

# ELTA NEWSLETTER

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2017

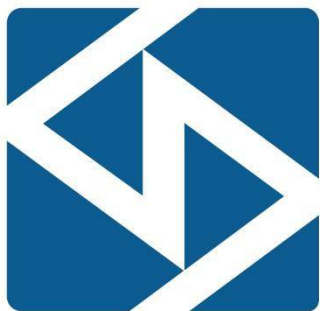
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# ELTA Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL – JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2017

Dear readers,

We are happy to introduce you to the latest issue of our newsletter, the first one in the New Year.

We offer you the pleasure of reading an interview with **J.J Wilson** which has been prepared and led by our team member **Vicky Papageorgiou**. J.J Wilson is a well-known and respected ELT author who has recently published a novel. It is called *Demnificados* and it covers many interesting topics, mostly about social justice and Utopia. His quote that utopia is like a horizon – we are going towards it, but it always seems to be away – can be an inspiration for all of us who might feel a bit disappointed by what has recently been happening all over the world and can be transmitted to our work-related situation when we fight for all the good causes education brings and feel struggling with the reality we live in. The interview offers insight into the author's worldview which is rather refreshing and new. You can find it our section **[A Day in the Life of](#)**.

We offer you two excellent **[Lesson Plans](#)**. The first one deals with the topic of love, which can come in handy for the forthcoming Valentine's day. It is prepared by **Katarina Ristanović** and offers a chance to inform students about courtship through the ages. The second one was prepared by our team member **Branka Dačeski** and it deals with the universal topic of being happy.

Our new **[Feature Article](#)** deals with the topic of technology. It was prepared by **Dimitris Primalis** who has worked, written and presented on the topic of learning technologies extensively. The article discusses the topic of 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and reassures teachers to use technology without the fear of being out of touch. It also addresses the new roles of a teacher in the modern-day classroom.

Our **[Academic Corner](#)** brings a qualitative research on the topic of dyslexia. **Panayiotis Constantinides** shares the results of a small-scale research with two objectives: to determine the level of awareness of Greek teachers about the dyslexia, as well as to provide suggestions how to improve awareness. The article concludes that teachers need education and pedagogy tools to deal with this topic during the undergraduate studies, as well as professional development events throughout their careers.

Our **[Borrowed from](#)** section was taken from the website Using Technology better. It provides

insight into the Google story builder tool which helps learners how to develop their writing skills.

The **Students' Corner** presents three winning entries in the competition called Sci-Fi Short Story Competition, submitted by **Svetlana Gavrilović**, organized by Užice Grammar School and sponsored by the English book and Pearson. Take some time to read the exciting stories by **Dejan Bakić**, **Aleksa Nikolić** and **Jovana Babić**.

You can enjoy a new chapter of the Duke's novel by **Ken Wilson** in our **Creative Corner**, which is a true treat.

In section **Young Learners' Playground**, our colleague **Marko Škundić** once again shared his collection of translation errors which his students made throughout the year. The entries are light-hearted, no names are stated, so – have fun!

In **ELT Flash** column, we also share a report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> International SKA Conference which was held in Košice at the end of September 2016 prepared by the ELTA representative, **Tijana Nešić Ristić**. The conference was packed with talks and presentations on various topics: literature, Shakespeare, drama, CLIL, vulnerable groups, technology in the classroom...

Make sure you check the upcoming events. The spring brings a lot of international conferences in the region, you can follow the link to the IATEFL Annual Conference which is to be held in Glasgow and do not miss the link to the ELTA conference which is due in May.

We would also love to thank **Milica Prvulović** for being a devoted, hard-working fellow member of ELTA Editorial team and we look forward to seeing her back on our team by the end of this year.

Yours,

ELTA Editorial team

## **An interview with J.J. Amaworo Wilson**

**Vicky Papageorgiou, ESL/EAP instructor, Metropolitan College,  
Thessaloniki, Greece**



**JJ Amaworo Wilson** is a German-born, British-educated debut novelist. Based in the U.S., he has lived in 9 countries and visited 60. He is a prize winning author of over 20 books about language and language learning. *Damnificados* is his first major fiction work. His short fiction has been published by Penguin, Johns Hopkins University Press, and myriad literary magazines in England and the U.S.

**Vicky** : J.J., thank you so much for agreeing to give this interview!

**J.J. Wilson** : My pleasure, Vicky!

**Vicky** : I know that you have traveled to a lot of countries in your life. Which one is the most memorable?

**J.J. Wilson** : Every country I've been to has at least two things that I love about it. The first is always the people.

**Vicky** : I personally would like to know more about the time you spent in Lesotho and your school theatre.

**J.J. Wilson** : I got there the year before Nelson Mandela became President of South Africa, and it was already clear that big changes were about to happen in that part of the world. I was lucky enough to get work teaching and running a school theatre, so I produced and directed plays about what was going on there. We did a lot of Athol Fugard (*the great anti-apartheid playwright*), but also Beckett and Shakespeare. No one has more to say about tyranny than Shakespeare.



**Vicky** : You are a very productive writer, not just in the ELT industry though. I know you have written short stories, for example. And about a year and a half ago, if I am not mistaken, your novel '*Damnificados*' came out (which I really loved reading, by the way!). Tell us about the *Tower* and how you came up with the idea of your novel.

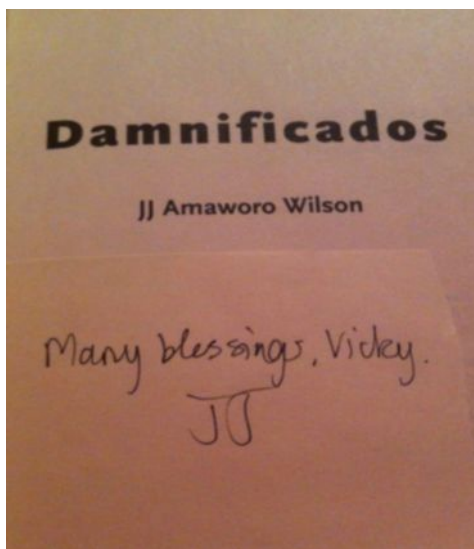
**J.J. Wilson** : Firstly, thank you! I'm glad you liked *Damnificados*! I was on a book tour in Venezuela some years ago, and I couldn't sleep. I took a long, late-night walk and saw the Torre David (*Tower of David*). The tower was unfinished, but hundreds of homeless people had moved in and built a community. I'd known nothing about the tower, but when I got back to the States I researched it. I discovered that the community living there was incredibly creative and resilient, like many poor communities. For example, the lift was broken so they built wooden ramps up the side of the tower and motorcycle boys gave people rides. They built an outdoor gym on the helicopter pad at the top of the tower, using leftover building materials – pulleys and iron bars. Their resourcefulness inspired me to write about them, but I turned to fiction because that's how my mind works.

**Vicky** : 'A modern day David & Goliath of epic proportions', 'Moses meets the desperados', 'Mad Max meets the favelas'. Which of these metaphors better represents your first novel?

**J.J. Wilson** : All of them! There are a lot of Biblical references in the novel. The hero is a Moses figure, discovered beside a river when he was a baby. He later

leads his people to the Promised Land - the tower. I included a terrible flood in the novel. That's taken from the Bible, although there are floods in the literature of all the major religions. The tower is also the Tower of Babel, with everyone speaking different languages. The Bible is full of great stories that writers can steal.

**Vicky** : One of the central messages that your novel conveys is that of social justice. Do you feel that social justice is a utopia in the world we live in?



**J.J. Wilson** : Utopia is like the horizon - beautiful and always out of reach. We walk ten paces towards it and it's still out of reach. We walk a thousand paces and it's still out of reach. We walk a thousand miles and it's still out of reach. And that's the point of Utopia. It keeps us moving. The struggle for social justice will never end. Humans are too flawed. Moving towards Utopia is all we can do.

**Vicky** : When narrating a story like the one in the *Damnificados*, does it actually sound 'inevitable' to resort to *magical realism* because...how else can you portray the absurdity of our times?

**J.J. Wilson** : I don't think it's inevitable. That story, like all stories, can be told in a straight, factual way or in a satirical way, as Orwell would have told it. *Magical realism* was a style I adopted because of what I like to read and because it's *the* great Latin American style, practiced by some of my favourite

**writers: Marquez, Allende, Borges, and Asturias.**

**Vicky :** While you tackle on many different issues (homelessness, urban social politics of power), you also make an interesting point about polyglotism. Introducing languages means we are forced to recognize diversity. One thing you were not afraid to use in your novel was languages! Do your *damnificados* respect each other's diversity more than people in the rest of the society? And why?

**J.J. Wilson :** I'm not sure they respect one another's diversity more than anyone else. They're just used to the fluidity of languages. It's like this in many parts of the world. There are parts of Nigeria where you'll go out to get your morning coffee and newspaper and you'll speak four different languages before breakfast. Australian aborigines might switch languages when they arrive at a certain river or rock, because that river or rock belongs to a different linguistic culture. The *damnificados* in my novel simply have to work together to survive, regardless of race or nationality or language. It's not a choice they make out of respect. It's out of necessity.

**Vicky :** I know writing takes up a lot of time but I also know you love it. Are there any plans for a new novel or an ELT book?

**J.J. Wilson :** I'm working on books in both fields - ELT and fiction. It's good to switch between the two. They use different parts of the brain!

**Vicky :** Thank you so much for your time!

\*\*\*\*\*

\*I hereby certify that I have the right to publish these photos

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**Vicky Papageorgiou** is an ESL/EAP instructor with approximately 20 years of experience, mainly with adult learners. She holds an MA in Education (Open University of Cyprus) and an MA in Art (Goldsmiths College, UK) and she has also been awarded a PGCE in Technology Enhanced Learning with distinction from the University of Wales Trinity Saint David . She studied in Greece, Italy and the UK but also participated in an international project for the McLuhan program in Culture and Technology for the University of Toronto, Canada. Her fields of interest are Technology enhanced learning, Art in ESL, critical thinking, Inquiry Based learning



and teaching adults. She is currently based in Thessaloniki (Greece) working as an Adjunct Lecturer at Metropolitan College.

# Courtship through the ages

Katarina Ristanović, "Takovski ustanak" Grammar school,

Gornji Milanovac, Serbia

**Keywords:** lesson plan, courtship, history, dating

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>“Courtship through the ages”</i></b></p>    | <b>Lesson:</b>   |
| Upper-Intermediate +  | <b>Student Level:</b>                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Developing students' reading skills</li><li>✓ Discussing successful reading strategies</li><li>✓ Revising and introducing new vocabulary related to <i>courtship</i> (chaperone, arranged marriages, courtship rules, speed-dating)</li><li>✓ Developing students' speaking skills</li></ul>  | <b><u>Lesson aims:</u></b>                                 |
| <p><b><u>By the end of the lesson the students:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ will have read the text about the history of courtship inserting the missing lines</li><li>✓ they will be able to deduce the meaning of the new words from the text and to use the target vocabulary in a new context</li><li>✓ will have discussed the advantages and disadvantages of modern ways of dating and meeting a partner</li></ul> | <b><u>Outcomes:</u></b>                                    |
| <p><b><u>Matching exercise.</u></b> Each student gets half a quote on love/marriage on a piece of paper (look at the notes and handouts below). A student pairs with the one who has the missing half and they sit together to discuss the quote. The teacher can ask the following questions: <i>“How do you understand the quote? Do you agree with it?”</i></p>  | <b><u>Warm-up:</u></b><br><b>10 min</b><br><b>In pairs</b> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>NOTE: To avoid noise in large classes which usually follows matching exercises of this kind, you can ask a student to read their half of the quote and invite the one who has the matching one to read theirs.</b></p>   |   |
| <p>Tell the students the topic is <b><i>the history of courtship</i></b>. Draw a timeline and mark the important dates and places (look at the notes below). Read the list of the events and ask the students to put them on the timeline.</p> <p>18th century England - <b>1st celebration of Valentine’s day</b><br/> Late 1998 America - <b>1st speed-dating bar was opened</b><br/> Before the mid 20th century in China - <b>arranged marriages were a norm</b><br/> 19th century, rural Austria - <b>there used to be a strange courtship rule; girls were keeping sliced apples under their armpits during the dances; after the dance, the girl gives it to the one she fancies; if the feeling is mutual, the chivalrous gentleman eats the sweaty apple</b></p> <p>Students check in pairs before you ask the class to give you feedback.</p> <p><b>NOTE: If you have time, you can ask students which piece of information they find most surprising. You can encourage them to draw their own timeline with the pieces of information they find on the Internet. This could be set for homework.</b></p> | <p><b><u>Activity 1</u></b></p> <p><b>5 min</b></p> <p><b>A whole class, pairs</b></p>        |
| <p>Tell the students they will learn more about the history of dating by <b>reading the text and that they will insert the missing lines.</b> (look at the handouts below)</p> <p>With the whole class discuss successful techniques for doing this activity (e.g. scanning all the missing lines before matching, looking for the words</p>   | <p><b><u>Activity 2</u></b></p> <p><b>10 min</b></p> <p><b>Individual, check in pairs</b></p> |

of the same lexical field in the text and the missing line, looking for the linkers, etc.)  
 Whole class feedback follows.

**KEY: 1-E, 2-C, 3-D, 4-A; B is extra**  
**NOTE: Text taken and adapted from**  
<http://www.lovehistoricals.com/medieval-romance/courtship-ages/>

**List a number of ways people meet their partners nowadays**  
 (speed-dating clubs, blind dates, dating services, on the Internet, going to a party)  
**Students mark these from 1- 5 according to their preferences** (1 - the worst, 5 - the best way to meet a partner) In small groups of 3-4 they compare their answers;  
 Ask one or two groups to give you feedback.

**Activity 3**  
  
**10 minutes**

**HANDOUT #1**  
**Quotes on love and marriage**

**...but to love more.**

**...always with the same person.**

**....who treats you like you are ordinary.**

**There is no remedy for love...**

**A successful marriage requires falling in love many times...**

**Never love anyone...**

**...but in looking outward together into the same direction.**

**...made with a fume of sighs.**

**...is the beginning of a lifelong romance.**

**...but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages.**

**...women because they are curious.**

**...cured by marriage.**

**...that was more than love.**

**Love does not consist of gazing at each other...**

**Love is smoke...**

**To love oneself...**

**It is not a lack of love...**

**Men marry because they are tired...**

**Love is a temporary insanity...**

**We loved with a love...**

**HANDOUT #2**



***“Courtship through the ages”***



These days, public displays of attraction are everywhere. Skin is bared, bodies and lips touch across every media from advertising to YouTube. But what was a couple a century or ten

centuries ago allowed to do? How could a man show his lust and a woman show her willingness to be lusted after?

### **Courting – Medieval Style**

In the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, there was little *courting* as we know it today. Women often met their husbands for the first time at the altar, their fate having been decided by their parents in some cases before they were born. Marriage was for procreating heirs, not for love.

It was considered inappropriate for unmarried men and women to be alone together. Women's bodies were covered from head to toe, including the hair.

Yet this was an age when illegitimate children were the accepted norm. **1** \_\_\_\_ but he openly flaunted almost twenty mistresses (most of them married to men in his court) and had untold numbers of royal bastards.

While it was acceptable, even expected, that a man would take a mistress, if a married woman so much as looked at another man...unless that other man was a king.



### **Courting – Lakota style**

Aside from chance meetings, brief conversations, and a well-aimed plum pit tossed at a girl to gain her attention, a young Lakota man a hundred years ago had little opportunity to get to know the girl of his dreams. To win her heart he might have obtained a love potion from the Elk Dreamer, a shaman skilled in such magic. **2** \_\_\_\_ it could make the young man very sick. So, most likely, he made himself as attractive as possible in his finest clothes and beaded moccasins and headed for the girl's tipi with a blanket draped over his arm. Enfolded in the blanket, their heads covered from view, he and his heart's desire could converse privately in public, shielded from the girl's overprotective parents and curious onlookers. The custom was called *ina aopemni inajinpi*, or "standing wrapped in the blanket".



## Courtship in the Victorian Era

Just as women today are sometimes advised not to “try too hard” or pursue a man when he’s just not that into you, women during the Victorian Era were expected to let the man take the lead when it came to courtship. In most cases, men called on women, not the other way around. Etiquette books of the period encouraged young women to behave with modesty, propriety, and refrain from too much exuberance. Laughing too loudly, winking, or putting your hand on the person with whom you’re conversing would have been considered immodest. Ladies were expected to be chaperoned when they met with gentlemen or took a walk outside, but young people expected to conduct their courtship under the watchful eye of **chaperones**. Such a custom was meant to protect the young lady’s reputation. Only after a couple was formally engaged were they allowed a modicum of privacy and could hold hands, walk arm in arm, or even share a modest kiss.

Though flirtation was difficult within the constrained world of rules and chaperones, some guides provided ladies with tips on how to signal their interest, or disinterest, in a man through the use of their gloves, handkerchiefs, fans, or parasols. According to one guide, holding one’s gloves with fingertips down could indicate you desired to make a certain young man’s acquaintance. It seems young men would have had to do a good deal of studying the various **secret languages of fans and gloves** in order to read a young lady’s signals correctly. **3** \_\_\_ Interestingly, the etiquette manuals were quite vehement about being clear in one’s intentions and never leading a member of the opposite sex on or doing anything that might cause them to misconstrue your interest or disinterest. Some manuals provided wording examples of notes you could send to reject a suitor properly.

Another fascinating aspect of the Victorian period is that the companionable love match became a popular notion. Of course, couples fell in love in every era, but finding **a beloved companion**, was never so much an objective of marriage as in the Victorian popular imagination. Victorian literature of the period contributed to the notion of the perfect romance, and such ideals actually made courtship a bit more challenging for young men and women. Conduct manuals, etiquette books, and newspaper articles advised women how to embody the feminine ideal and guides for men laid out just as many expectations for gentlemanly conduct. It was a lot to live up to! Still, despite the rules and rituals, Victorians couples managed to meet, fall in love, and marry. Indeed, the marriage rate and population/fertility rates increased in Britain throughout the

Victorian period.



## **Courting in Charlemagne's Empire**

What courting?

Like many aristocratic societies, those in the upper echelons of the Carolingian Empire married to make connections, and often these were **marriages arranged** by the parents, with no regard for the youngsters' preferences. This seems archaic now, but children were raised to expect such a marriage.

There is very little history left for us regarding the lower classes in the 800s. We know they lived in a much smaller world than the aristocrats, and may have at least been able to marry someone they knew. I like to imagine young couples meeting at mass or dancing together at a community holiday. 4 \_\_\_\_\_

So, as some of us anticipate cards or flowers for Valentine Day, and others might be getting together with good friends, we should remember the ideas of romance, courtship and marrying for love are not universal concepts. Entire empires were built by couples who barely knew each other!

**Insert the missing lines in the text. One is extra.**

A However, small landholders or merchants might also benefit from arranging favorable alliances and probably would have followed the lead of the upper classes where possible. B In ancient times, many of the marriages were by capture, not by chance.

C But the love medicine was very powerful, and if not handled properly

D And you can easily imagine a comedy of errors in which the wrong gentleman receives a message that wasn't intended for him at all.

E King Henry I of England sired two legitimate children

\*\*\*\*

**Katarina Ristanović** graduated from the Faculty of Philology, Belgrade, in 2000 and has been working in Grammar school "*Takovski ustanak*", Gornji Milanovac ever since. As SITT trainer she was involved in "*Towards Better Understanding*" project as a teacher trainer and project manager. From 2010 to 2015 she was a member of ELTA Board and ELTA International Coordinator. Her interests include teacher development and CLIL.

## Lesson Plan

### The Missing Piece, by Shel Silverstein

Branka Dačeski, English teacher, Access Microscholarship Program, Cycle 1  
Kragujevac, Serbia

**Keywords:** Reading stories, analyzing the reading text, developing critical thinking skills

**Age group:** Teenagers

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Materials:** Handouts, laptop, projector, speakers, blackboard /whiteboard

**Lesson Plan:**

**Warm –up**

Teacher prepares 4 circles of paper (about 20cm in diameter) that are then divided into smaller wedges, equaling the number of people in the group. Each student gets one wedge, on which they write the answer to the question:

**"What makes you happy?"**

When they have finished, they put back the wedges into the circle, and read it.

(10 minutes)



## Activity 1

Tell students they are going to hear a story - but before that you'll give them some expressions, phrases and words from the story. The teacher (or a student/s) writes these expressions on the bb.

You go through these together with students, explain or translate if necessary.

*set off in search*

*baked in the sun*

*cool rain would come down.*

*it was frozen by the snow.*

*sun would come and warm it again.*

*it would pass a beetle*

*"Oh I'm lookin' for my missin' piece*

*through swamps and jungles*

*lo and behold!*

*I am my own piece.*

*"I'm sorry to have bothered you."*

*this one a little too sharp*

*and this one was too square.*

*but it didn't hold it tightly enough*

*it held too tightly*

*falling into holes*

*and bumping into stone walls.*

*And one day it came upon another piece*

*"I can be someone's and still be mine."*

*"Maybe we won't fit...."*

*At last! At last!*

*it rolled faster and faster.*

*Oh my, now that it was complete it could not sing at all.*

*and it set the piece down gently,*

(15 minutes)

### **Activity 3**

The students are divided into groups of 4. They get these words and expressions - cut out and jumbled. They should put the cutouts on the desk face up, and while they listen to the teacher reading the story, they have to put the expressions in order as they appear in the story.

The teacher reads at normal speed, doesn't stop or repeat.

(10 minutes)

### **Activity 4**

The students probably paid more attention to finding the expressions and words, and did not pay much attention to the story itself. That's why they're going to hear the story one more time, and to watch it as well –animated video.

[The Missing Piece](#)

(10 minutes)

### **Activity 5**

Students answer these comprehension questions.

1. *What is "it"?*

2. *What was it searching for?*

3. *What was the weather like on its way?*
4. *Who did it talk to?*
5. *What places did it go through on its way?*
6. *What happened when he found its missing piece (first one)? What did the missing piece say to it?*
7. *How about other missing pieces, what was wrong with them?*
8. *Was it happy when it finally found the right one (missing piece)?*
9. *What happened next?*
10. *What happened in the end?*

(10 minutes)

## **Activity 6**

### **Questions for Philosophical Discussion**

#### **Happiness**

*The circle is unhappy with its Missing Piece.*

*Is the circle happy before it finds its Missing Piece?*

*What does the circle enjoy doing?*

*Is the circle happy after it finds its Missing Piece? Why or why not?*

*What do you want? Is it similar to what the circle wants?*

*Why do you think the circle keeps on looking for its Missing Piece even after it left the one that fit perfectly?*

#### **Independence**

*The Missing Piece says to the circle, "I can be someone's and still be my own."*

*Do you think that you are independent, or do you belong to someone else?*

*Can you rely on other people and still be independent?*

*Do you need other people to be happy?*

### **Quest**

*The circle finds that it is happiest when searching for the Missing Piece.*

*Why does the circle let go of its Missing Piece?*

*Does the circle like searching for the Missing Piece?*

*What happens to the circle while it looks for the Missing Piece?*

*Is the journey more fun than the destination?*

(20 minutes)

### **Activity 7**

Make a bookmark with your favorite lines from the book.

**\* It is the quest that brings it fulfillment and not the attainment of the object itself.**

**\*The Missing Piece should be a reminder to us all: to be happy with another person we must first be happy with ourselves.**

(15 minutes)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Branka Dačeski** has been teaching English for 12 years. She works in secondary and primary school, as well as in a private language school. She has also been teaching in English Access Microscholarship Program Project for year and a half, and this is one of many interesting and creative lesson plans.

# Teaching a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Class: Opportunities and Challenges

Dimitris Primalis, Dukas School, Greece

**Keywords:** 21st century skills, Edtech, digital citizenship, digital natives, web 2.0 tools

I started teaching in the previous century or as I often tell my students in a humorous mood, in the previous millennium. Back in 1992, learning technology involved using audio and video cassette players that would often chew the tape and had to be booked well in advance as they were rarely available to all classes. Books were our main tool and photocopied handouts were the main means to supplement the content. I was seen as the “authority “ – the person who knew everything about English language- and the learner’s path to autonomy was limited to English newspapers and magazines – to the ones who could find them or afford them – and films. Less than 25 years later, the EFL landscape has changed dramatically. Learners from a comparatively young age, are exposed to L2 through the social media with posts, videos and text messages; internet gaming and news platforms such as the BBC site. Learning English has never been more convenient, diverse and affordable as learners can access language content through their mobile phones virtually anywhere, anytime. It all sounds awesome but there are key, nearly existential questions arising: What is currently my role as a teacher in 2017? Do I have to assume new roles? Is there a place for me in the years to come?

## **“Are teachers redundant?”**

I can still remember the feeling of shock and awe shared by many colleagues after Sugata Mitra’s plenary in Harrogate (IATEFL annual conference, April 2014) and the heated debates that followed on whether teachers are necessary or technology will turn them into a relic of the past. The same fear has often been sparked by the developments in Artificial Intelligence, the introduction of Flipped class and I am convinced there will be even more concerns in the future as technology advances and is integrated into the classroom. Yet, from my experience -since 2009 when the school I am working for decided to adopt the 1:1 approach (1 tablet computer to 1 student) - my role may have changed but has never been questioned. On the contrary, the use of technology has highlighted the importance of an active, well-educated and open to new developments educator who can instill values and guide students in the uncharted

waters of the vast data ocean which they are about to sail in. The teacher remains the role model especially for younger students who seem to miss quality time with their parents due to long working hours. However, educators who live in their ivory towers are rather unlikely to find a way to establish bridges of communication. Acknowledging new realities, relinquishing old roles and assuming new ones seem to be the key to success for a 21<sup>st</sup> century educator.

### **Teacher is the authority in class? No more...**

Gone are the days when my students felt that I was a moving dictionary and I could answer any question they had. Now they can “google” any word they like and find within less than a second, a long list of online dictionaries. They can even listen to the word they are looking for with an English or American accent. What is more, they often use vocabulary found in computer games and trendy expressions that native players use on the internet that most teachers have never heard of which can be quite embarrassing. Isn't that a good reason for despair? On the contrary, it is this digital context that can be used as a vehicle to approach younger generations and establish a good rapport with them.

### **“I can help you with English, you can help me with technology”**

Over the years, I have found that sending implicitly or explicitly the above message is a game changer in class. Recognizing your learners' expertise in a field and often recruiting them as your assistants for the day can boost their confidence, make them feel that their teacher respects them and they gradually grasp the notion of synergy in order to achieve a common goal. Consequently, they tend to be more collaborative and positive than the traditional class. But their dexterity when using appliances does not necessarily mean that they have developed competencies that will allow them to exploit the opportunities given in a digital era for learning and protect them from potential dangers.

### **Teaching digital citizenship to digital natives...**

“In an increasingly digital world, where ubiquitous computing and demand-driven learning are the trends, there is a need to expand our vision of pedagogy so that learners become active participants and coproducers rather than passive consumers of content and learning processes are participatory and social, supportive of personal life

goals and needs.” (McLoughlin, C. and Lee, M., 2008) . Copying and pasting long passages without understanding what they mean and procrastinating on facebook and the other social media will offer little to students who wish to learn. Setting clear rules about how technology should be used with emphasis on respect to intellectual property, personal data and how to select reliable sources on their webquests may sound alien to an English teacher. Yet, they are the ones who can have an impact on their learners as the main bulk of data is in English and the EFL syllabus is usually more flexible and open to new concepts and practices. The above lessons are laying the foundations for sound academic skills and prevent learners from mishaps in their professional and personal life such as plagiarism, being reported on the social media and breaching copyright regulations.

Assuming new roles such as content curator and facilitating learner autonomy can help learner increase their exposure to English and exploit to their benefit the huge pool of authentic or simulated authentic material which is available without any charge.

### **New genres, old techniques**

Contrary to popular belief, younger generations write and read more on average than in the past. Yet the genres and purpose may differ to a great extent. Students may use English to text to friends, make a comment on the social media on a photo or statement, upload a post on a blog or create content for their own webpage. They all still have to do with the good old skills development we were trained to do as English teachers but tasks maybe modified to reflect real life. For example, students are more likely to respond positively to sharing their opinion on a blogpost rather than writing an essay. The main principles of argumentative writing remain the same but the above task accommodates personalization and is more likely to activate schematic knowledge than the traditional one. By no means do I insinuate that one should discard the classic EFL syllabus for the sake of emoticons and social media register but adapting the syllabus to approach the learners' daily life can have a positive effect in terms of motivation and participation in class.

### **New tools deployed in the battlefield of learning**

Finally, one cannot ignore web 2.0 tools and applications such as MS OneNote, linoit and Padlet – among literally hundreds available on the WWW- which actively support collaborative learning, communication and creative thinking skills. The teacher can

easily create content and share it with the learners, receive their work, give them feedback using virtual notebooks that can host text, sound, image and video files. Access to these learning spaces is easy and can be done anytime during the day – as long as there is internet access. Thus, a significant amount of time that was spent doing the above in class, can now be exploited to help learners develop their skills.

### **Some final thoughts**

A few hundred words in an article cannot describe fully the new landscape unfolding in our professional and personal life. Nevertheless, these groundbreaking changes highlight the need for teachers to adopt a flexible approach by incorporating new elements and practices in their teaching. Continuous professional development through training courses, building a Personal Learning Network with educators who face similar challenges and establishing a good rapport with learners can help an educator to keep in touch with the dramatic developments in the field of education and enable them to inspire their learners to fulfil their dreams for a better life through education.

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# Identifying Dyslexia in the First Classes of the Greek Primary School

Panayiotis Constantinides, Freelancer, Greece

**Keywords:** dyslexia, inclusion, Greek primary schools awareness, dyslexia identification

## 1. Abstract:

The aim of this small-scale research is twofold: firstly, to examine how aware Greek primary school teachers are of Dyslexia and Learning Difficulties mostly in the first three years of primary school. Secondly, to recommend ways through which Greek teachers will improve this awareness. The study is a qualitative research, since the purpose is not to test or measure the current situation and produce statistics. On the contrary, it aims at understanding the depth of the issue not only by analysing the existent literature and the Greek legal framework which refers to Dyslexia (e.g. law 3699/2008), but also by observing what people who are directly related to it – teachers - say and believe. These views will be assessed in a way that will bear suggestions to improve the current teachers' awareness of Dyslexia in Greece. In general, it adopts Mills's explanation on qualitative research as an "approach to data collection to understand the way things are and what the research means from the perspectives of the participants in the study" (Mills, 2011:5).

The significance of this research lies in the fact that the area of Dyslexia awareness among primary school teachers and even educators in general is very weak in Greece and measures need to be taken to reinforce this awareness.

The findings prove the above view to a large scale and justify the need for changes not only in the legal framework, but in teachers' attitude as well, if we wish to create an inclusive pedagogical environment in Greek primary schools and equal opportunities to knowledge.

## 2. Review of literature

The literature of this research mainly consists of two different pillars:

The first refers to scientific articles and books on Dyslexia in Greece, mostly written by Greek scientists, such as Dr. Anastasiou Dimitrios from the University of Western Macedonia and Athina Zoniou-Sideri from the University of Athens. The second is an analysis of the legal framework in Greece during the last 30 years, with a particular focus on the last decade, when some changes in order to improve the situation have occurred. Laws 2817 of 2000, 3699 of 2008 and 315 of 2014 can be considered as the most representative regarding the recent legal framework in Greece.

These two different areas provide the main source of knowledge in the field of Dyslexia at its initial stages. It must be stated here that a researcher who wishes to explore the area of “dyslexia in the first years of primary school”, will not encounter a huge number of authors and articles regarding the situation in Greece. The main reasons for this “weak” bibliography are mostly because Greece as a country tends to deal with a matter much later than the rest of western countries and this phenomenon could not exclude Dyslexia and Learning Difficulties. Thus, only after a respectable international bibliography has been published in a specific subject, will one start to encounter articles or books written by Greek researchers. Moreover, lack of funds to support research or even closure of research institutes or even universities around Greece is considered a serious factor which worsens the situation (Abbott, 2010) and (Marseilles, 2013).

Another factor to be considered, is a tendency to publish new laws faster than normal, usually due to deadlines from the European Union or simply pressure to solve a forthcoming problem and this leads to deficiencies and obstacles in the implementation of these laws. More often than not, after a law has been published, dozens of alterations follow, in an attempt to “cure” some of these deficiencies. Actually, this is one significant reason why this specific topic was chosen. The fact that some lack of a variety of resources on the issue occurs, results in the weak “awareness” stated in the title and makes the purpose of this research even more important as much as challenging. On the other hand, the meticulous search on the topic has led to some noteworthy pieces of work and has designated the key thinkers of the issue.

One of these key thinkers of the literature on Dyslexia in Greece is considered Zoniou-Sideri. After the Inclusive and Supportive Education Congress in Scotland, her

article 'Inclusive classes in Greece: New Names, Old Institutions' (2005) stresses a crucial issue regarding Inclusive classes in Greek primary schools. This issue is the range of "theoretical and practical difficulties and contradictions related to the implementation of inclusive educational practices" (Zoniou-Sideri et al, 2005:1). It also concerns the ellipsis of an official curriculum for these classes, a phenomenon which in combination with the extremely high number of students to be evaluated at KEDDYs (State Diagnosis and Support Centers) and MPCs (Medical Pedagogical Centers) actually present two of the most significant problems regarding Dyslexia and generally Inclusive Education in Greece of the 21st century. These problems still exist, albeit not so obvious, due to the new law 315, which is analysed below.

Some interesting features on Dyslexia in this methodology review are found in Anastasiou's work, a researcher and University professor whose articles have contributed crucially to research on Dyslexia. In his article on identification of Dyslexia in Greece (2009), he presents the identification procedures currently used and compares the situation with what happens in the US outlining common ground, as well as discrepancies between the two countries. A point of high importance has to do with the four different reasons he presents as causes of the increase. We should stress here the first one and agree that "the character of the Greek educational system and its central importance assigned by it to written exams (2009:64). The lack of supportive educational programs and services has also been a routine in the Greek educational system. Actually, it must be mentioned here that the article was written in the beginning of the Greek recession, which means that the situation lately has been much worse, with schools closing or being merged with bigger ones. According to one of the most reliable educational websites in Greece ([www.alfavita.gr](http://www.alfavita.gr)), from 2010 to 2014 more than 2000 schools disappeared from the educational map and 25000 teaching positions were lost. This certainly has led to poorer services, closure or merging of SEN schools as well and it is needless to refer to fractional support for students with Dyslexia or LD. The Greek Teachers Federations of primary and secondary education, worrying seriously about the loss of thousands of teaching positions, will send an urgent appeal to the Education International Teacher Federations asking for "support of their struggle to repeal the decision of the Ministry of Education in Greece" (<http://www.doe.gr/11/doe180311.pdf>).

However, a discrepancy must be stated here that existed in 2009, when Anastasiou presented this work, but changed in 2014 for the better. Anastasiou mentions lack of specialists comparing the Greek with the American system. It is true that then, no specialists such as SEN teachers or school psychologists were hired. Fortunately, with law 315 of 2014 a respectable number of schools - all schools with support classes - are accredited with an LD specialist and create support classes – Resource Rooms - for weak students and students with Dyslexia and LD. This decision, despite the obstacles occurring (lack of sufficient SEN teachers, areas where no schools with Resource Rooms exist) should be considered a serious step forward that under certain circumstances and state support can essentially improve the current situation. Definitely, it must be regarded as a positive move towards a more inclusive educational system, which so far has suffered serious disadvantages.

Additionally, a reference to law 3699, the most critical law of the current legal framework on dyslexia in Greece must be noted. This law will also be mentioned later in this research.

In a nutshell, Anastasiou's view that there are critical differences between the inclusive educational system of the USA and Greece is acceptable, however, some steps have been made lately in an attempt to bridge the gap.

Further information on the criteria and procedures regarding identification of Special Learning Difficulties (SLD) can be retrieved in Anastasiou's article on the Diagnostic Approach of Dyslexia (2007).

Part of the literature on Dyslexia has also been found in Vlachou's study on “the role of support teachers in Greek primary schools” (Vlachou, 2006). In this article, she refers extensively to the role of SEN teachers in Greek primary schools. The role of support rooms is stressed together with significant problems they face. Lack of special teachers, as much as lack of a formal diagnosis are key points here. Despite the fact that the work

counts already 9 years of age, both problems seem to be still present. The conclusions drawn from large-scale research are substantial, covering a number of almost 800 students and she is the second in a row key thinker, whose interviews with teachers refer once again to difficulties in implementing policies on Dyslexia and LD in classrooms. Again, analyzing her findings we can see both similarities to the present such as the "difficulties connected with the inflexible subject-oriented national curriculum" (50:2006), since no serious steps have been taken by the Ministry of Education since then for the better. The latter refers to her first finding from the interviews with teachers about the "limited cooperation between ordinary and special teachers" (50:2006). As it was stated earlier with Anastasiou's case, law 315 brings an improvement since this gap between teachers and SEN teachers starts being bridged. With this law, EDEAY (Committees of Diagnostic and Educational Evaluation and Support) are created and run only in schools where there are inclusion and support classes. The committee consists of the headteacher, school SEN teacher(s), a psychologist and a social worker. Every term, the students' progress is assessed and their improvement (or lack of it) is considered. The creation of the committees will "filter" the number of students to be assessed in KEDDYs, in an attempt to relieve the bottleneck. Still, the fact that they run in less than half of the schools in the country, automatically means that a respectable number of students who need support, cannot have it in the school they attend. To sum up, 315 brings a welcome change, despite the difficulties still existing.

A shorter - but very relevant to the present research - work on Dyslexia belongs to Lemperou et al, since it reflects "training needs of EFL teachers who teach dyslexic students within the mainstream classroom in primary education" (Lemperou et al, 2011:411). Despite the fact that the study refers to EFL teachers, it is obvious, they have been facing similar problems as their colleagues in primary education. As she highlights, EFL teachers:

*recognize the distinct needs of these learners in EFL they were unable to appropriately cater for them as they lacked the knowledge of how to devise an*

*appropriate teaching approach in order to ease the load of dyslexic learners and enable them to learn the target language (Lemperou, 2011, p. 414).*

We share this view but need to add that the courses Lemperou recommends for EFL teachers to attend in order to be able to improve their knowledge on Dyslexia, should be organized by the Ministry of Education with the assistance of Greek Universities. More analysis on relevant suggestions will be presented in the Discussion part.

As stated above, the second main resource for methodological analysis deals with the legal framework. A researcher could find some existence of LD back in 1978, but looking for the term "Dyslexia", it is not mentioned earlier than 1985. Then, law 1566 refers to the "Structure and function of Primary and Secondary Education. Regarding SEN, it is stated that the main aim is the "integration of the pupils in the productive process through specific educational programmes". Ten different categories of SEN are stated, one being Dyslexia and speech disorder. A new body is established for SEN programmes and teacher training. However, it would be lengthy and useless to analyse and critique laws like the above, since they have been replaced and are not valid anymore. The research will intentionally focus on three laws, considered crucial for the awareness of teachers on Dyslexia. These are 2817 of 2000, 3699 of 2008 and 315 of 2014, which has already been analysed.

The first is considered of high importance since for the first time special centres are established, named KDAY (Centres for Diagnosis, Assessment and Support). They assess students, formally diagnose and suggest support. Law 2817 can be therefore considered as the milestone of the legal framework which will follow, mostly because until then, no formal governmental body had been formed to assess students. During the next years, the core of it will remain "in use", KDAY will be reformed and renamed to KEDDYs with law 3699. Terms like co-teaching, parallel support and IEP – Individual Educational Programme are used. There is reference to two different types of special programmes, one for mild and one for more severe cases. However, it must be stated here that out of the 37 articles of this law, only 7 refer to Special Educational Needs and

the rest refer to school organisation and qualifications of special educators. This is a fact to be criticized, since a central law of crucial importance for Dyslexia, Learning Disabilities, learners with visual impairment and autism should include a core of articles regarding the relevant curriculum and solutions to improve the above categories learning procedures.

In the middle of this situation, the typical Greek school teacher seems unaware of identifying Dyslexia cases. Lack of knowledge of the above legal system is a factor to consider. Teachers are almost always e-mailed new laws by the school headteacher, but rarely do they bother to read them, remaining consequently unaware, a feature which is present in many interviews and questionnaires of this project.

Also, the fact that the majority of them have not been taught anything related to Dyslexia and LD during their university studies, something that will be analysed later in this work, deteriorates the problem and together with the lack of relevant seminars and in-school lectures advocate for a very unclear scenery regarding their knowledge.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Aims and objectives**

##### **3.1.1 Aims in general**

The aim of this project is to investigate teachers' knowledge in identifying Dyslexia, mainly in the first three years of the Greek primary school. A second, equally significant

aim is to offer suggestions that will improve this knowledge in this primary education setting.

### **3.1.2. Qualitative and Quantitative features**

This project is qualitative, however, it is possible that quantitative methods be used to support a qualitative approach. For instance, the number of interviewees who had the same answer to a question can be considered a quantitative characteristic. However, a quantitative research is based on statistical data and refers to testing. On the other hand, a qualitative research is based on rich data and helps understand something in depth. Many researchers have referred to this coexistence. As Blaxter et al. mention “the qualitative and quantitative have a tendency to shade into each other, such that it is very rare to find reports of research which do not include both numbers and words” (Blaxter et al, 2001:199). As stated in detail in the literature part, the main aim is to research the level of awareness on Dyslexia among teachers of the first three classes of primary school, a period which is crucial for the identification and support of a pupil with Dyslexia. Simultaneously, the data collected, being properly analysed, will form the basis for drawing useful conclusions and recommend ways to raise this awareness, which even before the beginning of the research seemed very poor. In a way, it follows McNiff’s explanation of the purpose of a research as “gathering data and testing it in order to generate new knowledge which can produce new theories of how reality works” (McNiff, 2002: 19).

### **3.1.3. Action Research vs Practitioner’s Enquiry**

This piece of work can be considered as an example of Action Research since it focuses not only on observing teachers awareness of Dyslexia in Greece, but mostly tries to reflect and change typical practices and offer suggestions and ideas for improvement. It aims at achieving “professional self-improvement through focused collaboration and allow teachers to be both more deliberate and more accountable in their efforts to change educational practice” (Freebody, 2003:87). The importance of the Ethics factor is

another characteristic of an action research project and this feature was essential for this research as well.

Instead, a practitioner's enquiry is done to implement change and it is

*much more about developing the knowledge, skills, dispositions and understanding required to become the kind of professionals who are able to question, challenge, understand and know deeply about teaching and learning* (The General Teaching Council for Scotland)

Consequently, this small – scale research intends to examine Greek primary school teachers' awareness on Dyslexia and LD and simultaneously suggest ways to improve it, "do things better, change our instruction to impact students" (Ferrance, 2000:3).

### **3.2 Research question**

The project is based on the following research question:

**"How can Greek teachers improve their awareness in identifying Dyslexia during the first three years of primary school?"**

The above question was carefully chosen after taking into account the researcher previous experience in assessing pupils with Dyslexia. After a period of almost four years assessing primary and secondary school students, the researcher realized the noteworthy lack of awareness on Dyslexia, from the part of primary school teachers, as much as the inadequate educational and legal framework to cope with this learning difficulty efficiently in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Lack of a variety of resources, poor legal framework and recession problems were some of the main reasons why this research question has been a challenge to discover. Furthermore, it will be really helpful to reach conclusions and offer suggestions that would improve the current situation on Dyslexia in Greece.

### **3.3 Methods of data collection and why they were chosen**

The participants were teachers of primary schools in Greece. The basic reason for this choice is that their role can be essential in identifying (or worse not) children in their

classes, who possibly need to be assessed in order to be offered further support as early as possible. The methods of data collection were questionnaires and interviews.

Questionnaires (13 in number) were chosen because it is a convenient way to collect data not only for the researcher, but for the individual to be questioned. This is because a participant can complete the questionnaire in the comfort of their home, without being worried about the result or the researcher. They “are a quick and simple way of obtaining broad and rich information” (Hopkins, 1996:134) and it is important that the researcher have an amount of written in paper information in hand, to refer back to it easily whenever they wish. In a nutshell, this type of collecting information was chosen because it can cope with participants who face some fear, for various reasons to participate in an interview. It is understandable that a questionnaire lacks the advantages of a face to face method like the interview, such as personal contact and the ability to see and interpret the participant's facial expression or body language. However, it is still a valuable form of collecting data and the use of open-ended questions provided valuable information, a feature stressed by McNiff again: “more open questions that allow personal responses are more difficult to analyse, but provide rich information and insights” (McNiff, 2009:143).

The second method of data collection was interviewing a number of teachers (six), giving the opportunity to triangulate the collected data. As Mills mentions (2011:92) this “desire to use multiple sources of data and not rely on any single source of data” is generally accepted in action research, therefore a second source after the questionnaires for this project was necessary. Not only did it make it easier to reveal similarities and differences among participants, it also disclosed some additional aspects, which were valuable to form recommendations.

An interview is a much more personal way of collecting data, since the researcher comes face to face with the participant carrying all the pros and cons of a personal contact. One of the advantages for instance is that some use of the prompts like extension questions, examples and encouragement comments can be skillfully used “to enable participants to reveal more details of the phenomena they are discussing” (Stringer, 1999:70). Additionally, it is important to have this “social” contact with an interviewee since its “social character constitutes a learning process” as Blaxter notes (2001:171). However, the number of interviews must be manageable, since they are also time-consuming to analyse, transcribe and decode trends. This is the reason why the

number of interviewees was kept low. Finally, a factor to consider, which is not present with questionnaires and was taken into serious consideration during interviews is the “care and consideration for the interviewee and the refinement of the researcher’s interviewing” (McNiff, 2002:96). The interviewee must be handled with respect and the researcher should also be able to filter the most crucial parts of the interview and use them objectively and wisely.

### **3.4 Sampling procedures**

The initial target group of participants required a few standards. First, the purposeful sampling had to be teachers of state primary schools to keep in accordance with the research question. They should be teaching in the first, second or third class of the primary schools during the current school year or the last two years. At least a week before any form of data collection, they were explained what the research was about, given the Plain Language Statement and asked whether they wish to participate in the research either via interview or questionnaire. Any questions were clarified at that time, so that participants were fully aware of the procedures of the method they would join and the purpose of the project.

All teachers taking part either via questionnaires or interviews were different (19 in total), so that a wider range be achieved and repetition of data from the same person be avoided. Deliberately, they varied in age, from teachers who were in their second year of teaching to very experienced ones, teaching for more than 25 years.

In regard to the gender, out of the 19 participants 13 of them were female and 6 were male. This is a reasonable ratio considering that the analogy of Greek primary school teachers is 60-62% for female and 38-40% for male (Department of Business Research and Statistics of the Ministry of Education, 2005) and Athanasiadis E, Maropoulos M. (2007:349).

The researcher in most cases, used sample among teachers who have already contacted him in person or via telephone or email to seek advice for students of theirs. There were a few cases where the participants were just acquaintances, still there had been previous contact with the majority of them. This fact can be considered as an advantage, since the atmosphere in the interviews was friendly and comfortable and the return of questionnaires was punctual. Questionnaires were given in person and the

interviews took place at the researcher's personal office. This place was chosen mainly because no external noise or other means would distract the interviewee.

### **3.5 Researcher's bias**

This research accepts that the role of the researcher is to produce rich data, which will lead to useful conclusions and recommendations and the "facilitator or consultant who acts as a catalyst to assist stakeholders in defining their problems clearly and support them as they work towards effective solutions to the issues that concern them" (Stringer, 1999:25). The main aim is to let participants express their own views so as to use these views as incentives for further research and analysis. In this way, we will be able to "look into the mirror of our findings and reflect on what we see" (Mills, 2011:114). On the other hand, it must be accepted that a researcher who performs this kind of work is automatically involved with the people who take part and as such there are reasonable chances that he be subjective. This fact though, does not mean that the above described procedures of the research are not followed and fully respected using a systematic and rigorous manner.

### **3.6 Validity and reliability**

One would wonder what is necessary to follow in qualitative research to make it valid. What is considered valid in action research is explained in Research Methods Knowledge Base: "when we talk about the validity of research, we are often referring to these to the many conclusions we reach about the quality of different parts of our research methodology". Some characteristics of this research such as the aim to achieve rich data and to use more than one means of collection can count in favor of the above term. Furthermore, some ideas in order to increase validity were followed by Feldman's suggestions (2003:27-28), such as a detailed description of the data collection and how the representation of this data was constructed.

Finally, regarding reliability, following its theory as "the quality of measurement, the consistency or repeatability of our measures" (<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/reliable.php>), it seems that the findings of this

research are case specific (Dyslexia) and the only wider application it could cover, could be the aspect of Learning Difficulties as well, where teacher awareness in Greece is also weak. The fact that the number of participants was limited is considered positive, since it is manageable and the results of both methods used showed repeatability of the data collected. Following once more Mills's advice, the researcher has tried to "consider whether his data would be consistently collected if the same techniques were utilized overtime" (2011:113).

### **3.7 Ethics**

Ethics has been a very serious part of action research. As Hopkins states:

*Action researchers must pay attention to the ethical principles guiding their work. Their actions are deeply embedded in an existing social organization and the failure to work within the general procedures of that organization may not only jeopardize the process of improvement but existing valuable work (Hopkins, 1996, p. 221)*

Therefore it was meticulously and typically coped during this project following the rules and regulations of the University of Glasgow Ethics Committee in order to make sure that the research is an ethical one. Apart from completing the relevant Ethics Application and Consent forms (see Appendix), some more ethical aspects were also taken into consideration. For instance, all persons and authorities had been consulted in advance and "equal access to information generated by the process" (O' Brien 1998:12) has been offered to all participants. Throughout the research anonymity was kept for all participants and they were provided with a Plain Language Statement (see Appendix) well before an interview or completion of a questionnaire informing them in detail on the purpose of this study and what it involved if they decided to participate.

## **4. Presentation and analysis of data**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to analyse data deriving from this small - scale research, aiming mostly at deducing from the data rather than merely present the results. The relevance to the research question will be analysed as much as links with the literature mentioned before.

#### **4.2. Data analysis**

In the context of this research, themes for analysis emerged directly from the data. It was decided that both questionnaires and interviews be analysed in parallel, since in most cases the similarities and discrepancies drawn from them had many common characteristics, in a sense that it would be useless for the reader to encounter similar aspects twice. In addition, data was grouped wherever possible, for instance seminar attendance and whether participants prefer morning or afternoon sessions. This was deliberately done in order to facilitate the flow of the research and avoid overuse of subcategories for replies which were related.

The first analysis of data was to go through the interviews and questionnaires meticulously and write down all the common features that were revealed. This "filtering" was dually useful because it simultaneously disclosed some discrepancies among replies. As a result, categories - "grouping the data into themes" (Mills, 2011:128) - were created according to these similarities and differences.

Secondly, an effort has been made to relate these data to the literature presented in this project, including points where this literature is confirmed and points it is argued. It aims at "revealing the concepts, theories and underlying assumptions on which various claims and viewpoints are based" (Stringer, 1999:171).

Finally, the relation to the research question will be analysed, namely how far this question has been answered and what these answers mean for the people who are involved, teachers, students and parents.

### **4.3 Similarities and differences**

From the very first analytical reading of the replies from both questionnaires and interviews, it was apparent and sometimes impressive that there were strong commonalities among responses. These "common or frequent answers are located and gathered", as Gilbert and Mulkay (1984) point out in the usual sequence of events of an interview. Before the beginning of the analysis, it must be mentioned that the professional experience of the participants covered a wide range of years in primary education from "freshers" in the second year of their teaching career to very experienced ones. The selection was deliberate, so that the range of issues raised to be wide and also to be able to compare the differences which have occurred in the education these teachers have received.

#### **4.3.1 Previous background on Dyslexia**

The first feature in common which derived from the data analysis deals with the above issue, since half of the sample (sample 1 questionnaires N1=13, sample 2 interviews N2=6) accepted they had not been taught any subjects relevant to Dyslexia and Learning Difficulties during their undergraduate studies. A factor to note here is that the older the teacher, the less possible to have been taught on Dyslexia. This simply means the change in the academic curriculum as the years went by, in order to "fit" the needs of a modern, more inclusive class. At the same time, the need for more practical and less theoretical university courses during undergraduate studies was stressed by the majority (n=16).

#### **4.3.2 Frequency of Dyslexia cases in class**

The second common feature is of crucial importance, since it refers to the frequency of Dyslexia cases or LD in classes and all (n=19) participants have experienced such. It is interesting though to note here that older teachers of 40 and over (n=14) stressed the lack of relevant assessment tools and structures some 20 years ago. Today, with the improvements in the legal framework, mostly law 315, teachers who suspect a

difference, contact the SEN teacher and if there is not any, since not all schools provide one, they contact the head teacher and the Special Education Counselor. The role of the latter was also established by law 2817/2000, the first of the key laws in Greece, as mentioned in the literature part. The participants here refer to the usefulness of Resource Rooms, a solution which was provided with the same law and was improved with laws 3699 of 2008 and 4186 of 2013.

On the other hand, one of the participants, who works as a head teacher this year mentioned the lack of willingness of KEDDYs (State Diagnosis and Support Centers) to accept students who are sent as "dyslexia suspected" by the school. Unfortunately, this may sound as a unusual discrepancy, but the high number of students to be diagnosed and lack of adequate scientists in these centers have resulted in such a negative reality. The problem has knocked the door of the Greek Parliament where MPs ask the Minister of Education when this problem is to be solved (<http://www.syriza.gr/article/id/50111/Sobara-problhmata-prokalei-h-ypostelechwsh-sto-KEDDY-Hrakleioy---Erwthsh-boyleytwon-SYRIZA-EKM-pros-ton-Ypoyrgo-Paideias-kai-Thrhskematwn-Politismoy-kai-Toyrismoy.html#.VZpmPPmqpBc>) since law 4186/2013 allows a period of 45 days from the application day for a student to be examined, but this is nowhere possible. On the contrary, due to lack of staff in many cases the center ceases acceptance or assesses students at an extremely low pace. Even small town centers like in Lefkada island suffer a waiting list of 400 students to cope (<http://xeneglosses.eu/2013/11/polla-keddy-den-mporoun-na-axiologisoun/>).

#### **4.3.3 Teachers' awareness**

Regarding the extent to which teachers feel adequately aware on Dyslexia and LD, the overriding majority (17 out of 19) feel they are not at all. Only in one case where the teacher was a SEN graduate, she felt reasonably confident. It was a common phenomenon that teachers be informed generally about changes in law or new Ministry of Education decisions during the teaching staff meetings, something which could not provide enough knowledge unless the teacher devoted time for self-research. Also, what was obvious among replies (17 out of 19) was the fact that as teachers gained more teaching experience, they could "suspect" more easily an LD or Dyslexia case. Most of

them (16 out of 19) finally do believe that with more cooperation among the teaching staff the situation would improve significantly. Perhaps with the hiring of a SEN teacher in most Greek schools, this cooperation will become more fruitful. In this part no differences were noticed.

#### **4.3.4 Seminar attendance**

Some very interesting features came from the questions relevant to seminars teachers have attended on Dyslexia, organized by their LEAs. Seminars held by the state were not very frequent and there was a discrepancy on their opinion on whether these should take place in the mornings during working hours or in the afternoons. Half of them (n=9) opted for the first choice, stating that this way they could definitely participate. The rest went (n=10) for the afternoon option, justifying this to the fact that in the mornings due to their teaching, a seminar participation would not be feasible. As for the content of these seminars, they all agreed (n=19) that in most cases they are too theoretical and they wish to receive more practical and experience-based knowledge. Moreover, it must be noted here that 16 out of 19 teachers attended seminars organized by a private body and less by the state. Summing up with seminars, all were willing to attend seminars or lectures on Dyslexia but for obvious reasons they would rather they were free of charge. They expect to find such a session useful, provided it includes information about the first signs, cooperation with parents and references to the legal framework. Two features were common among all replies and these were the provision of supporting exercises for the student and information on assessment tools used today to evaluate learners.

An uncommon feature here was expressed by one teacher (n=1) who was the only participant to refer to the need to offer psychological support to Dyslexia students. In addition, another suggested seminars for parents as well, stressing the fact that most parents are not interested in raising their awareness on such a serious issue.

#### **4.3.5 Schools attitude towards pupils with Dyslexia**

The crucial part of the school's attitude towards a pupil who has been formally diagnosed with Dyslexia comes next. As mentioned before, when a student has been identified to have some signs, the case is discussed in the teachers' meeting, which is usually held every 3 months according to Decision 353.1/2002. However, teachers' meetings are

held more often, because there are issues to be discussed much earlier than the 3-month scheduled ones. It is generally accepted that then it is a matter of the teacher how to cope with the case more efficiently. Simultaneously, the number of students is of high importance. Despite the fact that teachers are aware of the fact that they need to give equal chances to LD students to participate more, the more the students in a class, the more difficult to provide these chances. Resource Rooms are available for these students according to laws 2817 and 3699, however, as stated above, unfortunately not all schools offer them, a phenomenon which should be eliminated, so that every single pupil be given the chance to attend supportive classes. Furthermore, the moment a pupil holds a formal diagnosis by the state committee, the school adopts the recommendations given with these diagnoses and tries to follow them. An interesting point here is that the majority of mainstream students respect the condition when they share the same teaching hours with pupils with Dyslexia. In a nutshell, participants mentioned the need to discuss more often issues of students with Dyslexia and share experiences among them and also with the SEN teacher, to learn more and be able to handle cases more effectively.

The uncommon feature here came from a SEN teacher (n=1) who stresses that teachers should give Dyslexia students the "opportunity to discover the 'strong' part of themselves", so as to help them build their self-confidence, a feature which at the moment is not taken into account by the typical Greek school.

#### **4.3.6 Future expectations**

The last part of questionnaires and interviews deals with what teachers expect to see in the future in order to work in a more inclusive environment. The common belief which prevailed here (n=15) was that more in-school seminars should be organized, again with more practical and less theoretical content. There is demand for experienced researchers and teachers to run these seminars so that they can efficiently impart their useful experience. The role of an active SEN teacher is essential as much as the frequent congregations of the teaching staff to exchange ideas on the issue.

An interesting, different but innovative point here came from a young SEN teacher who suggested that a good idea from now on would be to have a "Dyslexia manual" at the

school premises, a book with all information necessary to teachers, which will remain in school all day and everyone will be able to seek information.

#### **4.3.7 Conclusions**

The analysis of data from the interviews and questionnaires brought to the surface some commonalities with the literature presented earlier on Dyslexia in Greece as well as some differences.

The first commonality which was confirmed with the analysis of data, was Vlachou's reference to the significant role of support rooms in Greek primary schools and simultaneously the problems SEN teachers have been facing with IEPs, feeling

*left alone in their effort to respond to the complexities of their work since they did not have any formal, systematic support, information and guidance that will help them to create more effective and appropriate teaching interventions (Vlachou, 2006, p.50)*

Despite the fact that this data analysis comes 9 years after the above article, unfortunately it confirms this negative situation for a teacher. On the other hand, in the same work we must notice a discrepancy with Vlachou's (2006:43) and Zoniou's et al (2005:3) regarding the establishment of new schools in Greece. At that time, indeed schools and SEN schools were founded, but as stated in our literature review, the number has dramatically decreased from 2010 to 2014 and the deep political crisis in which the country has been while these lines are being written is very possible to lead to an even worse situation for the Greek schools.

Since we refer to the above key thinkers, another conclusion in accordance with our findings is the lack of an enriched curriculum that will facilitate "more hands-on-experience learning" (Vlachou, 2006:42). This issue is also found in Zoniou's et al work as a lack of a "corresponding official curriculum for inclusive classes" (2005:7).

The analysis of data revealed some commonalities with Lemperou's et al work, despite the fact that it refers to EFL teachers. Their reference to the substantial role of the teacher "to support dyslexic students and make educational adjustments in order to

create successful classroom environment” (2011:411) is confirmed by the replies of the majority (16 out of 19) of the participants of this research. No matter whether a teacher teaches English or Greek, their role and attitude towards a person with Dyslexia has been of vital importance to a more inclusive educational setting. In accordance with the findings of the previous key thinkers, Lemperou et al come to agree that the EFL teacher – as much as primary school teachers we are analyzing – facing problematic coursebooks and instructional methodology, bears the burden “to adjust and present the curriculum in a dyslexia friendly manner” (2011:415). It is finally impressive how she agrees with the majority of the participants concerning the need of teachers “ to be trained in updated methods and approaches in order to secure the success of dyslexic students in learning English as a foreign language in the mainstream classroom of public primary education” (2011:415).

In the last part of the relation to the literature, the work of Anastasiou is regarding a serious lack of a robust “formal, legal delimitation” (2007:399). This deficiency hinders a smoother assessment of students with Dyslexia using similar tools and diagnosis services.

## **5. Implications**

All in all, the resources of this small-scale research project offered invaluable information on the matter and answered a hundred percent the research question. The fact that some crucial commonalities came straight to the surface, helps in realizing the main problems teachers in Greece have been facing towards awareness concerning Dyslexia. Also, some features which were expressed only by 1-2 teachers offered useful ideas and food for thought in order to form suggestions and bring solutions for the future.

Lack of state support is a key factor in many different areas which affect Dyslexia awareness. This lack concerns a range of aspects, such as insufficient undergraduate courses during future teachers basic studies. A new university curriculum should be designed by the Greek Ministry of Education, which will include subjects on Dyslexia and LD together with examples and intervention practices based on the experience and the students needs which have been recorded so far.

Moving on to after graduation professional improvement, seminars and lectures must be organized by the Ministry of Education or even each LEA, so as to ensure teachers' Continuing Professional Development (CPD). One cannot think of teachers without CPD in the 21st century, mostly with the numbers of students with Dyslexia to hold according to the British Dyslexia Association 10% of the UK population (<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about>) and to rise dramatically year per year.

CPD is almost unknown in Greece and all participants impressively agreed that whatever they know about Dyslexia is based on self-study. The Greek government should find ways to organise and support CPD not only aiming at "improving the job performance skills of the whole staff", but also to "improve pupil learning" (Craft, A., 2000:10-11). Currently, there are state bodies like EKPA (National Kapodistrian University of Athens) which run e-learning three-month courses on Dyslexia and other LD aspects via distance, embodying a really helpful spectrum ([http://elearn.elke.uoa.gr/show\\_programs.php?catID=52](http://elearn.elke.uoa.gr/show_programs.php?catID=52)). The Ministry should start cooperating with Greek Universities in order to run such programs with their assistance and trying to cover financially part of the fees. Half of the participants in this research suggested having such an opportunity and they were willing to join if part of the cost is subsidized.

Regarding LEAs, better and more frequent information on Dyslexia, new laws, assessment tests should be offered and this is a point that our research showed it is also a matter of headteachers. The latter should not only be willing to inform staff about anything related to Dyslexia, but be looking for the organization of such seminars in the area with the cooperation of other schools.

One of the most significant factors which seems to impede the improvement of teachers awareness in the first - crucial - years of primary schools is the weak legal framework which affects most areas of inclusive education, such as diagnosis centers, assessment tools, staff awareness and curriculum. For instance, law 3699 which can be considered a milestone in the Greek legal framework on education, refers in 30 out of its 37 articles to the organizational issues and SEN teachers qualifications instead of setting the scene for a core of articles for a rigid curriculum for all to improve and facilitate their learning skills, assessment tools and teachers' CPD. As Anastasiou and Polychronopoulou mention "in

Greece, a thoroughly categorical model of special education provision has never been applied to children with SLD or other mild disabilities" (2009:63).

Finally, Greece has been suffering from a deep recession lately, which already counts almost 7 years. The financial situation undoubtedly affects education to a critical extent. Diagnosis centers are underemployed or sometimes cease their services since there are no psychologists or SEN teachers to staff them. The Ministry of education needs to find ways to man KEDDYs with "educators with scientific prestige, knowledge, experience, ethos, maturity and determination" (Anastasiou - Iordanidis, 2006:8) so as to be able to cope with the difficulties of assessing students and inform parents. Law 315 of 2014 was a significant start by sending a SEN teacher to many schools, in capital cities, but this should cover all schools of the country. The establishment of Medical Pedagogical Centers was another step forward facilitating the diagnosis procedures and shorten waiting time, but they need to be well supported and adequately staffed.

In a nutshell, Greece can walk its own way in raising awareness of teachers in primary schools, a fact which will help young learners learn better. It is understandable that both would flourish much more easily under a stable economy, still in many cases, right decisions, well prepared laws and teachers' willingness to improve their knowledge are basic ingredients for a successful, more inclusive recipe, for a well-supported, happier young learner.

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# Get Your Students Developing Their Writing Skills With Google Story Builder

This article was originally published on the Using technology better website

<http://usingtechnologybetter.com/google-story-builder/>

**Keywords** : edtech, writing skills

**Google Story Builder** is a fun Google tool that will get your students developing their basic writing skills.

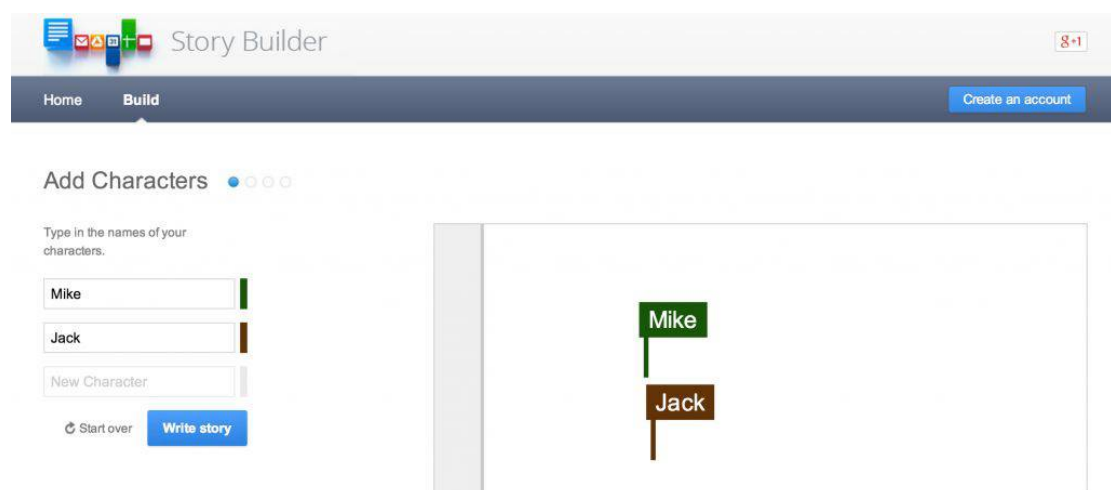
You don't need a Google account to participate and younger students can easily navigate through the Google Story Builder steps.

Once the students have finished writing their story, they can add music and watch the animated video of their writing experience.

You can check out this quick example I made <http://goo.gl/JYMyA5> and then see below for the step by step guide

## 1. Go to Google Story Builder

You don't need to click on create an account. Just enter your character names into the boxes on the left hand side. Once you have the character names entered (you can have up to 10) click write story.



## 2. Enter the characters text.

Each character can be used multiple times. Once you select the next character, they can go back and edit the text from a previous character.

**NOTE:** If you have started to use your next character, you can't go back to the previous character and edit the text. The next character needs to do the editing.

Write Story ● ● ● ●

Write what you want the characters to say & title your story.

**Mike** There once was a teacher that loved to use technology with his class

**Jack** There once was a teacher that loved to use technology with his students. Jack also loved using technology to write stories because they are easy to edit

Character

Title Google Document  
My story about a teacher

Clear story Edit characters Add music Preview story

## 3. Add your music

There are seven styles of music you can select. As you click on the music selection the story will begin to play so you can see and hear what the finished product will sound like.

I chose 'Go Google' for the example story above.

Add Music ● ● ● ●

Choose a soundtrack, or keep it without.

**GO GOOGLE** II

SUSPENSE

COUNTRY

SLAPSTICK

LOVE STORY

UPBEAT

NO MUSIC

Edit story Finish up

Preview video

#### 4. Give your story a title and get the short link

Once your students have given the story a title, they can click the get the short link button. Google will create a Google short url (goo.gl) for you to share.

It would be great if this short URL was linked back to your Google URL shortener account.

Share Your Story ●●●●

Now that you're finished, send your story to all of your friends.

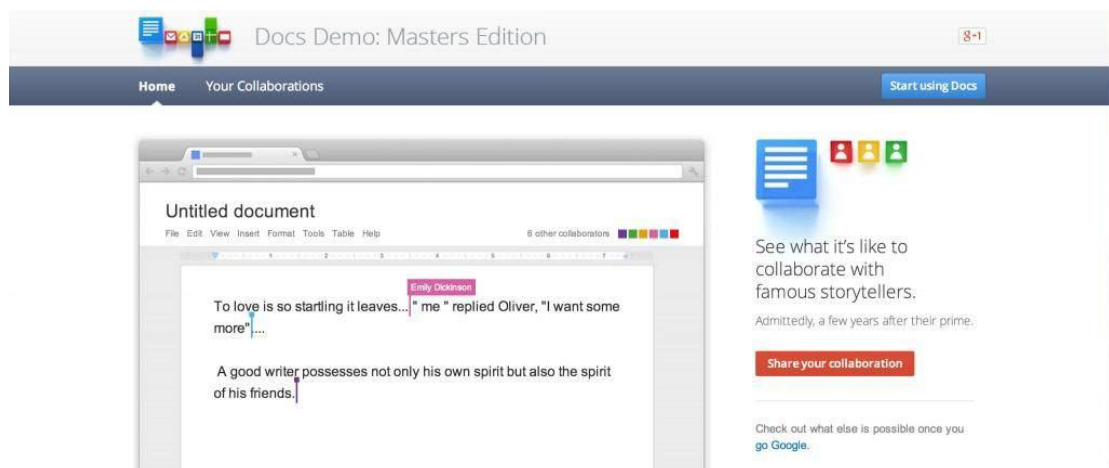
Title

Your first name

*There is also a different Google Story Builder:*

Your students can collaborate with other famous story writers. When you go to **Master Edition**, a famous writer will start the story off and your students can finish it.

Every now and then another famous writer will drop into the Doc and add a line or two.



*If you have a Google Account you can also create a master edition*

Once you have logged into your account, you can create the first part of the story.

Save your work and then get a short URL to share with the class. They can collaborate on the rest of the story.

\*\*\*\*\*

## The Sci-Fi Short Story Writing Competition

Svetlana Gavrilović, Užice Grammar School, Užice, Serbia

**Keywords:** science fiction, short story, competition



This year's writing contest in Užice Grammar School was dedicated to Herbert George Wells and his 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. To honour the great sci-fi master, English students and teachers organized a writing competition in which the participants had to produce a short story between 300 and 1,000 words in length on the topic of science fiction. Like many times before, the contest was sponsored by The English Book and Pearson. Here are the three winning entries, whose authors were inspired by didactic, whimsical and adventurous elements from Wells's novels.

### Lost by Dejan Bakić IV5

I slept badly tonight, so I was completely exhausted. Still, I had so much work to do. Miss Peregrine from Mission Control was furious, for some unknown reason ... We were not even late with our reports at all ...

Sigh ...

I was yawning, typing on my holographic touch screen keyboard and talking with ship's AI, Theta, while drinking my hot tea and trying not to fall into dreams' embrace. I was really, really grateful that they had let us grow tea here, on our 'Vixen-02', the starship that we had called our home for almost a year now.

Who were 'we'? My colleague, Antonie Meaumont, and me Ayla Foile, of course!

'Vixen-02' consisted of two personal rooms, a greenhouse, a tiny kitchen, a bathroom, a couple of spacious storage areas, all of this connected to our working area, and then, finally, a hallway leading outside, protected by safe-proof airlock.

Oh, and, by the way, please don't ever ask what happened with 'Vixen-01' ... Try not to mention it at all!

We were sent on planet Hephaestus V to collect and analyze various samples from the surface. The results were pretty astonishing. Not that long ago did we find life! Well, tiniest traces of life. A small primitive colony of microorganisms in one of the rock samples. Mission Control and Miss Peregrine were (finally) delighted!

- A life form detected outside – metallic voice of our ship's AI filled the room.

I jumped, surprised and confused. I didn't even notice that I had fallen asleep! Shame on me!

I stood up and looked on the computer screen that was hanging on the wall near the inner airlock door. Antoine was waiting outside of 'Vixen-02', with the floating cylinder used for storage and protection by his side. It looked like he had found something interesting!

- Ayla, do you hear me?

- Yes, Tony. Welcome back!

- You know that you can leave this whole process to the computer, right, captain Folie? – ship's AI asked me.

- Oh, please, not again ... We had this conversation before, Theta.

I pressed the button under the screen, the outer airlock door opened, and Antoine walked into the corridor. Then he continued down the hall, while the floating container was following him autonomously. I heard sounds of air pumps and disinfection robots doing their jobs.

A small light above the screen turned green, I pressed the button again, and the exit door near me opened.

- I see you've found something! – I said, trying to hide my sleepiness.

- Yeah, there are traces of unknown living matter on these rocks. Something like moss – he replied calmly.

- Really? How exciting! Imagine the reaction of Miss Peregrine!

I returned to my desk and continued with my dull work.

\* \* \* \* \*

- A life form detected outside – Theta said suddenly.
- What? – I whispered, and then heard a voice coming from the airlock door speaker.
- Ayla, do you hear me?

Antoine's voice.

I froze, and then slowly looked at the screen.

There he was, waiting outside, with the floating cylinder by his side.

- What the hell? – I said quietly.
- Ayla? Ayla, do you hear me?
- Ye .. Yes. Didn't I just let you in, Tony? – I asked cautiously.
- What? What are you talking about? I've just returned from my trip. You cannot imagine what I've found!

I glared at the screen, silent and extremely worried.

- Is there a problem over there? I am, you know, kinda tired and kinda out of air.

Oh, come on, Ayla, you silly girl! I must have dreamt and imagined everything.

I finally pressed the button, watched Antoine approaching the inner door and listened to the sounds of machinery and streams of air while waiting for my colleague.

- Who are you talking to, Ayla? – a voice behind me startled me.

I turned around and almost screamed in terror.

Antoine was standing just outside his bedroom, confused.

- What's happening? He asked quickly.
- No ... no! you are in the airlock now, aren't you?! This is not happening ...

Am I losing my mind?!

- What are you talking about, Ayla? – Antoine tried to approach me.
- Stop! One more step, and I will ...
- Ahem, Ayla, dear, what's wrong? – the airlock speaker came back to life, and I quickly looked at the screen. Antoine was standing just outside the inner door.
- What's taking you so long? Are you tired?

I started shaking. This simply couldn't be ...

- Ayla! Don't open the door!
- Ayla? I've heard a voice. Who are you talking to? – the speaker spat out Antoine's words.
- Ayla?!

With my fingers hovering above the button and two identical copies of my colleague on the opposite sides of the airlock door, I just stood there, speechless, weak, horrified ...

Lost.

### **Justice by Aleksa Nikolić III1**

His master was calling me, he knew he had to hurry up. He mustn't keep Graeus, the supreme God, waiting for too long, else he will surely hear his master's harsh scolds, as always. Amaraus had just recently become the apprentice supreme God, chosen to be Graeus's, once the time arrived. He felt proud, but he lacked humbleness, he knew why he was chosen – his power, he knew all too well that his power far exceeded that of the lesser Gods, and his ego didn't miss it either. Graeus knew that Amarus was incredibly powerful, so he never trained nor nourished the pupil's power, rather, the only training he did was that of the mind, the soul, and the heart. The God had much to learn about compassion, humility and virtue, if he was ever to become the successor. Finally, as he walked faster and faster, eager to hear why his master called him, he arrived at the Holy Tree at which Graeus was residing. Graeus was as always, waiting for him, sitting in front of the enormous tree. Amarus kneeled, to which Graeus simply shook his head.

'You kneel, but you do not understand the purpose of kneeling. Rather than a sign of respect towards me, you kneel because you respect yourself, you want to be dignified, even though the situation doesn't call for it.'

Amarus remembered these words well, Graeus would repeat them every time they met. Did Graeus think that if he repeated something enough times it would change anything? Amarus smiled, he couldn't let Graeus see his insecurities, however miniscule they could be.

'Excuse me, lord Graeus, what was if you wanted to talk about,' said Amarus, who meanwhile sat next to his master.

'I know how you feel, but you must understand that this is simply how it must be. Even us, Gods, cannot change the way the Universe works. You mustn't give in to your distrustful tendencies, you should battle them now, while they still aren't so severe. You must humbly train your mind and silently watch over the deeds of the humans.'

Humans, why is it always about humans? Those foolish lesser beings, Amarus thought. Why must I, a God, be reduced to be a mere servant of the humans?

'Lord Graeus, there is something I've always wondered about; are the humans really worth protecting? I've observed countless deeds committed by humans up to this point. They prosper, they wage wars, they fall. This cycle repeats perpetually. To me, these seem like utterly foolish acts.'

Graeus got shook by such a question. He always knew his pupil had some distrust of the humans, but that it went that far, he had no idea.

-That is what humans are,' replied Graeus, managing to keep calm.

This angered Amarus, who furiously stood up.

'Do these beings who do nothing but repeat their foolish mistakes really deserve our protection? Would it not be better to put an end to their foolish deeds ourselves?'

Graeus, still managing to keep calm, replied: 'The Gods' duties, lesser or supreme, are to protect, not destroy. You understand that, I presume?'

'But are you telling me to silently look past the human mistakes?'

'Not look past them, you are to silently watch over and foster them, that is our purpose.'

Amarus sat back down, noticeably distressed.

'Amarus, know your place, learn more about the humans. Here, I have recently been watching over a new civilization of humans to see how they would turn out, but they're far too brutal.'

He showed the civilization to Amarus. Amarus saw tribesmen humans fighting each other with spears, killing, murdering, pillaging. He grew sick at the sight.

'In that case, maybe we should clean up while we can?'

'Clean up? What do you mean?'

'Exterminate them, of course.'

'What are you saying?' yelled Graeus. 'That is not for you to decide!'

'Then what should we do? Are you saying such ferocious creatures will become calm?'

'Well, I say we watch over them for a few thousand years or so.'

'I rather doubt that order will be born. After watching so many other civilizations it's obvious. All human civilizations are ...'

'Very well, if you are so adamant about it, let's have a look.'

'A look?'

'Yes, I am going to transport us through time, normally, only the Supreme Gods are allowed to do this, but just this one time, I'll consider you one.'

'Thank you very much, lord Graeus.'

And so they travelled to the same civilization, a few thousand years in the future.

The humans had now built cities, castles, universities, churches, farms and much more. But they were still waging wars, which became even more brutal. Amarus noticed all of it.

'See?', said Graeus. Something resembling a culture is formed.'

But the sight of them slaughtering each other with metal swords made Amarus feel sick. As long as humans exist, the universe will never have peace, he thought.

The fighting continued, blood was shed all around. Pillaging, battling never ceased.

'They take whatever they want by force. That is the way of the humans. Or could it be called their law? They have neither justice nor order. The wisdom bestowed upon them by the Gods is of no use to them whatsoever.'

A human appeared behind them, he saw the two Gods. He attempted to attack them from their back to which Amarus repelled him back. The human was dizzy for a bit, but then stood up, yelled and started charging at the Gods again. Amarus charged his power, full of murderous intent.

'AMARUS! STOP IT, AMARUS,' yelled Graeus desperately.

But it was already too late, Amarus had already sliced the human in half using his power.

'We're going back,' said Graeus, full of disappointment.

They were now back.

'That life could have one day affected the history of that civilization in a significant way. It might have brought change.'

But Amarus knew what he had to do, he knew it now.

'Lord Graeus, you always say that learning from mistakes they make and building a better world upon them is what humans do.'

'Yes,' nodded Graeus.

'Yet from what I've seen, the humans don't learn. I'm sure you have seen more examples like that civilization.'

'We must wait for the humans to learn, Amarus.'

Amarus felt anger and sadness at the same time.

'Are we only to watch over them? When I was invited here, I thought I would learn justice from you. But is Gods' 'justice' purely watching over others?'

Graeus felt Amarus's heart blacken.

'Amarus, have you ever thought about good and evil?'

'Yes, constantly. Evil should perish. Justice is necessary for good to flourish.'

'I see, however, this is what I believe: justice entails bringing balance between good and evil.'

'Balance?'

'Even if evil makes you lose your way, you stand your ground and keep searching for the path of good ... Is that now what justice is? It is for that reason that the Gods gave humans knowledge.'

'We mustn't allow evil, Graeus. Evil is violence like that of the humans, and conceit like that of the human who would trade blows with the Gods. Humans use their God-given wisdom for evil, and spoil our beautiful World. The humans who gained knowledge are true evil. Does this not strike you as half hearted? What good are Gods if they do not destroy evil?'

'Amarus, it is wonderful to have a good sense of justice. But there are times when keeping your heart pure and guiding the lost will lead to peace. Don't forget that it was for the sake of your heart that you polished your powers. Gods are not perfect. Even Gods learn and grow.'

Amarus bowed for the final time, and swiftly killed Graeus, taking him by surprise. 'Graeus, merely watching over them is the biggest sin of all,' he thought. He was now the supreme God, and he used that power to travel back into the future, to the place where he had killed a human. It was there where the ignorant humans dared raise their fists against Gods, and he wanted to do more than merely watch over them. He would deliver to them 'the Justice of the Gods'.

### **The Escape by Jovana Babić III6**

'Attention, all humans. You have failed us. You have five minutes to say your last goodbyes and then you will all be destroyed'. At first, they were all confused, next they started panicking. In the end, everything became black.

I woke up covered in sweat. *It was just a nightmare.* I thought, but my hands were still shaking. *Look around, focus.* I was in a small white room. There was no furniture except the bed which somehow levitated. There were no doors either. *How am I supposed to get out of here? Where am I?* A million questions started rolling up in my head. I banged the walls and shouted '*Let me out of here!*'

'Calm down' said the voice behind me. My heart almost stopped. I was looking at tall, white creature with big saucer eyes. He, or better it, was so serene that I started to relax. 'Give me your hand'. I don't know why but as soon as it told me to do something, I immediately had a strong urge to do it. I put my hand in its (which had only three fingers) and we appeared in a large round white room. The first thing I saw was a spectacular view of a million stars brightening up the endless, dark space. I was speechless. 'Have a seat and after you eat something I will answer all of your questions.' I sat down and ate a bunch of pills which tasted disgusting, but I was hungry so I didn't mind. 'Ok, now what you promised. Where am I? Why am I here and who are you?' It had irritated face, like it's doing the same thing over and over again, but it started talking:

"How should I explain this? I'm taking you to my home planet. You need to be examined, repaired. Most of your body now is bionic, 63% to be exact. When we found you, you were on the verge of death. Thankfully, we were able to transplant your conscience in new body. We had to make you a new arm and we also made a few adjustments, otherwise you wouldn't be able to breathe.'

I looked at my arms, I was so confused. I couldn't tell which one is mine. Both felt normal. First I wake up in a starship and then find out that I am a half-robot... It's a lot to process.

'Ok, wow... But, you still haven't told me who you are.'

'I don't' have a name. My species is as old as the universe itself. We've been exploring space since the beginning of time. We lived for knowledge, but now there is a problem in our ranks. That's where you come in.'

'How am I supposed to help?'

'Some of our members have started to develop feelings, thing we worked so hard to destroy. They think our lives have no meaning, and now we are on the verge of war. Every day more and more are joining the wrong side. We're losing sight of who we are.'

'I don't understand. Where am I in all of this? Why are feelings a problem?'

'You can't understand. Your mind is too simple. You see, a few of us who are still in our right minds have made you, humans as a project. We gave you intellect, but we also gave you the ability to feel and look where that led you. All those pointless wars, destruction. We made our point.'

'Wait a minute, you destroyed the Earth?'

'Yes, you would have destroyed yourselves anyway. Now, will you help me convince the others before we end up like you?'

I was stunned. I wanted to say something like *'No way! Are you crazy?!'*, but I just nodded. 'Ok, wait here. I have some business to attend to. You will be a great reminder in our museum,' it smiled and left.

*I have to get out of here, I don't want to be some kind of artefact!* I started running through endless halls like a maniac. I had no idea where I was going. I stumbled on a map. *There must me some kind of exit.* I saw it. There was a section with a spacecraft. After a few wrong turns, I finally found it. *Awesome, it's a starfighter!* It was beautiful with its giant wings which reminded me of a bird in flight. As soon as I got closer the door opened and I went inside. I found a cockpit and set it to autopilot.

'Where do you want to go, miss?'

Then I realized that I don't know. The Earth was destroyed along with my family and all my friends. I had nowhere to go. I was all alone. I was hopeless. Tears blurred my vision. I started to cry. *Those idiots! How could they do that?! Obliterate everything just to prove a point! They won't get away with this. If I could just go back and fix things...* Then it hit me. It was crazy but:

'Scan the area for wormholes. Are there any?'

'Yes, miss, there's one just a few light-years away from here. Would you like to go there, miss?'

I couldn't believe it. Wormholes, they exist! Theoretically, they can be used for space-time travel, but it was never proven. Well, I guess I'll be the first one to find out.

'Yes, set the course for that wormhole.'

I buckled up and I was ready for flight when I saw the alien's shocked face through the glass. It was furious.

'Get back here! Where are you going anyway?'

'To rewrite history.'

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**Svetlana Gavrilović** has been teaching English for over twenty years now. She is currently working in Užice Grammar School.

\*I certify that I have the right to publish this photo.

**The Duke's portrait**  
**A novel by Ken Wilson**

**Chapter 5**

**Au naturelle**

In the blue drawing room at Great Park, Charles stared at the stationmaster, thanking his lucky stars that the raincoat he was wearing most of his cream suit, which the man might remember, not least because in this neck of the woods, where most people wore black or grey, cream seemed very exotic indeed. The stationmaster looked him up and down and Charles was convinced he was staring at the two inches of trouser that were visible below the hem of Garth's long raincoat.

The two police officers walked forward and stood in front of Charles and Polly. The older man was wearing the peaked cap of an officer and the younger one was wearing a constable's helmet. Looking at the constable's sizeable frame, Charles thought there must be something in the water around there. Most of the locals he'd encountered since his arrival at Stanford Saint Mary - the stationmaster, Garth and now the constable - were vast human beings.

The sergeant took off his peaked cap and cleared his throat before speaking. "Good evening, Mr Washbrook, Miss Capstan," he said. "I'm Sergeant Conway from the Cheltenham Constabulary, and this is Constable Prodgers."

"Evening, all," said Prodgers, with a small nod of the head.

"This evening," continued the sergeant, "we were called out to investigate an assault and robbery."

"Good heavens," said Polly. "Who's been assaulted and robbed? Not the Duke, I hope?"

"No, not me, darling," said someone in a deep baritone. Charles peered through his dark glasses to see who owned this rich voice. There was a high-backed red leather armchair facing a coffee table in front of the large fireplace, and the man sitting in it now appeared and approached them. He was about the same height as Pickles, but twice as wide. It was as if someone the size of Pickles had eaten someone the size of Pickles. This place is populated by giants and dwarves, thought Charles.

The Duke of Burfaughtonleigh waddled elegantly towards the new arrivals.

"Sergeant dear," he said to the sergeant. "Could you wait just a moment while I welcome my distinguished guest?"

Sergeant Conway bowed slightly, stepped backwards and replaced his cap.

The Duke held out his hand and Charles extended his own. It was immediately clasped between the Duke's pudgy sweaty palms. Charles felt as if his hand had been consumed by a toothless lizard.

"Mr Washbrook, this is the most profound honour and pleasure," said the Duke, a broad smile spreading across his wide face, causing his luxuriant head of brown curly hair to shift slightly. Charles looked at the mobile wig and resolved not to smile in case his moved, too.

"Charmed, I'm sure," replied Charles, experimenting with a less squeaky voice. He glanced at Pickles, the only member of the Great Park household who had heard his originally misjudged falsetto delivery. He needn't have worried. Pickles was staring fondly at the Duke.

"We've met before, haven't we?" said the Duke.

Charles froze, his hand still trapped inside the mouth of the lizard. But in the midst of his fear, he dimly remembered Polly saying that Gerald had never even seen a photo him. He hoped to goodness she was right.

"Yes, of course we have!" said Charles, calling the Duke's bluff. "Buffy Snodgrass's fiftieth birthday party, wasn't it? Back in '35."

"Yes, indeed!" replied the Duke enthusiastically, looking around the room to make sure that everyone was aware of the fact that a world-famous artist remembered meeting him.

Sergeant Conway coughed theatrically. The Duke turned to face him. "What is it, sergeant?" he asked.

"Your Grace," said the police officer, "with your permission, I feel we must press on with our investigation. I have to ask Mr Washbrook and Miss Capstan a few questions."

The Duke sighed. "If you must," he said. "But I hardly think Mr Washbrook needs to be questioned about a case of common assault. I mean, he's a world-renowned *artiste*."

The sergeant addressed the new arrivals. "Earlier this afternoon, someone arrived at Stanford Saint Mary on the train from Oxford which was bound for Cheltenham," he said, "and at approximately the same time, someone assaulted Mister Arnold McGurk, the Stanford Saint Mary stationmaster." He made a broad sweep of his arm to indicate the victim of the crime, who was still seated. "The assailant also stole Mister McGurk's whistle, which is the property of the Great Western Railway Company. We have reason to believe that the perpetrator of the crime was the person who disembarked from the train, who was described by a witness as a young man with red hair."

Sergeant Conway paused to see what effect his words were having.

"What an extraordinary story," said Polly. "Do go on. We're all ears."

Sergeant Conway cleared his throat again. "After the assault, the man left the station in the company of a young woman with blonde hair." He paused and looked Polly in the eye, and then looked up at her hair. Polly stared back at him, and opened her mouth and gasped.

"I say! What jolly bad news," she said. "Sorry we can't help you, but we haven't been anywhere near Stanford Saint Mary station. I picked Mister Washbrook up in Oxford."

"Oxford?" repeated the sergeant.

"Yes, Oxford. Walter missed the Cheltenham train at Paddington and caught the Oxford Express instead, so I had to go and pick him up in Oxford. Didn't you, Washy?" she added more loudly.

"Oh yes indeed," said Charles. "Missed the bally thing by a whisker. Slow on the old pins these days. Getting on, what?" And getting better at behaving like an old person, he thought to himself.

"I see," said the sergeant. "Miss Capstan, how did you know Mr Washbrook had missed the Cheltenham train?"

Polly emitted a long "Uuuuum" sound.

"He sent a telegram from the station."

Charles was surprised to hear the source of this alibi. It was Pickles who said it, not Polly.

"Absolutely right," she concurred. "Pickles came racing like a whippet over to my office, which is next to the stable, and brought me up to speed about the change of plan. I had to hot-foot it out of here toot sweet to get to Oxford in time."

The sergeant looked at her for a moment, but said nothing. He turned and addressed the stationmaster.

"Mister McGurk, have you seen either of these people before?"

McGurk stood up. Charles shivered slightly as he remembered the man's strong hand on his shoulder and the sight of him crashing to the ground after Polly's karate kick had knocked him out. The stationmaster walked across the room, hobbling slightly. Oh Lord, thought Charles, did she do him some kind of permanent injury?

"I've never seen the young lady before," he said. "And this man ... " he paused. "This man ... is not the person who assaulted me."

The sergeant breathed through his nose, a snort either of relief or annoyance, Charles couldn't tell.

"Well that seems to wrap things up," said the Duke. "I'm sorry we can't help you more with your enquiries, sergeant. Pickles, will you show these gentlemen out?"

"This way, please," said Pickles, applying a firm hand to the back of Constable Prodggers,

which propelled him forward faster than he would have wished. Charles was impressed by the strength shown by the tiny butler.

When the police and Pickles had left the room, the Duke shuffled slowly over to a drinks cabinet. "Mr Washbrook, can I get you something to drink? Whisky and soda, perhaps?"

"That would be absolutely fine, your grace," replied Charles.

"Oh please, let's forget about the 'your grace' nonsense. Do call me Gerald."

"Thank you, Gerald. And you must call me Charles."

Charles yelped as Polly kicked him firmly in the calf.

"Call you what?" asked the Duke.

"Walter," said Charles, gritting his teeth to hold in the pain.

"Oh, right! For a moment, I thought you said Charles."

"Charles is actually his real first name," said Polly. "It's what his parents call him."

"Parents?" repeated the Duke. "Are your parents still alive, Walter?"

"Oh yes," said Charles. "Not only alive but also kicking."

"My goodness, they must be quite old," said the Duke.

"Yes, well into their nineties, both of them," said Charles. "But both fit as an orchestra full of fiddles."

"Do sit down, both of you, you must be exhausted," said the Duke. "Sherry for you, Polly?"

"Oh, rather." Polly and Charles sat down on a rather uncomfortable chaise longue in front of the coffee table and opposite the high-backed armchair that the Duke had been sitting in when they arrived. Polly looked at Charles, then motioned with her eyes towards the wall over the fireplace. Charles didn't understand what she wanted him to do, so she did it again, jerking her head more rapidly this time. Charles eventually looked in the direction she was indicating.

There, hanging over the fireplace was a portrait. Charles didn't recognise the subject, but the painting was most definitely in the style of Van Gogh. This must be the portrait of Robert Louis Stevenson, the one he had to copy.

The Duke poured drinks for both of them, put them on the coffee table and went back and poured an extra large whisky for himself. He then planted himself in his armchair opposite them, crossing one voluminous thigh over the other. At that moment, the door opened and Pickles re-appeared. "Your grace, there's a phone call for you," he said.

"Not now, Pickles, I want to spend some time getting to know Walter."

"It's your wife calling long-distance from Biarritz."

"My ex-wife, Pickles, please refer to her in the past tense, as I do. Tell her whatever it is, I can't afford it."

Pickles walked over and whispered something in the Duke's ear. His eyes widened and his

jaw dropped. "Oh Lord," he said. "How *does* she manage to get into such pickles?" He glanced up at the butler. "No offence intended, Pickles."

"None taken, your grace."

"Walter, do please excuse me for a moment."

When the Duke had left the drawing room, Charles breathed out quietly, relieved that the first hurdles seem to have been negotiated without too much trouble. Pickles walked lightly across the room towards them, paused and then began to speak. "Mr Washbrook, I'm very pleased that you made it safely to Great Park. I'm sorry that you arrived too late for dinner. You must both be quite hungry."

"Yes, I *am* a bit peckish, now you come to mention it," said Charles.

"Polly?"

"Not me, Pickles," said Polly. "I'm totally fine."

"My Washbrook, would it suffice if I arrange for some cold pheasant sandwiches to be served in your room? I can also send a bottle of claret to wash them down. How does that sound?"

The mention of food made Charles's stomach rumble. Pheasant sandwiches and claret sounded very good indeed. Pickles went out of the room for a moment, called for someone and gave them instructions. He then walked back and stood next to the high-backed armchair.

"That's all arranged," said Pickles. "And your case has been taken to your room. I hope after a good night's sleep, you'll feel ready to start work."

"Absolutely," said Charles.

"I trust Miss Capstan apprised you of the Duke's requirements?"

'Oh yes indeed," replied Charles, relaxing into his role as a world-renowned portrait painter. "One portrait of said Duke, just as fast I can rustle it up."

"Quite," said Pickles. "And you're happy with the type of portrait the Duke requires?"

"Um... yes, of course."

"Have you done a portrait of this kind before?"

"Yes. Probably. Er ... a portrait of what kind exactly?"

"*Au naturelle.*"

"I'm sorry?"

"*Au naturelle. Sans vêtements.*"

"Sorry," said Charles. "I'm not sure I understand. Do you mean ...?"

"Yes," said Pickles. "The Duke wishes you to do a portrait of him in the nude."

**Ken Wilson****The Duke's portrait**

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**Ken Wilson** is an ELT author and trainer and has worked in English language teaching for more than forty years. He's written more than thirty ELT titles, including a dozen series of course books, and also writes radio and TV programmes, sketches, songs and drama resources.

His first ELT publication was an album of songs called *Mister Monday*, released when he was 23, which at the time made him the youngest published ELT author ever. Since then, he has written and recorded more than two hundred songs for English learners.

Until 2002, Ken was artistic director of the English Teaching Theatre, a company which performed stage-shows for learners of English all over the world. The ETT made more than 250 tours to 55 countries on five continents.

## Get a laugh

**Marko Šundić, English teacher at primary school “Jovan Popović”, Kragujevac, Serbia**

**Keywords:** young learners, humor in class, funny translations

A couple of years ago, I started writing down my students' translation errors on the margins of my textbooks because I thought some ideas were unusual and amusing. I kept them to myself until one day my colleague asked me if she could borrow my textbook. She read them and said they were hilarious and made me read them to our other colleagues, and soon everybody wanted to hear them. Then I decided to share them with my students, and we had great fun. I put them on a social network and the reactions were the same, and people started adding some jokes from their own collections.

My friend Branka also enjoyed them and she asked me to have them published in ELTA Newsletter in May 2015. I showed a copy of it to my students. After that, when someone makes a mistake in class, everybody is looking at me to check if I'm writing it down. They actually hope that I will quote them in the magazine next time. However, there is one rule – we never say the name of the student who made the error as we don't want to mock anybody, just to have a good laugh.

This is volume 2. I chose the funniest ones from 2016, according to the reactions of my students and my friends on social media.

- I've broken this china dog - Slomila sam ovo kinesko kuće.
- No, thanks - Neka, fala.
- My name's Pete King - Ja se zovem Petar Kralj.
- It's bad for me - To je krevet za mene.
- The students who are graduating wear gowns and caps - Učenici koji maturiraju nose ogrtače i policajce.
- Forest fire - vatrena šuma
- You're Polish? - Ti si Poljanka / Portlandka / Poljankica?

- Luckily, she hasn't got a pet giraffe - Laki nije njen ljubimac.
- He's 14 years old, like me - On ima 14 godina i voli me.
- Do not lean out of the window - Ne klati se na prozor.
- Emergency exit. Keep clear. - Požarni izlaz. Ostanite čisti.
- I'm going to die - Idem da umrem.
- He was probably taking his sheep and goats into the mountains... - On je valjda predvodio brod sa kozama...
- I take the bus to school - Ja vodim autobus u školu.
- They were traders... - Oni su bili zamenjivači...
- The sale of the century - Plovidba kroz vekove
- United States of America - Ujedinjene države Amerike; Ujedinjene nacije
- I mean... - Ja čoveče...
- Notebook - Notna sveska
- What on Earth's up with him? - Šta li je sa Zemljom?
- He's a bit of a bighead - Ima ujed na glavi
- We have to help the teacher with the register - Moramo da pomognemo nastavniku da se registruje

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**Marko Šundić** graduated from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade in 2004. He has been working as an English teacher in "Jovan Popović" primary school since 2004.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> International SKA ELT Conference 23-24 September 2016 Kosice**

### **MIND THE GAP**

**Tijana Nešić Ristić, English studio Playschool, Serbia**

**Keywords:** SKA ELT Conference, report, ELTA representative

The fact that my workshop proposal was accepted and I was chosen to represent ELTA at the 2nd International SKA ELT Conference in Košice by the end of September made me proud and at the same time imposed the feeling of great responsibility regarding my future performance.

With great care the details of the presentation were prepared, a train ticket was bought and the morning of September 22, comfortably seated next to the window, I found myself travelling to a town close to the southern Slovak border. The day was sunny and bright, filled with anticipation and curiosity. When I finally reached my destination, there was a smiling face of Lynda Steyne, the current and founding chair of the Slovak Chamber of English Teachers, waiting for me at the railway station. Though we only got acquainted through Facebook during the weeks preceding the conference, after just a few words on our way to meet other presenters gathered at dinner, it seemed that we had known each other for a very long time. Her unique and friendly comportment radiates such positive energy as well as her team consisting of kind and helpful people and great professionals: Eva Lange-Smolak, Hon Chong, Ildiko Gaspar, Ilonka Šostronekova, Katerina Ferenčakova, Marta Fričova, Martin Jelinek, Ondrej Koscik and Michaela Zaletova.

The Conference, which started on Friday 23 September, was organized at Gymnazium Opatovska, a bilingual secondary school situated outside town centre whose friendly students were also engaged as assistants with registration, technical support, refreshments.

The first to address the teachers and educators at the conference was Lynda Steyne, a teacher trainer, bilingual programme coordinator, currently working at BISLA (Bratislava International School of Liberal Arts).

From the very beginning, with Lynda Steyne's keynote on the necessity to develop and include intercultural communicative competence in our teaching, the programme was so

versatile and interesting that was really difficult to make a choice and select only one workshop to attend in the given time slot. There were thirteen presenters from Slovakia and twenty who came from other countries. They covered variety of topics: from Shakespeare and literature, via multicultural issues, vulnerable groups, CLIL, drama in ELT to application of technology and modern devices in the classroom. The experienced presenters (from freelancer teacher trainers and authors to teachers at primary, secondary or tertiary educational institutions) contributed with a lot of practical suggestions and possible solutions for various problems that are often encountered in a classroom. Their fresh ideas created inspiring atmosphere and made attendees eagerly participate in all the activities.

The sessions I chose reflect the variety of ideas/topics that were presented through this conference.

The first one on my list was IMPROV THEATER AS A TEACHING TOOL by Hon Chong who was also one of the presenters at the last ELTA conference. Hon Chong is a Drama Special Interest Group Coordinator of the Slovak Chamber of English Teachers. Without any special equipment, "armed" only with catchy ideas that in matter of minutes engaged the people in the Janosik Hall – the largest hall in the school, we were able to learn several ways how to create a relaxed atmosphere in a classroom in which our students would gladly participate in creating a story together, in a spontaneous, stress-free manner, with emphasis on cooperation and not rivalry.

The next one was devoted to Intercultural Communication Activities by Ildiko Gaspar and Marcela Kovacova. These two experienced secondary school teachers, from Slovakia, interested in ways to develop learners autonomy as well as allow students discover language and communication outside textbooks, presented some short, simple, practical activities whose aim is to encourage speaking by questioning stereotypes and prejudices.

The last workshop on Friday I attended was FOCUS ON THE CONTENT: A NATURAL CONTEXT FOR EFL YLS carried out by two university teachers from Budapest, Eva Trentinne Benkő and Judit Kovacs. Their field of expertise is CLIL and its application to teaching YL. The participants of this workshop were actively involved in a series of practical tasks which allowed them to imagine being in young learners shoes' and explore

the variety of imaginative activities whose aim was to enable participants/students discover their inner self while establishing different contacts with other people there.

The final session on the first day of the conference was highly engaging and energizing EVENING OF ACTIVE DRAMA by David Farmer. He demonstrated with ease simple steps how to engage participants/students in a number of activities with the aim of developing communication and cooperation of people working/learning together in groups. Setting easy tasks to which instant response was required produced dynamic session filled with spontaneous laughter, good mood and willingness to participate. This session also presented an introduction to a 90-minute workshop, scheduled for Saturday, entitled AWAY FROM HOME. While the Friday session was more relaxed and learning was disguised by entertainment, the Saturday one showed brilliantly how the same means could be applied to exploring one of the burning issues of today's world – the refugee crisis. With just a few simple instructions David Farmer majestically led the participants through deeper and deeper stages of identification with people suffering away from their homes, experiencing tragedy and in need for understanding and humane support. Though elements of drama used meant that verbal communication was not the primary one on the part of attendees, emotions and empathy that the activity ignited in participants proved that the communication which heavily depend on movement can send powerful message and be important tool in ELT.

On Saturday morning, Russell Stannard, a teacher trainer at NILE and a previous winner of the ELTons Technology Award, in his plenary KEY TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN REALLY IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING provided the participants with a lot of detailed and practical information on various tools that can help teachers in their work by saving time and can be simultaneously teacher- and student-friendly. More information can be found on [www.teachertrainingvideos.com](http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com).

My workshop BORDERS ARE INSIGNIFICANT IF WE CAN SURPASS OUR LIMITS dealt with development of critical thinking through raising awareness of multicultural aspects of our world today in lower secondary students. I presented several ways how students/participants, through pair or group work can be intrigued to observe the world around them and their own experience making comparison between those two, posing questions about people whose destiny is different from their own, doing the jigsaw reading

in order to learn and exchange information on a given topic. There were nine teachers of different age and probably level of experience. Since I had prepared a short feedback form, their positive comments made me feel satisfied.

The conference was concluded by plenary of Zuzana Strakova, an associate professor at the English Language and Literature Department at the Institute of British and American Studies at the Faculty of Arts. The plenary PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT, OR NOT? stressed out the necessity not only to have repetition and revision as some of the means of practicing different language skills, but to make any type of exercising meaningful and relevant.

If I am to summarise the working part of the conference, I have to say that all the participants eagerly shared their knowledge and experience, provided a lot of examples of positive practice, with stress on practical, clear and simple activities which can contribute significantly to increasing motivation in students and teachers alike.

The two days of the conference were really busy and provided great opportunity to meet and exchange opinion and ideas with colleagues from all over the world. A couple of impressions that stayed with me are that good teachers always and everywhere strive and eventually manage to thrive despite all the difficulties they encounter along the way. They are ready to give a helping hand to their young colleagues, and never cease to cater for their students. They also create a growing community of people with integrity constantly aware of numerous changes happening in the world around us, ready to maintain critical approach and provide support for positive development in the society they belong to.

There are also a few things that have to be mentioned when talking about Košice conference. Great Tokaj wine we could enjoy during meals, tasty local specialities we could try for lunch or at the relaxed gathering on Friday evening, and we all learned a lively traditional Slovak dance. The accommodation in a lovely, comfortable, family hotel Villa Regia, in the beautiful centre of Košice where the colleagues from different countries continued chatting until late hours. Personally, I am sorry that I did not have more time to explore the town and its surroundings because whatever I saw on my way to the conference venue and back was really beautiful. Košice was the European capital of culture in 2013 so old buildings and streets in the town centre were renovated and still

create the feeling you stepped back into a fairytale. Above all, I must thank my hosts for the friendly atmosphere they created that made me feel as if I had known them all my life. The event held in Košice in September was the second one the Slovak Chamber of English Teachers (SKA) organised, but the level of professionalism of our hosts and the quality of sessions proved that the organisers were excellent. I wish SKA a lot of successful conferences in the future.

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Being a teacher for thirty years, **Tijana Nestic Ristic** has had the opportunity to explore various methods and try out different ways of working with students age 3 to seniors, individuals, and groups.

In 2003 she started her own English studio Playschool. Since then her work has included the following: CLIL approach when teaching very young learners and primary school students, preparation for Cambridge English Exams as well as IELTS, TOEFL and SAT, and work with adults.

She passionately believes that a teacher has a moral duty not only to teach his/her subject but to try to be a role model in an attempt to ignite curiosity and thirst for never-ending learning in young students as well as to be brave enough to tackle a variety of issues and raise awareness.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- [Conferences](#)
- [Summer camps](#)
- [Webinars](#)

## CONFERENCES

*\* Call for papers still open for some of the conferences, check it out*

### ✓ **International IATEFL Slovenia Conference, I Teach therefore I Learn**

Date: 9-12 March 2017

Place: Terme Topolšica

*For more, follow the link: [IATEFL Slovenia](#)*

### ✓ **TESOL Greece – 38<sup>th</sup> Annual International Convention – Keeping it Practical**

Date: 18-19 March 2017

Place: Royal Olympic Hotel, Athens, Greece

*For more, follow the link: [TESOL Greece](#)*

### ✓ **HUPE Conference**

Date: 24 – 26 March 2017.

Place: Solaris Beach Resort, Šibenik

*For more, follow the link: [HUPE Conference](#)*

**✓ 51<sup>st</sup> IATEFL Conference 2017**

Date: 4-7th April 2017 (PCEs 3rd April)

Place: Glasgow

*For more, follow the link: [51st IATEFL Conference 2017](#)*

**✓ ELTA Albania International Conference, "From the English Classroom to the real-life challenges and careers!"**

Date: 28 - 30 April 2017

Place: Elbasan, Albania

*For more, follow the link: [eltaalbania](#)*

**✓ Sixth International Conference on Language and Literary Studies**

Date: 19-20 May, 2017.

Place: The Faculty of Foreign Languages (Alfa BK University in Belgrade)

*For more, follow the link: [Sixth International Conference on Language and Literacy Studies](#)*

**✓ 15<sup>th</sup> ELTA Conference**

Date: 20-21 May 2017

Place: Singidunum University, Belgrade

*For more, follow the link: [15th ELTA Conference](#)*

**✓ 4<sup>th</sup> International TETA Conference**

Date: 16-17 June, 2017

Place: Bosanska Krupa, Bosnia and Herzegovina

*For more, follow the link: [The 4th International TETA Conference](#)*

✓ **26<sup>th</sup> BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, Learning and teaching languages: Creating bridges to the future**

Date: 22nd – 25th June 2017

Place: Konstantin Preslavsky University of Shumen, Department for Information, Qualification and Lifelong Learning, Varna, Bulgaria

For more, follow the link: [26th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference](#)

✓ **The 18th INGED International ELT Conference**

Date: To be announced

Place: To be announced

For more, follow the link: [The 18th INGED](#)

### SUMMER CAMPS for STUDENTS

- ✓ [Open-courses in Devon](#)

### SUMMER CAMPS for TEACHERS

- ✓ [SOUL Camp for teachers of English - Location Slovakia](#)
- ✓ [SOUL Camp for teachers of English – Location Serbia](#)

### WEBINARS

- ✓ **Macmillan webinars**

[Macmillan webinars](#)

✓ **OUP webinars**

[OUP webinars](#)

✓ **SEETA Webinars**

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✓ **NILE Webinars**

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