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Editorial - September 2018

We are sending you the last sunny spells of Indian summer wrapped up in this Newsletter for which we promise it is a page-turning issue. If it is to judge by articles you sent us, the previous school year was challenging, exciting and creative. We enjoyed reading about your professional development experiences and we certainly did wish to be your students and engage in activities you prepared for them.

We open the Academic Corner talking about formative assessment with young learners written by our colleague from Slovenia, **Gabi Čakš**. Ms Čakš explains that the core of this type of evaluation is stress free, continuous assessment, as it should be with young learners who are yet to form a positive attitude towards learning languages. Furthermore, she points the out elements of formative assessment, some of them being the promotion of cooperation, peer teaching and learning, and providing feedback.

In this issue we have two Feature Articles. **Andreja Mešera** discusses extracurricular activities, sharing the classroom atmosphere captured in photos. She explains the importance of such activities and how they can be beneficial to students. The other one comes from an avid reader, **Nataša Intihar Klančar**, who provides us with tips and tricks for inspiring children to read. The range of tips varies from types of books they can read at different ages to using social media to promote reading, but also literacy and social behaviour.

That the passion of reading is what many teachers share proves the article in ELT Flash section. Two English language fellows, **Brook Leach Grabble** from Pristina and **Jean Linehan** from Belgrade got together to promote reading aloud to children in the classroom. What it looked like and what their impressions of this project are, you can find under the title "Read together! Project"

Another ELT Flash contributor is **Jelena Mihajlov** who describes her first experience at the three-day HUPE conference in Poreč, where she held a workshop as an ELTA Serbia representative.

How do you recognize a teacher? Of course, by itchy feet and an insatiable desire to learn and share knowledge. That is exactly what two teachers did, who are introduced in ELTA around the globe. **Jelena Perišić** got inspired to apply for Erasmus+ project and earned a two-week professional development course at Blue Lake school of English in Oxford where she was taught by renowned English language textbooks authors. Hoping to motivate her colleagues to

venture into a similar journey, she gives an in-depth narrative of the whole process, including her post-mobility presentation experience at IATEFL conference in Slovenia, where she met experts in the ELT field of study, such as Penny Ur and David Crystal.

Višnja Krstić, a PhD student, on the other hand earned a scholarship to attend a six week summer school course in the School of Criticism and Theory at Cornell University, Ithaca. She took part in a programme for early career researchers in numerous fields, ranging from literature and philosophy to gender and queer studies.

If you have ever wondered about what **Ian McEwan**, featured on the list of “the 50 greatest British writers since 1945” reads in his leisure time, *A day in life* gives an answer to this question. During a conference held in June, at the Faculty of Philology, dedicated to John Updike, **Aleksandra Jevtović** used the opportunity to chat with Mr McEwan about his characters, books that inspire him and, in particular, Serbian writers he appreciates.

A day in life also brings **Marisa Constantinides**, the director of studies of CELT in Athens interviewed by **Vicky Papageorgiou**. She is a speaker and presenter at conferences, an active user of social networks, such as Twitter, where she co-moderates #ELTchat, and as a very socially-aware person, with many years of teaching experience, a volunteer.

Last, but by no means least important, Students’ Corner of this issue is designed by gifted students from Mathematical Grammar School who illustrated exercises from the coursebook *Upstream Intermediate*. Thank you, Mirjana Savić-Obradović, for sharing your students creativity with us!

Before you dive into reading these articles, we would like to thank to several important (groups of) people.

First, to our newly formed team of diligent editors who meticulously polished the following pages.

Then, to **Maja Jerković**, who was a marvelous editor-in-chief, keeping the whole team and the idea of Newsletter and Journal on her shoulders. Maja, we hope you know that ELTA Editorial team will always be your home.

We use this opportunity to welcome **Milena Tanasijević**, our new “captain”. Thank you for accepting the position of a new editor-in-chief.

Finally, thank you, our fellow teachers, researchers and students for reading and sharing your ideas and practices with us. Be inspired, keep inspiring and spread inspiration!

We wish you a super-exciting and fruitful school year! And, don't forget to write to us on newsletter.elta@gmail.com ☺

From the **Editorial Team**

EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LEARNING WITH YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

**Gabi Čakš, prof., English teacher, VIZ II. primary school Š Rogaška Slatina,
Slovenia**

Keywords : formative assessment, young learners, positive attitude, learning process

Formative assessment is a range of formal and informal assessment procedures conducted by teachers during the learning process in order to modify teaching and learning activities to improve students' attainment. It is a challenge for a teacher to use a methodology which is new for them, but it is beneficial for both teachers and students as it fosters positive attitude and produces positive results. Not only is positive attitude towards learning being promoted, but also each student has the opportunity to monitor their own knowledge. On the other hand, summative assessment's main aim is to evaluate student's learning at the end of the learning process. There are many reasons why this is the most stressful situation for students. First, the problem is if students are not aware of the criteria which influence the outcome of students' and teachers' work. The main aim of formative assessment is to monitor students' learning progress, to provide ongoing feedback and to improve students' learning. The pre-knowledge is another element of formative assessment where the teacher has the opportunity to recognize their students' knowledge. This is one of the main elements that provides discipline in the classroom and prevents students' boredom. The interaction between a student and a teacher is the element which proves what is happening during the lesson – whether students are afraid of their teacher, if they are enjoying the lesson, are cooperating, and whether they are involved in the learning process. If students are used to formative assessment (FA) elements, teaching is easier. I want to point out, that you cannot use all the elements of affirmative assessment in one lesson, but you should plan different elements according to the aim of a lesson.

In the early stages of teaching foreign languages, formative assessment is one of the most important methodologies. Young learners are very sensitive- they want a teacher to be fair towards students and some of the formative assessment strategies are a really good idea to avoid further stressful situations in the classroom. In Slovenia, English is taught from the first grade onwards (students' are 6 years old) and the class can be as large as 28 students – which presents a big challenge for a teacher. Not only is it difficult to maintain a good working atmosphere, but maintaining discipline is also a challenge. Most importantly, it is a challenge to provide as much input and knowledge to students as possible. Below, I describe some of the elements of formative assessment with young learners. We have to be aware of this crucial age we are dealing with when young learners are getting their first foreign language experience which should be as positive as it can be. The final outcome should be the ability of each student to cooperate in an English lesson. Apart from establishing the foundations for later learning, early language learning also influences attitudes towards other languages and cultures. The main idea behind the inclusion of language teaching at the primary level is that young children have a great facility for understanding, imitating and learning without

difficulties. The main method should be a guided game and the notion that it comes from a student's inner world.

The following are some recommendations for what could be said or done during a lesson:

1. Rearrange your seating arrangement in the classroom – students should learn how to cooperate and work in a team – this is how we expose them to real-life situations. You have many options how you can do it, just try avoiding the traditional setting where students sit in rows.
2. Do not focus only on the more competent speakers when it comes to oral production– all students should try to articulate their thoughts. The school nowadays should be inclusive. You can create many fun situations to include your students. Raising hands is over. Rather, try creating sticks, flowers, stickers with students' names. When students get used to it, they get more attentive, they listen better and always try to provide an answer.
3. Check what they know- your class is very diverse in knowledge. This creates a necessity for a teacher to know the strengths and weaknesses of their students'. If you put students in groups they get an opportunity to learn from one another, to provide help, they learn what solidarity is and many other affective values which are important for the whole society.
4. Give feedback to your students- it should be positive, made by gestures, and positive words.-Keep eye contact with your students; they will get the feeling that they matter and will want to be better.
5. Be specific and brief - provide your students with the chance to say something for themselves. Self-evaluation helps to develop critical thinking and metacognitive experience. My suggestion is that you put signs with smiles or colours where students recognise and are able to evaluate themselves. Do not forget to provide time for a student-to-student feedback.
6. If you see that students' motivation is low, stop and try to motivate them differently. Sing a song and dance a little bit. You should provide at least three to five different activities for young learners- jumping, sports and dancing are very good tools because they engage the left and right brain hemispheres.
7. At the end of the lesson ask your students what they have learnt, what they still have to do to improve their knowledge and interest.
8. Try to get as much evidence of their knowledge as you can - evidence matters and students have to be engaged in the learning process.
9. Be positive, careful with your words, sensitive to your students because they are at the beginning of their foreign language experience which should be encouraging.
10. Provide your students with a lot of authentic adventures –like exposure to native speakers, parties, cooking experience, multisensory learning is important. Bring the real things (realia) in the classroom because you have to step into your students' world of imagination and curiosity.



1. Name tags for students



2. Self-evaluation of students' knowledge



3. Sitting arrangements (groups)

4. Total Physical Response (TPR)



Gabi Čakš is a teacher at VIZ II. primary school Rogaška Slatina, Slovenia. She graduated in English and American studies at the Faculty of Arts in Maribor, Slovenia. She continued her education at the Faculty of Pedagogy in Maribor and completed a study programme for teaching English to young learners. **Gabi Čakš** also graduated in Gestalt pedagogy from the Faculty of Theology, University of Ljubljana, and is writing her PhD thesis in Gestalt pedagogy. She teaches English to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 9th grade. She has attended International conferences as a speaker mainly in the field of teaching young learners. The school she works in has cooperated with the National Education Institute of Slovenia where Gabi Čakš provided two sample lessons for teachers and headmasters of Savinjska region.

LEARNING ENGLISH THROUGH EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

mag. Andreja Mašera, prof., English teacher, VIZ II. OŠ Rogaška Slatina, Slovenia

KEY WORDS: extracurricular activities, learning English, communicative competence, classroom engagement, students' self-esteem



Andreja Mašera is a teacher at VIZ II. OŠ Rogaška Slatina, Slovenia. She has graduated in English and Sociology at the Faculty of Arts in Maribor, Slovenia. She continued her education at the post graduate level and got her master's degree in Sociology. She has been teaching English and Ethics at VIZ II. OŠ Rogaška Slatina for 22 years. She has coordinated several international language projects. In her teaching methods she regularly applies extracurricular activities in and out of school with students of different ages.

Introduction

Teaching English language contains many important components: pupils, a teacher, materials, teaching methods, evaluation etc. Teaching and learning are a time-consuming educational processes being conducted through the interaction between teachers and students. To be successful in both processes, maximum work of teacher, student, as well as, transmission of materials, techniques, methods, classroom management, and so on, is required. Teachers are expected to be creative to support language learning activities in and out of the classroom.

What are extracurricular language activities?

Extracurricular activities are activities that are not included in the educational curriculum although they are a significant and useful part of education that provide positive gains for students. They are usually activities conducted outside school hours. They can be done in school or out of school depending on the demands and convenience of extracurricular activities. These activities motivate students to accomplish their curricular goals, they help students to gain confidence and enable them to display their skills and abilities with ease in a classroom practice. Extracurricular activities provide a pleasant language learning environment and therefore encourage students to improve their level of English. We can say that

extracurricular activities are as necessary as regular classes for development of language skills. Furthermore, extracurricular activities are good opportunities for students to achieve their curricular goals. Students discover and develop their skills through pleasant and fun language situations.

Extracurricular language activities can be performed at all levels of schools in many different ways such as sports, clubs, debate, music, art, drama, language labs, school newspaper etc. All this extracurricular language input leads to higher educational success and helps students get better grades and higher scores in tests.

Students stand a better chance of displaying their skills and abilities in a confident classroom practice. Students develop self-esteem because of their accomplishments. Self-esteem is crucial in promoting students' achievement at school, moreover, extracurricular language activities establish an environment for students to use the knowledge they learn at school. Students have an opportunity to practice the knowledge in the real-life settings.

The effect of extracurricular activities on English learning

In general, students who regularly engage in extracurricular activities are more fluent and confident in their second language. They improve their communicative competence and English proficiency. Students who deal with extracurricular activities are more successful in learning in general. They also more actively participate in regular activities in the classroom. Extracurricular activities enable students to be exposed in the target language, they can share and discuss their ideas and opinions which leads them to higher achievements. In a relaxed learning environment students become more productive and have more opportunities to involve in different activities and task.

Conclusion

All the above mentioned activities support the characteristics of approaches we apply in foreign language learning process. Extracurricular activities create positive attitudes towards learning foreign languages and learning in general. As long as students are encouraged to learn, they stand a better chance of achievement and they improve their command of English. What is even more significant, extracurricular language activities create a positive bond between students, teachers and school. When students are positively connected to their schools, they develop a better perception of knowledge that leads to efficiency in language learning and learning in general. Students can build good relationships among peers, they gain confidence and their classroom engagement increases.



3. Christmas workshops at VIZ II. OŠ Rogaška Slatina

Christmas is a special time of the year. Therefore, we try to bring the festive spirit in our classrooms as well as extra-curricular language activities during the whole month of December. Students love to learn about celebrations around the world, they engage themselves in different activities in and out of the classroom (games, quizzes, decorations, Christmas karaoke, presents, festive cuisine, charity events, fairs, ect.).



4. Students raising money for an international language project at the Christmas fair in Rogaška Slatina

In December 2017 students, teachers, parents and grandparents stepped together to raise money for students attending British English Olympics in London in March 2018. The above photo shows our students selling Christmas cookies (baked by their mothers and grandmothers) at the local Christmas fair. Rogaška Slatina is a well known and popular tourist town, therefore students selling the goodies had to use English, as well as other foreign languages to be successful at selling.

How To Boost Reading for Pleasure in EFL Primary Classroom

Nataša Intihar Klančar, Primary school Brezovica, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Keywords: reading for pleasure, EFL primary classroom, reading aloud, picture books, reading corner, social media, reading badge competition

I have always loved reading and it's been my sincere wish to make sure that my pupils take their time to read, both at school and at home. This is how they build vocabulary, fluency and expand their knowledge. The trick is not only to make them read but to enjoy the process as well. So what can be done in the ELT primary classroom?

Here are some tips that may help you inspire children – I use them in my classes and they work well:

1. Read to Children in Class

Be it 5, 10 or 15 minutes, you should always keep in mind that something is better than nothing. Start with the reading material that mostly appeals to them, i.e. picture books (some are also adapted into cartoons or films), fairy tales, stories about super heroes, funny books, jokes, books that cover topics close to them (i.e. family, friends, favorite food, animals) and the like. This will catch their attention and make them interested first in listening, and then in reading. Motivation is one of the key points and this is how to strengthen it.

Picture books are a good starting point because the sentence structure is simple, vocabulary is basic and the short content is supported by lovely illustrations. All of this will ensure the readers feel comfortable, motivated and interested in the subject matter. They may first want to listen to the classics they know in their mother tongue and maybe compare the original with the English one. This is a normal progression. Then you are able to move on with new, unknown stories. These will catch their attention for sure. Moreover, the stories deliver strong moral values and give the simplest lessons of life.

Encourage pupils to bring their own books and share them with class and so help create a reading corner library. This is always so much fun and it becomes meaningful and personal, connecting the class.

Then they can exchange books, read to each other, do all sorts of after-reading activities. And at the same time they practice English, which is definitely a bonus. The language in books is rich; it ensures a wide range of word-acquisition and vocabulary lessons are learnt and remembered while reading.

2. Set a Reading Corner

Find a place in the corner of your classroom and fill it with books, magazines, comic books, poems etc. Make it as versatile as possible and at the same time colorful and lively, add some posters, positive messages and inspirational quotes. Create it together with the class, this will be so much fun because everyone can contribute and feel important.

Let the children help prepare the corner, let them bring their own ideas, books and decorations. As stated above, this will then become their own little place where they feel cozy and welcome. You can add some pillows, big bean chairs or other comfy seating.

Take some time to create bookmarks of their choice. Create attractive book displays by organizing shelves or boxes to sort the reading material. Boost the children's creativity and imagination in every possible way for this is such a wonderful thing.

Setting a place where they feel comfortable and at ease is of great importance. It will definitely attract them and it will be much easier for them to spend some quality time there, reading for pleasure.

3. Use Social Media Wisely

Do incorporate the social media aspect when promoting reading but do it wisely. I often use lyrics of famous songs to talk about either the meaning behind the lines or the grammatical points. Or – the one that I like the most – a combination of both. Then we read, comment, learn and exchange our thoughts. The pupils are then encouraged to do a similar task at home, which is such an inspiration for there is always a song or two they would each like to explore.

Discuss social media behaviour, how to write and make comments, read some examples from blogs, maybe go through some tweets and let the pupils respond. Teach them the importance of staying polite, confident, kind and tolerant. Compare the use of language in text messages and in books. Find differences between their mother tongue and English. Do languages work in the same way?

When discussing a certain topic, check some of the websites that give useful information. Go to the computer room with the whole class and start a project. Let the pupils find all the necessary information about their favorite animal, for example, gather it, create a powerpoint presentation and then share it with their classmates.

We tried this a few weeks ago and it was a huge success with my 6th-graders. We discovered that many of the words were repeated over and over again throughout the presentations and so we used them in a series of crosswords the children created using English descriptions. They are now published in our annual school magazine – in the English corner, and we are so proud of it.

4. Create a Reading Badge Competition

Another nice way of promoting reading is with the help of a reading badge competition. The Reading Badge movement has been widely popular in Slovenia for over 50 years and it is an activity that helps develop —reading habits and reading culture among the youth.

In order to promote reading in a foreign language, I created a similar competition. This is how it works: the teacher-mentor gives the pupils a long list of most popular and most suitable English books children can choose from. We co-operate with our school library and our school magazine. The reading is intensive and usually accompanied by a reading diary. The books are then discussed as well.

According to the age and level of knowledge, the number, complexity, length and choice of books differ. At the end of the year all the readers are awarded the winning badge for successful reading, ranging from bronze, to silver and gold. It is a nice motivation and there are many children competing in English too. They are slowly but steadily becoming confident and independent readers.

And this is exactly what we are trying to achieve: reading to become a part of their lives, forming them into strong and capable readers who not only build vocabulary, work on their fluency and expand their (background) knowledge but also enjoy themselves while doing so.

Let's keep reading for pleasure – it is enjoyable and so much fun. And do not forget to spread this around. It is totally worth it.

Nataša Intihar Klančar graduated from the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, where she also earned her Master's and Doctoral degrees respectively. She is a teacher of English at a primary school and at the faculty. She enjoys preparing workshops, she loves her work and she loves sharing her knowledge. Her free time is devoted to family, friends, travelling, reading and sports.

Read Together! Project

Brooke Leach, English Language Fellow Program, US Department of State

Keywords : read aloud, reading project, children’s literature, pre-reading activities, after reading activities, U.S. Department of State English Language Fellows, Regional Language Office

U.S. Department of State English Language Fellows (ELF) Jean Linehan (Belgrade, Serbia) and Brooke Leach Grable (Pristina, Kosovo) were asked by the Regional Language Officer Jen MacArthur to create a project for teachers in both regions. After months of discussion, Brooke and Jean discovered reading aloud in the classroom was a topic they both were passionate about.

As a Fellow, Jean had been presenting on the benefits of reading aloud to children in the classroom and hosting read alouds at the American Corner. As an elementary classroom teacher, Brooke had been using children’s literature as a way of teaching English to her students. Both Brooke and Jean used children’s literature as the basis of entire lessons. Their goal was to show a group of teachers that books could be used as whole lessons as well as used multiple times.

The benefits of reading aloud and repeated readings are plentiful. According to the Commission on Reading study entitled *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, “the single most important activity for building knowledge for their eventual success in reading is reading aloud to children.” Rog (2001) states, there are many benefits to reading aloud to children. Some of these include vocabulary development, modeling reading fluency, developing understanding of story structure, encouraging higher level thinking and motivating students to read on their own. One of the biggest benefits of repeated readings is that “children pick up new vocabulary quicker from repeated readings of the same book than when they encounter the same words in different new texts. This is especially helpful for English Language Learner.” (Horst, Parsons & Bryan, 2011) It was with these benefits in mind that the **Read Together! Project** was born.

Brooke and Jean selected three teachers from their regions. From Kosovo, Brooke chose Adrijana Petrovic, Venera Kabashi and Burhan Beqiri. From Serbia, Jean selected Branka Deckovic, Sofija Simic and Ljiljana Scekic. Next, they chose nine different children’s books; *In the Tall Tall Grass*, *The Big Red Barn*, *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See*, *Rainbow Fish*, *Caps for Sale*, *Chrysanthemum*, *The Napping House*, *If the Dinosaurs Came Back* and *What I Like About Me*. For each book, the teachers had a big book version and three regular size books to use in the classroom. Each book to be taught over the course of two weeks or four lessons. The project would last six weeks in total.

In February 2018, the teachers came together for a weekend training in Nis, Serbia. The training covered the reasons why reading aloud should be done in classrooms, how to choose high quality children's literature, conducting a reading lesson with pre-reading, during reading and after reading activities and finally how to use children's literature to meet the needs of the English language curriculum. After training, a teacher from Serbia was paired with a teacher from Kosovo. Then, the teacher pairs had hours to work together, planning lessons for their books with the guidance of Jean and Brooke.

Adrijana Petrovic, who teaches pre-school students, was paired with Sofija Simic who teaches four and five year old students. They read the books *In the Tall Tall Grass*, *The Big Red Barn*, and *Brown Bear Brown Bear What Do You See*. Many of the pre-reading activities done with these young students involved preparing them for the vocabulary to come in the literature. The students learned the vocabulary for the animals and insects in the books. During reading, the students learned about characteristics of animals and insects. They discussed what different animals eat, what insects fly or how many legs they have. After reading, students made their own *In the Tall Tall Grass* books. One of Adrijana's favorite after reading activities was with *The Big Red Barn* book. The students fed toy animals grass, hay, and corn. It was as if the students were the farmers.

Venera Kabashi and Branka Deckovic were paired together. They teach five and six year old students. Their books were *The Napping House*, *If the Dinosaurs Came Back* and *What I Like About Me*. For this age group, the pre-reading activities involved getting the students familiar with the content from the stories. They voted on whether or not they would want the dinosaurs to come back or they learned vocabulary for the house and members of the family. The pre-reading activities were Branka's favorite part of the project. She enjoyed "setting the atmosphere for reading and having the students guess what the story might be about." During reading, the students learned about shapes and colors while reading *If the Dinosaurs Came Back* and learned sequencing skills while reading *The Napping House*. One of the activities Brooke was able to see during a visit to Venera's class was during the book *The Napping House*. The students made letter blocks out of paper, glue and legos. The students put letters together to spell the various characters in the book (granny, child, dog, flea). Once they made the words the students sequenced the characters in how they were laying in the story.

The final pairing was Burhan Beqiri and Ljiljana Scekcic. They were paired together because both wanted to use the literature with slightly older students in third and fourth grades. Their books were *Rainbow Fish*, *Caps for Sale*, and *Chrysanthemum*. Just as in the other groups, pre-reading activities were always part of the lessons. The group took picture walks through the stories to help students gain an understanding of the text to come and pre-taught some of the important vocabulary. During reading, the students acted out parts of *Rainbow Fish* and got to draw different vocabulary from the stories to deepen comprehension. After reading the students completed a Reader's Theater of the book *Caps for Sale* and discussed the moral of the story for *Rainbow Fish*.

After completing all of their lessons, the group created a presentation to share with teachers at the English Language Teachers' Association (ELTA) Conference in Belgrade, Serbia and the Kosova English Teacher Network (KETNET) Conference in Pristina, Kosovo. For many of the teachers in the group it was their first time presenting at a conference.

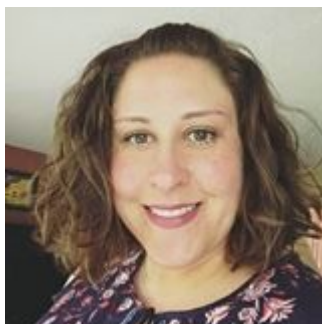
In the end, not only did the students learn parts of the English curriculum, the teachers learned as well. Branka said she learned : *"You can cover a curriculum with a good choice of books. You can teach everything that is planned in a curriculum through reading books."* Ljiljana said : *"I have learned that less can be more. I had only three books, but managed to teach vocabulary, critical thinking, involve other subjects and, above all to have fun!"* Finally, Adrijana said *"it is possible to have fun reading and learn a lot with only one book by bringing the book to life in the classroom with a little effort and creativity."* All of the teachers who participated in this project said they will continue to use children's literature in their classrooms.

If you would like additional information about the **Read Together! Project** or wonder how you can begin to use children's literature in your classroom, please contact Brooke Leach Grable. Her email is elfkosovo@gmail.com.

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Brooke Leach Grable earned a B.S. in Early Childhood Education and AN M.A. in Elementary Education from The University of Akron. She holds Reading and TESOL endorsements. She is In-Coming Chair on the Awards Professional Council for TESOL International and sits on the Ohio TESOL Board of Directors. Brooke is an English Language Fellow for the US Department of State in Kosovo.

26th Annual International HUPE Conference – The first encounter

Jelena Mihajlov, ELTA representative, Belgrade, Serbia

Keywords: Conference, report, priceless experience

I set off for Porec not really knowing what to expect since it was my first HUPE conference as well as my first time as a presenter. However, by the end of the first day, I was engrossed in the event. Everything was inspiring – the venue, the plenaries, the workshops, the social events, the sea. There were so many workshops and so little time that I had to choose carefully.

On the first day of the conference, I attended two very different workshops. One of them was held by Gail Ellis who was talking about helping children develop awareness of their learning process. Gail Ellis also gave a plenary talk *“Teaching our Learners How to Learn”*. During the talk, she focused on the importance of guiding students to reflect on what and how they learn. In the course of her workshop, Jasna Kraljic-Cmrk gave us an insight into Complex Instructional Method as well as the dangers of teacher burnout.

The next day started with the plenary talk held by Luciana C de Oliveira who comes from the University of Miami, Florida. She did not only share useful ideas on how to address the writing demands for all levels of education, but she also helped me relax before my workshop. During my presentation, I realised how supportive our colleagues are. It all went well, and I sincerely hope the colleagues who attended the workshop will find use for my ideas in their classrooms.

On the last day, I only had enough time for one workshop, and I decided to check out Ivana Kirin’s *“Photography 101”*. It was a mixture of practical advice on how to take amazing photos, and ideas for interesting projects for students (visual journals, photo dictation, a sequence of steps).

Being a part of a large and welcoming community of English teachers at The 26th Annual International HUPE conference was a priceless experience, especially for a newbie like me. I think it is really worth taking the second or even the third, fourth run at future HUPE conferences.

Jelena Mihajlov comes from Belgrade, Serbia. During her studies at the Faculty of Philology, she had some experience in teaching, both in private and public schools. This not so nice experience deterred her from the idea of teaching but only for a while. After finishing her studies, she got a job in Matilda Language Center, and ever since she has been dedicated to teaching and especially working with young learners.

My Erasmus+ experience

Jelena Perisic, Rainbow School of English, Novi Sad, Serbia

Keywords: Erasmus+, course, workshop, teachers' development

As a teacher with almost 20 years of experience, but still a burning desire to travel, learn and bring everything learnt back to the classroom, I literally jumped at the opportunity when I saw one. Back in 2013, when I was doing a course in Contemporary English in Cambridge, I met a lot of teachers from Germany, Spain, Slovakia and Slovenia who told me that they had been granted the course by Erasmus projects. I had no idea at the time what those were, I just heard the words "granted" and wondered how lucky you have to be to be paid to come to a course in the country of your choice and be admitted to the course of your choice with all expenses paid and some pocket money to get by!

When I returned, I started investigating, but there was nothing available for us, teachers in private schools. There were some possibilities, though, for higher education staff, and I was told that there was nothing available because we were not in the European Union.

All my hopes sank. European Union seemed and seems like a far-fetched dream and I thought that that would be a road never travelled for us. However, several years later I signed up to Tempus mail list and started receiving notifications of their activities regularly. It was not until December 2016 when I incidentally enrolled for a seminar in the city library in Novi Sad that mine and Tempus's path crossed once more. During the seminar, I found out that Pilgrim's were offering courses for teachers from Serbia and started wondering how that was possible. One of the speakers mentioned that Erasmus+ would be funding professional development courses for teachers from Serbia and I was all ears. Then and there I decided that I would go on one of those. Also, someone mentioned the statistics that there was a 50% chance to win the scholarships, so I wasted no time, and found out that there would be a workshop for writing projects for Erasmus+. As you may have already guessed, I did attend the workshop, trying to memorize as much as possible. My ambition was so intense that I managed to convince our school's management that it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and spent my whole winter holiday writing and re-writing the project. It was a laborious, tedious job, but with help from my colleagues, I managed to do it in a way that I found satisfactory. I opted for Oxford and the

course “Creativity in Secondary and Adult Classroom”, and my colleague chose “Using Technology in Teaching English” in Cardiff. To make sure that the project would not be rejected, I devised a detailed plan of action, which proved to be a bonus. I also promised to do far too many things, which I am now painfully aware of, including speaking at two international conferences, organizing several workshops in our school and writing for the ELTA Newsletter, to mention just a few. On February 1st, just a day before the deadline I clicked “send”. The rest is history. In May we were informed that our project was accepted, and we became the first private school in Serbia to have achieved this, apart from YALS association, but there were many more people involved!

We were invited to the meeting with other lucky winners, and soon we signed the contract. Little did we know then that we needed a) a much greater knowledge of legal terminology; b) money to co-finance the project because the funds EU provides come in 3 installments, the last coming well 60 days after the end of the project itself, and c) sufficient computer skills to update and load information about the project during its total duration.

Happy to have been awarded this grant, we stumbled upon the first obstacle: opening the special bank account, via which all the payments take place. It took us several weeks and as many visits to different banks to have finally found one where the staff knew what they were doing. From that moment on, the things started rolling, we started doing what we were supposed to do before the actual mobility phase, did surveys of students’ satisfaction, did observation classes, found flights and health insurance, paid to schools in the UK and obtained visas. Before we got the second installment, we had a report to file, and truth to be told, it took us over a week to get our heads round to calculations, worrying about where to post documents online and which documents, and taking care that we covered every penny received. In the meantime, due to 30 days waiting period between the money due and the actual trips, we funneled EUR 500 of our own money and the colleague flew to Cardiff on her own budget, only to receive the payment for daily expenses towards the end of her stay.

The mobility phase itself was, of course, the most memorable. Two weeks in Oxford with all expenses paid and a fair allowance to go by was a dream come true! Lake School of English comes third in the UK when it comes to quality and standards of the British Council. Owners were more than welcoming and helpful, always with big smiles on their faces, and always with a helpful tip on where to go and what to do.

Even in November, I loved every minute of it! I did learn a lot in the lessons (being taught by one of OUP authors, Lucy Holmes) but also from fellow teachers who came from all over Europe: The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland, and Lithuania. We shared an amazing experience, immersing in everything Oxford had to offer: Botanical Gardens, Pitt Rivers Museum, The Ashmolean Museum, The Oxford Theatre, Tour of the Colleges, Even Song at the King's College and Magdalene's College, cream teas, visit to fantastic Blenheim Palace, the Royal city of Bath, the pub Rabbit and the Hare where presumably Tolkien was a regular, Turf's Tavern where Bill Clinton was caught smoking dope and Waterstones, the biggest bookshop in the world. Not to mention the food: choice of Indian curries, Lebanese dishes, Italian and German sausages, Chinese, Thai... You name it, they have it. I also had a wonderful insider's experience with my host, an ex-model in London, an amazing, smart lady who taught me several recipes and instructed me into Kate Atkinson's novels which I now literally devour (as well as into Jacob's Creek, excellent Australian white wine ☺) I came back, full of impressions, books and teaching material to try at home.



Generating new ideas



A wonderful “Blue Lake” crew

But if you think that this is it, you are gravely mistaken! Post-mobility phase contains further engagement, all as I generously promised in the plan. After having several workshops for our school staff (which was not so scary), I started preparing for IATEFL Slovenia conference in March, which was my first workshop ever, let alone an international level one. I was rehearsing every day for two weeks in a row, full of doubts and worrying about what could go wrong. But then I thought that no one knew me out there and if I did badly, that would be something to learn from. I was even hoping that no one would attend, so I wouldn't have to embarrass myself. To cut a long story short, my workshop was not too bad, if I may say so myself, people found it useful, and the whole experience was magical, with David Crystal, Penny Ur, and a lot of inspirational workshops from colleagues all over Europe. I also met two ladies, one teacher from Novi Sad and one from Belgrade, who I had the greatest time with.



IATEFL Slovenia 2018: Getting our heads round...



...and looking for some clues

My colleague Ana had a workshop at ELTA conference in Belgrade, and she loved it. We had two more rounds of observation plus a visit from Tempus, who went through our meticulously collected documentation and invoices, as well as the final survey of satisfaction to see whether we have made any progress when it comes to the teaching we do. This article is also a part of my plan, with the aim to inform and encourage fellow teachers from both state and private sector to find out more and engage into this type of projects because they will benefit both privately and professionally.

This was the last year in a nutshell: full of experiences, events and tremendous people. By the time this text is out, hopefully, we will have turned in our final report and have measurable results.

So, the final words of wisdom: Was it stressful? Very much so. Was it demanding? None the less so. Would I do it again? By all means! So should you.



A little treat for the hard-working!

I hereby declare that I have the right to publish these photos.

Jelena Perisic is an English language teacher from Nis, but currently living and teaching in Novi Sad. She graduated in 1994 from the Department of English language and literature in Nis. She took a CELTA course in 2004 hoping to get a more widely acknowledged certificate. From 1998 to 2010 she was a co-owner and a teacher in Virginia English Centre in Nis for 12 years. Since she moved to Novi Sad in 2010, she has been working at the Rainbow School of English, mainly preparing teenagers and young adults for Cambridge exams and IELTS. She is still very keen on learning, alert and ready to upgrade on all levels.

The School of Criticism and Theory (SCT) at Cornell University: A six-week intellectual journey on a gorge(ou)s campus

Višnja Krstić, PhD Student, Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade

Keywords: Critical theory, Cornell University, summer school, theory camp

Located on the banks of the Cayuga Lake in central New York, the town of Ithaca is home to Cornell University. In summer, this prestigious Ivy League Institution hosts the School of Criticism and Theory, a six-week programme dedicated to the latest theoretical debates in the humanities. Initially envisaged as a theory camp for university professors, the programme today predominantly attracts early-career researchers, be them postgraduate students or faculty members. Owing to its interdisciplinary character, the SCT brings together scholars working in a number of fields – ranging from literature and philosophy to gender and queer studies.

Although the School's long history, dating back to 1976, has been traditionally associated with the most important currents of postmodern thought, this year's session has opened up to new forms of discussion, questioning the existing discourses through the interrogation of alternatives to critique and calling for new methods of analysis.

The programme is structured around the main seminar – this year's participants choose between the following:

- Genealogies of Memory and Perception: Literature and Photography (Eduardo Cadava, Princeton University) examines *'the rapport between literature and photography by looking closely at a number of literary and theoretical texts that differently address questions central to both literature and photography: questions about the nature of subjectivity, representation, reproduction, memory, perception, knowledge, images, and history'*;
- Adorno's Aesthetic Theory (Peter Gordon, Harvard University) focuses on *'the philosophical contours of Theodor W. Adorno's aesthetic theory, with an emphasis on the dialectical relation between the modernist artwork and modern society'*;
- Reading the Social World: Observation, Description, Interpretation (Heather Love, University of Pennsylvania) explores *'recent debates about reading in literary*

studies in the context of historical debates about method in the humanities and social sciences’;

- Intersubjective Acts: Psychoanalysis and Politics (Tracy McNulty, Cornell University) *‘take[s] Freud’s work as a point of departure from which to explore the intersubjective dimension of political acts’*, thereby *‘putting psychoanalysis in dialogue with classical and recent works of political theory’*.

In addition to the seminars, which meet twice a week, participants get the chance to engage with the seminar leader’s ongoing projects more closely by attending colloquia where original papers are delivered.

What is more, the programme includes four mini seminars. Led by Veena Das (Johns Hopkins University), Avital Ronell (New York University), Bernard E. Harcourt (Columbia University), and Samuel Moyn (Yale University), these are an excellent opportunity to discuss a wide range of topics with some of the leading critical figures in American Academia.

Finally, one of the highlights are visiting lectures delivered by distinguished theorists. Opened to public and followed by a generous Q&A section, this year’s lectures include:

- Homi Bhabha (Harvard University) – ‘Statelessness and Death: Reflections on the Burdened Life’
- Paul Fleming (Cornell University) – ‘The Politics of Anecdotes’
- Alondra Nelson (Columbia University) – ‘Moral Institutions and Racial Reconciliation after the Genome’
- Sari Nusseibeh (Al-Quds University) – ‘Sound Minds’

As busy as the SCT schedule may seem, it does allow enough spare time for students to conduct their own research, as weekends and Fridays are kept free. Library resources are plentiful, meeting the participants’ needs – as varied as they might be – more than adequately. The Cornell University Library is one of the largest library systems in North America, holding over eight million printed volumes, split between sixteen physical and virtual libraries on the central campus in Ithaca. The combined collection of Olin and Uris Libraries, those specialising in the humanities and social sciences, is said to be almost two million. In addition, Cornell is part of the Borrow Direct system, which enables its users to search and request materials from the combined library catalogs of Brown, Columbia,

Dartmouth, Harvard, University of Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, Johns Hopkins, MIT, Duke, Princeton, and Yale. These twelve universities hold an impressive collection of over sixty million volumes, any of which can be delivered through Borrow Direct within two working days.

The academic programme of the SCT is saturated with regular social gatherings, most of which take place in the scenic garden of Andrew Dickson White House, the historic home of Cornell's first president and co-founder. The opportunity to exchange ideas with SCT participants and faculty, be it in a formal or casual setting, makes this programme an unparalleled summer experience, distinguished by its academic excellence and notable history in shaping the contemporary thought.

Višnja Krstić is a PhD student at the Faculty of Philology of the University of Belgrade. She holds a BA and an MA in English Language, Literature and Culture from the University of Belgrade as well as an MA in English Literature from the University of Warwick, UK. Her research interests include literary translation theory, feminist literary theory, multilingualism, and sociolinguistics.



Picture 1. The campus is separated by two gorges that cut through Ithaca, boasting a series of natural waterfalls; it is for this reason that the place is often referred to as 'gorge(ou)s'.



Picture 2. Jennie McGraw Clocktower, one of the symbols of Cornell's central campus.



Picture 3. Homi Bhabha (Harvard University) delivering his keynote lecture entitled 'Statelessness and Death: Reflections on the Burdened Life'.



Picture 4. A.D. White Reading Room at Uris Library.



Picture 5. A garden party at A.D. White House.

Interview with Ian McEwan

Aleksandra Jevtović, ANGLIA, Novi Sad



Ian McEwan was born on 21 June in 1948 in Aldershot, Hampshire, England. He spent much of his childhood in the Far East, Germany and North Africa where his father, an officer in the army, was posted.

He returned to England and read English at Sussex University. After graduating, he became the first student on the MA Creative Writing course established at the University of East Anglia by Malcolm Bradbury and Angus Wilson. He was awarded the Shakespeare Prize by the Alfred Toepfer Foundation, Hamburg, in 1999. He was awarded a CBE in 2000.

In addition to his prose fiction, **Ian McEwan** has written plays for television and film screenplays, including his novel *On Chesil Beach* (2007), was shortlisted for the 2007 Man Booker Prize for Fiction, and winner of the British Book Awards

Book of the Year and Author of the Year Awards. Recent books include the novel *Solar* (2010), a satirical novel focusing on climate change, winner of the 2010 Bollinger Everyman Wodehouse Prize; *Sweet Tooth* (2012); *The Children Act* (2014); and *Nutshell* (2016).

Ian McEwan lives in London.

Picture : Ian McEwan lecturing at The Faculty of Philology, Belgrade.

The writer who was featured on the list of 'the 50 greatest British writers since 1945' by The Times and was number 19 in the list of 'the 100 most powerful in British culture' by The Daily Telegraph, Ian McEwan was gracious enough to grant ELTA a short interview during his recent visit to Belgrade.

Alexandra : Do you read or have you read any Serbian authors?

McEwan : Many years ago I got to know and very much like **Danilo Kis**. The last time I saw him was in Lisbon just a year before he died. Actually, what was very flattering to me was that he made a point of coming to find me and we had a very good time together. I liked his writing very much.

Alexandra : How much do you read and which authors do you read?

McEwan : It is like saying 'What do you eat?' I eat a lot and I read a lot.

Lately I have been reading a very interesting Dutch writer called Willem Hermans, who wrote one of the most brilliant novellas about WWII called '*An Untouched House*'. He is known to everybody in Holland but outside of Holland hardly anyone has heard of him.

I think his would be a good book to recommend to students because you know how hard it is to get students to read a long book. This one is a hundred pages long and it is rather strange, dreamlike work.

Alexandra : The way I read your books I feel that your female characters are stronger than the male ones. Who do you think is the stronger sex?

McEwan : I take a general humanist view. I deal with men and women in my fiction as I need to. I never really thought of who is ahead in this race. I don't have a strong sense of that.

There was a vogue many years ago of people, mostly women, saying that men mustn't write female characters and women mustn't write male characters. That seems to me to strike at the very heart of the project of writing fiction which is to imagine yourself in the skin of others. As a young man I could try and write young people and as an old man I now try and write young people. I think you must let imagination go free. Since I've known many women in my life and loved quite a few, I very happily inhabit them but I've also had many men in my life that I've loved same as women.

Alexandra : Are you an optimist or a pessimist?

McEwan : A bit of both. There's plenty to worry about the state of the world. There always is. There never has not been. At the same time I think that writers and intellectuals sometimes bury themselves in their pessimism. It becomes a kind of badge of intellectual life. There are many things to celebrate right now. One of them is that we have lifted more people out of poverty in the last fifty years than any other time in history. We are living longer. Fewer women are dying in childbirth. There's more clean drinking water. Literacy levels are rising. Generally, standards of living are rising. Maybe not in the United States interestingly, where child mortality rates are increasing but they are on a different, very alarming, course from many of us. On the bad side there's climate change, environmental degradation, mass extinction of species, bad air. But you can't have one without the other. If you just abandon yourself to gloom, no one will do anything. We'll just give up on ourselves.

Alexandra : It is interesting that you say that because in your books, it seems to me, the characters make one mistake and the rest of their life turns into gloom.

McEwan : This is said about my fiction but I don't know if it's really true. I think it is because I wrote a novel called *'Enduring Love'* where there is a moment and then everybody started looking for moments. I am interested in things going wrong. They don't have to go wrong quickly. They can go wrong slowly. Many things in life that are catastrophic happen quickly, there's no doubt about it. Except for maybe a dear friend dying slowly of an illness. Even then the death is a surprise. But I don't think I'm any different from many other writers in this that you put your characters through something... The great catholic writer Henry de Montherlant said 'Happiness writes white'. It is very difficult to do happiness. You can do it in poetry, in lyric poetry but the novel charts fates through time and it's not part of the human condition to be happy all the time. Sooner or later something happens. Happiness is an unstable condition in human affairs.

I hereby declare that I have the right to publish this photograph

Aleksandra Jevtović is a teacher, a teacher trainer and a presenter with 25 years of experience in the classroom teaching all levels of English to young adults and adults. Aleksandra's particular areas of interest are extensive reading and the use of mother tongue in teaching English.

An Interview with Marisa Constantinides

Vicky Papageorgiou, Metropolitan College, Thessaloniki, Greece



Marisa is a teacher, teacher educator, and ELT author; she is the **Director of Studies of CELT Athens** responsible for the design and implementation of all courses offered at CELT.

Her main **ELT qualifications** are a Diploma in TEFLA (the RSA Dip. TEFLA, predecessor to the Cambridge Delta) and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from Reading University. Marisa is a frequent conference presenter and keynote speaker – some recent presentations can be viewed here – and has presented at IATEFL International, TESOL France, Brazil TESOL, TESOL Greece as well as on numerous online

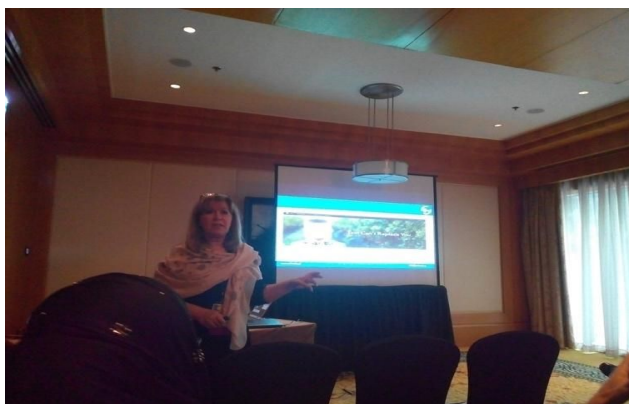
Conferences and Events and has served as a member of the Committee of the IATEFL Learning Technologies SIG (Special Interest Group).

Marisa is one of the founding moderators of a weekly hash tagged discussion of ELT teachers on Twitter which was **nominated & shortlisted in the 2012 ELTon Awards for Innovation in Teacher Resources**. Marisa co-moderates #ELTchat on Twitter every Wednesday (find more info on the ELTchat blog.)

Vicky : First of all, I would like to thank you for agreeing to give this interview and to welcome you!

Marisa : Dear Vicky, I was very happy to accept your invitation and deeply honoured to have been selected!!! Thank you for the opportunity to address your members!

Vicky : Marisa, you are such an active person! **#ELTchat**, Committee work for the IATEFL LTSIG, **CELT Athens**, conferences, writing. The list can go on and on...Which one do you enjoy the most?



Picture 1. In Dubai for the last TESOL Arabia conference in 2017

Marisa : I must stress the fact that first and foremost my work for CELT Athens is at the top of my priorities, so my management and training responsibilities **come first**, simply because I am responsible for the well-being of all my staff, my trainees, and the good conduct of our courses.

Having said that, I confess that I am very much a community oriented person and I do sometimes struggle with my priorities ☺ !!! I love it all!

This is not a facile answer - I love how all these diverse activities make my life so much richer, so much more interesting, how they let me test my strengths and stretch me in many ways, how they allow me to be in touch with and learn from so many fabulous colleagues around the globe.

I sometimes think there's too much on my plate but then I think how all these diverse activities have helped me grow as a professional and have challenged me to keep trying to get out of my comfort zone!

The other reason is that I very much believe in volunteering my time. There are many reasons for this:

- Not all teachers are able to pay for my courses, no matter how excellent or valuable they are
- There is a culture of exploiting teachers in many countries in the world, including Greece, where teachers are expected to work for next to nothing – 4,5 to 5 euros an hour for many colleagues; how could they possibly afford to pay for a CELTA, even though this may empower them and give them more choices to teach and be paid with respect to their studies and training?
- I am very grateful to have been entrusted with the training of so many teachers and to be able to do a job I love! I feel the need to give back to my community – local and international – and volunteering my time for #ELTchat, for the Learning Technologies SIG or for the **free webinars** we offer once a month. Your members are very welcome to participate completely freely by clicking on the link to see what topics we have covered so far and subscribing to our mailing list.
- Sharing is subject to the paradox of more learning coming your way, so I encourage all teachers to get involved in more of this!!!

Vicky: Many of us are very grateful to your team of moderators and colleagues running #ELTchat. How is this project coming along?

Marisa : #ELTchat was the **very first** hash-tagged discussion of English Language Teachers on Twitter. Since we launched it in 2010, and were very proud to be finalists for an ELTons Award in Innovation in Teaching Resources, many more groups have emerged, some of them local, some topic focused, e.g. on EAP or teaching YL's or teachers in Australia (#AusELT) and more!!!

But we are still going strong and remain a point of reference for many new chats. We have a formidable resource on our blog with hundreds of great summaries contributed by our members and feel very pleased to have helped many colleagues with their teaching and, indeed, their careers!!!

Many teacher trainers around the globe now mention our #ELTchat blog as a great resource to their trainees and, of course, so do I!

By the time this post has been published, we will have celebrated our 8th birthday!!!



Vicky: One of your fields of interest is, of course, technology. What is the biggest challenge, in your opinion, that ESL teachers are facing in using technology nowadays?

Marisa: I think that the biggest challenge with technology is choice. We are spoilt for choice and it's quite easy to get carried away and use too much of it or for the wrong reasons. It's not true that we will be worse teachers without technology. A bad teacher is a bad teacher no matter what they use – and the reverse of course!!!!

We are experiencing the growing pains of a generation of teachers with so much choice that some feel frightened and avoid using tech altogether! Not a good decision!

We need to make **informed choices** – a little and often is what I usually preach. Each teacher should find the tech that responds to a problem their students have **better** than how they could deal with it without tech; then by all means, choose it and use it!

Tech without a sound pedagogical background is as bad as unprincipled use of traditional materials without tech. But good use of tech makes teaching and learning much more motivating and exciting!

Vicky : Which do you consider the best medium that teachers can use for professional development as much as for practical reasons, for example finding teaching resources: twitter or youtube?

Marisa: My personal favourite for professional development is Twitter, no question about it!



For me, Twitter is the hub, the centre of CPD and although Facebook is trying to catch up in that respect, there is much more concentrated exchange of information and educational resources and reading shared on Twitter.

You Tube is where I go to learn about these new tools through tutorials – there are so many “how to“ videos, it’s amazing!

I love it because it can teach me how to do anything!

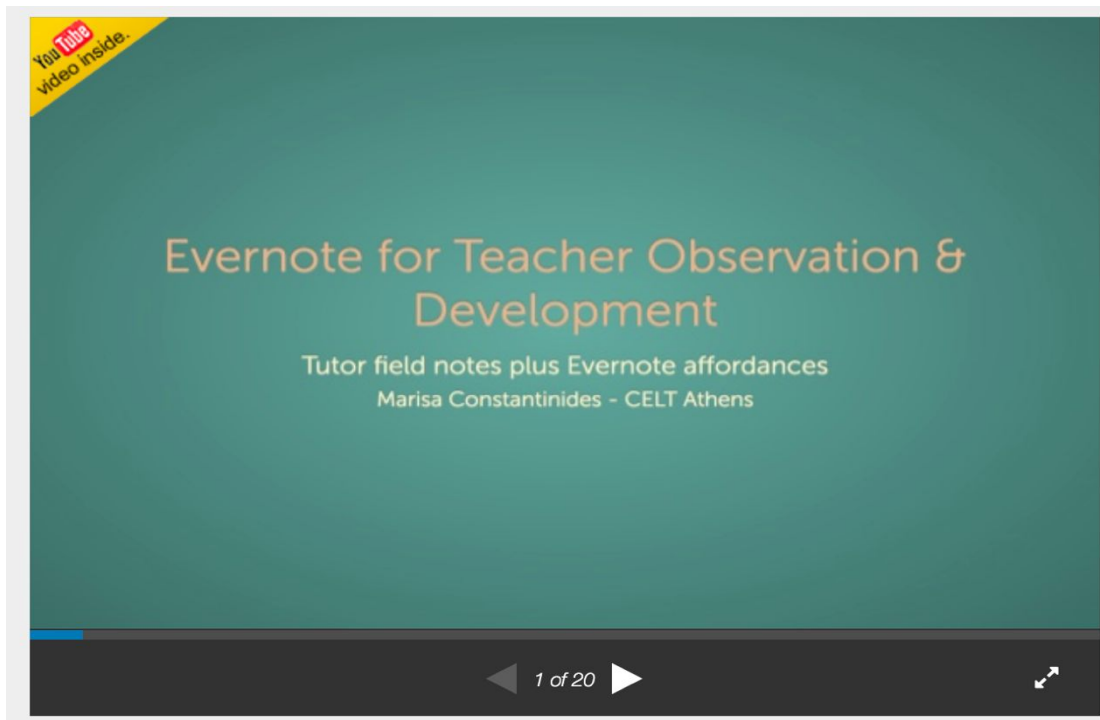
I know that most teachers prefer Facebook and find it easier – they are afraid of Twitter for some reason but I want to say to them, join me on twitter!

Vicky : Over the years, you have written about new apps and how teachers or students could profit from them. Is there a new app you are fascinated with or experimented with lately?

Marisa: I am very fond of a number of apps which I find extremely useful in my teaching and training, for example, I use Google Docs extensively with my online trainees to do collaborative online work – I think teachers could get their students to do loads of collaborative writing online. Primary Pad is also great because each writer’s contribution is highlighted in a different colour so it’s lovely to see a group writing, fixing, editing!



I love **Evernote** which I use when I observe teachers and find it a fabulous tool; it can do so many things it's incredible! If anyone is interested in this app for training let me share the slides of a presentation at IATEFL International a few years ago. You can access it [here](#).



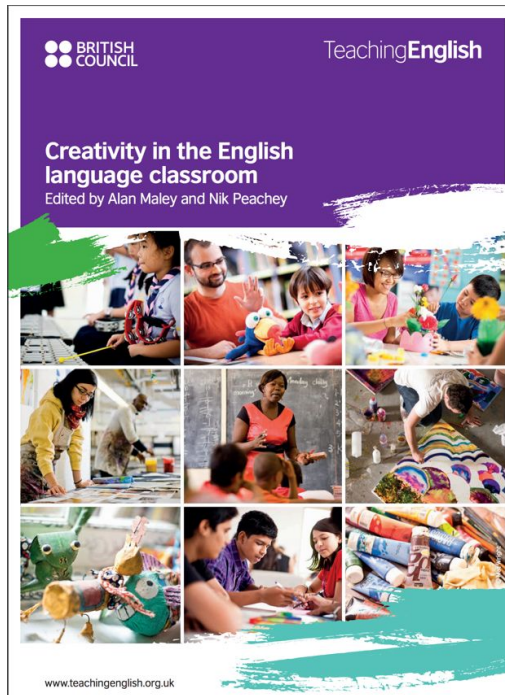
Lately, I have been experimenting a lot with storytelling; I think stories are great to teach any content and so tools like **Storybird**, **Creaza**, **Powtoon** are fantastic vehicles for that!

Another all time favorite is **Padlet** which I use to share with the world, to share with my trainees, to upload materials for lessons; padlets are wonderful and well worth exploring by teachers and teacher educators.

Vicky : Creativity is another interest of yours. In your 2013 article *“Eight steps to becoming a more creative teacher, Creativity now!”* for IATEFL Voices magazine, you stated that a teacher ‘has to become a knowledgeable teacher – this implies learning about other things’. Lately, there has been a talk about multidisciplinary education being the new future. Do you believe that specialization has narrowed down our creative skills and critical thinking? Can an ‘opening up’ to other disciplines make teachers to think outside traditional silos? And how?

Marisa : Thank you for that question, Vicky... You know my interest in developing creative and critical thinking skills in teachers and learners and how many ELT teachers have, in recent years, turned their thoughts into areas such as this, looking at Bloom’s taxonomy as well as formulating linguistic objectives, but the movement is still small and needs to spread!

I think traditional ELT has distanced itself from mainstream education for no good reason. We need to learn more about general education principles and not behave like we are something so special that we have to ignore general education theories and knowledge that every schoolteacher considers a must before they can start teaching.



ELT has a limited view of how people learn and I am all for broadening our scope and introducing education studies into our training courses!!!

In recent years, I have felt much more connected with mainstream educators through online conferences and have started going to some conferences not exclusive to language teachers – something which has helped me learn and ‘see’ things in a different light.

You may be aware of some recent writings and new groups forming with a focus on creativity – one of them I also contributed a chapter two – free to download from [this page](#).

Vicky : Marisa, you travel a lot for work purposes. What’s the last country you visited which you found absolutely amazing? Why?

Marisa: I have been invited to many conferences – the biggest highlight for me was presenting at the British Council in London alongside Alan Maley and Nick Peachey at the launch of the volume on creativity in the English Language Classroom.

Like many non-native speaker teachers/trainers, I have always felt that the British Council has dominated our ELT lives with the subtle message that they own all the expertise and that local knowledge is inferior or secondary. It was good to present a

talk livestreamed worldwide – the message was probably unintentional but it was a good message to the ELT community that the non-native trainer and presenter can also be the locus of expertise.

My most recent visit to Morocco, and especially to the city of Laayune far down in the South of Morocco is another highly memorable recent conference experience. It was a conference organised by the local Chapter of MATE (Moroccan Association of Teachers of English) and not only was it fabulously well organised and well-attended but it was a culturally great moment for me. I feel very fortunate to have been invited as a plenary speaker by such a vibrant ELT community and I was very impressed with some great ideas I saw there for the first time. For example, they organised a



Picture 2. With Pete Sharma in Morocco talking about creative and critical thinking skills development

parallel learner conference where they got the students to display various great projects they had put together, but they also called in speakers to teach them how to film, how to organise their student clubs and activities – this was amazing and very very original!!!



Picture 3. In Malta with the LTSIG talking about curation

I cannot tell you what a stunning country Morocco is and can't stop talking about their amazing hospitality and enthusiasm for professional development. I was really impressed!!!!



Vicky : Do you have any exciting plans for the future that you would like to share with us?

Marisa : We are all going through an era of transition from old technologies to new. I think many of us are coming to realise that much, if not most, of the learning in future will be online!

However, online should not mean depersonalized and faceless – we are social creatures and learn best with others, even though going it alone is a solution of convenience.

We are now able to use amazing online virtual learning environments with video and audio contact with everyone and yes, I am very interested in experimenting and developing new online courses with an eye to blended rather than fully asynchronous learning solutions.

And of course, I plan to travel a lot more and your conference is in my sights!!!

Hope to see you there soon!

Vicky : Marisa, thank you for your time!

Marisa : It was a pleasure and here is where you can find me!



I hereby declare that Ms Marisa Constantinides has given us permission to use her photos

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 also the website editor of the Visual Arts Circle. She currently divides her time between Thessaloniki (Greece) working as an Adjunct Lecturer at Metropolitan College and the UK.

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Keywords: Creativity, students, authors, coursebooks

Mirjana Savić-Obradović has been kind enough to share the creativity of her students with us. They have illustrated exercises from the coursebook *Upstream Intermediate*. One of them has even drawn the authors themselves. Thank you, Ms. Savić-Obradović for sharing this incredible work with our readers.

The authors are all students at Mathematical Grammar School in Belgrade.

1 Hana Andrić, 2b, To do impressions of somebody

2 Luka Lazić, 2b, To hit the jackpot

3 Maša Cucić, 2b, To break the ice

4 Lana Popović, 2b, To have itchy feet

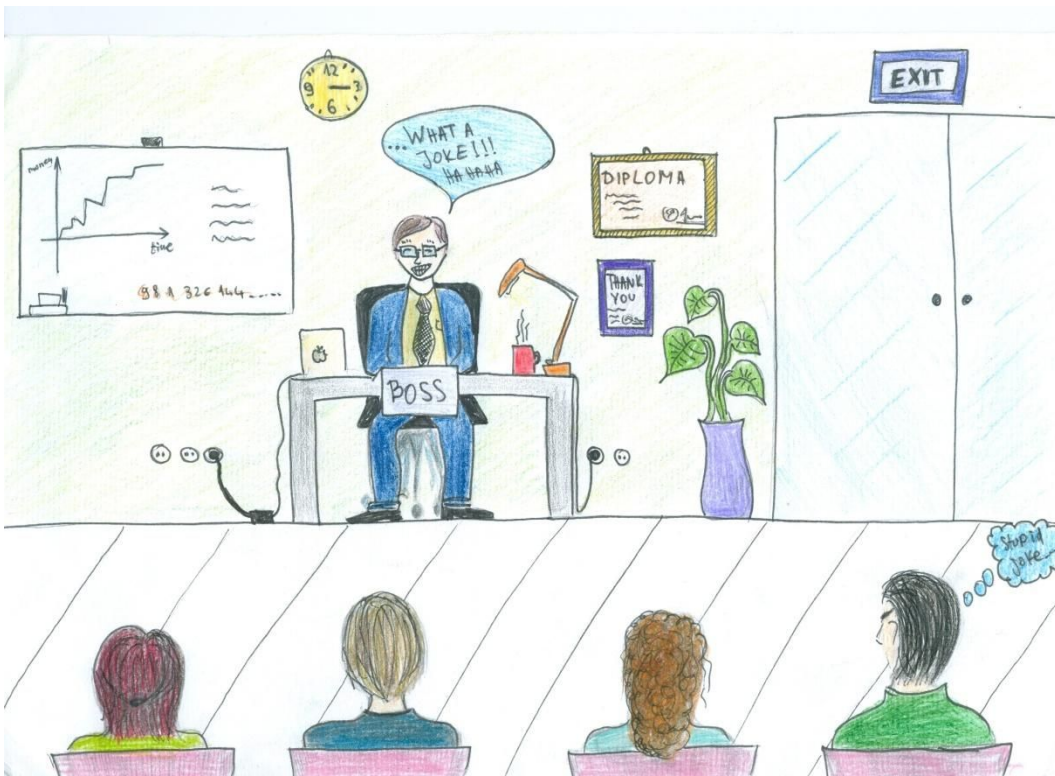
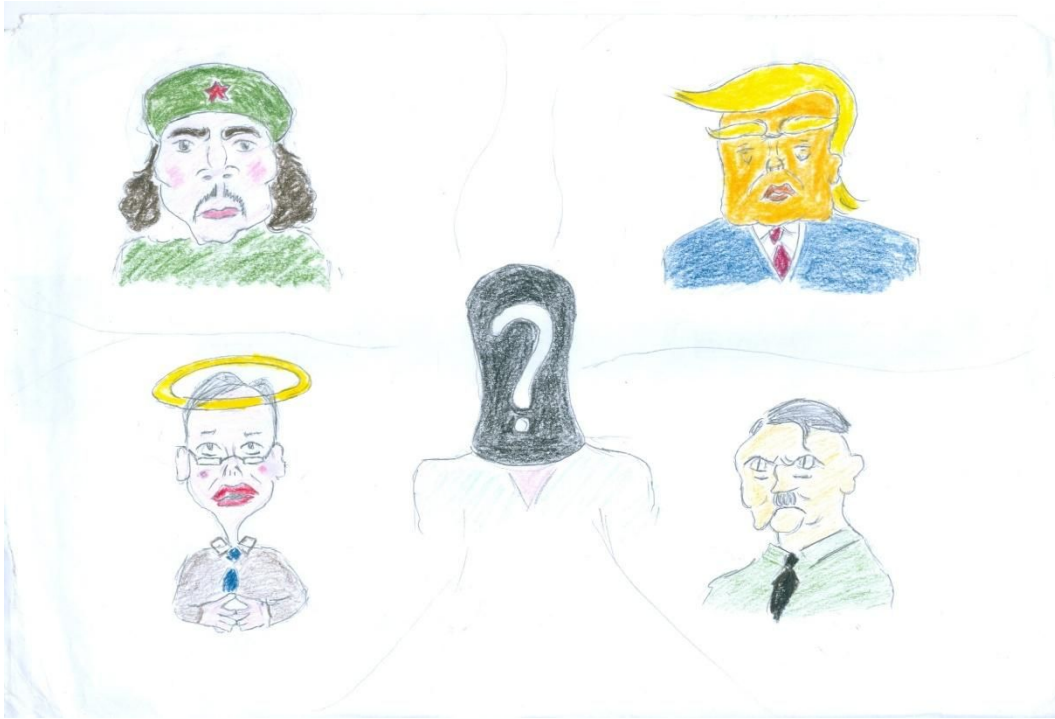
5 Anja Stanić, 2b, To break the ice

6 Jelisaveta Aleksić, 2b, To break the ice

7 Zoi Bizetić, 2b, To break the ice



The Authors, drawing by Lana Popović; From left to right: Zoi Bizetić, Hana Andrić, Anja Stanić, Maša Cucić, Jelisaveta Aleksić, Lana Popović, Luka Lazić



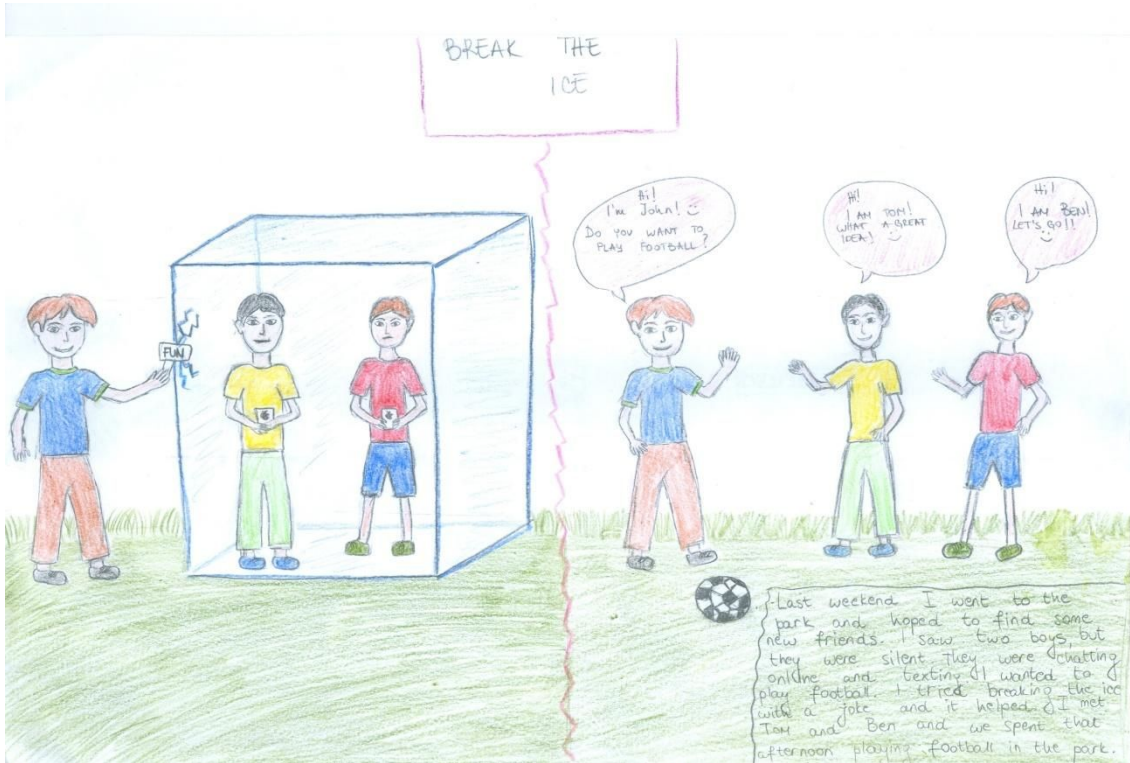
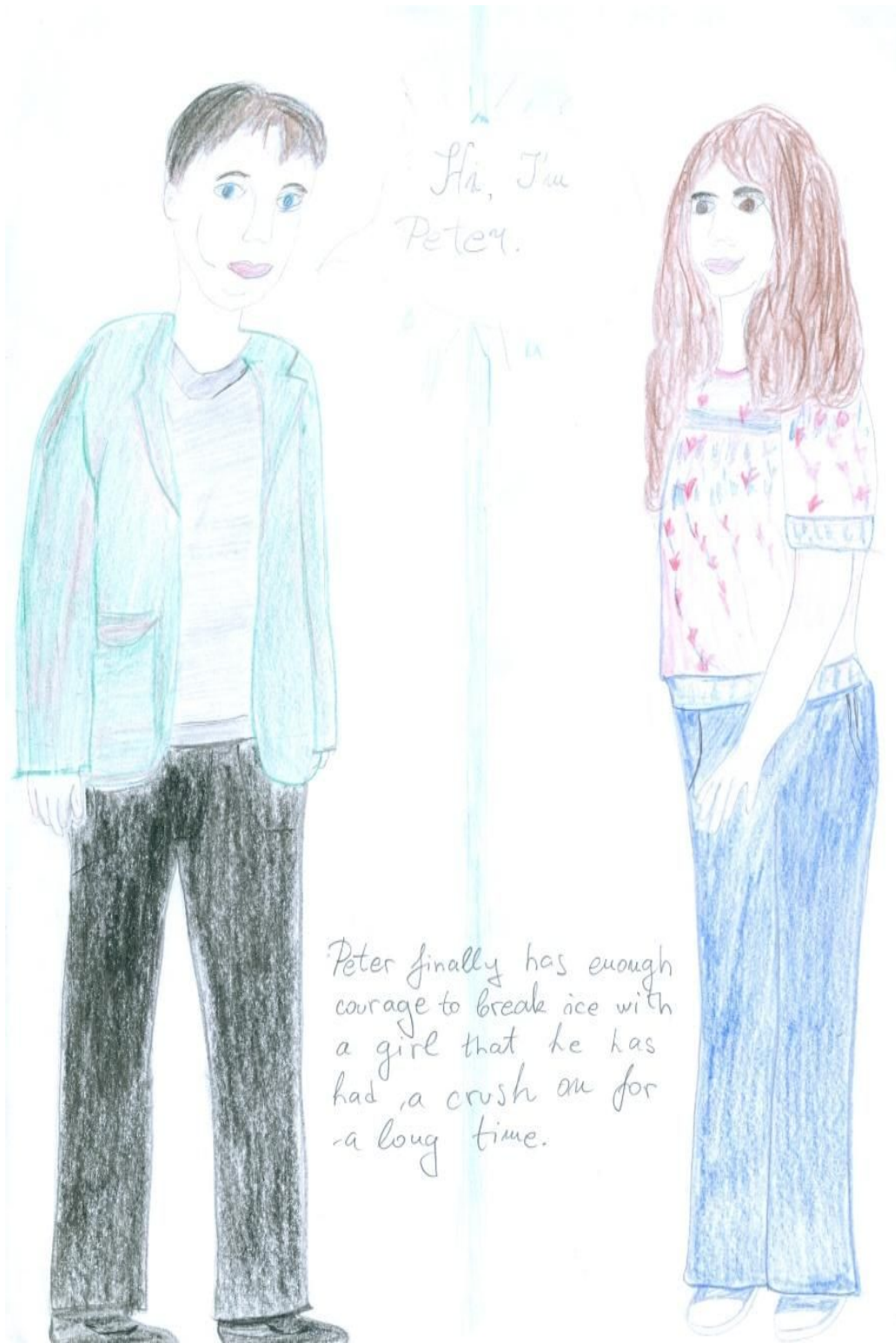


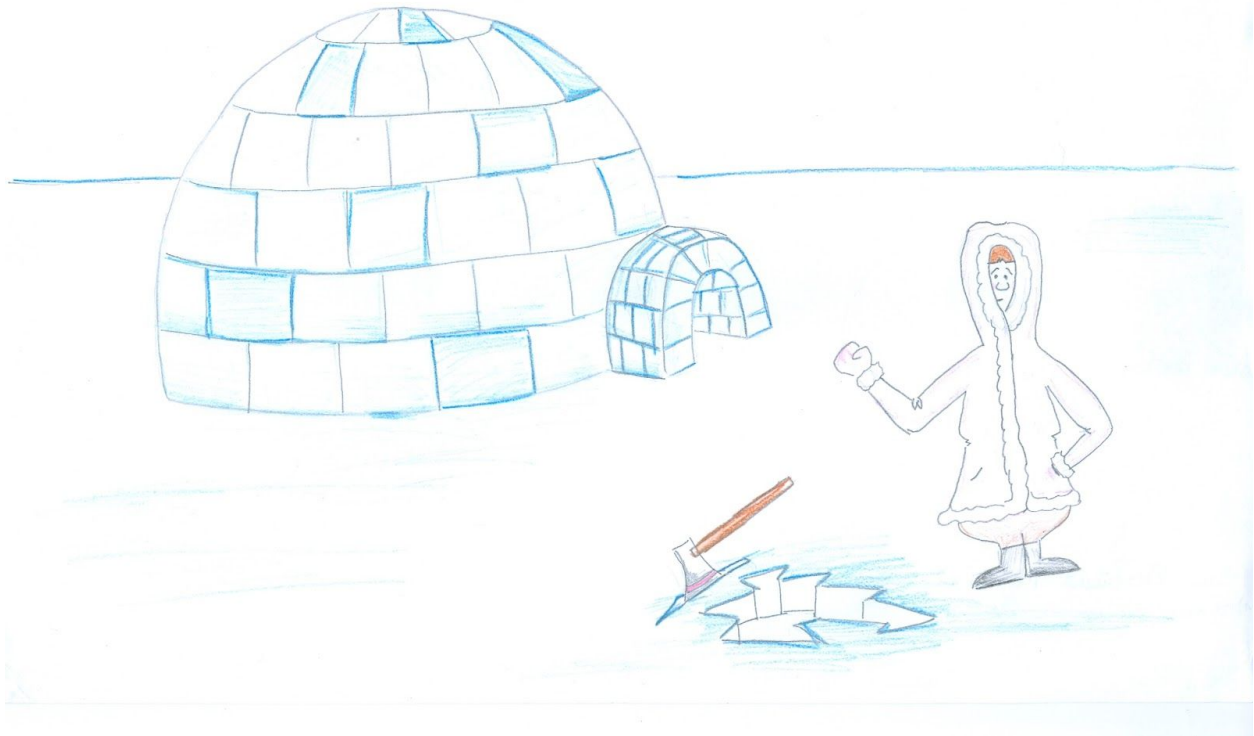


ILLUSTRATION:

“DEBBIE HAS ITCHY FEET - SHE NEVER STAYS IN ONE PLACE FOR MORE THAN A YEAR OR TWO BEFORE SHE GOES TRAVELLING AGAIN”



"At the start of the meeting
the boss told us a few jokes
TO BREAK THE ICE"
Zoi Bizetic





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