens to other students. She lacks the very basics of the language and therefore cannot and does not perceive English as a language with a system and logic behind separate rules and expressions. This may be the reason why she is stuck on a low "plateau" and cannot improve her language, even though she does make some effort, listens in class and does her homework. She also does not use English outside of school; her motivation is only to pass the subject in school every year. She does watch English and American films, but not very often and always with Slovene subtitles. She also only reads books that are translated into Slovene and prefers Slovene, Croatian or classical music to English or American.

### Lea

Lea is a high school senior (18 years old). She is taking French as one of her five subjects at the final high school examinations (Matura). Lea did not learn French at primary school, because there was no option to take French as an elective course. So she started learning it only at high school, and at first she had quite some problems with the language. Because of that she was afraid to speak, as she felt she did not know enough; in other words she was not self-confident about her French. Nevertheless, she liked the language and wanted to learn it well. So she decided to take charge of her learning and learn and practise it whenever possible. At school, the teacher did not give the students a lot of exercises or homework to do, so Lea bought a grammar and vocabulary exercise books and started doing the exercises. She also took special notes and kept a vocabulary notebook throughout high school. She rewrote many of the vocabulary expressions several times to remember how they should be written and made flashcards for verb conjugations and the expressions she found difficult to remember. She became more and more successful in her French, especially in written expression. Lea enjoys reading and writing in French very much, but stayed a little less self-confident regarding her spoken French. Her motivation and persistence have brought her far: now she is one of the best learners in her class. She makes very good use of grammar and vocabulary which is varied and appropriate. She writes coherent and witty texts and her written work is remarkably good. She enjoys reading books in French, watching French television, films, shows and documentaries, listens to French songs and chansons, and watches French YouTube videos. Lea has also been keeping her personal diary in French.

### Tomaž

Tomaž is Lea's classmate but is not taking French at the Matura exam. He is slightly better at speaking than at writing but has problems with passing the subject every year. The biggest problem for him is to write a coherent text, even a shorter one. Asked to write about something, whether this be a description of an object, a day of the week, an essay

or a short story, he never writes more than a couple of simple sentences. In class, he is usually silent unless he is called on to speak and often does not follow the classes actively. In group work, he does not cooperate much and prefers to use Slovene instead of French. Most of the time, he does his homework, but it is usually done incompletely and negligently. He confesses he is not interested in the language, does not like the sound of it very much, and mostly learns French only with the purpose to pass the tests and consequently the subject. Tomaž does not use French outside of school. He does watch some films in French from time to time, but always has Slovene subtitles turned on. Sometimes, he also watches a sports programme in French, but only occasionally if "there is nothing else on television".

## DEALING WITH A SPECIFIC LANGUAGE TASK

The four learners individually carried out a specific language task: Anže and Alja were asked to prepare a presentation on a topic they liked and were interested in and Lea and Tomaž had to write an essay with the title "My Favourite Tourist Destination and Why I would Recommend Visiting it" (the topic they were dealing with in school at the time, plus we discussed it at the course too). The four learners were asked to carry out the tasks at home and to approach them in the way they usually did: I specifically asked them to carry out the tasks in the way they usually did so that I could get real results and not improved versions. Anže and Alja then gave their presentations during our courses; Lea and Tomaž handed in their essays.

The results were as expected. Anže and Lea performed extremely well. I was positively surprised by how many and diverse vocabulary expressions they used and used appropriately. They used correct grammar, spelling and pronunciation, presented interesting ideas and supported them well, were coherent in their thoughts, etc. They made some mistakes, but these were not significant and did not change the meaning or make it harder to understand their presentation or essay. Alja and Tomaž, on the other hand, were not very success-

ful. Alja's presentation lacked focus: she had problems with pronouncing certain words, misused quite a few expressions and made several bigger grammatical mistakes. Nevertheless, she had some interesting ideas and had prepared a PowerPoint presentation, which was neatly and wittily made, although it contained some grammatical mistakes. The essay that Tomaž wrote, however, lacked structure and coherence and was full of spelling and grammar mistakes. Tomaž used simple vocabulary and very short sentences throughout and wrote only 18 sentences altogether.

The empirical part with the learners performing the tasks was carried out with the purpose of finding out whether the use of strategies that Chamot *et al.* (1999) proposed in the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning had any influence on whether learners would successfully or unsuccessfully carry out a certain language task. My hypothesis was that the application of such strategies helps learners perform the task better and more successfully, and I checked it by giving the four learners a questionnaire to complete about their use of the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning strategies.

### Results: Application of the Strategies of the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning by Chamot *et al.* (1999)

#### Planning

In the questionnaire, I asked the four learners if they used any of the five strategies that are suggested by Chamot *et al.* (1999) for effective planning. These strategies are:

- setting goals;
- directed attention;
- activating background knowledge;
- predicting;
- organisational planning.

All of the four students claimed that they directed their attention to the task at hand and ignored other distractions. Tomaž did not tick anything else in the planning process.

It is interesting that none of the students ticked that they set goals before dealing with the task. Nevertheless, Anže, Lea and Alja used the organisational-plan-

ning strategy and activated their background knowledge: they made either a draft or a mind map, which Anže and Lea claimed to have kept changing throughout dealing with the task (adding or deleting ideas etc.).

In addition, Anže and Lea predicted the use of certain expressions which they first checked in the dictionary (if they needed to do so) and then wrote on their drafts.

The planning stage proved to be very important for the students in order to find information about the topic they were dealing with, focus on the task, and decide on their main ideas and the message. Moreover, Anže and Lea showed that it is important to preview and predict useful expressions and to keep updating the first draft.

#### Monitoring

The monitoring stage consists of five strategies:

- asking if it makes sense;
- selectively attending;
- taking notes;
- talking yourself through it (self-talk);
- cooperating.

When dealing with their tasks, Anže and Lea used three important strategies: asking if it makes sense, selectively attending and taking notes. The use of these three strategies was crucial for them to make their presentation/essay coherent and to organise and present their thoughts and ideas well and clearly. On the other hand, Tomaž and Alja did not use these strategies, which may be a reason why their works lacked structure, organisation of ideas and focus.

Alja was the only one to use a self-encouragement technique, most probably because of her insecurity and lack of confidence in speaking. I believe that the other three students did not need to specifically and consciously encourage themselves as they already unconsciously believed that they could accomplish the different tasks.

As for the strategy of asking for help or feedback, again it was the two successful learners who used the strategy while the unsuccessful ones did not, which shows that successful language lear-

ners strive to improve and do their best, while unsuccessful ones often give up too quickly or do not use all of the resources available. Moreover, as I found out during the interviews, a poor attitude towards mistakes and fear of embarrassing themselves impede many learners' chances of improving their language. This robs them of valuable practice, clarification of confusing expressions, usage and grammar rules, and of feedback on their knowledge.

#### Problem solving

The learners were asked to briefly comment on their problem-solving techniques. They had to comment on whether they used any of the four problem-solving strategies of the Metacognitive Model by Chamot *et al.* (1999) when they were working on their language tasks. The four strategies they were asked about are:

- inferencing;
- substituting;
- asking questions to clarify;
- using resources.

Similarly as in the process of monitoring, the two successful learners asked for clarification and help, while the unsuccessful ones did not.

All of the four learners commented that they used various resources already in the planning stage and then kept using them throughout the completion of the task, which shows that the Metacognitive Model truly is of a recursive nature. One important point regarding the use of resources is that although both successful and unsuccessful learners used them, the two successful learners used more resources than the unsuccessful ones, plus they used a variety of them. While Tomaž and Alja only used bilingual dictionaries and Wikipedia, Anže and Lea used mono- and bilingual dictionaries, internet forums, YouTube videos, and newspaper articles.

All four learners also substituted unknown words with descriptions or other related words; most probably they helped themselves by using dictionaries. Anže also wrote in the questionnaire that, during his presentation, he described a couple of expressions which he forgot in the excitement of presenting or used synonyms for them. Both tech-

niques are believed to be characteristics of good language learners and strategies which good language learners use when they have to compensate for lack of knowledge.

None of the students reported to have used the strategy of inferencing.

### Evaluating

In the questionnaire, I also asked the four students about their use of the next five evaluation process strategies:

- verifying predictions and guesses;
- summarising;
- checking goals;
- evaluating yourself;
- evaluating your strategies.

Surprisingly, none of the four learners seemed to have used the strategies of verifying predictions and guesses or evaluating strategies. However, Lea wrote a thought-provoking comment by claiming that she usually does not evaluate the use of strategies after completing a certain task, but rather at the beginning of dealing with a new one, i.e. when she is making plans for tackling it. It is then that she thinks of her previous experiences with similar tasks, reflects on the strategies she used and evaluates them. After a quick evaluation, she uses those which were helpful and effective again and does not apply the ineffective ones in the next task.

On the other hand, all of the four learners reported to have used the "evaluating yourself" strategy. Interestingly, all of them wrote that they read through their presentations or essays after they finished them and checked the vocabulary and spelling. However, they did not reflect on their weaknesses and strengths. Again, only the two successful learners added a (similar) comment saying that they somehow highlighted or took note of the aspects they still needed to improve on. Anže even gave an example: when preparing his presentation, he was not sure about the use of some verb and preposition combinations, so he had to check them on internet forums and with his teachers.

There was another interesting finding: everyone except Tomaž used the strategies of summarising and checking goals, and both Lea and Alja added the

comment that they both usually use the summarising strategy only in their heads and do not write down the key points again.

### Findings

The objective of the tasks and the following questionnaire was to find out whether the use of strategies which Chamot *et al.* (1999) proposed in the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning helps learners deal with a certain language task more successfully or not. My hypothesis was that the application of such strategies does help learners perform the task better and more successfully. The hypothesis proved true: the use of the strategies of the Metacognitive Model did help the learners deal with their task more successfully. However, it is clearly not obligatory to use all of the strategies; rather they should be used according to the task at hand, plus a student needs to use those that are the most meaningful and effective for them. Moreover, the nature of the Metacognitive Model is recursive, which means that the strategies are not sequential and do not need to be used in the exact same order as proposed in the model, but should rather be used in accordance with the demands of the task and the way learners deal with it.

## PART 2: THE USE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES ACCORDING TO OXFORD'S (1990) STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL) (QUESTIONNAIRE)

The second empirical part investigates the use of language learning strategies among a group of 50 successful foreign language learners; it is based on Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL). The 50 successful language learners were chosen according to different criteria: high-school students were chosen according to their grades in school or/and their results at afternoon language courses; adult language learners were chosen according to their results at the final Matura exam and/or their results at afternoon language courses. All of the learners are either Slovenian high-school students or adult learners who attend my afternoon language courses. The majority of the learners (45) are high-school students, while the

five adult learners finished high school not more than four years ago. The high-school learners study English and French because the languages are part of the school programme and attend the afternoon language courses to get more practice and improve their language skills. On the other hand, the adult learners attend the afternoon language classes to improve their language skills because they need them for their work.

Half of the 50 successful language learners are students of English, the other half of French. I decided to mix students of both languages to get more general answers from learners of foreign languages.

The students were asked to complete Oxford's questionnaire on language learning strategies. For each learning strategy, they had to state how often they use it: next to sentences describing different language learning strategies, they had to respond 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 on how true of them the statement was. The scale was a five-grade scale with the grades:

- 1 = never or almost never true of me;
- 2 = usually not true of me (less than half the time);
- 3 = somewhat true of me (about half the time);
- 4 = usually true of me (more than half the time);
- 5 = always or almost always true of me.

The students who studied English as a foreign language got a questionnaire about their use of language learning strategies when learning English; the learners of French got the same questionnaire, but about their use of language learning strategies when learning French.

### Results of Individual Categories

The biggest interest for me was which strategies are most frequently used among the 50 successful language learners, so that I could provide unsuccessful language learners with a collection of the most efficient and most commonly used strategies.

<b>PART A: REMEMBERING MORE EFFECTIVELY</b> (DIRECT STRATEGIES: MEMORY STRATEGIES)		
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Average Grade</b>
1	I remember new English/French* words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, on a street sign...	3.40
2	I think of relationships of what I already know to new things I learn in English.	3.14
3	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	3.14
4	I connect a sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.	3.12
5	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.	3.10
6	I review English lessons often.	2.40
7	I use rhymes to remember new English words.	1.96
8	I use flashcards to remember new English words.	1.94
9	I physically act out new English words.	1.74

**Figure 1 Part A: Remembering More Effectively**  
(Direct Strategies: Memory Strategies)

### **Part A: Remembering More Effectively (Direct Strategies: Memory Strategies)**

In the first part, “Remembering More Effectively”, there are nine individual language learning strategies.

As seen in Figure 1, successful language learners make use of context and memory devices and like to connect their new knowledge with pre-existing knowledge. The three most widely used strategies of the set are the first three: remembering new words with or in their context, connecting new knowledge with pre-existing knowledge, and using new words in a sentence (and thus giving context to the expression). However, some strategies show almost the same average, for example strategies 2 to 5 from Figure 1, which means that they are probably fairly equally important and effective among the 50 students.

<b>PART B: USING ALL YOUR MENTAL PROCESSES</b> (DIRECT STRATEGIES: COGNITIVE STRATEGIES)		
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Average Grade</b>
1	I watch TV in English or go to the movies in English.	4.38
2	I try not to translate word-for-word.	3.74
3	I read for pleasure in English.	3.46
4	I use the English words I know in different ways.	3.39
5	I try to talk like native English speakers.	3.38
6	I try to find patterns in English.	3.28
7	I practise the sounds of English.	3.20
8	I start conversations in English.	3.18
9	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.	3.06
10	I write notes, messages, emails, letters or reports in English.	2.94
11	I say or write new English words several times.	2.76
12	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.	2.72
13	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.	2.70
14	I first skim an English passage (i.e. read over the passage quickly), then go back and read carefully.	1.94

**Figure 2 Using All Your Mental Processes**  
(Direct Strategies: Cognitive Strategies)

### **Part B: Using All Your Mental Processes (Direct Strategies: Cognitive Strategies)**

The second part, “Using All Your Mental Processes”, is composed of 14 language learning strategies. These, together with average scores from my survey, are presented in Figure 2 below.

In this set, the strategies dealing with authentic materials are the most highly graded: watching TV in English or French and reading authentic materials. Similarly, successful language learners seem to deliberately avoid direct translations from their mother tongue into the foreign language.

Interestingly, there is quite a big difference between the most and the least popular strategy in the set: the first, watching authentic materials, got an average grade of 4.38, while the last, first skimming a passage and then reading it again, got a grade of only 1.94.

<b>PART C: COMPENSATING FOR MISSING KNOWLEDGE</b> (DIRECT STRATEGIES: COMPENSATING STRATEGIES)		
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Average Grade</b>
1	If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	<b>4.36</b>
2	I read in English without looking up every new/unfamiliar word.	<b>4.16</b>
3	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	<b>3.24</b>
4	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.	<b>2.50</b>
5	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.	<b>1.96</b>
6	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.	<b>1.96</b>

**Figure 3 Part C: Compensating for Missing Knowledge**  
(Direct Strategies: Compensating Strategies)

<b>PART D: ORGANISING AND EVALUATING YOUR LEARNING</b> (INDIRECT STRATEGIES: METACOGNITIVE STRATEGIES)		
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Average Grade</b>
1	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	<b>4.12</b>
2	I have (clear) goals for improving my English.	<b>3.82</b>
3	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	<b>3.61</b>
4	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.	<b>3.57</b>
5	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.	<b>3.30</b>
6	I think about my progress in learning English.	<b>3.06</b>
7	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.	<b>2.98</b>
8	I look for people I can talk to in English.	<b>2.58</b>
9	I plan my schedule in a way that I would have enough time to study English.	<b>2.12</b>

**Figure 4 Organising and Evaluating Your Learning**  
(Indirect Strategies: Metacognitive Strategies)

### **Part C: Compensating for Missing Knowledge (Direct Strategies: Compensating Strategies)**

The six strategies presented in Figure 3 below belong to the “Compensating for Missing Knowledge” set of strategies according to Oxford (1990).

Oxford (1990: 47) claims that good language learners make guesses and do not panic when confronted with unknown expressions. The results of the questionnaire support her statement: the average scores of the first three strategies of the “Compensating for Missing Knowledge” part are all very high (all of the three strategies are about making guesses and effectively using compensation strategies when faced with an unknown expression).

### **Part D: Organising and Evaluating Your Learning (Indirect Strategies: Metacognitive Strategies)**

The nine strategies of the “Organising and Evaluating Your Learning” part are presented in Figure 4 below. Again, the strategies are arranged according to the frequency of their use among the 50 students.

Oxford (1990) further divides metacognitive strategies into three classes: centring your learning, arranging and planning your learning, and evaluating your learning. It is interesting that each of the three the most popular strategies belongs to one of the classes of the metacognitive strategies; the three thus form a unit. This shows that it is important to take all sides of learning into account and not focus only on one part of it, such as the evaluation of one's learning. The results also show that different language learning strategies can be used to reach the same goal and that even successful language learners are different. The latter further shows why it is important to know about the variety of language learning strategies and choose those that work best for you as an individual learner.

<b>PART E: MANAGING YOUR EMOTIONS</b> (INDIRECT STRATEGIES: AFFECTIVE STRATEGIES)		
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Average Grade</b>
<b>1</b>	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	<b>3.64</b>
<b>2</b>	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	<b>3.26</b>
<b>3</b>	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	<b>2.82</b>
<b>4</b>	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. / I compliment myself (can be done silently in your mind) when I do well in English.	<b>2.64</b>
<b>5</b>	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.	<b>2.00</b>
<b>6</b>	I write down my feelings in a diary (could also be a blog) in English.	<b>1.74</b>

**Figure 5 Managing Your Emotions**  
(Indirect Strategies: Affective Strategies)

### **Part E: Managing Your Emotions** (Indirect Strategies: Affective Strategies)

The next six strategies deal with emotions, attitudes, motivation and values in language learning.

Although the importance of affective language learning strategies cannot be overstated, these strategies are often neglected. The results of the questionnaire show that successful language learners do use these strategies, but the results are not as positive as in the other five classes (more than half are used only about half the time or even less). It would be interesting to compare the results of the 50 successful language learners with a group of unsuccessful language learners, as successful language learners maybe do not use affective strategies much because they are already successful and confident in their language learning. The successful learners probably use such strategies unconsciously: the results show that successful language learners notice when they feel tense and afraid and choose to encourage themselves in such a situation. On the other hand, unsuccessful language learners most likely need more encouragement and would appreciate to learn how to lower and reduce their anxiety.

<b>PART F: LEARNING WITH OTHERS</b> (INDIRECT STRATEGIES: SOCIAL STRATEGIES)		
	<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Average Grade</b>
<b>1</b>	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	<b>3.70</b>
<b>2</b>	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	<b>2.96</b>
<b>3</b>	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	<b>2.88</b>
<b>4</b>	I ask for help from English speakers.	<b>2.84</b>
<b>5</b>	I practise English with other students.	<b>2.68</b>
<b>6</b>	When I write/speak in English, I translate the sentences from my mother tongue.	<b>2.41</b>

**Figure 6 Learning with Others**  
(Indirect Strategies: Social Strategies)

### **Part F: Learning with Others** (Indirect Strategies: Social Strategies)

The last six strategies of Oxford's SILL questionnaire belong to the category "Learning with Others".

Language is the basic form of communication for human beings. Learning a language involves communication with other people, which means that developing social strategies is important for language learners. Although none of the strategies got a very high average grade (except for the one asking for repetition or speaking slower), none got a very low one either, which shows that the 50 learners use the social strategies regularly. However, the social strategies are not the ones that they use the most. This maybe shows also that these learners prefer learning individually, or that they do not have regular contact with native speakers.

THREE MOST FREQUENTLY USED LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES FROM EACH CATEGORY		
	Strategy	Category
1	I remember new English/French words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, on a street sign, etc..	Remembering more effectively
2	I think of relationships of what I already know to new things I learn in English.	Remembering more effectively
3	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.	Remembering more effectively
4	I watch TV in English or go to the movies in English.	Using all your mental processes
5	I try not to translate word-for-word.	Using all your mental processes
6	I read for pleasure in English.	Using all your mental processes
7	If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.	Compensating for missing knowledge
8	I read in English without looking up every new/unfamiliar word.	Compensating for missing knowledge
9	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.	Compensating for missing knowledge
10	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.	Organising and evaluating your learning
11	I have (clear) goals for improving my English.	Organising and evaluating your learning
12	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.	Organising and evaluating your learning
13	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.	Managing your emotions
14	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.	Managing your emotions
15	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.	Managing your emotions
16	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.	Learning with others
17	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.	Learning with others
18	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.	Learning with others

**Figure 7** List of the three most frequently used language learning strategies from each category

### General Results: List of the Three Most Frequently Used Language Strategies from Each Category

A list of the three most frequently used language learning strategies from each of the six categories is presented in Figure 7 below.

The results of the questionnaire supported many of the statements made by Oxford (1990) and other researchers. Although only a few language learning strategies scored an average grade above 4, every category had at least some strategies with a fairly high score. Moreover, a fair amount of strategies received an average grade above 3, which means that they are used at least half the time among the learners. With such a variety of strategies in the questionnaire, this is a very high score, which shows that successful language learners often use language learning strategies and indeed several of them.

### Conclusion

The investigation into the complex phenomenon of foreign language learning and the connection between the use of language learning strategies and a higher success rate in language learning confirmed my assumption that theory and practice do cross in this field. The following are some important lessons I have learnt from the research.

My hypothesis that the use of strategies which Chamot *et al.* (1999) proposed in the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning helps learners perform the task better and more successfully was supported. Nevertheless, it is not obligatory to use all of the strategies. The strategies should be used according to the task at hand, plus students need to use those that are the most meaningful and effective for them in the order that is in accordance with the demands of the task and the way learners deal with it.

Such was the situation for the four language learners here. Although Anže and Lea are very successful language learners, they did not use each and every language learner strategy proposed in the model. However, they used the ones that were effective for them and used them wisely, diversely and accordingly to the task at hand. On the other hand,

while Tomaž and Alja, the two unsuccessful language learners, did use some of the successful language learner strategies, they lacked variety in using them, flexibility in their application and motivation to keep improving.

One of the first big steps in learning is to understand one's weaknesses. Then, being aware of them, a learner can organise their learning and, for example, search for ways to ameliorate their use of a foreign language. The first step – appreciating weaknesses – is essential. However, it does not have very much value if the second is not realised too: in order to get better, an active role on the part of the learner is crucial. From the interviews with Tomaž and Lea, I became conscious of the fact that most of the successful language learners make both steps, while the less successful ones get stuck with the first and therefore deprive themselves of the opportunity to improve.

Lea and Tomaž showed, moreover, that it is vital to not give up and to keep improving. Lea is considered a good learner, but she knows she has not mastered the language yet and has to keep working on it. Thus she accepts challenges and in fact is getting better and better. Tomaž, on the other hand, is not successful in his learning. He seems stuck on a low "plateau"; if he improves, he improves only insignificantly.

The results of the questionnaire supported many statements made by Oxford (1990) and other researchers. Although, according to Oxford (1990), the 50 language learning strategies collected in the questionnaire are all language learning strategies that are effective and considered to be used by successful language learners, the research showed that only some of them are frequently used by the 50 successful language learners that were part of the present research, while some others are not used so often. Again, this could be explained by the fact that with such a wide variety of strategies, it is impossible for these learners to practise all of them on daily basis. Reasonably, some language learning strategies are also more popular than others, which is quite understandable since there are different language learning strategies that can be used to reach the same goal: even successful language learners differ

and they use different strategies to reach the same goal. Also, since the results were not extremely high or low, these learners most probably use a variety of language learning strategies and adapt the use of them according to the situation or the task at hand. Finally, strategies in no one category received particularly low average grades. This shows that successful language learners know that it is important not only to focus on one part of learning, but to take all aspects of it into account.

The final list of the three most frequently used strategies from each category was made simply on the basis of the average grade. This list could thus be improved in many ways. For example, it would be interesting to see how the grades were dispersed for each individual strategy and check how many answers of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 the strategies received: knowing whether there were mostly middle grades or whether there were learners who always use a given strategy and those who never use it could help us understand more about the use of certain strategies. Also, individual profiles of successful language learners could be made according to their questionnaire responses, revealing their overall use of strategies. Subsequently it would be useful to undertake further research into the frequency of use of language learning strategies of individual classes and

establish the strategies of which categories are most frequently used and which strategies should be encouraged to be used more. Finally, all these aspects could also be studied among unsuccessful language learners and then compared with the results of the successful ones.

My research, however, did not end with the investigation of the language learning strategies proposed by Oxford (1990). Alja and Tomaž agreed to focus more on their foreign languages during the school year and work harder towards their improvement. We agreed to make learning plans and focus especially on language learning strategies, as they did not use them adequately or appropriately. At first, I wanted to make individual learning plans for them, but it transpired that they enjoyed their joint endeavours and the way they could encourage each other; therefore we agreed to make plans for the two of them together. Because I did not want the learners to feel overwhelmed, we decided to set monthly goals. Starting in January and finishing at the end of June, we had six months and six challenges in total. We prepared their learning plans and set the goals, which we made sure were realistic and attainable. The challenges, I am pleased to report, brought impressive results and improvements for both students.



**APPENDICES**

**1.1 APPENDIX 1:**

**Sample Questionnaire: “Use of The Strategies of the Metacognitive Model of Strategic Learning by Chamot et al. (1999)”**

**USE OF THE STRATEGIES OF THE METACOGNITIVE MODEL OF STRATEGIC LEARNING**

Tick (use ✓ or X) the strategies which you used during the four processes when dealing with your task. If you did not use a certain process at all (planning, monitoring, problem solving, evaluating), leave the whole part empty. If you only used a certain strategy, tick that one. Please add any comments or further explanations in the special spaces marked “Any other comment?”.

<b>I Planning</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>1 Setting goals</b> (Did you identify what you want to achieve with the task?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>2 Directed attention</b> (Did you focus on the task and ignore other distractions?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>3 Activating background knowledge</b> (Did you think about all of the knowledge you already possess and can come in handy when dealing with the task?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>4 Predicting</b> (Did you predict what kind of expressions, formats, etc. you will need in order to complete the task?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>5 Organisational planning</b> (Did you make a plan for carrying out the task? Did you make a draft or brainstormed the ideas, useful vocabulary, etc.?) <b>Any other comment?</b>
<b>II Monitoring</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>1 Asking if it makes sense</b> (Did you check if you are making sense?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>2 Selectively attending</b> (Did you focus on important information?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>3 Taking notes</b> (Did you write down key concepts and ideas?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>4 Talking yourself through it (self-talk)</b> (Did you encourage yourself that you can do it?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>5 Cooperating</b> (Did you ask anyone for help or feedback?) <b>Any other comment?</b>

<b>III Problem Solving</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>1 Inferencing</b> (Did you make guesses when you did not know a certain expression? Did you use gestures, images or context?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>2 Substituting</b> (Did you substitute the unknown words or describe them?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>3 Asking questions to clarify</b> (Did you ask anyone to explain or clarify something to you?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>4 Using resources</b> (Did you use any reference material, such as a dictionary, the internet, books, newspaper articles, etc.?) <b>Any other comment?</b>
<b>IV Evaluating</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>1 Verifying predictions and guesses</b> (Did you check if the predictions and guesses that you made at the beginning were correct?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>2 Summarising</b> (Did you restate your main ideas and the message?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>3 Checking goals</b> (Did you check whether you met your goal(s) or not?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>4 Evaluating yourself</b> (Did you check how well you performed the task? Did you reflect on your strengths and weaknesses?) <input type="checkbox"/> <b>5 Evaluating your strategies</b> (Did you check if you used the appropriate strategies and used them well?) <b>Any other comment?</b>

**Did you use any other strategy?  
Did you use any strategy during a different stage or process as suggested in the Model? If so, which and when?  
Thank you for your time and cooperation.  
(Adapted from: Chamot et al. 1999)**

**APPENDIX 2:**

**Sample Questionnaire: Oxford’s Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL)**

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE USE OF LANGUAGE LEARNING STRATEGIES: OXFORD’S (1990) STRATEGY INVENTORY FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING (SILL)**

Next to particular sentences describing different language learning strategies, write the response (1, 2, 3, 4 or 5) that says how TRUE of YOU the statement is.

- 1 = Never or almost never true of me  
 2 = Usually not true of me (less than half the time)  
 3 = Somewhat true of me (about half the time)  
 4 = Usually true of me (more than half the time)  
 5 = Always or almost always true of me

PART A	
1	I think of relationships of what I already know to new things I learn in English/French*.
2	I use new English words in a sentence so I can remember them.
3	I connect a sound of a new English word and an image or picture of the word to help me remember the word.
4	I remember a new English word by making a mental picture of a situation in which the word might be used.
5	I use rhymes to remember new English words.
6	I use flashcards to remember new English words.
7	I physically act out new English words.
8	I review English lessons often.
9	I remember new English words or phrases by remembering their location on the page, on the board, on a street sign, etc.
PART B	
10	I say or write new English words several times.
11	I try to talk like English native speakers.
12	I practise the sounds of English.
13	I use the English words I know in different ways.
14	I start conversations in English.
15	I watch TV in English or go to the movies in English.
16	I read for pleasure in English.
17	I write notes, messages, emails, letters or reports in English.
18	I first skim an English passage (read over the passage quickly), then go back and read carefully.
19	I look for words in my own language that are similar to new words in English.
20	I try to find patterns in English.
21	I find the meaning of an English word by dividing it into parts that I understand.
22	I try not to translate word-for-word.
23	I make summaries of information that I hear or read in English.
PART C	
24	To understand unfamiliar English words, I make guesses.
25	When I can't think of a word during a conversation in English, I use gestures.
26	I make up new words if I do not know the right ones in English.

27	I read in English without looking up every new/unfamiliar word.
28	I try to guess what the other person will say next in English.
29	If I cannot think of an English word, I use a word or phrase that means the same thing.
PART D	
30	I try to find as many ways as I can to use my English.
31	I notice my English mistakes and use that information to help me do better.
32	I pay attention when someone is speaking English.
33	I try to find out how to be a better learner of English.
34	I plan my schedule in such a way that I have enough time to study English.
35	I look for people I can talk to in English.
36	I look for opportunities to read as much as possible in English.
37	I have (clear) goals for improving my English.
38	I think about my progress in learning English.
PART E	
39	I try to relax whenever I feel afraid of using English.
40	I encourage myself to speak English even when I am afraid of making a mistake.
41	I give myself a reward or treat when I do well in English. / I compliment myself (can be done silently in your mind) when I do well in English.
42	I notice if I am tense or nervous when I am studying or using English.
43	I write down my feelings in a diary (could also be a blog) in English.
44	I talk to someone else about how I feel when I am learning English.
PART F	
45	If I do not understand something in English, I ask the other person to slow down or say it again.
46	I ask English speakers to correct me when I talk.
47	I practise English with other students.
48	I ask for help from English speakers.
49	I try to learn about the culture of English speakers.
50	When I write/speak in English, I translate the sentences from my mother tongue.

**Thank you for your time and cooperation. ☺**  
 (Adapted from: Oxford 1990)

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# How can I say it in English? Some strategies to compensate for lexical gaps.

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## **Introduction**

An English Language Teacher Education (ELTE) programme located in a non-English speaking country like Slovenia or Argentina may offer the ideal environment – or a perfect bubble – for those who, apart from being passionate about teaching, find the language fascinating. One reason for this is that, as in our case (an ELTE programme offered in a small town from Argentina), where the degree course is taught in English, future teachers (FTs) are given the opportunity to practise and improve their language skills in a simulated immersion atmosphere that offers plenty of meaningful input in the target language. And although being encouraged to follow an English-only policy through the course of studies might shock some of the students at the beginning, FTs gradually embrace the idea as the number one rule. The ELTE programme “is then a small bilingual speech community in which there is a common L1 and the L2 is both the means and the object of study” (Percara & Bayona, 2018, p. 20). However, the linguistic code used in the institutional context to which the programme belongs is the L1, and the academic jargon, in our case specific to the Argentinian education system, gets lost in translation when trying to find L2 equivalents. At this point, interlocutors find themselves applying diverse strategies to fill in the lexical gaps, i.e. “to translate an expression from the

source language into the target language where the equivalent expression does not exist” (Priyono, 2005, p. 228). In some cases speakers may improvise, creatively combining words or phrases, while in other situations they may appeal to the lexical items they have heard other people in the programme choose.

As Wajnryb (2008) notes: “It’s rarely the predictable language that causes problems. Rather it’s the unpredictable, unrehearsable part” (p. 18). The lexical gaps become part of those unrehearsed communicative situations, and the terms, expressions or strategies used to compensate for the lacunas or semantic voids contribute to characterise the ELTE programme as a speech community. Reflecting upon this aspect – probably observable in other institutions too – is thus relevant for English as a foreign language (EFL) educators, as it may shed light upon understanding some of the challenges to effective communication and successful interaction faced by non-native speakers.

## **Lexical gaps and communication strategies**

By means of participant observation and through a survey that FTs consented to complete, I collected information on their preferred strategies to fill lexical gaps when referring to academic

jargon in their L1. For Bialystok (1990) the communication strategies language learners implement to get their message across can be defined as “techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language” (p. 3). In most of the cases, and mainly when referring to a student’s academic status specific to our institutional context, the FTs used L1 words with the corresponding L1 pronunciation. This process, known as code-switching (Dörnyei, 1995), was the most recurrent compensatory strategy and, as the interlocutors shared the same L1, the tactic proved successful and avoided misunderstandings. This could be seen, for instance, when students enquired about their academic status at the end of a term. They preferred using the Spanish jargon they were familiar with instead of English lexical items they were unsure about. However, it should be noted that when this is not the case, i.e. when speakers do not have a common linguistic code to which to turn, and bearing in mind that the aim of the programme is for FTs to use English as a communicative tool, code-switching may be regarded as the last resort (Percara & Bayona, 2018).

The second most widely chosen technique to overcome lexical gaps was calque. As Larizgoitia (2010) explains, this strategy, which can also be called loan-translation or substitution, implies “reproducing the meaning of an item in another language through imitation, employing the target language’s signifiers or linguistic elements” (p. 15). Thus, in many of the cases when the FTs employed word-for-word translation to English, the meaning conveyed in the L1 suffered modifications and, consequently, communication was imprecise. An example found in the data collected was the English equivalent students offered for the Spanish term *cuero docente*, which may be translated as *teaching staff*. Since *cuero* can be translated as *body* and an uncommon translation for *docente* is *professor*, a few students referred to the *teaching staff* as the “*professor’s body*”! As Percara and Bayona (2018) point out, if interactants’ L1 is the same, literal translations may elicit the same associations for all the speakers. But,

again, if the interaction takes place among English speakers who do not share the same home language, communication might be misleading and ineffective.

Finally, the least commonly selected strategy among FTs was approximation, a technique that, according to Castro Garcés and López Olivera (2014), should be highly preferred over code-switching or calque. In approximation, students use alternative terms that describe the meaning of the target lexical item as closely as possible (Dörnyei, 1995). Hence, in some situations, FTs explained the L1 academic jargon by providing definitions in English, usually preceded by the word “like”. For example, “*it is like... uhm... when you don’t pass and have to take the final exam*”.

By applying approximation, FTs seemed to leave less room for misinterpretation. The denotations they wanted to convey became easier to grasp by their interlocutors as their descriptions compensated for the semantic voids. As a lexical gap-filling mechanism, approximation appears to facilitate understanding among speakers whose L1 is not the same. Even though the strategy may require students to resort to varied, alternative terms, it could provide their interlocutors with a more complete explanation of the lexical item, leading them to construe the message more effectively.

### Conclusion

Observing and reflecting on the communication strategies presented, chosen as lexical gap-filling mechanisms by the FTs in the Argentinian ELTE programme, may prove beneficial for language educators. After identifying techniques that may benefit students in their process of becoming more efficient users of English, we may help them develop awareness of their potential for both enhancing and hindering communication in the target language. Further, we may contribute to reducing the risk of English language students naturalising non-existent lexicon in the target language (Percara & Bayona, 2018), which may act as barriers between speakers who do not share the same L1. As Castro

Garcés and López Olivera (2014) clearly put it, “a good choice of communication strategies by language learners can be of great help to facilitate the development of communicative skills” (p. 22).

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### Building maps of fiction

Mapping our reading experiences has become easily manageable with digital maps. Although placing our favourite stories on a printed map is a beautiful and creative project, digital maps have affordances which can engage students in and out of class. Start by opening a web mapping service. For example, sign into your Google account, open 'My Maps' [www.google.com/maps] and click on 'Create a new map'. Once you are on this page, you can search locations, drop pins and add information about them. You can do this as a class, in groups or as an individual project with your classes. Visit the map from time to time to see how many titles and locations have been added during the year.

### Start exploring

**Navigate the map.** When you select a location, click on a pin and then on 'View in Google Maps'. This link will take you to the place on the map and you can start exploring the area. What's the terrain like? How many rivers, lakes, mountains and forests are there? You can then look again at the places mentioned in the story you're reading.

Let's take the novel *Anne of Green Gables* by Lucy Maud Montgomery as our example. First, we find Prince Edward Island, then type in 'Anne of Green Gables', and among the results we can find Green Gables Heritage Place in Cavendish. Then, by clicking on the names, we can read about their relevance to our story. Exploring the map will take us to lakes, like Lake of Shining Waters, and beaches which are really close to the place which inspired the novel.

**Change to Street View.** Dropping the yellow figure on the map lets us walk the streets around our selected area. Take this opportunity to explore the road signs. On which side of the road do the cars drive? What's the speed limit? Are there any bus stops? How might you get around the area? When we have explored the different ways of getting around, we can study the buildings. What are they made of? What do they look like? How are they different from the buildings in our cities? Where would you go for a coffee? Where can you go shopping? You can continue this list and

invite your students on imaginary walks in real cities. Through exploring in this way, the locations of our beloved stories become real places worth visiting.

**Getting around.** The functions 'Directions from here', 'Directions to here', 'What's here?' and 'Search nearby' are excellent starting points for activities to practise getting around an area. Set the objective of getting to a particular place from your hometown. The students need to plan means of transportation, starting by taking a flight or a train or driving. Then, once they have arrived in the city of London, for example, they need to get to 221b Baker Street, the home of Sherlock Holmes. How will they travel? How long will it take them? How much will it cost? What means of public transport will be available? Answering all these questions might take a whole lesson, but it will definitely equip the students with practical skills which will boost their confidence.

### Culture and environment

**Learning about the culture.** Exploring the streets teaches us about transportation, shopping, eating out, buildings, parks and entertainment in a city. In other words, we learn a lot about the culture of the given area, and finding out about these places leads us to further research. We can then find out more about a café by finding its webpage or social media page. Students can look for opening hours, the menu and pictures of the place itself. By providing such context, imaginary dialogues become more realistic, and following the steps of our favourite characters can lead us to real-life experiences.

**Learning about the environment.** The words of our natural environment are also hidden in these maps. These words teach us something about the history and the everyday lives of people in the area. If you visit Yukon Territory, well-known from Jack London's *The Call of the Wild* and *White Fang*, for example, you'll find words like 'crossing', 'landing', 'junction' and 'rampart' and names like First Nation, Little Salmon and Porcupine River. Just by finding out about these words, we can learn a lot about the history and the habitat of the people there.

Each area will also have its characteristic expressions, sometimes unique, sometimes common. These words will not only build your students' vocabulary, but also increase their cultural knowledge.

**Track changes.** The mapping projects can also lead to observations about changes in the landscape and cityscape. For example, it is an interesting project to compare Baker Street in London at the time of the Sherlock Holmes stories in the late 1800s to Baker Street as we know it today. By doing a simple search on the internet, we can find old maps and images, which will let us compare the street names and houses back then and now. Similarly, going back to Yukon Territory, students might undertake an environmental research project to learn about the changes in the environment near the Arctic between the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and today.

### Travel with an author or a character.

It's easy to go on a long journey through the works of certain authors and certain adventurous characters. For example, with older students it's easy to travel from England to Italy and then to India through E.M. Forster's novels. And when we ask questions about the importance of the settings, we will soon find ourselves discussing British history in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The novel *A Room with a View* will raise questions about the Grand Tour of Europe, while *A Passage to India* will teach us about the East India Company and the Indian Independence Movement.

### Never stop exploring

With these simple tasks, I've illustrated how much active engagement and learning opportunity there is in digital maps. Whether we take them as starting points for CLIL projects or vocabulary building, they will definitely colour our lessons and set us off on longer journeys. Some of these imaginary and literary journeys might even become real-life experiences at a later time, but in any case our students will remember the stories and the experiences they gained in these lessons.

# Promoting multiculturalism and language learning with ERASMUS +: Youth in Action

by **Barbara Lukač Patarčec**



**Barbara Lukač Patarčec is currently working as an English teacher at Šmartno Primary School in Šmartno pri Litiji. Before that, she taught English as a Comenius Assistant in Spain and for the last couple of years has been a mentor and school coordinator for Erasmus+ Youth in Action volunteer projects. She is a true book-lover, devoting almost every free moment to reading.**

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My school, OŠ Šmartno, is one of four schools in our local community that participates in an Erasmus+ programme called Youth in Action.

Erasmus + enables schools to partake in various partnerships that offer both teachers and students the opportunity to experience other cultures and use foreign languages. Within this scope of the Erasmus+ programme, schools most often form partnerships that allow the faculty and a number of students to travel to a school in another European country with whom they've formed a partnership.

This is indeed a wonderful opportunity for students to broaden their horizons and become more aware of themselves, appreciate the usefulness of speaking foreign languages, and learn to become more accepting of the differences that exist among different countries and cultures.

While partnerships allow for student exchanges, the downside is that usually only a small percentage of students are in fact able to participate in them, thus leaving the majority without the possibility to experience the benefits.

Our school, together with several others in our region, has found a solution to this problem within the Erasmus+ programme itself. The solution is the Volunteer Projects that are a part of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action initiative.

These Volunteer Projects give young adults the opportunity to live and do voluntary work in a host country for up to 12 months. The volunteers' primary tasks are to engage with the community they live in and contribute to it, along with undertaking practical tasks that afford learning opportunities for the volunteer.

## **Who are the volunteers?**

The volunteers are young adults, aged 18 to 30, and their reasons for offering their services differ greatly. In countries such as Germany and Austria, for example, it is quite common for young adults to join such programmes after finishing high school and before going to university. This is the so-called gap year, in which they gain invaluable experience along with a better insight into themselves and their future goals.

Some volunteer because they would like to change the direction of their lives, to give them more meaning, while others use such programmes to find themselves professionally, thus volunteering in homes for the elderly, schools and so on.

Volunteers in the programme can be native speakers, but volunteers from other countries can often prove to be an even better asset, as they provide a completely new range of learning opportunities.

Non-native English-speaking volunteers can often better relate to our students, as they are familiar with the problems of studying English and contribute to a greater feeling of a multicultural society.

## **Volunteers in schools**

While school exchanges do not involve all the children that go to a certain school, having a foreign volunteer present at their school does.

These volunteers should not be mistaken for COMENIUS teaching assistants, because their role in the school is different. They do not necessarily assist with teaching, but rather provide other learning opportunities for the children. The emphasis of their work is on non-formal education, so some of their more important roles are in school-based extracurricular activities, during week long outings and so on. Most importantly, these volunteers are not necessarily teachers or even studying to become teachers. Those applying to schools are often interested in working in education and may have some experience in working with children, but they do not generally hold a formal degree in teaching.

Volunteers participate in after-school activities, go on field trips, participate in extended stay programmes and so on, though of course they take part in regular lessons too.

Very often they are included in English lessons or other language lessons, where they help in communicative exercises. These are especially beneficial, because students are “forced” to engage and participate in the conversation in a foreign language. This can be quite motivating for students who have low self-esteem and are reluctant to speak: in the situation they find themselves in, they are aware that the volunteer has no understanding of their language, so communication in English or other foreign languages is a must. The focus then turns from obsessing about speaking correctly to being understood and putting your message across. Our weaker students have come to realise that they are, in fact, much better at communicating in English than they had thought, and slowly but surely their confidence rises. Thus, by having the volunteer in the classroom, the students both are “forced” to use a foreign language and at the same time gain new knowledge about other people, countries and their cultures.

The greatest impact on students, however, is not to be found within the English classroom but in other classes. For example, the volunteer helps teachers in art, sports and other lessons. All the while, the communication flows in English, thus affording students the opportunity to use the language in different situations and in non-formal contexts, which in turn prove to be a real fount of knowledge.

### **Volunteers at our school**

In preparation for the arrival of our volunteer, the whole school lives and breathes the experience. All students from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade participate in decorating the school in the colours of the new volunteer’s country, making information sheets for the volunteer, translating signs and school rules, and so forth.

We do our best to incorporate our volunteer in as many different aspects of school life as possible.

We find that with the younger students, arts and sports lessons are the most appropriate settings for engagement with the volunteers. During art lessons, for example, the volunteer helps prepare the materials, gives ideas on topics they could work on and helps students dur-

ing their work. As the communication flows in English, students also learn new words and expressions.

In sports, the volunteer can again help prepare the materials for the lesson and do tasks based on their previous knowledge and interests. Our volunteers usually prepare a lesson about folk dances from their country and the students do the same for the volunteer. In this way both the students and the volunteer learn a lot about each other’s culture, finding both differences and similarities.

When it comes to older students, we have regular project-based after-school activities where the volunteer and the students learn how to cook certain dishes, make posters about preserving the environment and so on. The volunteer also has an after-school lesson with students who are less confident about using English, where they simply talk about different topics or prepare for oral exams. With the students who are more comfortable with English, the volunteer helps in preparing various presentations or organises other activities (games, drama, etc.).

For those interested, the volunteer also holds lessons in his or her mother tongue. For example we’ve had French lessons for both students and teachers who were interested in learning French from our French volunteers.

Very often we include our volunteer in out-of-school activities, whether it be excursions or out-of-school classes, which include a week of skiing and a week on exploring different ecosystems, with both younger and older students. Within the scope of these activities, the role of the volunteer is to interact with the students – playing board games, helping out in outdoor activities, singing songs or playing instruments and other activities the volunteer feels confident in.

During holidays and festivals which are important both in Slovenia and in the volunteer’s home country, the volunteer prepares lessons on the customs and traditions pertaining to them, and then he or she and the students try to find similarities between the two countries. By delivering lessons and participating in preparing lessons about different cultural aspects, the students learn to better

accept other cultures and learn about the differences and similarities between them. So far, we have explored the cultures of Ireland, Spain, the US, France, Hungary and Poland. Our cultural exploration with the volunteers takes place not only within the school, but also in our local community, as the volunteers help in preparing and running cultural events.

### **How to host a volunteer?**

As this is Erasmus+, in order to become eligible to host a European volunteer, the school first needs to apply for accreditation, in which you have to describe the school and staff, how the volunteer would benefit the local community and what the volunteer would learn through the experience of volunteering at the school, where the volunteer would live, etc.

When applying to host a volunteer, a school or youth centre needs to prepare a project that details the roles of both school and volunteer. This project needs to be accepted by the National Agency and is then uploaded to a database which volunteers from other European countries access to find a volunteer project they’d like to apply to. To make things easier in this regard, the schools in our community work with a local youth centre that handles most of the paperwork and takes care of the volunteers during the weekends and school holidays.

After all the paperwork is done, the school just needs to choose a volunteer from the applications they receive and prepare for his or her arrival.

More information on the Erasmus+ Youth in Action initiative and volunteers can be found at:

**MOVIT – mladi v akciji**

<http://www.movit.si/erasmus-mladi-v-akciji/>



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION: ERASMUS + VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**

[https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/individuals/young-people/european-voluntary-service\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/opportunities/individuals/young-people/european-voluntary-service_en)



# Students' practical work and vocational training in the 1970s and 80s school reform – Keeping in touch with reality, knowledge and skills for a quality life and the world of work

by **Mirjana Došen**, teacher advisor (retd.), Karlovac, Croatia



**Mirjana Došen, teacher advisor (retd.), owes a debt of gratitude to her Alma Maters the Universities of Zagreb and Bristol. She worked for 43 years as a teacher and teacher trainer. In cooperation with a number**

**of institutions, Mirjana also worked as a translator/interpreter. Her articles for HUPE, IATEFL and other printed and e-publications deal not only with various ELT-related topics but also with the history of education; with her colleagues she also organised lectures about young people's safety on the net. Now retired, she has been engaged in local history and community empowerment projects, as a result of which she was awarded the Karlovac Prize in 2010.**

**Acknowledgement and gratitude are due to Gimnazija Karlovac's (and my) former pupils Goranka Šubašić-Muharemaj, Dragana Bolješić-Knežević and Mirjana Podvorac. Now, as successful professionals, they have kindly agreed to share their invaluable experiences and insights with us, shedding light on their first contacts with the realities of the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century world of work.**



## A little bit older, a whole lot wiser...

**Goranka**, a foreign language teachers' aide (final exam 1979), points out the imagination, skills and the desire invested to engage our students and prepare them for their future profession. Her experience is that the programme "helped us grasp the practical aspect of teaching both elementary and secondary school classes". She feels that the engaging teaching methods and their little foray into the real world were scary and fun at the same time.

**Mirjana**, business correspondent/translator/interpreter (graduated 1986), also wrote in favour of timely inclusion of young people into their future world of work. According to her, this offers skills for life and insight into the structure and various forms and models of official and business communication and elements and phases of doing business, and that by comparing cultures (learning about others, raising our awareness of differences and similarities), we also learn more about ourselves. Mirjana considers maintaining business contacts on a professional level of mutual respect of the utmost importance. I strongly agree with her statement that this sort of approach helps people fill in the gaps that existed even in our own language. And Mirjana also pointed out the importance of promoting acceptable forms of behaviour and communication everywhere, particularly in public space.

**Dragana**, business correspondent/translator/interpreter (graduated 1984), finds work placement for students invaluable, not only in the final grades but also in the early stages of secondary education. She says that observing in production, in her case at Karlovac's Josip Kraš shoe and footwear factory, was an eye-opening experience for her generation of young people. Dragana is still appreciative of the friendly shoemakers' skill and dedication and of the sound advice they spontaneously gave to our students.

Later on, Dragana was given an opportunity to work at the Korana Hotel as a receptionist and gained insight, as she says, into something she could really do – the client service part of the operation, including administrative tasks that required accuracy and attention to detail.

Dragana testifies that these experiences played a major role in her personal and professional development at school and later in life. That makes her a strong supporter of hands-on learning and schooling based on relevant skills for life and workplace alike. It is her opinion that schools have to make an endeavour to bridge the gap between education and workplace requirements while students are still preparing to enter the world of work and, most importantly, while they are deciding on their future paths in that world.

### Complex preparations for fundamental changes of contents and methods

Profession-oriented curricula made it possible for all secondary school graduates to enter the job market (the world of what was then called "associated labour"). For teachers this meant more meaningful lifelong education, especially in the field of business correspondence and translation/interpreting, and cooperation with various institutions and enterprises. Prior to the reform work on in-service training of secondary school teachers was made more complex and, at the same time, intensified: there were seminars, meetings at individual schools and at the city and municipality levels, and open-door days at Zagreb's leading schools including theoretical lectures and very interesting demonstration classes. Back in the early 1970s

there was also trial project work to be dealt with, for example The Liverpool & the Merseyside Project organised by the Ministry of Education and their advisors, based on authentic work material. On the one hand this was demanding and time-consuming, on the other truly motivating and educational for both the teachers and the pupils involved (in those days they were still called "pupils" at that stage of their education). The Ministry of Education and the PPS (the Education and Pedagogical Services) were obviously doing their best to prepare the ground for the reform ahead.

There was a wide variety of topics dealt with at the aforementioned events: student evaluation in the context of the new vocationally streamlined (directional) education system, motivation, error analysis, learning strategies, individualis-

ation and organisation of the learning/acquisition process, curricula for individualised instruction, listening comprehension, the audio-visual dimension in L2 learning and teaching, creative techniques and forms of work, preparing authentic teaching materials, the cognitive approach, student self-management and the foreign language classroom, group work (as preparation for democratic teamwork, shared responsibilities, co-competition and brainstorming in adult life), organisation and strategy of a permanent group system, and extra-curricular activities.

In the course of these lifelong education events and activities, both our Croatian advisors and foreign professionals shared their expertise with us. Teachers were encouraged to share and evaluate each other's experiences. The meetings

were well attended as different foreign languages, Latin included, were a part of the in-service training scheme. We were also provided with the Ministry-approved curricula and other official documents pertaining to the teaching of the new subjects such as business correspondence and the theory of translation/interpreting. The Ministry-approved curricula brought cooperation not only with the PPS, but also with the relevant faculties and departments and the institutions and enterprises the young people were being trained for.

As one of the former students, Goranka, points out, owing to the supportive atmosphere, sometimes we were able "to go above and beyond the required curricula".

### Glitches, advantages and disadvantages

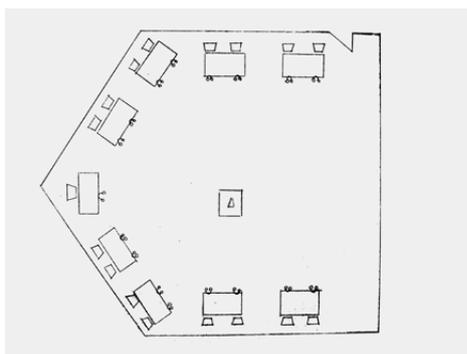
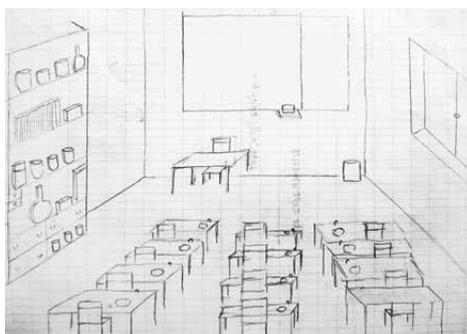
Still, in spite of some good plans and all good intentions, once the new organisational scheme had been put in place, there were problems as the huge secondary school educational centres that were created certainly proved to be a serious drawback. The schools that were merged often had very little in common, which caused at least misunderstandings and some occasional friction among their staff and between staff and students and the local community. Such big institutions lacked the feeling of togetherness

which frequently helps in the pedagogical approach to young people on the one hand and the andragogical approach to adult learners and the staff themselves on the other. Needless to say, students' emotional well-being and well-balanced intellectual development go hand in hand. Also, it needs to be pointed out that although some of the professions offered were quite interesting, many of the curricula proposed were a little one-sided – to say the least. People seem to tend to go from one extreme in another in the sensitive area of education. In terms of foreign languages, the number of periods one got to teach was either too small or too big, the contents sometimes too narrow or too vague. To begin with there were hardly any textbooks worth mentioning (or they appeared on the market irregularly), and obviously in those days textbook writers and publishers were not as well informed about nor as involved in the reform as the teachers themselves. But that said, there were some good teaching materials on the market, e.g. the business correspondence worksheet folders. Present-day hyper-production of teaching materials came only after the end of the reform, i.e. at a time when the number of periods one has to teach dropped significantly (and is therefore again so low), so the abundance and wealth of teaching materials is partly wasted on both the stu-

dent and the teacher. Not to mention the time-consuming process of choosing the "right" kind of textbook and the expense as well as the effort of getting adjusted that goes with the fact that textbooks are regularly changed in four-year intervals.

The English language-related subjects taught were, in addition to general English, business correspondence and the theory and technique of translation/interpreting with the aim of preparing our future professionals for the global market, since our companies had business ties with companies practically all over the world, from what were at the Practical work, supervised by our teachers in cooperation with professionals in various institutions and enterprises, was complementary with the subject-matter taught at school and therefore invaluable: it took place at the school itself (for teachers' assistants/aides), at primary schools and kindergartens, and in libraries, factories, insurance and travel agencies, hotels, and transport firms for business correspondents. It was a good merger of two complementary realities – the realities of the classroom and the realities of the world of responsibility and work. One could also simply say this was the best vocational guidance or supplement to vocational guidance imaginable. Actions speak louder than words! Thus the pupils were given an opportunity to get to know the school

S A D R Z A J	
	Strana
UVOD.....	1
1. INOKORESPONDENT - za poslove komunikacije s inozemstvom, IV stupnja stručne spreme.....	2
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SPECIALIZED CLASSROOM OF MY FAVOURITE SUBJECT

My favourite subject is English. ☺ Imagine that classroom on this way: besides classroom which we have now, it is including some additions. Each desk is equipped with readers, and pupils are listening lectures from the tape recorder. That classroom must have some of projectors to project pictures and photos. Master's desk is on the increase in the corner and desks of pupils are situated in the middle of classroom in semicircle. In the background, behind a desk there are projectors and book-cases. In front of the wall there are white lines and black-board.

system better, learn about the structure of a variety of enterprises, enhance their problem-solving and communication skills, especially their negotiating skills, gain a feeling of responsibility and accountability, and boost their perseverance – in short, after facing the realities of childhood and school, to face a new set of real-world challenges.

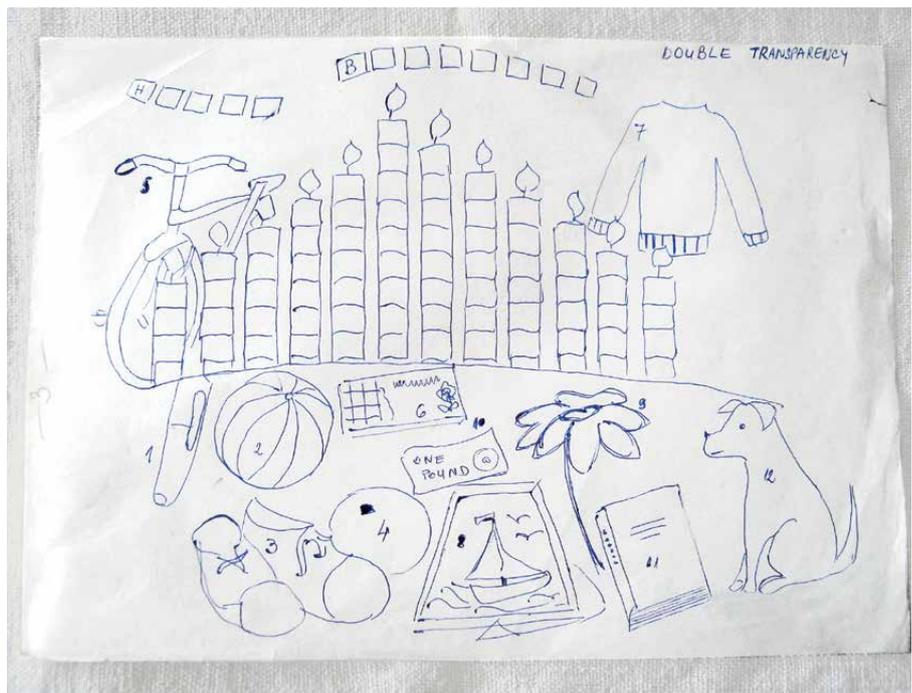
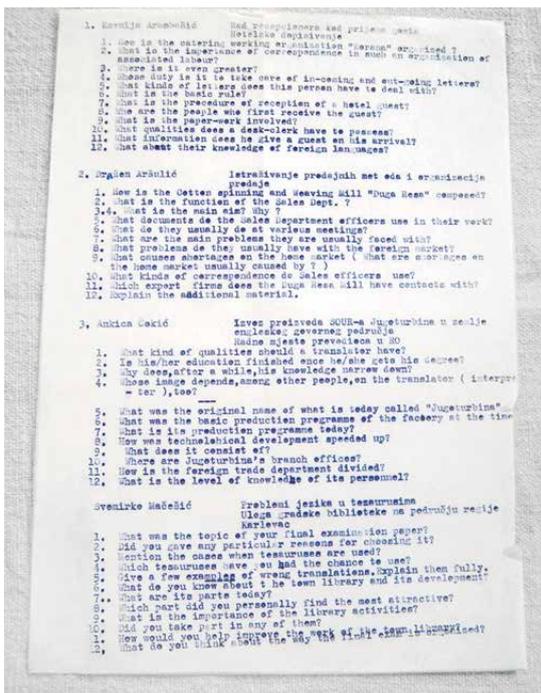
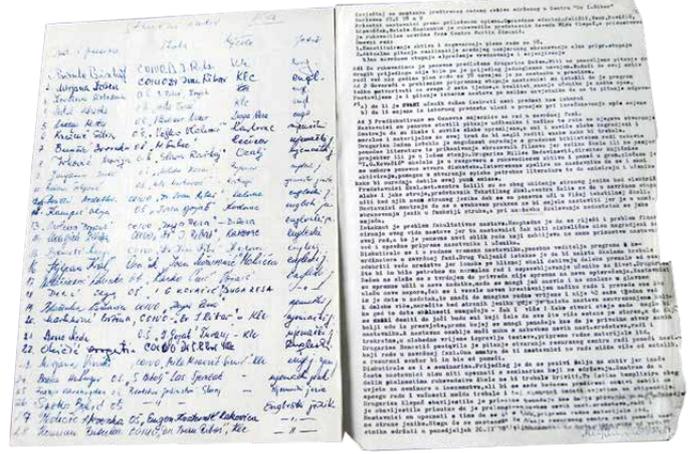
In the case of teachers' assistants', business and translators'/interpreters' classes, a lot of vocational training was centred around foreign language teaching/learning. The teachers' assistants were given an opportunity to study and produce teaching aids such as posters, transparencies, including double ones providing instant feedback and/or confirmation about, for example, modern engineering materials, crossword puzzles, and authentic teaching materials under the supervision of qualified and

experienced teachers and relate them to the curriculum and the textbook. The business students and translators/interpreters, meanwhile, were introduced to another kind of world, the world of work, business and money. Both groups had to keep a vocational work diary dealing with this pre-service/pre-university work. Their final exams were, as a result, focused directly on work at school or on enterprise-related topics.

### Dignity of education and work among true values

Of course, this required considerable preparation on the part of both the teachers and the students themselves, as well as the good will of the people involved in various places outside the school. The reward was that it was challenging and interesting so, no matter

how demanding it was, it was good – in some instances even excellent – as a kind of very meaningful experiential learning, training and, to point it out once again, vocational guidance for the student and additional creative in-service training as well as lifelong education for the teachers involved. The reform remains a meaningful and worthwhile long-term investment into the future, combined with a kind of quality assurance and quality control at all levels that contributes to the dignity of each and every profession and with it to the dignity and value of education. "The current efforts and challenges of all parties involved in the kick-off of the new school reform have yet again brought to mind the 1970s and 80s school reform with all its ups and downs... Are we able to learn from the experience?" Mirjana asks. For all our sakes it is essential that we do, so here is our little contribution!



# Using songs with young language learners

by Janja Androić



**Janja Androić is an English teacher at I. Osnovna šola Rogaška Slatina. She has been teaching 6–15 year old pupils for 11 years. She has specialised in teaching English to young pupils.**

**Apart from teaching English to young learners, she is also interested in implementing ICT, especially tablets, in English language teaching. She has attended several courses on the use of tablets in the classroom and also actively participated in IATEFL Slovenia and Sirikt conferences in the last year.**

Language teachers, especially those teaching young learners, often use songs in the classroom because they are fun and motivating and children love them.

What are the advantages of using songs in teaching young learners?

- they function as first steps in speaking as they offer opportunities for practising sounds, rhythm and intonation in the safety of the group,
- they are repetitive,
- they are fun and motivating for children,
- children enjoy songs and the positive feelings and attitudes created in the language classroom transfer to the learning experience as a whole,
- they allow language to be reinforced in a natural context,
- they build confidence in young learners (even shy pupils sing along),
- they help create a safe atmosphere in the classroom,

- they enable access to authentic language input and exposure to pronunciation, stress and intonation patterns, and
- they can help young learners memorise vocabulary, grammar and chunks of language.

Despite all the advantages, however, some teachers don't use songs in teaching because:

- they do not regard music as sufficiently serious for the classroom and are not able to conduct lessons using songs appropriately,
- music can disturb other learners in other classrooms,
- teachers can lose control of learners very easily,
- the vocabulary may not be suitable,
- expressions may be different to the rules of grammar being taught and this can be misleading, resulting in mistakes,
- teachers do not know how to develop material successfully, and/or
- a teacher may not enjoy singing or teaching with music.

If the use of song is meaningful and carefully planned, however, some of the above obstacles can be overcome. Using songs is not just about playing YouTube and singing: teachers should find songs with appropriate vocabulary or use just one part of the song if the rest is not appropriate. They should prepare a lesson plan and with sufficient guidance the pupils will probably not lose control. Songs can be used to develop all four language skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. We tend to use songs to create a more relaxed and motivating environment and at the same time teach vocabulary. However, we should bear in mind that songs can also be used to teach and reinforce various grammar points too.

"Do you like Broccoli Ice Cream?" (link below) is a great song for teaching yes/no questions, for example. We can also use songs to develop listening skills (listening for gist or specific information), to develop speaking skills and pronunciation (pupils practise the language in a safe environment through repetition), to practise reading and writing, and much more.

## HOW?

Songs should be presented in three stages: pre-listening, while-listening and follow-up, each stage consisting of different activities. In the pre-listening stage, teachers introduce the topic, elicit some vocabulary and provide some input, while pupils can predict or guess vocabulary, guess the missing words in a gapped song, or order jumbled lines. In the while-listening stage, pupils might perform actions, sing along, point to words or pictures, clap the rhythm, put pictures in the correct order, shout "stop" when they hear a certain word, sing different verses in groups, and so forth. In the follow-up stage, pupils might sing, use the vocabulary, change the words, add new vocabulary, illustrate the song or role-play.

The three stages can be illustrated using the song "If you're happy" (link below). In the pre-listening stage, the teacher pre-teaches vocabulary (feelings) using a magic box, pantomime and flashcards. The teacher puts emoticon balls in the magic box and the pupils first guess what's in there. Then the pupils draw emoticons one by one and the teacher (or a pupil) says the word depicted, which the pupils then repeat. Another game to pre-teach the vocabulary is pantomime. Here a pupil draws a picture and mimes the action and other pupils guess the word.



**Magic box**

In the while-listening stage, pupils listen to the song on YouTube and learn the lyrics. In the first listening they get familiar with the song. The teacher can elicit words they heard or put up flashcards and get the pupils to point to what they heard. They may need to listen to the song several times to check understanding. In the second or third listening pupils might mime the actions, which is something they love. The teacher can then mute the sound and play the video again and the pupils have to say and mime the words.

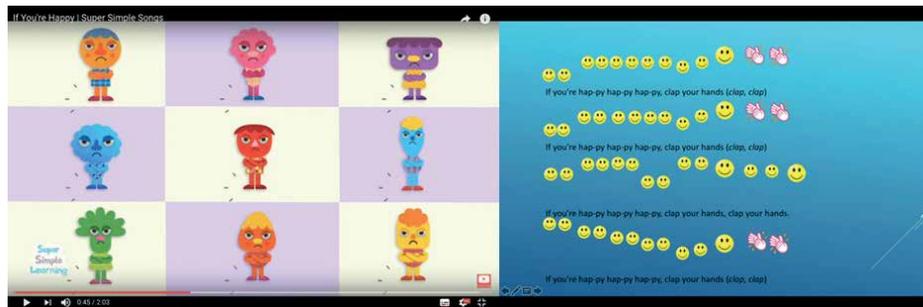


**Flashcards**

In the follow-up stage, pupils practise the vocabulary. They might throw a die and sing about a feeling which is shown. The teacher encourages them to add vocabulary and to change the lyrics. They present the pupils with a die with emoticons drawn on it (happy, sleepy, angry, scared, hungry and sad – the last two don't appear in the song). A pupil throws the die and they sing the appropriate line. When they throw hungry or sad, the teacher encourages them to make up a sentence about that, for example "If you're hungry, hungry, hungry, eat a sandwich."



**Pantomime**



My pupils love it when I teach through songs, probably because they feel they are not really learning but having fun. Among their favourites are "If you're happy" (Super Simple Songs), "I Am the Music Man" (The Learning Station), "Move and Freeze" (The Learning Station) and "Let's Go to the Zoo" (Super Simple Songs) (links below).



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## Songs

- Do You Like Broccoli Ice Cream? <https://youtu.be/frN3nvIHUK>
- If You're Happy <https://youtu.be/l4WNRvVjiTw>
- I am the Music Man <https://youtu.be/22kqja2ibVU>
- Move and Freeze <https://youtu.be/388Q44ReOWE>
- Let's Go To The Zoo <https://youtu.be/OwRmivbNgQk>

Our plenary speakers at the 26<sup>th</sup> International IATEFL Slovenia Conference 2019 #empowerED**MOJCA BELAK, Pilgrims**

During the summer Mojca is a Pilgrims trainer specialising in creativity in language teaching as well as in Choice Theory. For the rest of the year she is a lecturer at the Department of English, University of Ljubljana. Working with a lot of dedicated future teachers made it possible for her to bring many of her students to IATEFL Slovenia. She is a dedicated member of 'the big IATEFL', where she is Chair of Membership and Marketing Committee. Besides in Slovenia, she has had talks, workshops and seminars in the UK, Austria, Croatia, France, Lithuania, Portugal and Serbia. She likes dancing, distance running and trees.

**LYNDA STEYNE**

Lynda (Lyn) Steyne is a South African born, American passport holder who's lived in Bratislava, Slovakia, longer than anywhere else. She's been an English language teacher for going on 30 years, teaching students aged nine and up in public primary and secondary schools, as well as at university. She's served as deputy head of a secondary school, bilingual programme coordinator, and teacher trainer/mentor of incoming English teachers. Lyn has taught academic writing, research skills, and English at both the university and secondary school level, as well as short courses for Slovak journalists. She's the current (and founding) chair of the Slovak Chamber of English Language Teachers (SCELT).

**SOPHIA MAVRIDI**

Sophia Mavridi is an EdTech & EAP lecturer, teacher trainer and researcher. She is currently teaching in UK higher education as well as providing in-service training for institutions and publishers around Europe. She is the IATEFL Learning Technologies SIG co-ordinator and her research interests lie in the increasingly important role of digital & media literacies in language learning.

**MAUREEN MCGARVEY**

Maureen McGarvey has been working in ELT as a teacher, teacher trainer, manager and online trainer for over 25 years. She is Programme Manager eLearning at IH London. She runs a range of blended, face to face, and online training programmes for academic managers and teachers. She wrote the management module for the MSc in TESOL offered by Aston University and tutored this module for several years. She has also tutored on the management module for the MA in TESOL offered by Westminster University. She is Chair of the IATEFL Scholarship Committee.

**DOROTHY ZEMACH**

Dorothy Zemach is an author, editor, teacher, and teacher trainer in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). She taught English, French, and Japanese for over 20 years in Asia, Africa, and the US. She currently writes and edits English language teaching materials and textbooks, and conduct teacher training workshops. Her areas of specialty and interest include teaching writing, teaching reading, business English, academic English, testing, and humor. She is a frequent plenary speaker at international conferences, and a regular blogger for Teacher Talk at Azar Grammar.

# They Call This (C)rap!

by Hazelynn Anak Rimbar



**Hazelynn has been a teacher and lecturer at several public and private institutions, including University Technology of MARA and Swinburne**

**University of Technology, Sarawak. She has also worked as an advisor and mentor on the National Education Transformation in Malaysia. She currently heads the English Language and STEM Education Department at the Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Research of Sarawak, Malaysia.**

Once upon a time there was a little girl who had a lisp. Despite her good command of the English language, she was constantly laughed at because of her pronunciation. So she started to practise her speech by singing along to Eminem and Linkin' Park, and soon her speech improved and the lisp disappeared.

The little girl was me.

Similarly, Ed Sheeran, as reported in *The Times* (UK) in 2017, revealed how he cured his childhood stammer by learning "rude stuff" from an album by Eminem: "And when you're nine, and someone is saying rude stuff, you wanna learn it, and he raps at such a fast pace that my stammer would go. And weirdly enough, that was the speech therapy that cured me."

Does this mean that rap has a magical power that can help children with speech problems? Maybe so, but there is more to it than simple magic. This article will look at how rap can be used in the language classroom as a means to improve EFL learners' pronunciation and fluency. I will argue that this misunderstood genre (yes, some even call it "crap" – pardon my French), often associated with vulgarity and gangster culture, can actually be a useful pedagogical tool in the classroom.

## What is Rap?

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2016), "rap" means to utter sharply or suddenly. Rap music is a combination of rhyming and poetry to a beat. In fact, the word is an acronym for **rhythm and poetry**.

Music and chanting have been long used for educational purposes, and research has provided ample evidence that music:

- creates a learning environment that lowers the affective filter;
- elevates student interest;

- provides an ideal way to teach prosody, the rhythm, pitch and tone of a language; and
- creates a bridge between generations and breaks down possible teacher–student role barriers.

Learning English through music has been proven to improve language proficiency. When you learn English songs, you tend to repeat them again and again, because practice is enjoyable. This in turn contributes to learning English instinctively. Krashen's Input Hypothesis states that humans acquire a language by receiving comprehensible input. Rap – like other music genres – use a collection of set phrases which can be learned and memorised by learners. It is a similar process to first language acquisition, when children learn phrases and use them as one-word expressions (Miller, 1956). The collection of authentic language texts are stored in an individual's network of schemata and will be recalled when needed.

## But Why Rap?

The main advantage of rap is that you do not need to know how to sing: you do not need to have a trained voice in order to do rap! Rapping uses difference in pitch and flow and applies rhythm and rhyme to words that are spoken at different speeds. It is thus the genre closest to normal human speech.

According to Weinstein (2006), rap is known for being a form that is characterised by its lack of elevated language and for its ability to communicate in a deeply social manner. But despite Weinstein's claim about the lack of elevated language in rap, it is interesting to note that Eminem, the famous American rapper, reads the dictionary every day to add to his language repertoire. Indeed CNN Entertainment reported in 2015 that Eminem uses the biggest vocabulary in contemporary music. The study compared the vocabulary size of 93 best-selling artists

across 25 different music genres. Eminem topped the list with 8,818 unique words used, followed by Jay-Z with 6,899, the late Tupac Shakur with 6,569 and Kanye West with 5,069. Bob Dylan – a Noble Laureate, no less – came in only fifth with 4,883. It is interesting to note that the top four are all rappers, which, the study notes, is as expected because of the genre’s heavy emphasis on lyrics.

Can this also be true in education, i.e. might students who use rap in their learning have a larger vocabulary than their peers? We do not know that for sure. Yet Weinstein (2006) documented cases of underperforming students who had improved their literacy skills when rap was introduced as a literacy tool for teaching and learning.

### Focus on Fluency

Pronunciation is one of the most difficult aspects to master when it comes to learning a foreign language. Because people use everything from their throats to their noses when speaking, people who have different facial features produces different sounds and have different voices (Linguistics Society of America, n.d.). The vocal tract anatomy has a huge influence on how a particular culture or language form their phonetic system and speech production (Dediu, Janssen, & Moisik, 2017). Each language has a different phonetic system and sounds on which that language is built. Some sounds are similar to each other in different languages, while others do not exist in other languages. Japanese, for example, often use /r/ and /l/ interchangeably, because both sounds are considered liquid phonemes in the language. Goto (1971) reports that Japanese who learned English as adults have difficulty perceiving the acoustic difference between /r/ and /l/. Despite many years of living in America, many Japanese still have difficulty producing the two sounds distinctly.

Taking this into consideration, we move to the most important organ for speaking: the tongue. Just as leg muscles need to be exercised for one to run faster, the tongue needs to be exercised in order to be more flexible and able to produce certain sounds in rapid succession. [insert figure 2]

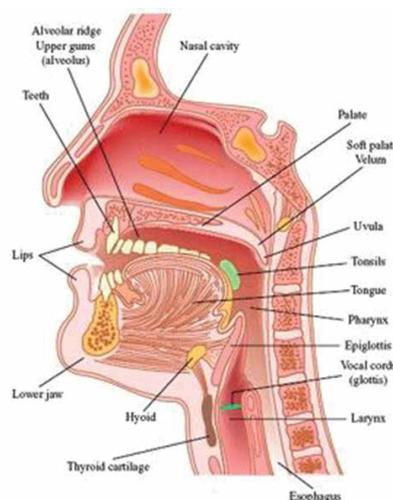
Tongue twisters, sentences that repeat similar sound patterns, are an excellent vehicle for this, because trying to say them aloud forces you to pay attention to how you’re speaking. To say a tongue twister properly, you have to concentrate on what you’re saying and fully enunciate each word and syllable – otherwise your words are going to get all twisted together into a garbled mishmash that means nothing.

Try this tongue twister, for example: “She sells seashells on the seashore”

Notice how, as you do it faster, it takes a lot more effort to make sure your pronunciation and enunciation are correct.

Different tongue twisters focus on the production of different sounds. For example, “She sells seashells on the seashore” emphasises the /sh/ and /s/ sounds, whereas “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers” works on the /p/ sound and the rapid change to /k/. While /p/ is a bilabial plosive, produced at the front of the oral cavity, /k/ is a velar sound, produced when the back of the tongue touches the soft palate or velum. The rapid back and forth between these different places of articulation makes this tongue twister more difficult than it looks.

The same principles apply when one is rapping. The speed with which the words are articulated makes rapping difficult. However, practice does help improve changing the position of the tongue and moving from one sound to another swiftly. You might also look at it like physical exercise: when you go jog-



ging, you need to warm up your muscles. Similarly, by practising and “warming up” your speech organs, you gain better control of mouth and lip movements. Also you create muscle memory, which is immensely helpful for later fluency.

### Rapping

I have shown how rap helps to strengthen the muscles necessary for proper speech as you practise the correct placement of your tongue, lips and teeth. However, we should also not overlook the poetry element in rap. Using rap can help show how different sounds can be used to create a particular effect, such as rhyme, but in a more fun and more meaningful activity than a traditional literature lesson.

You might have your students try this simple activity

First, go to the YouTube link [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOuJhk9\\_16s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JOuJhk9_16s)

1. Play the song and get the students to listen to it individually.
2. Play it again and encourage them to sing along to it individually.
3. In pairs, get them to take turns rapping different stanza, without the song playing. Here also get them to correct each other’s pronunciation.
4. Play the song again and get the whole class to sing together.

### “Just the Two of Us”

by Will Smith

**From the first time the doctor placed you in my arms  
I knew I’d meet death before  
I’d let you meet harm  
Although questions arose in my mind, would I be man enough?  
Against wrong, choose right  
and be standin’ up.**

It will take a while, but once your students are used to the lyrics, they’ll follow the tempo better. Once they’ve mastered this, you can try another rap song with a faster rhythm. You might have your students try this song, for example:

### **"In the End"**

by Linkin' Park

**It starts with one thing  
I don't know why  
It doesn't even matter  
how hard you try  
Keep that in mind  
I designed this rhyme  
To explain in due time**

Your students will find that their tongues are loosening up after these exercises. And by gradually increasing the tempo of the songs, your students will struggle less when trying to produce the sounds accurately, also giving them adequate challenge following Krashen's  $i+1$  (Krashen's Input Hypotheses, where "i" is learner's interlanguage and "+1" is the next stage of language acquisition.)

#### **Challenges with Rap**

Rap has a bad reputation among educators for its sometimes explicit lyrics and unorthodox content. However, we should admit that in the age of the internet, there is no escape from explicit words. As educators, it is our duty to make sure our children understand the implication of using such words. Therefore I strongly believe that instead of avoiding them, explicit lyrics and content should be dealt with too. For older (and higher level) students, "taboo"

words, their meanings and use, and the emotions and contexts that may allow such use need to be discussed. Simply banning these from the language classroom does not make them disappear from everyday use in the outside world. Therefore making the students aware of purpose, audience, context and culture (PACC) offers them choices and agency, rather than mechanical language use. If you do not believe me, watch the first few minutes of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994) and think about the effect the director wanted to create with that scene.

Fun is an important element of successful learning. One example of a fun activity that can be done in the classroom is "guess the parts of speech". Here students are asked to identify explicit words and what parts of speech they belong to. They need to then replace the words with another word from the same word class. It seems easy, but to find the right word, with the same number of syllables, and sometimes with the same sound, is often not, believe me!

There are many activities with which teachers can use rap songs not just to promote oral fluency, but also to get students to learn poetry in a fun and motivating way. One poem I love using is *If*, by Rudyard Kipling. I put it side by side with Will Smith's *Just the Two of Us* rap lyrics and get students to compare and discuss their theme. They will find that both rap song and poem are written

by a father to his son. They might also make comparisons between the different pieces of advice the fathers give in two completely different eras. The students then can decide which advice sounds more sound and meaningful.

So, "crap"? I think not. Rap will get you to work on your pronunciation and later on fluency and score you some extra points for cool! Rap, if anything, puts the C for cool in 'Crap'!

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# How to Be a Great Teacher from A to Z

by Nataša Intihar Klančar

**Let me ask you a question to start with: "Is there a guide that would help us teachers to evolve and be really efficient and successful without going through too much stress and disappointment?" Well personally I'm afraid there isn't one. It would be great, though, to have some sort of a checklist to keep us on track, motivated and strong at all times, giving us support and energy to deal with all sorts of challenges we may face in and out of the classroom.**

I've been teaching English at a primary school for almost 20 years and over that time have come across certain characteristics that one seems to find time and time again in great teachers who inspire and lead their students to success and independence. My personal experience has helped me a lot, so I prepared a list of some of these characteristics (feel free to add some more, by the way). I'm sure you'll be able to relate on many levels.

**A:** I believe every teacher should be **actively** involved in the teaching process and take part in different teaching techniques and methods, trying out new things in order to achieve maximum success. They should be able to **adapt** to various situations in the classroom and try many **approaches** that help them to be an inspiration to their students.

**B:** Being **busy** is definitely one of the foremost characteristics of our job. A teacher never stops or has time to relax in the classroom, as we have to be ready for all sorts of twists and turns that may occur. Try to do your **best** no matter what and the students will follow.

**C:** Teachers should promote students' **creative** aspect and **care** for different needs and levels. It does not hurt if one possesses a good sense of humour or

even uses one's acting skills in class: being a **comedian** every now and then is a positive trait that rarely loses its charm. Every once in a while show the students your inner child – smile, relax be **child-ish** and allow yourself to laugh out loud. Embrace the sense of fullness, of intrinsic aliveness, of joy in being. Treasure the value of just being yourself.

**D:** **Dedication** is our middle name, isn't it? Always having our students and lessons in mind, **determined** to offer the class the best we can. This is the way to go. Being **dynamic** and ready for the new challenges we face in our job helps us to be efficient and successful.

**E:** Students are introduced to the power of kindness through kind words and acts, thus supporting and **encouraging** our students is so important. The **energy** and **enthusiasm** we share are both contagious and effective and they go a long way.

**F:** As educators we should always be **flexible**, allowing ourselves to sometimes adapt the standards-based content to slightly change the topics and follow what works best in class without worrying we might lose some precious time. Stimulating the students' interest by following their stories helps them to feel good about themselves, learn more efficiently and enjoy the process itself while actually being relevant and a way of having **fun** in class. What more could you wish for?

**G:** I guess every teacher experiences ups and downs during their careers. At one point we may feel we have all the power and the knowledge, whereas there are times we feel powerless and exhausted. We should therefore allow ourselves to **grow**, accept new concepts, step out of our comfort zone occasional-

ly, go cross-curricular, and a sense of achievement and pride will follow.

**H:** Every teacher should be prepared to work hard. There's no rest and relaxation during our lessons, is there? **Hardworking** teachers put a lot of effort into lesson planning and preparing, marking, and giving extra time to those students who need it. It's a constant challenge to balance all the requirements and obligations. Try adding a bit of **humour** and everything will be much easier.

**I:** Set a good example, be a role model and an **inspiration** to the youngsters you teach every day. They look up to you (despite not always showing you this) and appreciate your standpoint, so use your **intuition** to give and share the best you have and are. Talk to the children and show a genuine **interest** in them – you will reap the rewards.

**J:** Both teaching and learning should not be all serious and boring, so make sure your class is also **joyful** and fun. It is a proven fact that students learn more efficiently in a relaxed atmosphere – in a place they feel accepted and important. Make every student count and be a part of a greater scheme.

**K:** Share your **knowledge** and experiences and do not feel limited by the coursebook materials you use in class. Mix and match the serious and the difficult on the one hand with the fun and the familiar on the other. Teach **kindness** and you will be rewarded with happy children who enjoy greater peer-acceptance and feel optimistic and self-worthy.

**L:** Keep in mind that you are not only a teacher but also a **learner**. Learning is an ever-present process and helps us to expand our horizons and to see things

from another perspective. In order to achieve this, make sure you are an attentive **listener**, which means being flexible and responsive.

**M**: **Mentoring** youths is a challenging task, and every teacher is on a mission carrying it out. It's done more easily by using your **motivating** skills, combined with the **multi-tasking** abilities that each teacher possesses. In this way you fill many roles and make reaching and accomplishing goals easier.

**N**: Try to stay **non-judgemental**, though of course we're tempted to be otherwise on certain occasions. Keep an open mind and allow various opinions. Maintain a **never-say-die** attitude and be an optimist and this will make your work (and life) easier.

**O**: As a teacher you've no doubt found that being **organised** is a big part of being successful at what you do. It prevents you from feeling overwhelmed and confused and it reduces your stress levels, making room for an **optimistic** view on both teaching and life.

**P**: A great teacher isn't shy of sharing the **passion** for teaching and the subject-matter with their students. They are intensely curious and ready to learn new things. It is with **patience** that they approach new challenges and give their heart and soul to their chosen profession.

**Q**: Maintaining a high level of **quality** of lessons by choosing a wide range of teaching methods and techniques is a process that needs constant adjustment to meet the needs of the students. It is the best **qualified** teachers that can manage that most easily by successfully responding to the ever-changing situations in the classroom.

**R**: A teacher is a **role model** and should as such behave in a highly **responsible** way. They should be **reliable**, just and set a good example to their classes. They should then inspire their students to strive for great things and to develop their potentials to the maximum.

**S**: By showing **support** to our students, we are then more likely to get them to trust us, show more engagement in learning and consequently behave better

in class, resulting in better achievement. **Successful** teachers produce successful students, it could be said.

**T**: By being honest, open, responsible and compassionate, we show our qualities as a **trustworthy** person our students can rely on. Moreover, the central features of trustworthiness play a critical role in developing a moral relationship between the teacher and the students. By providing a climate of safety and respect, learning will follow smoothly.

**U**: In order to be an **understanding** teacher, you have to be able to see things from the students' perspective. Every child needs understanding and a clear structure which enables them to feel secure in order to learn and grow. Don't miss a chance to be **unique** and **unforgettable** – just like your students.

**V**: Teaching is so much more than lessons from the textbook. The **valuable** life lessons that the students learn from the teacher (and school life in general) are sometimes even more important than the curriculum. A teacher's **vigour** can contribute immensely to learning life lessons such as communication skills, the power of negotiation and respect, teamwork practices, emotional intelligence, and time management.

**W**: A good teacher makes a large impact on students by teaching them new skills, new knowledge and new perspectives. It is with **wit** and **wisdom** that these qualities are presented and delivered to the

class, which is then in turn inspired and motivated to pursue their goals and skills.

**X**: Great teachers are confident and they never forget how **X-tra awesome** and fantastic they are – along with their class, of course.

**Y**: It is truly helpful to nurture your brain's capacities by maintaining a **youthful** mind-set which is dynamic, vibrant and curious. Staying **young** at heart and keeping a genuine interest in the students will offer numerous opportunities to grow and evolve.

**Z**: Really good teachers share their enthusiasm, **zest**, excitement and **zeal** for teaching and active learning alike. They pass these qualities on to their students. They are driven by a deep desire to teach and help others – thus teaching is not only a profession but is also a vocation.

To sum up: great teachers are enthusiastic and energetic multi-taskers who learn and evolve together with their students and remain positive and creative in their attitude. They are not afraid to step out of their comfort zone to change the routine and to freshen up their lessons. So don't be afraid to stand out and be one of a kind. Stay true to yourself and keep in mind that a positive attitude brings good results. Use praise genuinely and freely and encourage your students on a regular basis. Don't be afraid to ask for help and to consult your colleagues for bright ideas and solutions. Last but not least, always try to enjoy what you do.



# From Rogaška Slatina to the British English Olympics

by Catherine Earles



**Catherine's path to the beautiful greens of Slovenia was a somewhat long and winding road. Having worked as an exercise physiologist for Britain's elite athletes in her younger years, the arrival of a husband and children saw her**

**retrain to more family-friendly career options - first as a tennis coach in the heart of England and then as a mathematics teacher at local secondary schools. As the family grew to 6 (plus a dog) so came a change in priorities. A few years ago she made the bold decision to pack up her job and move to Slovenia to build a house in the hope that space and time would prevail over the everyday stresses and pressure of life in the UK. Five years on and the house is still an ongoing project, but business has succeeded in the form of a collaboration with a local glass company, who she now assists to drive sales in Europe. Pure Glass specialises in personalised engraved glasses for all occasions, exclusive hand-made jewellery, trophies and environmentally-friendly gifts. Having lived around the world, Catherine can't help but feel that Slovenia seems the perfect place to mix such business with pleasure.**

Since November last year something odd has been happening around the II. OŠ Rogaška Slatina in the peaceful town of Rogaška Slatina. On Saturdays and public holidays, while most kids were fooling around in the snow, or, perhaps more likely these days, hibernating inside with their gaming machines, a handful of young students have been coming into school of their own accord. With lights down low, the small party of students, quietly seated in an otherwise empty dining hall, seemed oddly melancholic without the usual hustle and bustle of school life around them.

There was a strange lull as the students took time to greet me. Granted, it was oh-so-early on a Saturday morning, but they seemed unusually reserved given there were no other teachers around observing their behaviour. As we started to converse I soon recognised what might have been interpreted as a lack of enthusiasm to be in reality a wave of nervousness slowly diffusing through the room. The reason? Both work and play were to be conducted in English that day.

As an UK expat having lived here for a few years, this was a strange environment for even me to adapt to. Living outside of the major Slovene tourist centres, I rarely hear English beyond my own interactions, and still cannot help but turn my head if I hear a passer-by speak my native tongue. Limited Slovene that I have, it was still hard not to automatically reply with the word "hvala" as the day progressed, or translate the odd word as required. I can

only imagine how hard it might be for this group of young adults, aged between 12 and 14, to switch their mindset to 100% English for the day.

The motivation for the seventeen students sat before me was their selection for *Team Crystal*, Rogaška Slatina, who were due to compete in the British English Olympics (BEO) 2018. BEO, organised by Oxford International Education Group, is an English language and academic contest designed for the world's brightest international students, simultaneously offering an authentic cultural programme to 12 to 16 year olds from around the world. 2018 marked the 10th anniversary of the competition, and included more than 2000 students from 139 schools worldwide, the vast majority of them private fee-paying schools and many bilingual institutions. Twenty-three countries were represented with Team Crystal being the sole representatives of Slovenia, and only the second Slovenian group to ever attend the competition, following Osnovna Šola Ivana Cankarja from Vrhnika in 2017.

The training has been tough, especially for the older students who already have more than their fair share of work to do preparing for their graduation from primary school. Their English skills are excellent but the competition places a whole new range of demands on the students, which they are not used to practising in school. The theme of this year's competition was "Out of this World", and there were seven elements to the competition for which they had to specifically prepare:

1. **BEO TED TALK** A science and technology presentation regarding the impact of robots on future commerce and society.
2. **BEO DEBATE 2.0** A debate surrounding the educational challenges facing the world in the modern era.
3. **BEO Country Spotlight** A presentation where each team must represent a given country at a University fair for professors and students of science and technology - Team Crystal were assigned Singapore
4. **BEO Drama Festival** Write and perform an original short play within the "Out of this World" theme.
5. **BEO A Cappella Contest** To write a song in English relating to the theme and perform it A Cappella style.
6. **Improvisation Challenge** An unknown task testing creativity which would only be announced on the day of the event.
7. **Mystery Challenge** A 3hr mystery challenge, announced on the day, to test their creativity and linguistic versatility.

As well as researching the topics and writing the texts for the presentations themselves, workshops were held covering various topics such as non-verbal communication, pronunciation, teamwork, improvisation and public speaking. As something so new for the students here, who typically learn in a different way, this proved to be a challenge for both students and teachers alike, but ultimately led to great developments in the confidence of these youngsters working in a second language.

In addition to the intensive preparations for the competition, the students were further responsible, alongside their friends and family, for a variety of fundraising efforts to allow them to finance the trip. Many local businesses showed generous support with financial and material sponsorship, parents of the team members made contributions and some employees from the school grouped together to make an additional

donation. A charitable concert was arranged at school featuring some of the many talented musicians who were former students of VIZ II. OŠ Rogaška, as well as musical performances from current students and the school choir. The headmistress, Karla Skrinjarič highlighted the goals of the school in fostering and recognising the talents of all students, from all backgrounds, whether musical, academic, sporting or otherwise. The concert was a resounding success with over 1000 people attending. Further fundraising was achieved through the sale of calendars, charity raffles, cookie sales and more to reach their goal and set on their way.

And so it came that on a dull Tuesday afternoon in late March, the Team Crystal students made their way to school for a later than usual start, laden with suitcases, snacks and the red peak caps that had become to show their team status. As they waited for the bus to pull up to the school gates they got their first taste of England - rain! As predicted, there would be plenty more of that to come over the following fortnight. The bus rolled through the grey mist towards Ljubljana, carrying seventeen students and two teachers full of hope, expectation, excitement and nerves.

After all the hard work the students were delighted to finally reach English shores and show what they could do. Their residence for the stay was Ardingly College, a prestigious independent boarding school in the South of England. A colleague of mine noticed a photo of the school building one day and described the place best by his immediate remark: "It looks like something straight out of Harry Potter." Quite a change for a group of pupils from the East of Slovenia, most of whom had ever visited England before.

Over the following two weeks they not only competed as Slovene representatives in the competition, but also enjoyed a full cultural programme to experience what England has to offer. Excursions included a trip to Portsmouth, where they saw HMS Victory at the Royal Historic Dockyard, as well as guided tours of London, Oxford and Brighton. Further extra-curricular

activities such as an international night, a talent show, and a disco added to their evening entertainment.

Throughout the preparation period there had been one clear goal for Team Crystal from the small town of Rogaška Slatina - to do their best and to have a good time. Many feared they would freeze on stage or that the team would come last, but as the hard work increased so did their confidence. They never felt they would be competing for the top prize, but they would hold their heads high and hoped to succeed in the "Fair Play" category at the very least. As nervousness slowly gave way to competence, common goals began to prevail - be prepared, do your best, and enjoy yourself. Their talks went to plan and they were satisfied with their performances. The talent show performance was a success. They excelled themselves in the improvisation category in which they had to write a play about a Renaissance man travelling in time to the modern day. Everything went to plan, with no major hiccups. After 8 days of incessant activity the whole delegation of more than 2,000 students finally gathered to declare which teams had been selected to



progress to the next round of the competition. With no expectation of progressing, it was with great delight and excitement when “*Team Crystal*, VIZ II Rogaška Slatina” was announced as one of the teams to proceed to the semi-final. Even more impressive, *Team Crystal* were nominated as winners of the “People’s Choice Award” and were presented with a plaque for the best debate of the competition. It didn’t take long for the news grapevine to relay the achievement back to Rogaška, and there was a distinct buzz around school for the rest of the day to welcome us into the weekend.

One more round of competition, and another mystery challenge awaited them to see if they could do what they had once imagined impossible and progress to the Grand Final. Following a tremendous effort, this turned out to be just the smallest step too far as they missed out by the narrowest of margins to make the final four teams left from Ardingly College.

The official winner of BEO 2018 was Instituto Moderno Americano from Mexico, but back in the small town of Rogaška Slatina the students of *Team Crystal* are the real winners - young local heroes welcomed home by proud parents, teachers and friends. They have worked hard, listened, learned and blossomed as a result of this challenge, and the teaching staff of VIZ II. OŠ are deservedly very proud of their progression. They have undoubtedly had the experience of a lifetime.

**“It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end.”**

*Ernest Hemingway*

**To see more pictures and videos of the students in action, please visit their facebook page: <https://bit.ly/2GQJmkw>**

This article was previously published on Total Slovenia News website on 30 May 2018 and is reprinted with the kind permission of the author.

Teacher Thoughts opinion column

# My Friend the Calculator

by **Lea Koler**

**I have a calculator. He sits in my phone, snug as the proverbial bug in a rug, waiting for the bouts of activity I bestow upon him at regular intervals.**

Every month, he calculates the hours of extracurricular activities, substitution lessons and other work I write down neatly in my report for our third pillar. Unfortunately he does not calculate the hours I have to spend planning my lessons. Other calculators did that instead of him and came up with 33 hours per week. He disagrees, but he is a lowly, unimportant calculator and they are big, important calculators with a lot of gravitas and fancy jobs. Such is life.

Every two months he calculates the marks of my students’ tests, deciding the fate of individuals, judging and weighing their knowledge. Unfortunately, he does not calculate the hours a particular student invested to get a well-deserved two, nor can he calculate the hours another particular student spent gaming instead of studying, which then resulted in barely a three. He cannot talk to the students and so simply relies on what the marks tell him. Such is life.

Every month he calculates my expenses, paying particular attention to the school-related ones. He got used, during my freelancing days and the less-than-stellar days of the crisis, to put aside some funds for professional development. He is of the opinion that nobody can take education from you and so it is a sound investment. He would try telling that same thing to the calculators in power, but again, he is only a lowly calculator and does not understand budgeting and the country’s needs. So they tell him, anyway. Such is life.

The big calculator’s decisions cannot be disputed: they are all-encompassing and absolute. But while a number may be true, it is only a representation of the reality we choose to put it in. We may not be able to change this reality or the result we get, but by changing the formula and maximising the only important calculation – the thirst for knowledge –, we can positively influence the intermediate steps. Sadly, as these intermediate steps are all but imaginary to the higher calculator and it has not yet developed the ability to work with complex numbers, they remain in the margins of any important decisions. Such is life.

Would the system be any better if it took our small calculators’ equations into consideration? I’d like to think so. I’d also like to think that my calculator is fair and just, but I can only hope. In the equation of education, our calculators are always lacking, because try as they might and important though their calculations may be, they cannot calculate the worth of a teacher’s friendly word or the power of their words in class, nor can they calculate the impact we have on a person’s life.

**Such is life.**

*A special thanks to my colleague Alen Ajanović for his thoughts on Mathematics that inspired these musings.*

# An exploration of art, culture and the unspeakable

by Tina Šajn

To write a single poem you have to know the whole world.

Srečko Kosovel

Tina Šajn is a 4th-year student at Gimnazija Vič. The following essay was written as part of a presentation on one of the topics for the English Matura oral exam. Her mentor is Anže Perne.

## Introduction

People create art and culture and then seek to define them in many different ways. The definitions are often open, subjective and debatable. The two concepts remain thought-provoking, they help us to grasp the human condition and enable us to contribute something of our own to the world. Cultural and artistic manifestation and understanding have changed over time, and both notions continue to stir controversy today because of the number of sensible interpretations. I hope it is not too idealistic to envision their impact in connecting people and making us reflect on our humanity. At the end of the day, we all contribute to the reality we are living in.

## Culture

Culture is our way of life. We are born into a premade world and become part of a society which existed before us. In order to survive, we take advantage of this powerful tool and its creations. We learn about behaviour, values, beliefs, customs and traditions. Language plays a very important role here as it not only helps us communicate, but also enables us to think in the first place. Our human nature is a source of many uncertainties, and culture helps us to navigate, to seek purpose and a sense of belonging. Nevertheless, we are dealing here with a very fragile phenomenon, as it is continually changing and is easily lost because it only lives in our minds. We inherit knowledge and the responsibility for its preservation.

This is a way for us to build an eternal identity even though we are not destined to live forever. Culture and art may thus both arise from the realisation of our mortality and the question of our legacy.

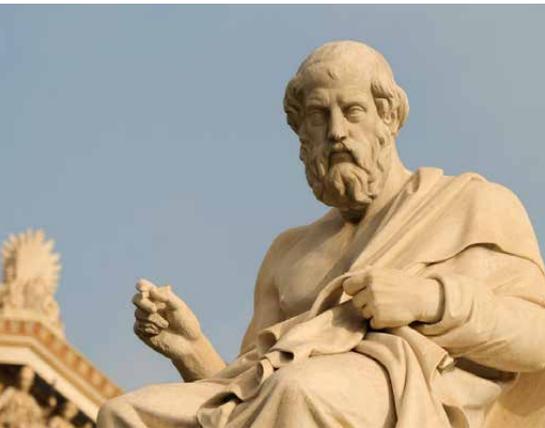
## Defining art

The concept of art is a bit narrower. It is a component of culture, reflecting economic and social substrates in its design. Its definition, role and evaluation have changed through time and space. We cannot deny the fact that art does not evolve in isolation, closed off from the world – context is of great importance.

Art definitely encompasses a diverse range of human activities, creations and ways of expression. The Oxford Dictionary states that art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as painting or sculpture, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

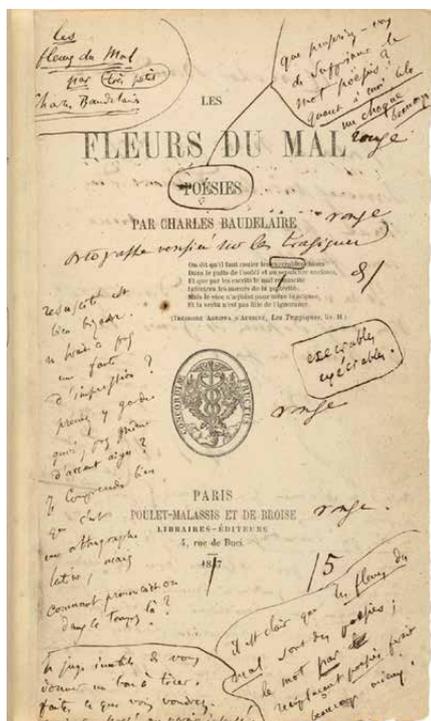
## A journey through history

To Plato, art was imitation of nature. Early on, it meant skill or craft; it was something you could excel at through practice and hard work. Through Romanticism and the birth of individualism, on the other hand, art came to mean originality. To do something new and never previously thought of defined the artist. His or her personality be-



Plato

came essentially as important as the artwork itself. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, photography and film took over the function of depicting reality. During the era of Modernism, the search for originality led artists to re-evaluate art. In 1847, for example, Charles Baudelaire published *Les fleurs du mal*, which tried to represent absolute truth through complex metaphors. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, abstract art overturned the whole notion that art was about representation, and the avant-garde radically experimented and pushed the boundaries of our expectations.



Charles Baudelaire's *Les fleurs du mal*

I think we can all agree on a consensus that artistic creation is mainly about ideas and emotions. It is an exploration of the human condition and a product of the human experience.

### The arts

Our understanding of the arts generally comprises the various branches of creative activity. Traditional categories within the arts include literature (including drama, poetry and prose), the performing arts (among them dance, music and theatre) and the visual arts (including architecture, design, painting, photography and sculpture).

Literature derives from our need for language. Literary expression is a reflection of our humanity and a way for us to understand each other. The voice of another person can shed light on things which we were not able to understand before. It allows us to step back for a moment and learn about life and everything that comes with it. Sometimes we may feel as though words are frail and weak, but literature shows us that they can in fact possess great power. As opposed to other arts, literature hardly ever includes a social component and thus many people are turned away from it or resort to its attenuated forms. They fail to see reading as an activity which is much more complex than merely scanning pages full of text. Literature can be quite intimidating, uncomfortable and lonely, because nobody will pick up a book and read it for us. It pushes us to face ourselves, reach into the deepest parts of our beings and doubt whether our sense of truth is absolute. Heavyhearted things should not be left behind as unwanted remains.

The performing arts, meanwhile, enchant us in the moment. In giving them our undivided attention, they become more than a narration, offering us the chance to live through the story and experience it directly and fully. There is something cathartic about them which helps us balance our unpredictable nature, whether taking the form of a harmonious melody or chaotic movement on the stage. Performing artists rarely hold back, put limitations on themselves or try to paint a perfect

picture. Their work is a mirror of the individual, of society and of the interactions between the two. Hence this type of exposure contributes to our awareness and gives us an insight into what it means to be human.

Concerts, performances and plays can be special and unforgettable occasions. They are also all transient, which relates to the inevitable finality of life.

The visual arts are the oldest documented forms of art. That may be because of their tangible presence, enabling us to merge the experiences from the inner and outer life we face. Keeping ourselves grounded can be quite a challenge in an age which gives us little time to focus on physical aspects of our beings without judgement. Visual artworks feel undeniably real, enabling us to simply be present in the given moment. Our bodies may not exhibit unconquerable strength, but our minds are often unrelenting. The ability to manifest elusive and imperceptible notions and contribute to the objective world in such an evident manner is greatly fulfilling. From underneath our hands raise artefacts that make our vague figures seem slightly more indestructible and limitless.

### Purpose and meaning

The purpose of works of art may be to communicate political, spiritual or philosophical ideas, to create a sense of beauty, to explore self-expression, to generate strong emotions, or to make us wonder about the world and question things. They push us into the unknown to reveal the underlying truth.

Art and beauty are formally studied in a branch of philosophy known as aesthetics. But what is the link between the two? Beauty is not about prettiness. It is rather a measure of affect, a measure of emotion. In the context of art, beauty is the measure of successful communication between participants – the conveyance of a concept between the artist and the perceiver. Beautiful art accomplishes this aim by portraying the artist's most profound intended emotions, inner visions and ideas, whether they be pretty and bright or dark and sinister. Beauty begins

where the lines between our physical, emotional and rational understanding start to fade. However, neither the artist nor the observer can be certain of successful communication in the end. Therefore, beauty in art is eternally subjective. But does art even exist without the viewer?

Creating an artwork means giving it a life of its own, separating it from oneself, and letting it out into the world. Only time will then tell whether it enabled us to become freer, more awake and more perceptive.

### Conclusion

There are times when we may feel estranged from art and culture, as if they are making us bear the weight of our ancestral heritage. We may find ourselves regarding them with disdain and being unable to free our minds from the prejudice of them being good-for-nothing and not playing an impactful, irrefutable or crucial role in our lives. I think, however, that we should realise that humanity, driven by the undiscovered, thrives on artistic and cultural expression. Art and culture are not an unwelcome force from the outside, but rather one that exists and develops inside of us. They are an embodiment of our inexplicable and never fully uncovered minds, something we can hold on to, while the process of turning ideas into creations remains a mystery.

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26<sup>th</sup>

International  
*IATEFL* Slovenia  
Conference 2019

# In the presence of the moon nobody sees stars

**Helena Žnidaršič Seme**, competition co-ordinator

Being an 8th grader is a special period in one's life, associated with the need for recognition and approval. A teen may have a writer, philosopher, English teacher, etc. hidden within him, and an English language competition is a wonderful opportunity for the expression of his potentialities. In November our best 8<sup>th</sup> graders wrote about the impact of celebrities on teenagers. They successfully showcased their English writing skills, creativity and maturity. Below are some examples we particularly enjoyed reading.

**Julija Pavlin Vodušek**,

*OŠ Solkan*

**Mentor: Luka Pavlin**

Nowadays the media has a huge impact on our lives. Especially in the teenage years, when we are the most insecure, celebrities influence our thoughts about our bodies and our talents. I think that there are too many stars that are having a bad influence on teenagers all over the world, with their inappropriate behaviour and song lyrics. Kids are starting to think that doing drugs or drinking lots of alcoholic beverages is okay and cool.

I think that parents lost the impact that they used to have on their kids' lives. Children would rather listen to successful YouTubers or singers who dropped out of school, thinking they could do the same. But they don't realise that there are more such people who failed to accom-

plish their dreams of being a big star with a worldwide fame.

The thing that the majority of teenagers probably don't understand is that money or fame can't buy happiness.

In fact, sadly, in most cases it's quite the opposite. Actors that we used to watch on TV as little kids are probably unfortunate and sad. Living in the spotlight with paparazzi and other media constantly behind you, without the privacy you want, isn't always easy.

I think that if you truly want to be happy, you don't have to own a villa by the beach or have a private plane waiting for you in your garage.

**Maks Andrijanič**,

*OŠ Antona Ukmarja Koper*

**Mentor: Tanja Berginc**

This proverb truly is a good one. It describes the human race these days. We are like some sort of satellites to these few people and we can see only them. Not each other, only them. That's because celebrities have such big influence and power. They are the true rulers of this planet.

Celebrities have a big impact. Mostly on kids and especially on teenagers. The impact is mostly positive. With that I don't mean when they say stuff like "Stay in school, kids". I mean with the things they do. When people see how successful their idols are, they think that maybe they can do that too. And then they start doing it. And some of them even succeed. The only negative effect is that when they see how great their idols are, it kind of takes their self-esteem because they think that they will never get as good as the celebrities they have as idols.

The influence celebrities have is great. Sometimes even bigger than we get from our parents. Because being big and famous to some kids means also a very high IQ. Sadly, it's not like that in most of the cases.

A person who has lots of money and is famous is the definition of celebrity. And let me tell you, money *can* bring happiness. It depends on what kind of person you are. But fame can't. It can bring satisfaction, maybe, but not happiness. And people start invading your life and even personal space sometimes. And that is a recipe for stress.

So, to sum up, celebrities have a big impact on our society. You hear so much about them you can sometimes even describe their daily schedule. And that is not healthy. In that case you could say our society is sick and needs a cure. There is still the moon, just not as shiny as it used to be.

**Mark Vodičar,**

*OŠ Valentina Vodnika, Ljubljana*

**Mentor: Blaž Preglau**

If you don't know the name of the new album Drake just released, you could say you're living under a rock. The new hairstyle from Kylie Jenner?

Everyone knows about it. Pop culture affects almost every teenager out there. In 2015 somebody posted a picture of their face and now you see people taking Snapchat selfies left and right. My point is that the media can influence teens way too much sometimes. It has positive and negative effects – mostly negative in my opinion. One celebrity can control millions upon millions of teens. They can say whatever they want, do whatever they want, the teens will follow them. It's almost like brainwashing at this point.

Of course as a little kid you don't know much about new movies, songs, etc. That's why most parents are afraid of what media can do to their kids. They are scared they will lose their influence. And a lot of parents do. As a teen myself, I have friends that are influenced more by social media and celebrities than their parents. Some of them want to become famous YouTubers, some of them even Instagram models. This has come so far you can have posting on social media as your full-time job and don't have to worry about your financial issues.

But of course, money and fame can't bring you true happiness. Helping others, accomplishing something through hard work, even helping your sister to do the dishes bring true happiness. But people don't see these small acts of kindness because even if they shine brighter up close, "In the presence of the moon nobody sees the stars."

**Nace Triler,**

*OŠ Cvetka Golarja*

**Mentor: Andreja Wastl-Petrič**

We are in a time in which celebrities have more influence than ever before. That is why we call them influencers now. The most affected are without a doubt teenagers, who represent the majority of the fanbase of musicians or other celebrities.

The influence can be very positive as teenagers find something to do if they are bored or it could help them calm down if they are sad. But the effect can also be negative because teenagers often get obsessed by their favourite musicians or groups. A prime example is the group N. W. A. that introduced gangster rap and after that crime has severely increased.

Parents often have less influence on their kids than musicians, because teenagers like to rebel, but I think it's smarter to listen to your parents because they always know what is best for you.

In some songs (mostly rap) you often find that musicians like to show off their possessions such as cars, mansions, etc. You always need to remember that money can't buy you happiness. In my opinion, these musicians are only trying to boost their image and ego.

I hope you learned something and if you disagree you at least get to see my point of view.

**Tinkara Praznik,**

*OŠ Fram*

**Mentor: Blaž Preglau**

These days more and more children want to grow up to be like their favourite celebrities. But how much impact do they really have? And is it positive or negative?

When you think of famous influencers, people like Kylie Jenner, Rihanna, Justin Bieber and others probably come to mind. Some are spoiled, money-hungry opportunists who do drugs, drink and buy expensive clothing and cars while others are kind, genuine people with real talent, who donate to charities and fight for equality. And kids and teens want to be just like them.

But let's not blame it all on the celebs and focus more on the people who are exposing them to their children. Parents are most likely the ones who chuck an iPad at their kids and say: "Hey! Stop nagging and play with this." Now the device is like a second home to them and soon they begin to stop listening to their parents and to live like the people on the screen. When the parents realize they've made a mistake, the kids are already in too deep.

They become spoiled, always wanting new things. But can money and fame really bring happiness? To some extent, yes. I mean, who wouldn't like the hottest new phone and designer clothes? Who wouldn't want to be recognised in the street and be invited to exclusive parties? But, after a while all these things become meaningless and tiring. Soon you're surrounded by fake friends, who want your fame, paparazzi trying to take an embarrassing picture of you and no real purpose.

You wish you could hop in that new sports car and drive back to your old life.

# My immigration story (TED Talk Lesson)

by Klavdija Krempf Slana

Klavdija Krempf Slana is an English language teacher with almost ten years of teaching practice, mostly at secondary school level. She graduated in English and Slovene Language and Literature at the Faculty of Arts in Maribor in 2009 and has worked as an English teacher since then. For the last seven years, she has been teaching English at II. gimnazija Maribor. She also coordinates the English language competition for third year students at her school, works as an external Matura examiner for English and prepares students for CAE exams.

Name: Klavdija Krempf Slana		Lesson title: My immigration story (TED Talk Lesson)	Topic: Immigration
Type of lesson: Skills (speaking, listening, writing) and vocabulary	Student level: B2 (according to CEFR)	Length: 90 minutes	
<b>Lesson aims:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>to develop language skills (listening, speaking, writing)</li> <li>to revise/upgrade vocabulary (topic: immigration)</li> <li>to develop language skills by using an authentic source of language input</li> <li>to raise students' awareness about an actual topic</li> </ul>		<b>Teacher comments:</b> I usually deal with this topic with my third year high school students. The umbrella topic of my third year syllabus is GLOBAL ISSUES, where I incorporate current and meaningful topics into my lessons and thus facilitate real-life language learning. The students love TED Talk lessons and are usually very inspired by the speakers and are more than willing to engage in class discussions.	
Materials: handouts, PowerPoint presentation (with pictures), answer key			
Lesson procedure:			
Time	Procedure	Teacher comments	
15 minutes	<b>Pre-listening:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>lead-in questions (whole class)</li> <li>making predictions based on pictures (whole class)</li> <li>giving instructions, reading the questions (whole class, individual)</li> </ol>	Teacher announces the topic of the lesson – immigration – and distributes handouts. Pre-listening section is carried out.	
15 minutes	<b>While-listening</b> (if necessary, students watch it twice): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>watching the TED Talk, answering questions (individual)</li> </ol>	Teacher gives instructions; students read through comprehension questions, watch the talk and answer the questions.	
60 minutes	<b>Post-listening:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>checking answers (whole class)</li> <li>discussion questions (whole class)</li> <li>vocabulary work (individual, whole class)</li> <li>creative task: poem writing / immigration word search (groups, whole class)</li> <li>discussion on immigration (groups, whole class)</li> <li>Homework</li> </ol>	The whole post-listening section is carried out.	

**Sources**

- https://www.ted.com/talks/tan\_le\_my\_immigration\_story (TED Talk)

**Pictures**

- Tan Le: https://www.visualcv.com/tantle
- Fishing vessel: https://goo.gl/images/zJ6zEA
- Second-hand shop: https://goo.gl/images/Ka4eiw
- An apple: https://goo.gl/images/vV7gSP

HANDOUT

**TED TALKS – Ideas worth spreading**

**Tan Le – My immigration story**

[https://www.ted.com/talks/tan\\_le\\_my\\_immigration\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/tan_le_my_immigration_story)

In 2010, technologist Tan Le took the TEDGlobal stage to demo a powerful new interface. But now, at TEDxWomen, she tells a very personal story: the story of her family – her mother, grandmother and sister – fleeing Vietnam and building a new life. (Source: [https://www.ted.com/talks/tan\\_le\\_my\\_immigration\\_story](https://www.ted.com/talks/tan_le_my_immigration_story))

**a) Questions**

Do you have any friends or family who are immigrants? How does that affect your view of immigration? What nationalities are most people who come to our country? Do you know any that have become famous/successful?

Why do people immigrate to other countries? (Make a list of possible reasons.)

What's the difference between a refugee, an illegal immigrant, an asylum seeker and a migrant?

Would you ever consider leaving Slovenia? Which country would you move to and why?

**b) Picture analysis**

Based on the photos, make predictions about the person's life.

Who is she? What is her job? What impression do you get about her life and personality?



This is an apple.

Listen and watch the video and answer the questions.

1. How old was Tan Le when she fled Vietnam?
2. Who are the "three generation of women" in her family?
3. How long did the boat journey take?
4. Where does she live now?
5. What was her deceased grandfather's profession?
6. How was the boat disguised and why?
7. What did they fear the most on their journey?
8. What did her mother carry with her and for what purpose?
9. What did the man on the oilrig give her?
10. What was the family's financial situation like in Australia?
11. What offensive word was she called?
12. What kind of jobs did her mother take on to support the family?
13. What kind of university did she finish?
14. What do you learn about her grandmother?
15. Why did she sue her husband?
16. How did her grandmother come to say goodbye to her on the day of her death?

**QUESTIONS**

- How did Tan Le's story make you feel?
- Summarise her talk in a couple of sentences.
- What did you learn from her and her story?
- How did the fact that she was an immigrant affect her life in Australia? Do you know someone who has suffered any kind of discrimination because they come from another country?

## VOCABULARY WORK

Read the sentences and fill in the missing words from the box. Sometimes you may need to change the form of the word.

HUDDLE • CUTLERY • IN VAIN • ENDURE • BRAVADO  
PRECARIOUS • RELENTLESS • JIGSAW • OBLIVIOUS  
ALLOCATE • BEAUTICIAN • SINEW

1. The government is going to \_\_\_\_\_ €10 million for health education.
2. It was so cold that night that we all \_\_\_\_\_ together for warmth.
3. It was an act of \_\_\_\_\_ that made him ask his boss to resign.
4. There is no currently recognised treatment for the \_\_\_\_\_ progression of this disorder. It is simply incurable and unstoppable.
5. When is the right time to introduce \_\_\_\_\_ to teach a child how to eat on his own?
6. These steel posts form the \_\_\_\_\_ (=temelji) of the building.  
  
The lorry was lodged in a very \_\_\_\_\_ way, with its front wheels hanging over the cliff.
8. She has decided to become a \_\_\_\_\_ because she has always been interested in make-up and helping people look good.
9. We spent all evening doing a 1,000-piece \_\_\_\_\_.
10. She's already had to \_\_\_\_\_ three painful operations on her leg.
11. Absorbed in her work, she was totally \_\_\_\_\_ of her surroundings.
12. All the police's efforts to find him have been \_\_\_\_\_. He's still at large.

## POEMS ON IMMIGRATION / IMMIGRATION WORD SEARCH

Write an acrostic poem about immigration.

Or use your dictionaries to search for words connected to IMMIGRATION.

After you finish, be ready to share with the class. (Maybe even have a class vote on the best one).

## DISCUSSION ON IMMIGRATION

As a group discuss the given statement (agree/disagree and justify your opinion) and be ready to share with the class.

1. Everybody should be able to live where they choose. Freedom of movement is a civil right.
2. People should stay and live in the country where they are born.
3. There should be more help available to immigrants to adapt to their new country.
4. Immigration makes countries more interesting and helps people become more tolerant.
5. All immigrants should completely adapt to their new culture, learn the language, etc. and forget their own.

## HOMEWORK: DIARY ENTRY / ARTICLE

**Diary entry (after having dealt with Ellis Island immigration):**

Imagine you are one of the millions of people who immigrated to the USA in the early 20th century. You have just arrived at Ellis Island and have been granted access to American soil. Write a diary entry describing your journey across the sea and your Ellis Island experience and share your hopes and visions of your new life.

**Article:** Write an article in which you share your views on immigration by discussing its positive and negative effects.

**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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## STUDENT SAMPLES

### Legal aliens in Slovenia?

Immigration is one of the biggest society problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Many countries are overwhelmed with big waves of people trying to get citizenship or even immigrating illegally.

In countries like Britain or Australia, politicians try to limit the amount of people migrating into their country. But in Slovenia, where population growth is negative, immigration is actually quite welcome. Recent public survey purports to show that immigrants are in 71% very well accepted and the majority of people know that immigrants provide cultural diversity to our country. There is no racial or national discrimination when it comes to education system or getting a job etc. It all sounds so great, but we are aware of the fact that some of the Slovenes are still very close-minded and tend to be rude to immigrants. Furthermore, some of them believe that immigrants take jobs away from local residents.

There has been a lot of press on the topic of immigration recently, especially on the matter of "The Erased", where people do not legally exist due to some irregularities with getting their citizenship during the emancipation of Slovenia. What do the politicians say about The Erased, as well all of the other illegal aliens and legal immigrants?

Alenka Bratušek, the prime minister: "We are happy to welcome any immigrants, as long as they apply for the citizenship. There are some quotas for the number of immigrants per year that can be allowed to become Slovenian citizens, but there are not too many people asking for the "green card", so basically everybody is granted permission to live in Slovenia.

I believe that emigration should be our greater concern, especially the brain drain."

But do the immigrants blend in? One of the right-extremist politicians, Zmago Jelinčič said: »Let's all admit, that immigrants can never be real Slovenians. I believe that we do not need any immigrants, all they do is take jobs away from the authentic Slovenians and make our culture and language disappear.«

In defiance of some harsh opinions, many agree that we should support immigration. The immigrants enrich our culture and contribute to making new traditions. We should not look at them as if they were legal aliens, because they are one of us. After all, we are all citizens of the same country. Although we might not share the same habits, language or skin color, we share streets, cafes, buses, we share the country. We are all citizens of Slovenia.

16<sup>th</sup> of December 1916

I finally came to America, the land of my new beginning. After 11 days on the ship, which was filled to the deck, I felt closer to my dreams than ever before, but I have never been so mistaken before. As I recall, I thought that our transportation was the worst part, and it was till the arrival at Ellis Island, where a nightmare for us all started. Back in Russia I recall the check-ups for the army, they were crazy, or at least I thought so before I came to Ellis Island, which showed me even more vicious inspections. The Travelling made me meet lots of new people, because there was no space, and we were all mixed up. Mostly I talked with a Polish teenager and a German ex-soldier, both told the same reason I have for the travel, the wish of a better life. Except the overcrowding of the ship the way to America was quite fine. At arrival we were fast sorted by our Nationality. There were like 30 Russians, within 300 people, so I thought that we will be have a fast check in, but that wasn't like that. Everyone has been processed so long, they made a total medical checkup, then they tried, if you understood English and could read, so this took quite some time. And they did lack on staff I heard saying, something went wrong some days before our arrival. The thing I wanted the most was a good warm meal and a bed for the night, but I was on Ellis Island, waiting for my inspection, for 6 days, without a real meal, on the cold floor. We all were only numbers for them. When I finally came on the row there was first this man who was asking me tons of questions, like my reason of migration here and other. Then he sent me for the reading part, and I had to read a part out of a book, which wasn't a problem. And then was the medical inspection, where I was treated as a dog or even worse, they were just checking, they didn't ask me anything just pushing me around from one to another, one checked height, the other checked my eye sight and another my hearing, so it went on for some hours. When I have gone through all check ups I needed to wait 7 more days, since the Russian quota was full, after 7 days of being there, I was finally released into the country of my dreams, so starts a new chapter for me.

### IMMIGRATION – poem

*I am moving abroad,  
Missing my country a lot.  
Moving to somewhere unknown,  
I can't imagine living on my own.  
Going as a refugee, somewhere where they  
didn't heard about me.  
Remember me?  
All of my friends were left behind,  
The new ones are not that kind.  
I am adapting slow,  
Oh my life is a blow, but what hurts the most,  
No one cares, I am like a ghost.*

# European Day of Languages 2018

by Maša Kolenko

How do students define language? How do they visualise it? What do they think about it? This year your creative work offered answers to these very questions. We hope they sparked many a discussion on languages in your classrooms. A big thank you goes to all mentors and students for taking part in the project. We've received quite a number of contributions, so we would like to share just some of them with you.

## Selected contributions

### High School: LANGUAGE stands for ...

### Elementary School: If language were an emoji, what would it look like (and why)?

#### Šolski center Novo mesto,

mentor **Sanja Radošević**

Learn an interesting language every day  
And make no excuse just to play.  
Nobody gains here but you,  
Glamour and knowledge is for you.  
Use it in every aspect of life,  
Anywhere that makes you go wild.  
Give all you can improve,  
English will help you move.

*Aljaž Hren*

#### Other secondary schools

Literature	Love
Against	And
Not	Never
Giving	Give
Us	Up.
A	Accept
Good	Great
Education	Experiences.

#### OŠ Podbočje,

mentor **Jasmina Sanković**



This emoji shows  
that we are different but  
we are all kings and queens.

*Lea Simončič in Leja Hudoklin*

#### OŠ Col,

mentor **Irena Saksida**



MOJ ČUSTVENČEK  
PREDSTAVLJA  
JEZIK GLASBE,  
KI GA RAZUME  
CEL SVET.

*Tinkara Lampe*

#### OŠ Škofljica,

mentor

**Andreja Janežič Stanešič**



If these languages were an emoji it will look like this.  
It represents all countries of the world.  
It represents all languages of the world.  
It's smiling because I like different languages.  
I think that learning different languages is very important.

*Zala Potočnik*

#### OŠ Koroška Bela Jesenice,

mentor **Barbara Ahačič**



When you are learning  
a new language you  
mustn't give up. A new  
language needs a lot  
of patience and exercises.  
You need to be proud  
of yourself and make  
your goals higher and  
higher till the top.  
Learning is hard but  
it is worth it.  
Believe me.

*Urška Torkar*

# Report from 28<sup>th</sup> IATEFL-Hungary conference

by **Sandra Vida**

**Hungarian conferences have always been a special treat in terms of the workshops, speakers and social events they offer, and as a delegation of representatives of IATEFL Slovenia drove towards Budapest, we knew this weekend would not disappoint. As it does every year, it gave us an opportunity to meet friends new and old, see what the publishers had to offer and attend workshops by teachers who not only dare to be different but also dare to say it out loud.**

I will try not to bore you with too many details to do with organisation, although this is what we assess whenever we go to a conference, thinking about who or what we could bring to our conference, about what we might avoid or do better.

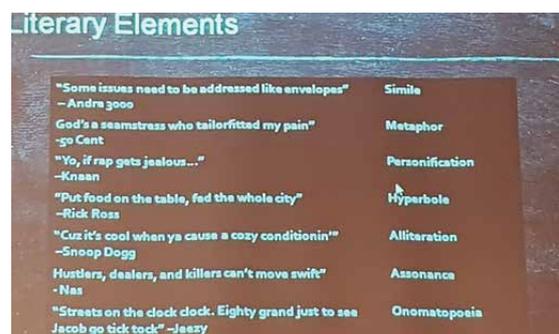
The first workshop I attended was about how rap can be included in our teaching. Knowing many of my students listen to it, but also knowing that the lyrics can often be too explicit for the classroom, I allowed the speaker to open my mind about the subject matter. And she did. Not only did she make a great case about why the explicitness of the lyrics is exactly the reason why we should allow rap into our classrooms, but she also showed how it can be used to teach literature, pronunciation and even reading.

Margit Szesztay's talk was about social intelligence for teachers. This is something none of us was taught explicitly at school, although it is logical

that teachers must be able to nurture and develop it. She presented a nice little sentence-completion activity, where each student gets a strip of paper with an ending and a beginning of a proverb or quote. The first one reads their part of the sentence and whoever has the corresponding ending reads it and then continues with their sentence beginning. We've prepared a worksheet for a similar activity which you can find in the members area of our website.

According to many conference programmes, gamified classrooms are all the rage with activities either involving augmented reality or even very basic paper-based games like treasure hunt and escape room. These activities offer a lot in terms of hands-on experience and fun and at the same time also provide food for thought regarding what is really important in the classroom today and where we want things to take us with our new generations of students.

The more conferences I go to, the more I realise just how important they are. Keeping up with the new generations gets harder every year, not just because the gap between us gets bigger, but also because our world is changing faster. If you missed the Hungarian conference, too bad, but the good news is that all the best speakers we saw have been invited to speak at our conference as well, so don't miss out on that opportunity whatever you do. See you at the next conference!



Quote	Literary Element
"Some issues need to be addressed like envelopes" -Andre 3000	Simile
God's a seamstress who tailorfitted my pain" -go Cent	Metaphor
"Yo, if rap gets jealous..." -Knean	Personification
"Put food on the table, fed the whole city" -Rick Ross	Hyperbole
"Cuz it's cool when ye cause a cozy conditionin'" -Snoop Dogg	Alliteration
Hustlers, dealers, and killers can't move swift" -Nas	Assonance
"Streets on the clock dock. Eighty grand just to see Jacob go tick tack" -Jeezy	Onomatopoeia



## The Creative Classroom

*'To live a creative life, we must lose our fear of being wrong' – Joseph Chilton Pearce*



# The Macedonia Experience

by Danny Singh



**Danny Singh, born and raised in London, but now based in Rome, gives creative English language lessons and teacher training courses all over Italy and abroad. He also offers stimulating monthly presentations on language related**

**issues at Rome's biggest international bookshop and is visible on web TV [www.inmagicartwebtv.eu](http://www.inmagicartwebtv.eu) with a series of interactive English video lessons. He is author of two books, "I was a happy man...then one day I came across Laughter Yoga" and "Learning English through the mind and the body" and is currently working on his third book, "Life is full of surprises". He regularly attends Pilgrims TT summer courses as a Guest Speaker. website: [www.laughnlearn.net](http://www.laughnlearn.net) e-mail: [singh\\_danny@hotmail.com](mailto:singh_danny@hotmail.com)**

The ELTAM conference is held in Struga every two years. The dates were good, I was free, so I sent my speakers proposal, which was accepted, then set about booking flights. There were no direct flights to Struga, so I would have to arrive in Skopje, then get a bus, similar to the journey made previously when my plane was diverted to another airport. However, the airline only flew two days a week to Skopje, Monday and Friday. As the conference began on a Friday, I could either fly on Friday and miss at least 50% of the conference, which would be a waste of time, or arrive four days early. Coming back was no problem, as the conference finished on Sunday and the flight was on Monday lunch-time from Skopje. I listened to those voices within me and my sixth sense, which told me to go ahead and book my tickets to arrive four days early.

Having booked my plane tickets, the next question was how I was going to pass those four spare days! Surely, four days was far too long to stay in what was

supposed to be a very small place and more importantly, with no other colleagues around? I contacted a few friends I'd made at the previous conference and they expressed excitement about the fact that I was coming and the possibility to see me again, so at that point, I decided to stay a couple of nights in Skopje before moving onto Struga.

In October 2018, exactly ten months after my first visit to Macedonia, I found myself in Skopje again. Thankfully, there was no fog this time, indeed the temperatures were not much different from those in Rome, sunny and warm during the day and cooling off at night. I met up with some of my local Skopje friends, revisited the old town, the main square with its fountains, and wandered around munching on a wide range of bureks from various bakeries. Two weeks previously, I had been at the IATEFL Hungary conference in Budapest, when at the end of one of my workshops, I was approached by a participant, who said he enjoyed the session and he'd be in contact. I asked him



An amazing view from Sveti Naum



Teaching 7 year-old kids in Struga



Fountains which change colour at the main square in Skopje

where he was from and he replied, Macedonia! As a result, Agim Poshka, a University Professor, had me at the SE European University performing in front of his young students, who were training to become teachers. This was not the only irony, as Agim actually lived in Struga, literally two minutes' walk from the conference location.

On my journey from the airport to my hotel in Skopje, I had got chatting away to the taxi driver, as I often do and he gave me his card and told me that he could take me to Struga, Thessaloniki, Sofia, Pristina or any other long-distance location. I dismissed this idea as ridiculous, especially as he was not forthcoming in giving me a price estimate. The bus station in Skopje is located far enough away from the centre of Skopje, that you need a taxi to get there. I duly took a taxi and again got chatting to the driver. This time, he convinced me with his quality intonation to be driven all the way to Struga. Why would you want to spend 8 euro on a coach when you can spend 80 euro with me? Do you think it's too much? Well actually, considering it cost 20 euro just to get from the airport to the centre of the city, while Struga is at least a three-hour journey from Skopje, I thought it wasn't too bad and I had just about enough cash on me. In addition, my mind went back to that horrible journey I'd had the year before when my flight had been diverted to Ohrid. So I accepted and off we went. The views were interesting and we had plenty to

talk about until we reached the final destination.

The conference hotel in Struga was even more overbearing than the airport in Skopje. There were several flights of stairs on each floor, so when you took one, you were never quite sure where you were going to end up. As there were still no other conference participants around, I popped over to Agim's bar, where I met Mark Andrews, who I had often seen at various conferences, but never really had a chance to speak to. As I sipped my first rakija, I realized that this man was a wealth of information, particularly on three subjects that I enjoy; the history of the Balkans, football from a social point of view and music bands and "live" gigs. After starting my second rakija, Mark suggested taking a boat trip on the famous Ohrid lake the next day, as the weather forecast was for sunny weather and calm waters. As I had nothing to do the next day and the idea of increasing my knowledge on a variety of topics that I enjoyed beckoned, I agreed!

On our way back to Struga, Mark invited me to join him, where we did a lesson together with some of Selpi's (Agim's wife) seven - and twelve-year-old students. Another interesting teaching experience and more rakija in the evening, I was exhausted, I had already been in Macedonia for four days, though it seemed like four weeks and the conference hadn't even begun yet.

As it was the 10<sup>th</sup> conference, there was a celebratory atmosphere and some formal awards to a number of people who had helped to build the ELTAM conference up to what it is today. Once the formalities were over, we got down to business and kicked off with a plenary from Fiona Mauchline. This was ironic, because I'd met her at the IATEFL Hungary two weeks previously, but had been unable to attend her plenary which closed the conference, as I had had to leave slightly earlier. Her talk was fun and interactive, as she reminded us of some of the basics that we sometimes forget, when searching for new ideas. After this, I went to a workshop on "using mindfulness in the classroom", given by two local teachers, Biljana Shoposka and Emilija Paunkoska. They had the additional difficulty of having to shorten their workshop, due to the formal presentations overrunning and what was coming up, but they managed it quite well. What was coming up you may well ask? An organised trip to Ohrid. That sounded interesting until I inquired for more details and was informed that it involved a boat trip. I had had just about as much water as I could stand, so found a small group of local teachers who wanted to go to Ohrid for a coffee and a walk. This was extremely interesting, as I got to meet and understand a bit more about the education system in Macedonia, while devouring some local cakes recommended to me. I will never forget the stunning views of the lake, as the sun set before we made our way back to Struga.



A well-deserved trout and potato lunch



Having fun with new friends made at the conference



Sunset in front of Lake Ohrid

In the evening, there was a Macedonian dinner offered for the teacher association representatives, which involved a fair amount of eating and drinking. Alexandra Popovski the ELTAM President, had informed me that she was getting calls from an insistent taxi driver, who wanted to speak to me. Yes, apparently, he (Miki) had called the hotel asking for me, as he was convinced I would be stupid enough to take a return journey with him from Struga to Skopje. The hotel was not willing to give out my name, so asked Aleksandra to deal with it, which she promptly did. As we staggered back to the hotel, I couldn't resist asking the question, should we call Miki and ask him to take us on a three-minute ride to the hotel?

The next morning, we started with a plenary by Jon Hird on the subject of dyslexia. He originally got into this subject, as his son is dyslexic and he showed us some of the extensive research he has done on the subject. After a coffee break, I had a tough decision to make, as there were three speakers who I knew well, giving workshops at the same time. I decided to give all three a miss and take a gamble on going to a workshop given by a speaker that I didn't know. The subject was one of my favourites, "creative writing", and although I had attended a two-week workshop at Pilgrims with my mentor and good friend, Mario Rinvolucri back in 2007, I always believe that there is more to learn on any subject and indeed there was, as Rina Krasniqi from Kosovo gave us some entertaining and useful activities. After this, there was a half-an-hour slot, which I'd normally skip, as I feel that thirty minutes is rather short for a

presentation, although I have been proved wrong a couple of times. In this case, I knew the speaker, Pero Sardzoski who was one of my translators at the MakeDox Skopje conference back in 2017. He runs his own school in Tetovo which is close to Skopje and one thing he has in common with me is that his lessons are paperless, however, his methodology is quite different as he focuses on technology, while I focus more on movement and using the body.

After his short presentation, it was my turn, as I gave my workshop on team building, which I had already done at several other conferences, including IATEFL Slovenia back in March 2018. I had a pretty good turnout and did all the usual activities, the name game, the circle game, some gibberish and laughter yoga. The gibberish went down very well and after chatting to several people at the end of my presentation and having photos taken, it was time for a late and much deserved lunch. Daniel Xerri, always immaculately well-dressed, gave a plenary on creativity. Daniel is one of the main organisers of the conference for teachers in Malta and naturally enough, he was promoting the many niceties of his country. I decided to skip the last two slots of workshops, as my energy levels were low, so I spent my time drinking coffee, rakija and chatting to other participants, until the evening agenda.

The evening consisted of a birthday party to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> ELTAM conference, so there was a buffet, a punch cocktail and a rock band which kept us moving into the early hours of the morning. It was another opportunity to socialise with other participants and the one theme of the evening although I have no idea why, was to wear something black. Sometime after midnight, though I'm not sure exactly when, I stumbled back to my room, mentally and physically exhausted.

Sunday morning was tough, after the late night before. After making my way downstairs for a late breakfast and having to leave the room by a certain time, I unfortunately had to miss Jen MacArthur's early plenary on "using poetry in the classroom". I did however, make up for it to some extent, by going to three of the four sessions remaining. The first

one was about The Great Escape from the Classroom. It was not the first time I had attended a workshop on this subject, however, as the presenter was different, I decided to give it a go. The speaker was Magda Goraj, who came all the way from Barcelona and she gave us a good demonstration of how she uses it, which wasn't easy, as the room had an enormous table in the centre of it and little room for manoeuvre.

After yet another coffee, I went to the toilet, as one does and while there, a man entered, looked at me and smiled. I looked back at him and smiled. He then said, hello. I politely replied, hello. His next words were utterly shocking; taxi? I couldn't believe it! Taxi drivers approaching me in the hotel toilet to try to get business! I told him I was fine and sped along to Ereza Mehmeti's workshop on Differentiated Instructions, which was extremely interesting, especially as in the first activity she gave us, we all interpreted her instructions in different ways, as if to illustrate the point. The final workshop of the conference was Mark Andrew's Paddington Bear story and how he uses it in the classroom, highly amusing, as well as informative. Finally, there was the raffle, prizes for winners and the closing ceremony.

I said goodbye to as many people as I could and got a lift from my friend Pero Sardzoski, so no buses and more importantly, no taxis for this stage of the journey. The last evening was spent in the square that I love, with the water in the fountains changing colour continuously. I had one final burek. I had missed my bureks while in Struga, but I had experienced so many other pleasures. I went to bed early and slept well, having asked the hotel to provide me with a driver to take me to the airport. For the first time in Macedonia, I had a taxi driver who did not insist on taking me halfway around the world or leaving me his business card for future reference, but simply on taking me to my destination with a minimum of fuss and a pleasant chat to help pass away the time. An incredible week was coming to an end, with an endless list of unforgettable memories; a great conference, tasty food, kind and generous people, stunning views and over-zealous taxi drivers. What more could one ask for?

# Literature reading in Ljubljana

It was very interesting listening to Lorca's poem in Serbian, as it is a language I mostly understand but still feels foreign to me. It felt as though I was looking at the poem through a filter and it reminded me that this is probably how our learners feel about English texts all the time. Alternatively, they might very possibly understand as much as I understood the Spanish original, so *nada*.

**Nina Jerončič,**

*OŠ Louisa Adamiča Grosuplje*

I am a holiday reader. I almost never have time to read otherwise. But hearing excerpts from the books others read, I couldn't help but find the books and put aside all the housework and homework and read in the evening, in the breaks. It felt really good. I will definitely do it again.

**Nataša Meh,**

*OŠ Komenda Moste*



# IATEFL Saturday in Maribor

## Dashing through Maribor

How many workshops do you know that take you to the streets on a wild treasure hunt? I'd known none – not one! – until I went to the IATEFL Maribor workshop. Not only did I learn the basics of making a successful treasure hunt, but I learned this by exploring the city while competing with other groups of teachers. Dashing through the streets, knocking on doors of shops, restaurants and historical buildings, asking for hints and gathering clues was an experience worth every step I took.

**Metka Lovrin,** *DOŠ I, Lendava*

## Book exchange

Engaging students in reading is a challenge. Some "real books" are fun but are likely to be beyond the language level of our students. Other books, for example graded readers, are perfect in terms of language but are lacking in structure and excitement. The IATEFL book exchange was my cozy couch where teachers gave teachers great ideas for authentic books that can be used in the classroom. For the youngest, we shared picture book titles and fun activities that bring movement into every class. For the older students, we delved into short novels that touch the soul and do not shy away from topics that really matter—especially for those young minds which do not just crave for a "why" but also for a "because".

**Metka Lovrin,** *DOŠ I, Lendava*

The seminar gave me much more than I'd expected it would... Interesting, fresh and in such good company, it will stay with me for some time... I strongly recommend everyone who missed it to rent a time machine and go for it...

**Ana Županić,** *OŠ Miklavž pri Ormožu*

I've been attending workshops at IATEFL conferences for years and have always been delighted and empowered by them. I always learn so much and return home filled with positive energy and a sleeve packed with new ideas. It was a pleasure to share my own ideas with other English teachers as well as my colleagues at my own school, where we prepared an interesting and relaxing workshop morning. It was fun observing teachers taking part in the career-planning game, discussing different aspects of their points of view and learning more about themselves in the guided fantasy meditative workshop. The very best part for me was taking the teachers around our home town, Maribor, where they took part in a scavenger hunt and discovered various historical facts about it. I also loved other workshops prepared by other teachers. I have already put some ideas into action, since this is the best way of remembering them and taking full advantage of such marvellous gatherings.

**Nataša Luković,**

*OŠ Ludvika Pliberška, Maribor*



# Plečnik Code in Ljubljana

We were going on a treasure hunt,  
We were going to catch the big one,  
We weren't scared  
After OUP we dared!  
Oh look! It's the pretty old town!  
Can't go over it,  
Can't go under it,  
Can't go around it,  
Got to go through it!

We had a blast, exercised our brains, got  
lost, got found again, learned some new  
info about Plečnik's Ljubljana and the  
Freemasons, but most important of all:  
it gave us a chance to unwind among  
old friends.

**Vesna Gros**, *OŠ Polje*

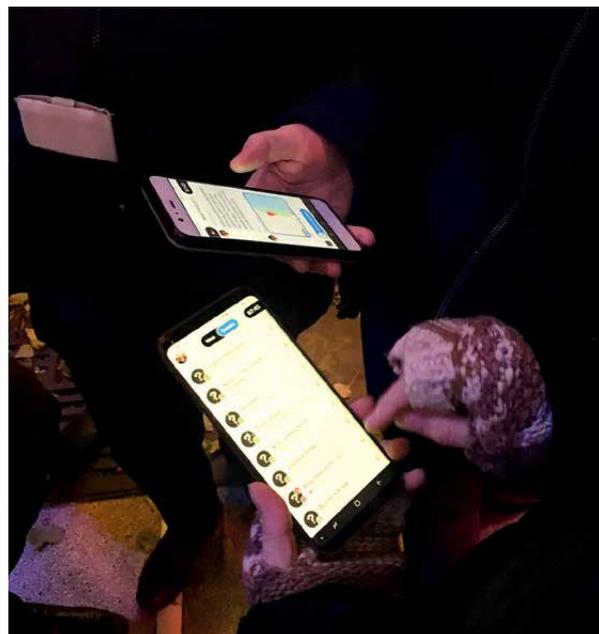
A bunch of English teachers on Prešeren  
Square on a cold December afternoon  
turning into evening. You're probably  
thinking this doesn't sound promising.  
Well, think again. If the teachers are  
members of IATEFL Slovenia on a treas-  
ure hunt around Plečnik's Ljubljana, then  
fun is guaranteed and cold (almost)  
forgotten. Added bonus: you get to learn  
a lot about your hometown.

So when you next see an invitation from  
IATEFL Slovenia, don't hesitate and say  
YES!

**Petra Mikeln**, *OŠ Polje*

I've lived in Ljubljana for more than half  
of my life and had walked these streets  
a thousand times but I had never taken  
the time to really explore the city and get  
to know its secret until that Friday night.  
I am really glad I had the chance to learn  
something new about Ljubljana and I  
have already spread the new acquired  
knowledge to my friends and family.  
A few hours well spent in lovely compa-  
ny. And the hot cider at the end was the  
perfect ending!

**Nataša Meh**, *OŠ Komenda Moste*



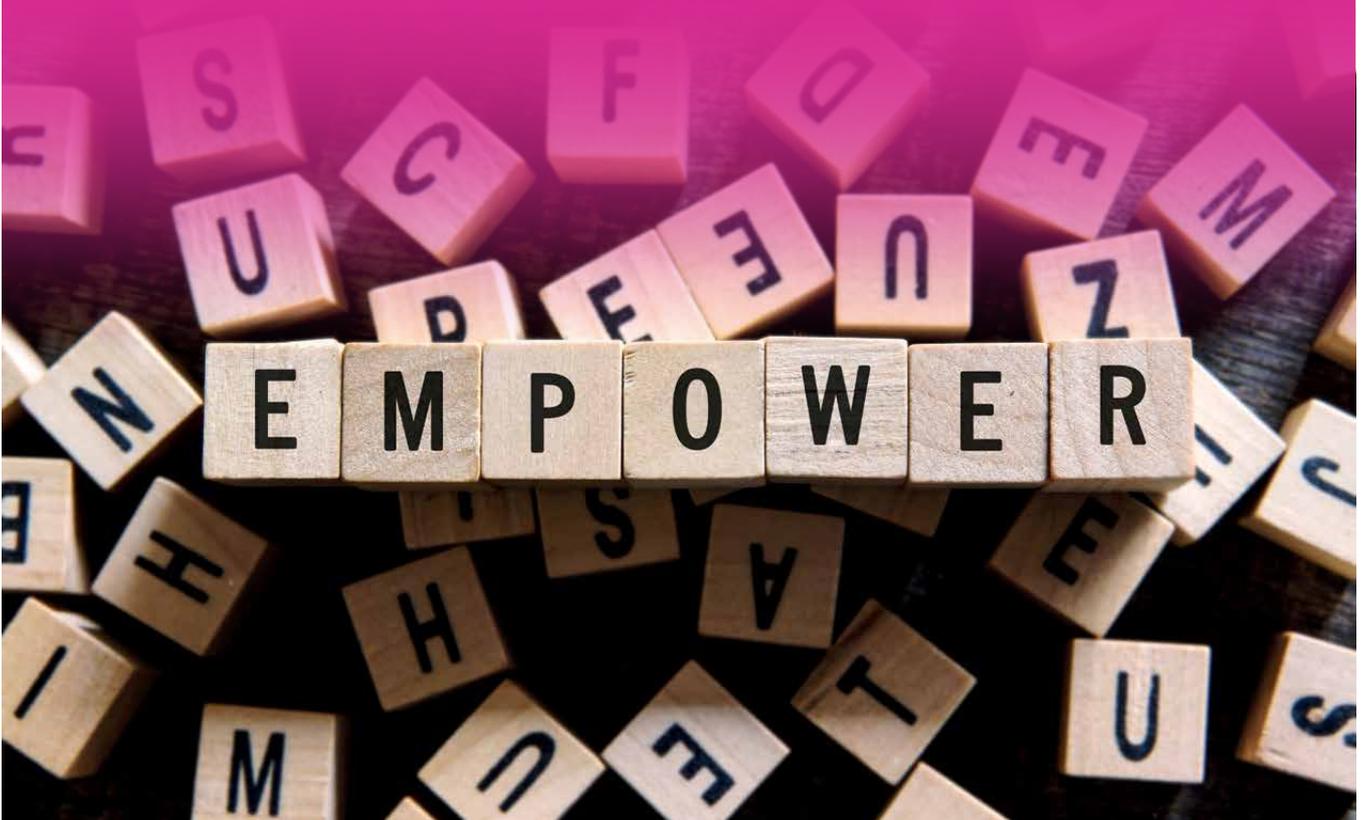
# 26<sup>th</sup>

# International *IATEFL Slovenia* Conference 2019

## #empowerED

**Our next conference aims to empower everybody in education, but especially women. Therefore, we bring you an all-female selection of fantastic plenary speakers.**

**With Lynda Steyne, Sophia Mavridi, Mojca Belak and others to be confirmed.**





# TWin odlični izleti!

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

1995 - 2015



Zemljemerska ulica 12  
1000 Ljubljana  
Tel.: 01 280 28 20,  
040 187 830  
e-pošta: info@twintur.com  
www.twintur.com

## Zakaj s Twin-om v London:

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

**Več informacij na [www.twintur.com](http://www.twintur.com) ali na 040 187 830 ali v poslovalnici na Zemljemski ulici 12 v Ljubljani.**

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

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

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

Ksenija Tripkovič, OŠ Selnica ob Dravi