

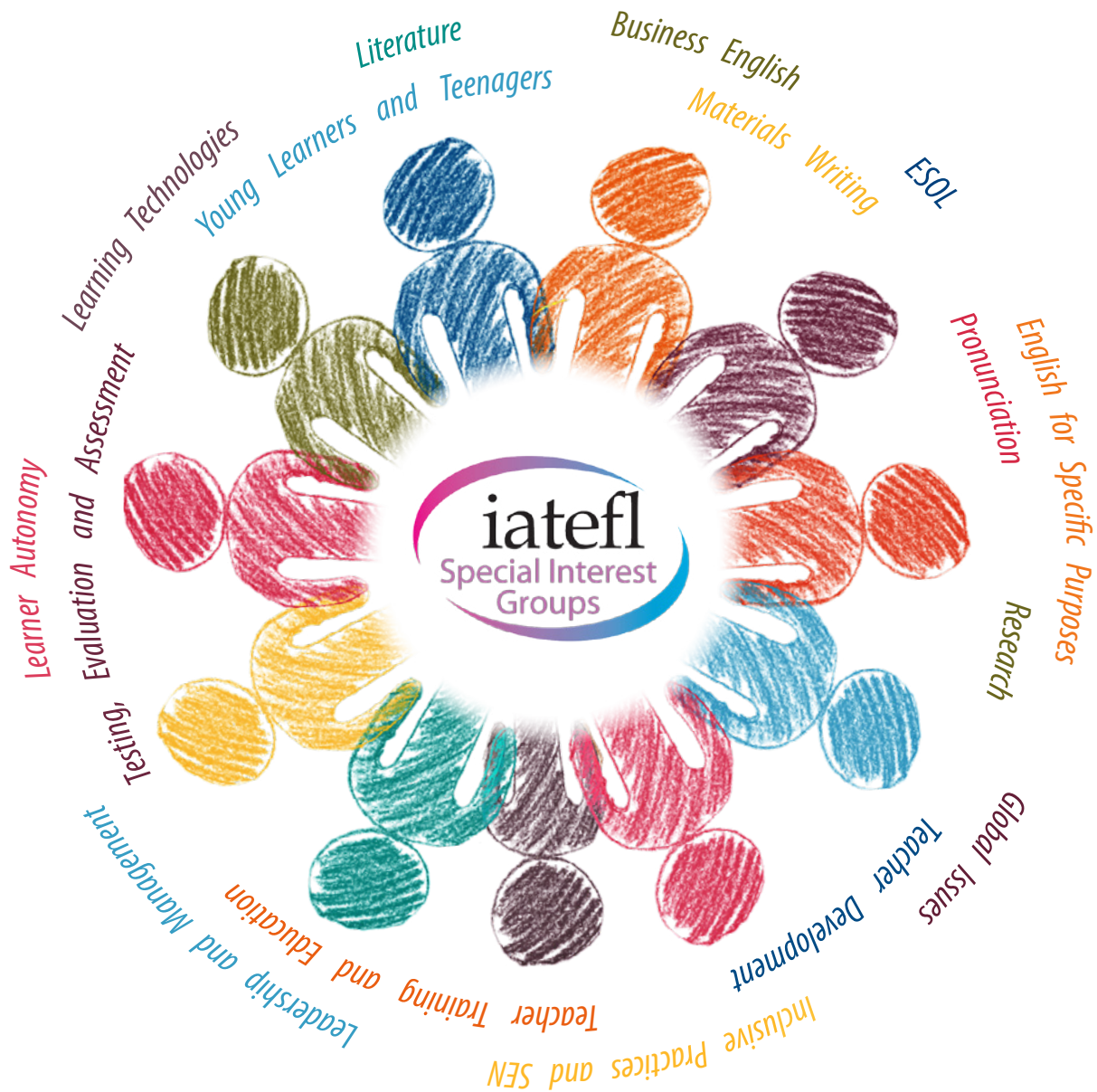


iatefl

# VOICES

May/June 2023  
Issue 292

# Get involved in IATEFL Special Interest Groups and connect with other professionals from within your ELT specialism



Face-to-face events

Webinars

Volunteering opportunities

Social media

Scholarships

and much more!

Newsletters

Blogs

Visit [www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org) to join and for more information

# VOICES

## From the Editor

Welcome to the May/June edition of *Voices* and my first since taking over as Editor. Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks and gratitude to Tania Pattison for all her hard work on *Voices* over the past five years and, indeed, for showing me the ropes during our handover. Also, a big thank you must go to Ruby Vurdien, who worked diligently on the Reviews for *Voices*.



Derek Philip-Xu, Editor

I hope you all enjoyed the IATEFL Conference last month. It was my first time visiting Harrogate and it's such a lovely place with some great parks to run around. I very much enjoyed being at the Conference and it was great to not only see many familiar faces but also make new friends as well.

In the Keynote article, Ozioma Okey-Kalu discusses content writing and how to introduce it to your students and gradually get them interested in this rapidly rising writing genre. Although Tania has hung up her *Voices* editorial hat, she is back writing one of our feature articles about video in the EAP classroom with lots of suggestions for activities that you can try out with your learners. Ania Karwowska talks about dyslexia in the EFL classroom and offers suggestions for teachers who have dyslexic students on how best to help them with their reading. And we hear again from Albert P'Rayan who brings us his second interview, this time with Dr K. Elango of the English Language Teachers' Association of India.

Wendy Arnold, Juana Sagaray and Maria Teresa Fernandez bring us the details of research they have been conducting on the use of the Telegram app to assist with both teaching and training in remote contexts, specifically referencing Venezuela, Indonesia and Mexico. Margit Szesztay's article on five-minute activities for learner wellbeing provides an interesting counterbalance to the technology that inhabits our daily lives and suggests alternative, digital-free ways to start your lessons.

Citing research, Sebastian Lesniewski writes in defence of direct corrective feedback in the classroom arguing that it can work successfully in conjunction with indirect feedback. Finally, Belén Francisco talks about incorporating legends in the classroom as a means of adhering to the requirements of Argentinian Comprehensive Sexuality Education.

I hope you enjoy reading the articles presented in this issue. If you would like to write for *Voices*, perhaps outlining some classroom research you have conducted, or writing about a particular issue in your context, please do get in touch.

With very best wishes

Derek Philip-Xu  
Voices Editor  
editor@iatefl.org

Cover photo: Yannis H/Unsplash

## Contents

**4 From the Trustees: New Trustees to the Board**  
*Maria-Araxi Sachpazian and Gerhard Erasmus*

**6 Keynote: Content writing: the new gold mine**  
*Ozioma Okey-Kalu*

### Feature articles

**8 Video in the EAP class: not just for tired Fridays**  
*Tania Pattison*

**10 Dyslexia in the EFL classroom: a structured literacy approach in the EFL context** *Ania Karwowska*

**12 Reading matters: an interview with K. Elango**  
*Albert P'Rayan*

**14 Telegram app as a tool for remote training and teaching**  
*Wendy Arnold, Juana Sagaray and Maria Teresa Fernandez*

**16 Five-minute activities for learner wellbeing** *Margit Szesztay*

**18 Direct corrective feedback's bad press is undeserved – research says**  
*Sebastian Lesniewski*

**20 Learning through legends: a pedagogic proposal to deal with Comprehensive Sexuality Education**  
*Belén Francisco*

### Regular column

**22 Materials reviews** *Reviews Editor*

### Inside IATEFL

**24 Note of thanks from the ESOLSIG Committee Members**

**26 From the Associates** *Jean Theuma*

**28 Coming events**

**29 Who's who in IATEFL**

## Contact us

### Head Office and Publisher

(for general information about IATEFL and details of advertising rates)

**IATEFL, 2-3 The Foundry, Seager Road, Faversham, Kent ME13 7FD, UK**

**Telephone: +44 (0)1795 591414**

**Email: [info@iatefl.org](mailto:info@iatefl.org) Web: [www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org)**

### Editorial Office

Correspondence relating to Newsletter content should be clearly marked for the attention of 'The Editor of IATEFL Voices' and sent to the above address.

The Editor can be also contacted by email at [editor@iatefl.org](mailto:editor@iatefl.org).

## Follow us @iatefl



# From the Trustees

## At the IATEFL Conference in Harrogate, we welcomed two new Trustees to the Board

Maria-Araxi Sachpazian is the new IATEFL Secretary to the Board of Trustees and Gerhard Erasmus is the IATEFL Membership Committee Chair. Here, both Maria and Gerhard introduce themselves and talk about their new roles.

### Maria-Araxi Sachpazian, IATEFL Secretary to the Board of Trustees



My professional identity as an educator has been shaped by Teachers' Associations (TAs) – first by TESOL

Macedonia-Thrace, Northern Greece, which I joined as a student and later by IATEFL, which was a dream come true for me. An even bigger dream was to attend an IATEFL Conference and then to present at one. Gradually, from 2001 when I first joined to 2023 when I was elected Secretary to the Board of Trustees, IATEFL grew in my life and with it grew aspects of my professional identity. I firmly believe that what TAs give to teachers cannot be replaced by any other form of continuing professional development (CPD). All other forms of CPD exist within and are unified into a coherent whole through TAs. By deciding to run for the Board of Trustees, I wanted to reiterate my faith in the mission and vision of IATEFL and to continue volunteering so that others, especially those who enter our profession right now, can benefit from this positivity that shaped my career.

I see the role of Secretary General as one in which communicative skills play a central role, so I am planning to use these to enhance communication between different sectors of our Association. One prevalent characteristic of IATEFL which makes it stand out in comparison to local TAs is its diversity and this *I* that stands for *International*. This international character and the diversity of our Association, make it necessary for all of us volunteers to think internationally, to be diplomatic and

put the interests and longevity of IATEFL first. More than that, we need to stay faithful to the vision and mission of IATEFL, which also needs to be updated as the times pass. I see this as a key challenge, but also as a necessary part of my new role. I also feel that as Secretary to the Board of Trustees, I need to see the whole picture not just the parts of IATEFL that I find interesting, or I used to relate to.

As a person, I am patient, eager to learn and share, flexible, good at time management and a natural organiser. I am also a good negotiator who tries to find the middle ground. Above all, I am hard-working and eager to help. I believe that TAs should have a future in our digital future, and volunteering is the best way to actively support this faith.

Right now, I feel excited about being given this position and deeply grateful to the colleagues who voted for me. I do hope that my work on the IATEFL Board of Trustees will show that they were right in their choice.

### Gerhard Erasmus, IATEFL Membership Committee Chair



My IATEFL journey started many years ago, predominantly because I wanted articles to read for my MA and could access them as an IATEFL member. I enjoyed the articles and although we could watch webinars without being a member, I only really started watching webinars after becoming a member. Over the years, I met quite a few people, mostly online, but also here and there at local conferences, and eventually decided that serving on a committee would be an even better way of getting to meet people and network.

I have served on the YLTSIG Committee, the Membership Committee, and am currently the LAMSIG Coordinator, a role I have to step away from to take up the role of Membership Committee Chair. I was also a Scholarship winner in 2018, and this happened to be the first time I attended the Annual Conference. I think this is an important part of my journey, as there are quite a few people who view the Conference as the main and only benefit or being an IATEFL member. My experience has been very different, and I am hoping that my experience will help us to ensure that benefits outside of the Conference also make it viable for people worldwide to become members of IATEFL.

Outside of IATEFL, I currently live in Taiwan, where I have been for the last 20 plus years. I have worked as a teacher, academic manager, trainer and director of studies. Currently, I am Academic and Course Director of Inspired CPD, a teacher training organisation that delivers Trinity qualifications and other types of training, as well as of Inspired Kids, which is a school where kids learn English, chess and other fun things.

As Membership Committee Chair, I hope to contribute by following a data-driven approach to membership and member benefits to ensure that our membership benefits reach all our members. This would mean looking critically at where different members are based, where we could be attracting new members, and how to cooperate with different Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to arrange events to serve our membership and the ELT community globally. I appreciate all that IATEFL has meant to me, and I hope that through this role I can ensure that IATEFL means the same or more for teachers and managers all over the world.



The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language was founded in 1967.

Registered as a Charity: 1090853 Registered as a Company in England: 2531041

#### Disclaimer

Views expressed in the articles in *Voices* are not necessarily those of the Editor, of IATEFL or its staff or trustees.

#### Copyright Notice

Copyright for whole issue IATEFL 2022. IATEFL retains the right to reproduce part or all of this publication in other publications, including retail and online editions as well as on our websites.

Contributions to this publication remain the intellectual property of the authors. Any requests to reproduce a particular article should be sent to the relevant contributor and not IATEFL.

Articles which have first appeared in IATEFL publications must acknowledge the IATEFL publication as the original source of the article if reprinted elsewhere.

# Keynote: Content writing: the new gold mine

**Ozioma Okey-Kalu introduces students to content writing and explores ways to help them to not only improve their writing, but potentially break into this fast-expanding profession**

## What do you know about content writing?

As technology improves and innovates, so new professions continue to emerge and innovate. Writing, which was invented as a means of communication, has become one of those professions that is being influenced by innovative trends in technology. Writers continue to emerge every day to fill the demand for their services. Currently, corporations, business owners, researchers, students and entrepreneurs seek the services of writers and many of them are willing to pay well for these services. Parents, teachers and school administrators also need the services of writers because they (writers) make sure that children have books to read for entertainment, learning and moral development. However, it can be difficult to find a good writer. This is why you, as a teacher, should encourage your students to become good writers.

One of the innovative writing genres that is currently in high demand is content writing. This type of writing broadly encompasses other minor writing



**Ozioma Okey-Kalu** teaches English at the Federal School of Statistics, Enugu, Nigeria. She is also a content writer, a ghost writer and an academic writer. Ozioma is currently studying for her PhD in English at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. She is the mother of two handsome young men.

genres. When you read blog posts, email marketing messages, social media posts (especially long posts that describe a product, service, or ideology), and web pages (such as the homepage, the 'About Us' page, and the 'Frequently Asked Questions' page of a website), you are reading the work of a content writer. As you can see from these examples, content writing was borne out of technological innovation. And content writers can take advantage of technological advances to develop their work.

One thing you may need to understand about content writing is that it is used for marketing purposes. You may be surprised to hear this because you do not necessarily see the blog posts you read as conventional pieces of advertising. That is the beauty of content writing: it is subtle in its marketing strategy. For instance, this writing genre can tell you about a product, a service or an organisation without making it look like it is out to influence your attitude, action or reaction towards the subject. This, by extension, should tell you that although content writing may seem easy, good content writers work hard to learn the art of creating

a captivating piece that can hold the reader's attention until the last word.

## As a teacher, how do you encourage your students to get involved in content writing?

Many people feel they do not have what it takes to become a content writer. Some believe they may fail in their endeavours because they need to write in a second or foreign language. For instance, a learner of English as a second or foreign language may see themselves as not being skilled enough to create content in the language they are learning. If you have students in this category, you may need to let them know that absolutely anyone can experience imposter syndrome when it comes to content writing. By doing so, you will encourage them to try out and practise content writing, which will lead them to understand that the feelings of impostor syndrome they experienced are unfounded and not peculiar to them.

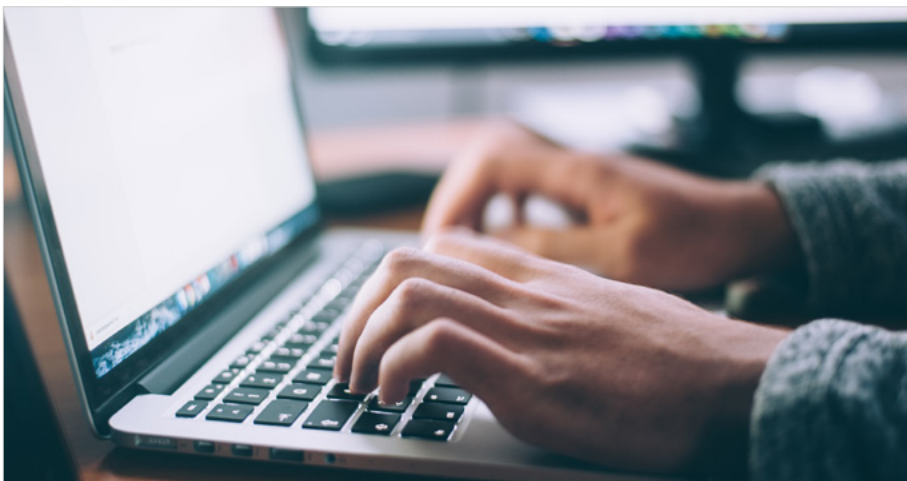
Content writers should acquire a number of skills that can help them to excel in this field. Here are a few skills you can help your students to develop as they take their first steps into content writing.

### Knowledge of the language of communication

Your students do not need to have a C1 level of proficiency in English before they can attempt content writing. However, they should demonstrate an intermediate ability to communicate in the language. Fortunately, they can improve their performance in the language if they write regularly. You should, therefore, encourage them to write about different topics as often as possible and this is something that can be incorporated into classroom lessons and self-study on a semi-regular basis.

### Descriptive and persuasive writing skills

Content writing is informative, descriptive and persuasive. This means that a content writer should be able to give adequate information about the subject of their text as well as help the reader to visualise what is being written about. A content writer that cannot paint pictures with words may not fully capture and retain the interest of the reader. In addition, they should be able to use rhetoric in their writing as a means of persuading and influencing the



reader. To help your students here, you can assign them tasks which encourage them to create persuasive texts on varying topics. It is useful to focus on topical issues they may find interesting. Remember to encourage them to be vivid in their descriptions and to focus on content that can appeal to readers.

#### Research skills

Your students do not have to know everything to become content writers. They only need to know how to find information from authentic and verifiable sources when creating content about unfamiliar topics. With the invention of the Internet, it has become easier for content writers to find the information they need on any given subject. However, considering the high rate of misinformation being spread on the Internet, you can teach your students how to find and use reputable sources for their research. You can advise them to use the following sources:

- Peer reviewed articles, published in academic journals.
- Reports from government agencies, intergovernmental associations (such as the United Nations and the European Union) and non-governmental organisations and reputable charitable organisation and foundations.
- Websites of government agencies, intergovernmental associations and reputable organisations and corporations.
- Reputable newspapers, news organisations and magazines.
- Published textbooks and book chapters.
- Private websites that have published information from verifiable sources. It is safer to use websites that cite the sources of their information.

#### A determined, positive and cheerful spirit

Your students need to master determination because that will help them to complete difficult tasks. They should also learn the skill of staying positive in the face of adversity because it will help them handle imposter syndrome and any other negative feelings they may face while working on a text. They should be taught to accept rejections and disappointments since, as content writers, they are bound to face criticism, rejection, difficult clients and cancelled contracts. You can start early to instil these values into your students by encouraging them to:

- analyse and critique articles written by experts;
- critique their peers' texts;
- submit articles to blogs, magazines

and journals either managed by their school or external publications;

- submit entries for writers' grants, sponsorship and competitions;
- send their articles to blogs, magazines and newspapers of their choice; and
- partake in any other activities that may help them to gain valuable feedback from non-teaching sources.

### How to encourage your students to become good content writers

Your students may know how to put words together but may not succeed as content writers. To be good at content writing, they should be able to attract and retain the interest of their readers. Your students have to learn how to make their piece interesting so that readers will be engrossed from the beginning of the text to its end. This requires skill and creativity. Hence, if you want your students to become good content writers, you should consider doing the following activities in class.

- 1 Help them to write for at least an hour every day. You can earmark 30 minutes

of your class activities for content writing and then encourage your students to spend 30 minutes at home to edit, proofread and polish their work. Encourage them to do this regularly so that they build a positive writing habit. You can ask them to submit their writing to the school blog, magazine, newspaper or journal. They should also be encouraged to submit their writing to other approved publishing outlets.

- 2 Organise seminars, webinars and training on content and creative writing and encourage your students to participate. If you receive information on events that can help them to improve their writing skills or to network with other writers, you should not hesitate to inform them and encourage them to participate.
- 3 Encourage your students to read articles written by good content writers because this will help them to improve their writing skills. You can also ask your students to analyse good articles so they can evaluate the authors' writing styles, word choices and creativity. That



Photo: Hannah Grace/Unsplash

will expose them to the intricacies of good content writing. Conduct some research prior to class so that you can recommend some good articles or blog posts for your students to explore.

- 4 Help your students to be original in their work. They may be intimidated by the work of the professional content writers they read and analyse and, as a result, attempt to copy them. Though your students should be influenced by the writing styles of other authors, they should be encouraged to be creative too. Encourage them to start experimenting with different writing styles until they start creating what their readers find unique and captivating.
- 5 Help your students to continue working on their language skills. Do your best to help them to improve their English grammar, punctuation and sentence construction. You can achieve this through regular classroom language lessons where, as the teacher, you can offer students some personalised tasks related specifically to their content writing work.
- 6 Encourage your students to read voraciously in order to add words to their vocabulary bank. Reading will also give them ideas on how to use certain words in context. Content writers who read regularly are never afraid to play and experiment with words. Your students can also achieve this if they read different types of texts as often as possible. Furthermore, they can practise wordsmithing if they read a lot of short stories, poems, political speeches and opinion columns in newspapers. Regular reading can also help generate new ideas for students to write about.
- 7 Help your students to network with writers in different parts of the world. You can connect to writers on social

media and follow their posts to find out when they have programmes, such as boot camps for young writers, which will help your students to meet professional and upcoming writers. You can also form a writers' club in the school and encourage teachers in other schools to do so. The writers' clubs within the community can come together on a semi-regular basis for networking and other related events.

### Tips and tricks for writing good content

Here are more tips and tricks that can help your students to write good content.

- They should always use the second-person point of view while writing an informal article. This will make the readers feel connected to their ideas or thoughts. With the use of 'you' as the pronoun for addressing readers, your students will succeed in making each reader feel that the piece was written specifically for them.
- They should break their articles into sections and use subheadings throughout. This will help them to organise their thoughts as well as make it easier for their readers, guiding them through the text to the end.
- When writing their first drafts, they should feel free to write extensively. They can achieve this by being verbose, chatty and expressive. At this stage, they should write without holding back on their thoughts or ideas. They should view their drafts as a container for emptying their minds. They should not worry about writing good content at this stage because they will have time to edit and tighten the work later.

- They should ease up on the formal language. They should use informal language to make their readers feel at home. However, they should consider who their readers are while choosing their words so they can avoid using terms they (the readers) may find offensive or inappropriate. Your students need to connect with their readers and not send them away.
- While writing their first drafts, your students should not worry so much about their grammar. They will come back to it when they edit and proofread their texts later.
- After writing their first drafts, your students should take time to read through their texts and edit them. They should read their work through the lens of their readers so they can discover errors and ambiguities. The best way they can do this is to start reading from the last paragraph of a section or the last section of the article. Reading out loud can also help identify errors.

### Conclusion

As you can see, content writing is a profession your students can get involved in. With some focused time and effort, you can help them to acquire the skills needed to become good content writers. You can adjust your class activities to accommodate the time spent in learning content writing and then encourage your students to spend some of their free time to practise and prepare for this profession. Whenever you can, you should organise training and webinars that can help them develop and polish their skills. Finally, you should create as many opportunities as possible for your students so they can practise this skill because practice, they say, makes perfect.

[oziomajuliekalu@gmail.com](mailto:oziomajuliekalu@gmail.com)

# Free 90-day trial

Of our best selling international titles on  
Oxford English Hub ▶



# Video in the EAP class: not just for tired Fridays

**Tania Pattison shows how short videos can activate higher-order thinking skills in an EAP context**

## Introduction

It's Friday afternoon and you're tired, but you have to teach. You're tempted to just play a video, calling it 'listening practice', but you feel guilty. While the use of video is fundamental in ELT, you're teaching EAP, and you suspect your students want and need something more... *academic*. Fear not. As Lansford (2014) points out, 'Academic skills such as summarising, paraphrasing, and giving an opinion are often linked with reading as a source of input. However, [...] a video is also an information-rich 'text' that can provide students with the ideas and concepts that they must learn to manipulate successfully.'

This article provides a framework for the application of Bloom's Taxonomy (revised version, 2001) to a 15-minute film. By following these steps, you will take your students from lower-order thinking skills, or LOTS (remember, understand, apply) to higher-order thinking skills, or HOTS (analyse, evaluate, create). Along the way, students will develop skills in summary writing and critiquing.

The film I have chosen here contains harsh language (in addition to the title) and scenes that are disturbing; on the other hand, it shows the realities of life for a child in a hostile environment. While this particular film may be a little too distressing for your class, the framework can be applied to any short film with thought-provoking content. There is little spoken language in this film, so it could work with any class at intermediate level or above.

## The film

*Little Sh\*\** (dir. Richard Gorodecky, 2018) introduces us to Paul, an aggressive young boy growing up in a rough housing development in London. Paul spends his days wandering aimlessly, shoplifting, scrounging money from his neighbours and fighting with his older brother. Paul, we sense, is a child who does not have



**Tania Pattison**, former editor of *Voices* and *Conference Selections*, divides her time between EAP materials writing and academic editing. Her most recent publication is *Reflect, Reading & Writing Book 6* (National Geographic Learning, 2022). Her websites are [www.taniapattisonediting.com](http://www.taniapattisonediting.com) and [www.taniapattisonelt.com](http://www.taniapattisonelt.com).

a bright future. However, as the film progresses, we see a different Paul. Walking by the canal, he meets John, a fisherman with a disability. As he interacts with John and experiences nature, Paul shows himself to be a sensitive, curious and kind boy. Towards the end, we learn the horror of Paul's home life, and we discover the terrible situation that lies ahead.

## In the classroom

### A Preparation

Prepare students for the film by discussing the following questions:

- 1 Show a still from the film, so students can see the environment where the story takes place. Ask: What kind of place is this? Where is it? Who might live here?
- 3 Students will likely identify the location as a poor part of a city. Ask: What causes poverty? Who does it affect most?
- 4 Tell students they are going to watch a short film about a boy who lives in this environment. Introduce the main characters: Paul, his brother, his mother and John. Tell students the title of the film, explain what it means and tell them that the expression refers to Paul. Ask: What kind of behaviour do you expect this child to exhibit?

### B Watch to understand

First, we focus on the lower-order thinking skills. This section will culminate with the writing of a summary of the film.

- 1 Play the film in its entirety; you may want to play it more than once.
- 2 Ask students to work in pairs to answer the following questions:

*Setting (time and place)*

- a) Where does the story take place?

- b) When does the story take place (past, present, future)?

*Characters (people)*

- a) Who are the main characters in the film?
- b) What words would you use to describe each one?
- c) What two sides of Paul does the film show?

*Plot (what happens)*

- a) What happens in the film? Make some notes on the main events.
  - b) How would you describe the ending of the film? Is it happy, sad, surprising, etc.?
- 3 Briefly review the process of writing a summary (ideally, this has already been covered in previous classes). Remind students that a summary needs to cover the key points, that it should be balanced, and that it should not contain critique or commentary. Students could write the first draft of their summary in class, perhaps in pairs, or they could write it for homework and come back to the film in a future class.

### C Watch and critique

Now we move from lower-order to higher-order thinking skills. The objective here is to write a critical analysis of the film, an activity that will prepare EAP students for the critical reviews that they may need to write later of books and articles.

- 1 Explain that summary writing is simply re-telling the story; the next – and more thoughtful – step is to analyse the film and write a critical review. Discuss the role of a critic (film, music, restaurant, etc.) and elicit from students what this person does. Encourage words like 'evaluate', 'judge', 'comment on', etc. Point out that despite the connection to the word 'criticise', a critique or critical review does *not* have to be negative; it can be very positive.
- 2 Play the film again.
- 3 Put students in groups of three to discuss the questions below. Make sure students understand that there are no correct answers; the important thing is their own response. Then, ask each group to share their thoughts with the class.



**The circumstances of production**

- a) What is the filmmaker’s message? Do you think he is successful in communicating his message?
- b) What do you think might have inspired the filmmaker to write this story?
- c) Which audience do you think the filmmaker was trying to reach?
- d) How do you think the filmmaker wanted his audience to react to the film?

**The content**

- a) Is the story realistic? If so, how? If not, does it matter?
- b) What do you think are the strongest aspects of the film (think about the story, characters, filming techniques, actors, scenery, background music, etc.)?
- c) Why do you think the character of John appears in the film? What is the purpose of this scene?
- d) Why do you think the film was made in black and white? What impact does this have?
- e) If you could change anything about the film, what would you change? Why?

**Reaction to the film**

- a) The film has won many awards at British and international film festivals. Why do you think it has done so well?
  - b) Are there any groups of viewers who might not like the film? Why?
  - c) How did you personally react to the film? What emotions did you experience? Did your emotions change as you watched?
  - d) Did you make any connection between a) the film and other forms of media you have seen; b) the film and world events; and c) the film and things you have personally witnessed?
  - e) If you could talk to the filmmaker, what would you say? What question(s) would you ask?
- 4 Ask students to write a critical review of the film. This can be done in class or for

homework. A suggested outline for the review is shown below in Table 1.

**Extension activities**

**Creative activities**

The following activities allow students to apply creative thought to the video:

- a) Imagine Paul’s life ten years from now. Where is he? What is he doing? What, if any, is his relationship with his brother?
- b) Imagine that Paul goes to live with a foster family, where he is treated with kindness. Write an email from Paul’s foster mother to her friend, explaining Paul’s situation, the challenges she is facing with him and her plans to improve his life.
- c) Imagine that many years later, Paul is invited to a youth centre to speak to a group of young people whose lives are similar to his own. What does he say to them? Make notes for a speech he might give.
- d) Think about John. What is his backstory? Use your imagination.

**Research activities**

The film also provides an opportunity for students to carry out some research into one or more of the issues raised in the film. Students might carry out library or online research; this could lead to a research essay or a presentation. Topics might be as follows:

- a) Find out about child poverty in your country and report on what is being done to address the problem.
- b) Provide an overview of the nature vs nurture debate. Do you believe that children are inherently good, and that bad behaviour is a result of their environment and upbringing?
- c) Find out about the long-term effects of bullying, either in the family or at school.

**Find your own short films**

Films that lend themselves best to this kind of lesson are a) short (less than 30 minutes); b) accessible in terms of



Photo: Ben Allan/Unsplash

language; and c) thought-provoking. In addition to providing practice in academic skills, short films are also a useful vehicle for introducing content that is beyond the realm of your coursebook. The following websites are good sources for short films:

- Good Short Films. A collection of films from around the world (not all are in English). <http://www.goodshortfilms.it/>
- Omeleto. A large and diverse library of short films, many with thought-provoking topics. <http://omeleto.com/>
- Short of the Week. This site allows you to search by topic or genre (documentary, drama, comedy, etc.). <https://www.shortoftheweek.com/>

**References**

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.). (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Longman.

Gorodecky, R. (2018). *Little Sh\*\**. [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lo69W1FRtH0&t=633s>

Lansford, L. (2014, March 27). Six reasons to use video in the ELT classroom. *Cambridge ELT Blog*. <https://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/2014/03/27/six-reasons-use-video-elt-classroom/>

taniam@taniapattison.com

1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Key information: name of film, name of filmmaker, release date</li> <li>■ A brief statement of what the film is about (just a line or two)</li> <li>■ Thesis statement: what do you want to say about the film?</li> </ul>
2	Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What is the film about? What happens? Don’t go into too much detail.</li> <li>■ Don’t analyse here; that can come later.</li> </ul>
3	Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Comment on the value of the film – what is the filmmaker’s intention here, and has he succeeded in getting his message across? You can discuss any aspect(s) of the film: story, characters, filmmaking, etc.</li> <li>■ Remember that a critique is your own personal, but reasoned, response to the film. There is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ analysis. Your review can be positive, negative, or something in between.</li> </ul>
4	Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ A quick summary and/or recommendation</li> </ul>

Table 1: Suggested outline for the review

# Dyslexia in the EFL classroom: a structured literacy approach in the EFL context

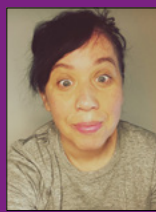
**Ania Karwowska outlines the use of structured literacy as a means of helping dyslexic students improve their English language skills**

Dyslexia is a learning disorder affecting a student's reading, writing and spelling ability. Dyslexic students need specialised teaching methods and support to overcome obstacles when learning a new language. Teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to dyslexic students can present a unique set of challenges for educators. This article will discuss strategies and tips for teaching English to dyslexic EFL students.

Structured literacy can help dyslexic EFL learners build confidence and motivation in their language learning journey. Dyslexic learners often struggle with traditional language learning approaches, leading to frustration and disengagement. Structured literacy programmes provide dyslexic learners with a systematic and explicit approach to learning, which can help them feel more confident in their ability to learn a new language. This approach can also help learners stay motivated and engaged in their language-learning journey, essential for achieving proficiency in a second language.

Structured literacy is an evidence-based approach to teaching language skills to help students of all ages and abilities learn to read and write. This approach is based on the science of reading and incorporates principles from cognitive psychology, linguistics and educational research.

Structured literacy instruction focuses on teaching foundational reading skills, including phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension. There is a focus on building a solid foundation of phonics, syllable types, and spelling patterns and teaching other language components such as syntax, semantics and morphology. It is a systematic and explicit approach that breaks down these skills into smaller, more manageable



**Ania Karwowska** is a relentless edu-myth buster, teacher and teacher trainer. She helps ESL/EFL teachers transform their practice and unfold their dyslexic ESL/EFL students' potential.

components and teaches them logically and sequentially.

One of the critical features of structured literacy is multisensory instruction, which involves engaging multiple senses (e.g. visual, auditory, kinesthetic) to enhance learning and memory. This approach can benefit EFL students with dyslexia or other reading difficulties.

## How does structured literacy benefit dyslexic EFL learners?

### 1 Phonological processing and phonemic awareness

One of the critical benefits of structured literacy for dyslexic EFL learners is that it helps develop their phonological processing and phonemic awareness skills. Dyslexic learners often struggle with identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words, which is a critical component of learning a new language. Structured literacy programmes teach learners to break words down into unique sounds and syllables, which helps them develop their phonological processing and phonemic awareness skills.

### 2 Decoding and spelling

Structured literacy also teaches learners how to decode and spell words accurately. Dyslexic learners often struggle with these skills due to phonemic awareness and phonics difficulties. Structured literacy programmes use explicit and systematic instruction to teach learners the rules of pronunciation, syllable types and spelling patterns. This approach helps dyslexic learners to decode and spell words accurately, which is essential for EFL learners who need to learn the complex phonetic and spelling rules of the English language.

### 3 Vocabulary and comprehension

Structured literacy also helps dyslexic

EFL learners develop their vocabulary and comprehension skills. Dyslexic learners often struggle with reading fluency and comprehension, impacting their ability to understand and use new vocabulary words. Structured literacy programmes teach learners to use context clues, root words and affixes to decode unfamiliar words and understand their meanings. This approach also helps learners develop their comprehension skills by teaching them how to identify main ideas, make inferences, and draw conclusions.

Structured Word Inquiry (SWI) is an approach to spelling and language instruction that can benefit EFL students with dyslexia. SWI focuses on teaching students the structure and patterns of language rather than just rote memorisation of spelling rules.

SWI involves:

- breaking down words into parts;
- analysing their morphemes; and
- exploring the etymology of the word.

By doing this, students gain a deeper understanding of the rules and patterns that rule English spelling and pronunciation.

Dyslexic students often struggle with decoding and encoding words, and SWI can help them develop the phonemic awareness and word analysis skills they need to overcome these challenges.

Additionally, SWI can help dyslexic EFL students feel more confident and empowered in their language learning. By providing a structured approach to spelling and language instruction, SWI can help students feel more in control of their learning and more engaged with the material.

Overall, SWI can be a powerful tool for helping dyslexic EFL students improve their spelling and language skills. By providing a systematic and structured approach to learning, SWI can help these students overcome their challenges and succeed in their language learning.

Structured literacy exercises in the EFL classroom context

### 1 Phonemic awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to recognise and manipulate the individual

sounds in words. For EFL students, phonemic awareness exercises can help them improve their pronunciation and spelling. Some examples of phonemic awareness exercises include:

- identifying the beginning, middle and ending sounds in words;
- clapping or tapping out the syllables in words; and
- saying words slowly and emphasising individual sounds.

## 2 Word analysis exercises

Word analysis involves breaking down words into word sums and analysing their structure. For EFL students, word analysis exercises can help them understand the rules and patterns that govern English spelling and pronunciation. Some examples of word analysis exercises include:

- identifying prefixes and suffixes in words;
- breaking words into syllables and identifying the stressed syllable; and
- identifying and classifying several types of English spelling patterns (e.g. consonant blends, digraphs, diphthongs).

## 3 Decoding exercises

Decoding involves using knowledge of phonics and word analysis to read words accurately and fluently. For EFL students, decoding exercises can help them improve their reading skills and build their confidence. Some examples of decoding exercises include:

- reading short passages and identifying unfamiliar words;
- practising reading fluency by reading aloud and timing oneself;
- segmenting words into sounds: Dyslexic EFL students often struggle with breaking words down into individual sounds. Elkonin boxes can help students see and hear the sounds in a word by having them say each sound and place a token (e.g. a bead or a button) in each corresponding box. This activity helps students to build their phonological awareness skills and improve their ability to decode unfamiliar words.
- blending sounds into words: Dyslexic EFL students may struggle to blend sounds to form words. Elkonin boxes can help students see how individual sounds combine to create a word by removing tokens from each box one at a time and saying the corresponding sound.

## 4 Encoding exercises

Encoding involves using knowledge of phonics and word analysis to spell words accurately. For EFL students, encoding exercises can help them improve their writing skills and build their confidence. An example of an encoding exercise is spelling words aloud and breaking them down into their parts.

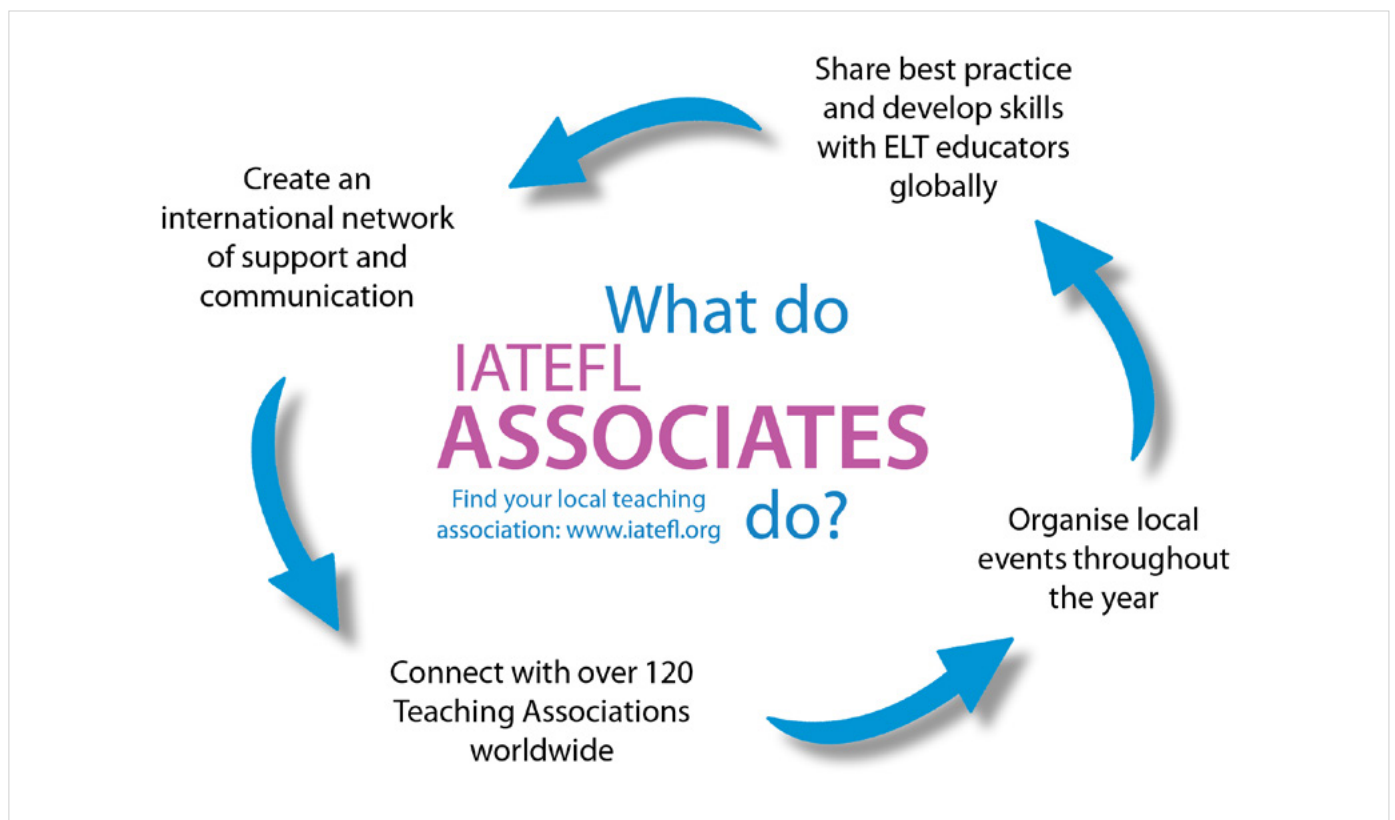
## Conclusion

Structured literacy exercises can be a valuable tool for helping EFL students improve their English language skills. By providing a structured and systematic approach to language learning, these exercises can help EFL students understand the rules and patterns of English spelling and pronunciation and build their confidence and proficiency over time.

## References

- Hagan Cárdenas Elsa. (2020). *Literacy foundations for English learners: A comprehensive guide to evidence-based instruction*. Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Kralova, Z., & Soradova, D. (2021). The phonics method in teaching EFL pronunciation to young learners with dyslexia. *Proceedings of CBU in Social Sciences*, 2, 211–217. <https://doi.org/10.12955/pss.v2.223>
- Nijakowska, J. (2010). *Dyslexia in the Foreign Language Classroom*. Multilingual Matters.
- Peer, L., & Reid, G. (2000). *Multilingualism, literacy, and dyslexia: A challenge for educators*. D. Fulton Publishers.
- Siegel, L. (2016). Bilingualism and dyslexia. In L. Peer & G. Reid (Eds.), *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia* (pp. 137–147). Routledge.

olwyn8989@gmail.com



# Reading matters: an interview with K. Elango

## Albert P'Rayan interviews Dr K. Elango of the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI)

This is the second in a two-part series on reading. Here, Albert P'Rayan presents his interview with Dr K. Elango, the Secretary General of the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI). To read Albert's interview with Stephen Krashen, see issue 291 of *Voices*.

**Q:** The English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) recently launched 'India Reads', a reading movement across the country, and as the brain behind the project, can you tell us the need for it?

**KE:** The culture of reading is on the decline among all age groups, especially among the e-generation. This cognitive crisis must be halted, otherwise intellectual decadence will sweep in, and instead of a knowledge-based society, a knowledgeless society will flourish.

Technological advancements are reversing the use of our physical and cognitive skills, these being on the decline nowadays. Reading is a difficult skill that requires discipline and investment of time and energy which the 'instant generation' is reluctant to engage with. Screen reading is hardly reading, as it can lack intellectual engagement, although some insist more people are reading more often now. However, this view is based on screen scrolling.

The primary aim of the ELTAI movement is to promote book reading, and in cases of inaccessibility, e-reading can be resorted to. The ELTAI believes that 'reading is the mother of all skills' and that the loss of reading would lead to the loss of all skills. Therefore, the launch of the movement is necessary.

**Q:** What are the objectives of India Reads?

**KE:** ELTAI embraces the idea that 'reading is caught, not taught', and aims to inspire a love of reading through a learner-led programme. The organisation believes that when one person reads, their friends and peers are more likely to read as well, creating a ripple effect of peer influence that is more powerful than the influence of teachers and parents.



**Albert P'Rayan** is an ELT activist, education columnist and media critic. He enjoys discussing social issues, human rights and current affairs. He can be reached at rayanal@yahoo.co.uk.



**K. Elango**, formerly Professor of English at Anna University, Chennai, India, is currently the national secretary of ELTAI. He is committed to making reading a movement, starting from primary students and reaching across all age groups, in order to avert possible intellectual decadence.

In order to promote reading for pleasure, the programme focuses on familiarising students with a variety of text genres and reading strategies. Rather than relying on academic textbooks, which have been found to be ineffective in inspiring a love of reading, the programme aims to offset this by encouraging students to read a wide variety of texts.

The programme also encourages bilingual reading, as it has been shown that reading skills are transferable across languages.

**Q:** What kinds of people constitute the India Reads movement?

**KE:** The organisation is attempting to make reading a community-wide movement (like the Chipko environmental campaigning movement in India), involving teachers, students, celebrities, writers, social and mass media, corporations, NGOs and others to impact young minds and bring about a transformative ecosystem for reading. This effort is meant to be a conscious and ongoing enterprise, rather than a transitory attempt.

**Q:** With the increasing reliance on digital media, some may question the importance of reading in the 21st century. Does reading still matter when many young people believe they can understand the world and their society better through 'viewing' than 'reading'? Do you feel that 'reading' is still needed for today's generation?

**KE:** In India, the education ecosystem is different from that of the developed countries, and it is important not to blindly adopt western models without considering the specific needs of our learners. Despite the decline of print media in many parts of the world, it continues to thrive in India, indicating



Photo: Aaron Burden/Unsplash

a strong reading culture that should be nurtured and encouraged.

It is important to remember that shallow viewing can never replace deep, immersive reading. Reading is not necessarily a 'felt need' for today's generation, but it is essential for their future. Therefore, efforts should be made to encourage and persuade young people to appreciate the value of reading.

**Q: What steps is ELTAI planning to take to promote reading among students?**

**KE:** The English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) has taken several steps to promote reading among students. One of the key initiatives is the development of a 100-hour module to engage students in hands-on reading experiences. The module is spread out over a two-year period and is tailored to different levels, including primary, secondary and tertiary students.

In addition, ELTAI is working to establish classroom libraries, where each classroom has its own library managed by the students themselves. This will help foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among the students. The libraries will be developed through student donations, as well as contributions from parents, corporations and the general public. The books in the libraries will be carefully selected based on the interests and preferences of the students.

ELTAI is also setting up a Learning Management System (LMS) to make reading materials available and scaffolded by a dedicated team at ELTAI. The organisation is also working to ensure that every student reads at least 50 books during the programme.

Lastly, ELTAI moves away from traditional library setups where they are placed in separate rooms or buildings which no longer attract people and have turned out to be disused places. Make books visible and accessible to students by keeping them in classrooms.

**Q: Stephen Krashen, a renowned second language acquisition theorist, has stated that much of our language development comes from self-selected reading for pleasure, which includes fiction. He suggests that those who read more have a deeper understanding of a wide variety of subjects, including history and science. Additionally, readers tend to have more empathy and a deeper understanding of others. In order to truly benefit from the power of reading, Krashen argues that readers need access to reading materials that they find both comprehensible and interesting. Do schools in India give importance to 'reading for pleasure'?**



Photo: Ishaq Robin/Unsplash

**KE:** In agreement with Krashen's views, in the Indian educational context the emphasis is mostly on 'reading for scores' and reading as a 'torturous act' rather than reading for pleasure. The reality is that if students were to become committed readers, they would be able to read and understand their English textbooks, which can be as long as 70 pages, in a single day, as opposed to spending an entire academic year on this. This is not only a waste of cognitive resources but also energy and other resources.

Moreover, if students were to become good readers, the claims of many EdTech companies, who capitalise on people's fears and ambitions, would be rendered meaningless. High performers and academics often assert that they hardly require any outsourced help and could become autonomous learners, which can only be achieved by reading on their own. Thus, it is important that the Indian education system starts promoting 'reading for pleasure' as a crucial element of learning.

**Q: Teachers who read can lead students to read. Do we have such 'reading teachers' in number in our educational institutions? Does the ELTAI think that it is important to train teachers first and enable them to nurture pleasure reading in students?**

**KE:** The traditional model is to train teachers and through them reach students. This has not yielded desired results. As an alternative, ELTAI believes in directly reaching out to students,

with the guidance of 'reading teachers', regardless of the subject or discipline they belong to. These teachers can serve as inspirations, igniters or galvanizers, engaging in pep talks and guiding learners independently when sought. The 'teacherish' aspect is to be avoided for the fear of being too prescriptive. The goal is to create a learning and development programme rather than just another English course.

**Q: How can we help our learners reach the 'free voluntary reading' state as envisioned by Krashen?**

**KE:** While this is our ultimate goal, we must first focus on the prerequisite state of 'voluntary reading'. Just like spontaneous speech, which is not truly spontaneous but requires significant effort, becoming a voluntary reader requires familiarity with a variety of text types and reading strategies. For example, popular fiction genres among all age groups include detective, horror, romance, sci-fi, historical, fantasy, and more. Nonfiction options include biography, autobiography, travelogue, spiritual, self-help, new age, and many others. Reading skills such as previewing, predicting, questioning, reviewing, SQ3R, know-want-learn, and others are also important. Readers must adopt appropriate strategies depending on their purpose and the type of text they prefer to read. Only by developing familiarity with these elements can they progress towards becoming voluntary readers.

# Telegram app as a tool for remote training and teaching

Wendy Arnold, Juana Sagaray and Maria Teresa Fernandez explore the use of the Telegram app as a means to aid both teaching and training in remote contexts

## What the Telegram app is not

The Telegram app is not a replacement for face-to-face training. It is an alternative for teachers in remote, inaccessible places with challenging conditions. This became a tool to communicate with trainers and teachers in Venezuela during the pandemic in 2021–2022 and has subsequently become the tool to train teachers in similar geographical contexts in Indonesia and Mexico.

## Contexts in February 2023

To understand the three contexts where the Telegram app is being used in projects described, data is shared in Table 1 below.

Indonesia has the largest population, with 58.2% of the population living in urban areas, compared to Venezuela which has the smallest population, with 88.4% living in urban areas. Mexico has about 50% of the population of Indonesia, but 81.4% live in urban areas. Venezuela has the smallest number of cellular mobile connections and the slowest broadband speed of 5.71 megabytes per second (Mbps) compared to the fastest in Mexico with 24.07 Mbps. Indonesia has the largest number of cellular mobile connections and internet users, and Venezuela has the smallest. All three



**Wendy Arnold, MA** in Teaching English to Young Learners and co-founder of ELT-Consultants© has been a teacher, teacher trainer and ELT consultant over the past 30 years. She's a former IATEFL YLTSIG discussion moderator, joint coordinator and events co-ordinator.



**Juana Sagaray, PhD**, former Project Manager at British Council Venezuela, has been a teacher trainer for over 25 years, material writer, researcher and consultant for international projects. She is currently Young Learner Teaching Coordinator at the British Council, Venezuela.



**Maria Teresa Fernandez, PhD**, has been a teacher trainer for 15 years. She is also a materials writer, researcher and consultant for international projects. She's a former IATEFL YLTSIG editor.

countries have over 96% literacy rates over the age of 15 years.

All three countries are in what has been called the 'global south', a term used for developing countries including China, with excessive unemployment and low per capita income (Kemp, 2023; World Population, 2023). The largest digital divide in the world is between urban and rural, young and educated vs older and less educated, men and women, and this is no different in any of these three countries.

## Project in numbers

The numbers of recipients and teams of ELT specialists in all three contexts are provided in Table 2. During the period from 2021 to 2023, 1,200 teachers were trained and over 40,000 students impacted. Forty-three international and national ELT training teams in 54 teacher training groups have delivered 16 modules of bespoke teacher training materials. Thirty-five international and national materials writers have collaborated. Over 150 hours of teacher training have been delivered. National teacher training capacity has been developed in both Venezuela and Indonesia.

## Why the Telegram app?

The use of technology for teacher training is an alternative method for teachers in remote, inaccessible places or during unexpected conditions like the pandemic.

Challenges to any kind of remote connectivity include regularly scheduled electricity blackouts, but are sometimes caused by weather conditions, for example in the rainy season both internet and mobile connections are disrupted.

A research study carried out in 2017 by SOSTariffe compared instant messaging apps and data consumption. The study identified that the instant messaging app Telegram had 30–40% lower data consumption than other apps. A more recent study carried out in 2022 by AndroidAyuda confirmed the 2017 study

	Venezuela 2021 to 2025	Indonesia 2022 to 2023	Mexico 2022 to 2023
<b>Total population</b>	28.56 million	276.4 million	128 million
<b>Urban population</b>	88.4%	58.2%	81.4%
<b>Cellular mobile connections</b>	22.29 million = 78% of total population with speed of 5.71 Mbps	353.8 million = 128% of total population with speed of 17.27 Mbps	123.5 million = 96.5% of total population with speed of 24.07 Mbps
<b>Internet users</b>	17.59 million = 61.6% of population	212.9 million = 77% of population	100.6 million = 78.6% of population
<b>Overall literacy rate (over 15 years old)</b>	97.1%	96%	96.1%

Table 1: Comparison of the mobile and internet data (Kemp, 2023)

Item	Venezuela 2021 to 2025	Indonesia <sup>4</sup> 2022 to 2023	Mexico 2022 to 2023
No. of teachers trained	400 pre-service and in-service secondary teachers	300 junior high secondary teachers	500 primary and secondary in-service teachers
No. of international and national trainers to deliver training	11 international and national ELT trainers	10 national trainers	22 international and national ELT trainers
No. of international and national writers to design materials	20 international and national ELT writers <sup>1</sup>	3 international writers, 2 national technology experts and 10 national trainers giving localised feedback	Materials adapted from Venezuela project to include primary teachers
No. of students impacted	8,750 secondary students	9,000 junior high students	22,500 primary and secondary students
No. of teacher training groups	13 teacher training groups	10 teacher training groups	31 teacher training groups
No. of teacher training modules delivered synchronously and asynchronously	11 modules of teacher training delivered synchronously and asynchronously by March 2025	9 modules delivered asynchronously using Google Classroom and synchronously using Telegram app	1 pilot module of teacher training delivered synchronously and asynchronously by March 2023
No. of workshops and hours/module	20 hours (10 x 2-hour) workshop content per module delivered over 10 weeks	Self-access MOOC, 60-minute post-MOOC workshop on Telegram and 90-minute Community of Practice/module over 1 month	20 hours (10 x 2-hour) workshop content per module delivered over 10 weeks
No. of hours of teacher training for all modules	220 hours of teacher training content delivered over 4 years	31.5 hours of teacher training content delivered over 9 months	20 hour of teacher training content delivered in 10 weeks for the pilot
Sustainability and legacy	1 module of teacher educator training <sup>2</sup> delivered synchronously and asynchronously and 12 months of teacher educator mentoring and coaching whilst delivering Module 1 and 2 cohort 2 <sup>3</sup>	12-hour Train the Trainer programme focused on developing the trainers' skills/knowledge using a flipped learning approach and synchronous and asynchronous modalities. The training comprises six 2-hour sessions focusing on familiarising trainers with the DIGI model, its pedagogy, and the digital platforms they would be using.	This is a pilot project but has already been tried and tested in Venezuela with 100 hours or 5 modules already delivered by March 2023.

Table 2: *Project numbers*

- 11 modules each of 20 hours delivered over 10 weeks based on the British Council's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework for teachers
- 1 module of 20 hours delivered over 10 weeks based on the British Council's CPD framework for teacher educators
- 40 hours of coaching and mentoring over 20 weeks as national teacher educators deliver to Cohort 2
- DIGI, Indonesia is a grant partnership between the UK and Indonesia

findings with Telegram being the app with the lightest data consumption.

Further information on the Telegram app can be seen below (GetApp, n.d.):

- Free app;
- Cloud-based messaging app;
- Usable on mobiles;
- Secure and fast;
- Voice calls, video calls (can be recorded);
- Sending photos, videos, messages, files of ANY format or SIZE;
- Synchronises across any number of installed Telegram apps on mobiles, tablets, and computers; and
- Two free APIs for developers to design a bot API.

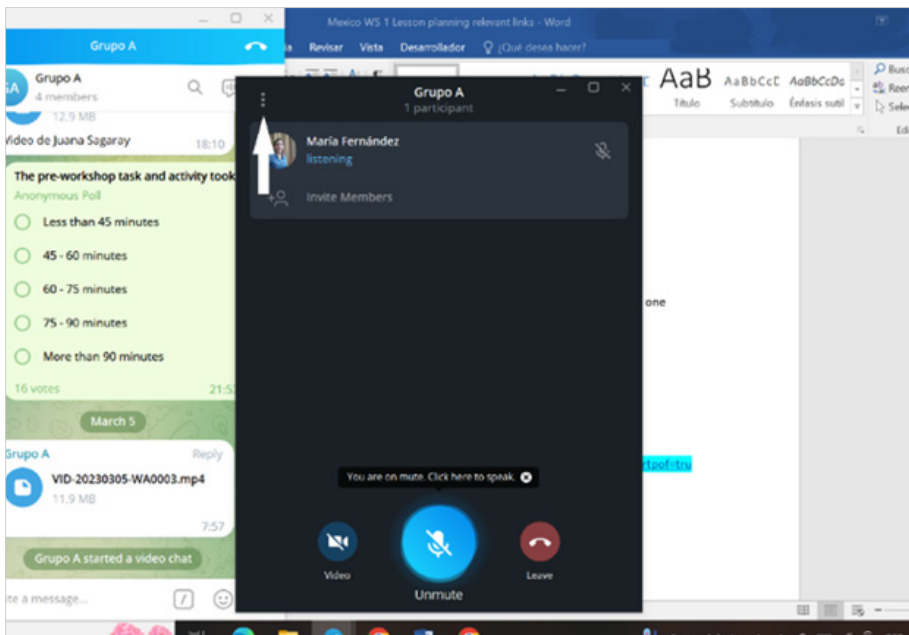


Using Bitmoji in the virtual classroom – a student-designed avatar.

## How Telegram is used to comply with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

The following was used to ensure EDI:

- scripting Trainer Notes to ensure that trainers in the future deliver the materials considering EDI;
- reference to the Code of Conduct for learning online;
- reference to Safeguarding for learning online;
- polling teachers to ask for their opinions; and
- providing an option for teachers who have missed a synchronous session to catch up.



Telegram and EDI

## Feedback

Comments made about the asynchronous and synchronous sessions include: good and simple, get acquainted with content, reflective, dynamic, organised, excellent, well-planned, interesting, useful tool.

Trainers acknowledge participants' enthusiasm and resilience despite adverse circumstances. The main problems they observed are weak internet connection and electricity interruptions. However, they have found ways to overcome these obstacles by recording the live sessions for participants who cannot attend, sharing the PowerPoint slides used during the training session and completion of an extra activity for participants to catch up.

Participants interviewed expressed very positive comments about the programme. They said they are learning new methods that can be put into practice in their classrooms. They feel part of a learning community as they have met teachers from other states in their groups and they are learning together. Some are now also using Telegram to communicate with their students.

## Conclusion

The Telegram app has been a useful tool for teacher training and teacher educator training in contexts with limited resources and connectivity challenges. It has allowed the inclusion of many teachers

and teacher educators who otherwise would not have been able to participate in a remote teacher training programme.

## References

- GetApp. (n.d.). <https://www.getapp.com/collaboration-software/a/telegram/>
- Kemp, S. (2023, February). Digital 2023 *DataReportal*. <https://datereportal.com/reports/digital-2023-venezuela?rq=venezuela>
- <https://datereportal.com/reports/digital-2023-indonesia>
- <https://datereportal.com/reports/digital-2023-mexico>
- SOSTariffe. (2017). *Le applicazioni alternative a WhatsApp: quanto traffico dati consumano?* <https://mcdn1.sostariffe.it/attachments/Com.St.%20Alternative%20a%20WhatsApp%20il%20consumo%20del%20traffico%20dati.pdf>
- World Population Review. (2023). <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/global-south-countries>

Wendy Arnold:

[wendy@elt-consultants.com](mailto:wendy@elt-consultants.com)

Juana Sagaray:

[saga1404@hotmail.com](mailto:saga1404@hotmail.com)

Maria-Teresa Fernandez:

[mtfernandezdituri@gmail.com](mailto:mtfernandezdituri@gmail.com)

# Five-minute activities for learner wellbeing

**Margit Szesztay discusses the important topic of learner wellbeing and presents various activities that can help promote wellbeing in the classroom**

Recently, I have felt the need to rethink how I start my lessons. I have always been aware of the importance of warmers to help learners transition into English from their mother tongue or to provide



Margit Szesztay teaches at the Department of English Language Pedagogy at ELTE University in Budapest. She runs courses in ELT methodology, reflective teaching, language development for teachers, staff development, group dynamics, the creative teacher, group facilitation, global issues and the teacher as educator.

a lead-in to the main topic of the lesson. However, now more than before, students seem to come to class locked in their own worlds.

## Mobile phone addiction

Some students enter class while still inhabiting a space created by mobile devices. Often, it is not enough to ask them to put their phones away. There will always be some who are so fully immersed in habitually clicking, scrolling and checking that, even if they let go of their smartphones, they will find themselves reaching for them again soon. And whereas using such handheld devices in the classroom in purposeful ways some of the time can be good practice, habitual overuse can distract and make it hard to focus on the people around us.



## Deeply felt anxieties

In addition to smartphone addiction, it seems to me that the level of anxiety that students bring to the classroom is also on the rise. I think this is partly due to the pandemic and the state of isolation that we had to live under for so many months. Another source of a diffuse kind of anxiety is the general state of the world, the collapse of ecosystems and the looming climate crisis. I work in a higher education context, and have become aware that all these worries and concerns are part of young people's psyche today. I have found many times that once you have an honest conversation about these issues, you discover that even students who come across as unaffected are, in fact, deeply worried.

## From thinking to sensing

Richard Burnett (2013) reminds us that our experience of the present moment is profoundly shaped by where and how we place our attention. In his insightful TEDx talk about mindfulness in schools, he demonstrates some activities for helping students move out of *thinking* mode and into *sensing* mode. In what he refers to as the *two slices of cheese* diagram, the space between the two horizontal lines cutting across the *slices of cheese* stand for the focus of our attention. The smartphone in the 'thinking' slice is my addition to show that such devices can keep students in an autopilot thinking mode. What many mindfulness activities do is to focus our attention on sounds, visual stimuli, bodily sensations and feelings.



Thinking and Sensing

## Some ways to start a lesson differently

Taking the above into consideration, I have decided to start my classes with a chance for students to disconnect from their smartphones and the voices in their heads which can lead to repetitive and unproductive thoughts. I now routinely spend a few minutes getting them connected with their own momentary state of mind, the flesh and blood people around them and the classroom space that they inhabit. I find that starting a lesson this way can make it easier for all of us to focus and engage with the content of

the lesson and with one another. Below are a few sample activities, while Pohl & Szesztay (2020) describe several more interactive tasks which can also be used as lesson starters.

### Mirror the clap

The teacher claps a rhythm and the students have to clap the same rhythm all together. It is worth starting with a simple rhythm, and to gradually increase the length and the complexity. Next, students take turns being the one to introduce a new rhythm. After a few minutes of clapping, students are asked to notice if they can sense a slight change in their energy levels. This is an important follow-up as it guides their attention inwards and helps to develop body awareness. Many variations are possible with, for example, stamping your feet, or clapping on different parts of your body. An Internet search with the following key words, will provide you with lots of alternatives: *body percussion, clapping warm-up, clap the rhythm, clapping games*.

### Sit down if you feel this way

We are asked 'how are you?' many times a day – and usually respond with a 'fine thanks' without pausing to reflect on how we really are. This activity asks students to do just that. The teacher asks everyone to notice how they are feeling at that very moment, and then to capture this with an adjective and stand up. Next, the teacher looks around the room, makes eye contact with some of the students, observes their body language and tries to guess how they are feeling. Students sit down when their feeling / state of mind has been called out. The ones who are sitting can then help the teacher to guess the feelings of those who are still standing. The activity ends when everyone is sitting. As an alternative, students can share the initial letter of their chosen word. I usually ban choosing 'tired' and suggest that if this is the word that pops up first, students have to 'peel away' the layer of being tired and see what other feelings emerge.

### Four corners

You will need four pictures showing different natural landscapes, for example, a snow-covered mountain, a waterfall, a valley full of spring flowers, and underwater marine life. Before class, display each picture in one of the corners of the classroom. When the class starts, ask students to stand up, visit each corner and choose the location where they would most like to be at that moment. As they stand in their chosen corner, ask them to connect with the scenery and imagine that they are

actually there. What does it feel like to be there? How does it affect their mood? Ask them to take this feeling with them as they go back to their seats and the class starts.

### Simon says ... with a twist

Just as in the original game, students need to follow your instructions if you include 'Simon says ...' in your sentence. The twist is that you add a comment about the *number* of people who should follow the instruction. For example: 'Simon says, *one* person should stand up!' 'Simon says *five* people should raise their right hand!' 'Simon says *four* people should go to the back of the classroom!' In order to carry out the instructions, some students need to take the initiative while at the same time directing their attention to their peers. This requires non-verbal communication and is a good way of moving into group mode before the lesson starts.

### Water, coffee and whiskey breathing

Another TED speaker, Lucas Rockwood (2018), demonstrates that bringing our conscious attention to our breathing can have an effect on our mood and wellbeing. He demonstrates three kinds of breathing and labels each one with a metaphor that helps us to remember the way it can impact our mental and physical state. Check out his short TED talk and discover how *coffee breathing* can give you an energy boost, *whiskey breathing* can put you into a more relaxed state of mind, while *water breathing* can help to maintain balance and focus. I find this an easy-to-recall framework and one that can help raise students' awareness of the way breathing affects our state of mind in and out of the classroom, from moment to moment.

It can feel a bit odd at first to ask students to focus on their breathing or clap a rhythm in the classroom. However, I have found that once students experience the benefits first-hand, they will take to these lesson-starters and they will be a welcome breath of fresh air in their busy and routine-filled school lives.

## References

- Burnett, R. (2013, January 12). *Mindfulness in schools* [Video]. TEDx talk. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mlk6xD\\_xAQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6mlk6xD_xAQ)
- Pohl, U., & Szesztay, M. (2020). Let's map it out! *ELT Professional*, 129, 39–42.
- Rockwood, L. (2018, December 10). *Change your breath, change your life* [Video]. TEDx talk. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_QTJOAI0UoU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_QTJOAI0UoU)

# Direct corrective feedback's bad press is undeserved – research says

## Sebastian Lesniewski looks into the benefits of direct corrective feedback in the classroom

Written corrective feedback (WCF) is intended to “help student writers build awareness, knowledge, and strategic competence . . . to better monitor their own writing in the future” (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 140). WCF is broadly divided into direct and indirect forms, where the former involves correcting the student's error, while the latter is about drawing the learner's attention to the error and inviting them to self-correct (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 65). The indirect approach tends to be recommended by educators, as it is understood to be more likely to prompt the student to reflect on their error, thus making the experience of receiving feedback more memorable, and more likely to lead to improvement in the student's writing skills. It is expected that prompting the student to self-correct adds an element of problem-solving, which might generate greater engagement with a given language issue than it would be the case if the student was simply offered a correct answer. In contrast, the direct error correction tends to be discouraged, and it is often seen as indicative of “a heavy teacher-centred approach” (Cordero Caballero, 2022, p. 26).

However, the assumptions about the direct corrective feedback being less likely to lead to improvement in the student's writing skills are not supported by



**Sebastian Lesniewski** is a PhD-qualified linguist, with over 20 years of experience in language education. He currently works as Senior Lecturer in Foundation Year Studies and Academic Lead for Research at Bloomsbury Institute London.

research. Indeed, studies from the 1980s and 1990s showed that neither approach is more effective than the other at improving the student's linguistic competence (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 67). Then, more recent research, from the 2000s and 2010s, consistently suggested that the direct approach has a clear advantage: while both direct and indirect feedback demonstrate a positive short-term effect, the direct error correction shows a more significant long-term effect (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012, p. 67).

That said, it is important to realise that any research findings investigating the effectiveness of different types of feedback ought to be treated with caution, bearing in mind that a cause-and-effect relationship is notoriously difficult to prove, and that improvement in an individual's language skills is hard to quantify. Ideally, to establish that the teacher's feedback (independent variable) has some effect on the student's writing skills (dependent variable), it would be necessary to adhere to the rigours of a randomised controlled trial, based on a comparison between an experimental group against

a control group. It would be necessary to compare two groups of learners that would be similar to each other in every way (level of language skills, motivation, learning abilities, age, L1s), except the type of written corrective feedback received. The experimental group of students would need to produce written work and receive regular feedback on it, while the control group would have to be deprived of any feedback. The obvious concern here is whether the students who never receive any feedback on their work would continue to produce written assignments with the same level of motivation as the students who do receive regular feedback. Thus, for logistical and ethical reasons, such a study would be difficult to organise in real life. Furthermore, to observe and compare improvement in the student writers' performance, it would be necessary to measure that performance in an objective and quantifiable way. Again, bearing in mind all the complexities of written performance, which could be assessed in terms of presence or absence of errors in the use of collocations, colligations and cohesive devices, as well as in terms of richness of vocabulary and language structures, it is hard to agree on a scale that would be precise enough for statistical comparisons.

To overcome these challenges, studies comparing the impact of direct and indirect feedback mostly investigate the effects of one-off interventions, rather than being longitudinal, and they tend to measure the improvement in the learner's



Sebastian Lesniewski at IATEFL Belfast



writing skills by focusing on easily quantifiable grammatical competences (see Bitchener and Ferris, 2012, pp. 67–68). For instance, Bitchener and Knoch (2010) compared the accuracy in the learners' use of articles ('the' and 'a'/'an') after receiving one-off feedback on this language aspect. The ANOVA test comparison of proportions of correctly used articles was made between four groups of students, of which three (experimental groups) received different forms of feedback, while the fourth one (the control group) did not receive any feedback. The obvious limitation of this research design is that it focuses on only one aspect of written performance (use of articles), which while fairly easy to quantify, may not necessarily be indicative of the overall writing competence. Bitchener and Knoch's study (2010) is subject to yet another limitation, as it relied on relatively small samples of

student writers. Indeed, the four groups of learners compared by the researchers were comprised of 12, 27, 12 and 12 students respectively, meaning that three of them were just about large enough for the ANOVA test to be valid (the recommended minimum is 10 cases per group).

Nevertheless, while the existing research is by no means conclusive, it provides enough data to justify that direct feedback should not be rejected out of hand. Direct correction is the essence of reformulation, i.e. helping students express in better English what they struggle to communicate (Dellar & Walkley, 2016, p. 149). Reformulation is an accepted activity in spoken performance classes, especially ones that focus on the emergent language. Since student writers have the same need of conveying their ideas eloquently and naturally, they are

likely to appreciate it if their teacher can supply a desired language chunk, as this is the kind of help that learners will not get from a dictionary or services such as Google Translate.

It therefore seems reasonable to conclude that student writers ought to be offered both direct and indirect feedback, and that the suggestions offered to the learner in response to a piece of writing they have produced need to be matched to the type of errors they make, and to the task that the student endeavours to complete. Thus, when dealing with some aspects of the written work the learner will be more likely to benefit from being prompted to self-correct, while at other times offering a better version of what the student writer is attempting to express may be more helpful. Consequently, teachers should not be reproached for choosing the direct forms of feedback when, in their judgement, it seems more viable.

A video-recording of my IATEFL 2022 talk can be found on <https://sebastianlesniewski.com>



## References

- Bitchener, J., & Ferris, D. R. (2012). *Written Corrective Feedback in Second Language Acquisition and Writing*. Routledge.
- Bitchener, J., & Knoch, U. (2010). Raising the linguistic accuracy level of advanced L2 writers with written corrective feedback. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 19(4), 207–217.
- Cordero Caballero, M. (2022). Written corrective feedback: Mexican teachers' beliefs and practices. *ELT Research*, 37, 19–26.
- Dellar, H., & Walkley, A. (2016). *Teaching Lexically: Principles and Practice*. Delta Publishing.

# Learning through legends: a pedagogic proposal to deal with Comprehensive Sexuality Education

**Belén Francisco incorporates legends in the classroom as a means of adhering to the requirements of Argentinian Comprehensive Sexuality Education**

## Introduction

Affect, feelings and values are the centre of all human behaviour and thus they are key components in an EFL classroom considering the intercultural, social and interpersonal character of communication in a foreign language. This article describes the legal landscape regarding Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) in Argentina as well as the theoretical background of a genre-based approach for teaching writing, in which the proposed teaching sequence is framed. Then, a pedagogic proposal is presented for the first year of a state-run secondary school drawing on the theoretical framework previously mentioned. Finally, it concludes by emphasising the relevance that legends have when reflecting on human values.

## Theoretical framework Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE)

In Argentina, Law No. 26,150, which was passed in 2006 (Congreso de la Nación Argentina, 2006), requires that Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) content be included across the curriculum in all educational institutions and across all levels.

The law promotes a view of sexuality that goes beyond 'genitality' or 'sexual relationships', moving into a much wider definition that takes into account aspects other than just biological or physical ones. In this respect, UNESCO (2018) defines CSE as:

a curriculum-based process of teaching and learning about the cognitive, emotional, physical and social aspects of sexuality. It aims to equip children



**Belén Francisco** is a teacher of English, currently working at the Instituto Nuestra Señora de la Guardia, Baigorrita, Buenos Aires, where she teaches students in Grades 1–6. She has recently started studying for a BA in English at the Universidad de Belgrano. Her interests are CSE, language acquisition, and literature in ELT.

and young people with knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to: realize their health, wellbeing and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own wellbeing and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives

The CSE programme in Argentina conveys the common basis of curricular content for all levels of the educational system, for both state and privately managed schools. It features five intertwined objectives (Ministerio de Educación Presidencia de la Nación, 2009) that ensure an integral approach to all human dimensions: acknowledge gender perspective, respect diversity, exercise our rights, take care of the body, and value affectivity.

The purpose of this article is to discuss how one specific CSE objective, namely 'value affectivity' can be addressed in the EFL classroom through traditional legends.

## Legends and language teaching

Literature has the potential power to transform, change attitudes and help eradicate prejudice while fostering empathy, tolerance and awareness of global problems (Ghosn, 2000). In this way, literary texts provide an interesting opportunity to deal with the way we feel and how we establish personal relationships while valuing the

differences that make us unique. Among all the different literary genres, legends in particular encompass these universal concerns. Moreover, they provide a real-life context to reflect on values and human behaviours, and promote empathy in the way that people relate to others. This coincides with one of the aims that CSE has, as stated in the objectives: valuing affectivity.

Thus, it can be argued that legends generate interesting topics to reflect upon in terms of human behaviour along with ways of solving conflicts through the empathetic attitudes that CSE encourages. They provide a meaningful context to recognise the tensions and conflicts that are present in all kinds of human relationships and to address them in a way that does not transgress other people's rights.

### The Yerba Mate Legend

This legend tells the story of the origins of the Argentinian custom of drinking 'mate'. This Guaraní legend starts with Yasi, the moon, and Arai, the cloud, transforming into two human women that are curious about the Earth and its nature. While the women are enjoying the landscape, a fierce jaguar attacks them. However, they are saved by a young Guaraní man who

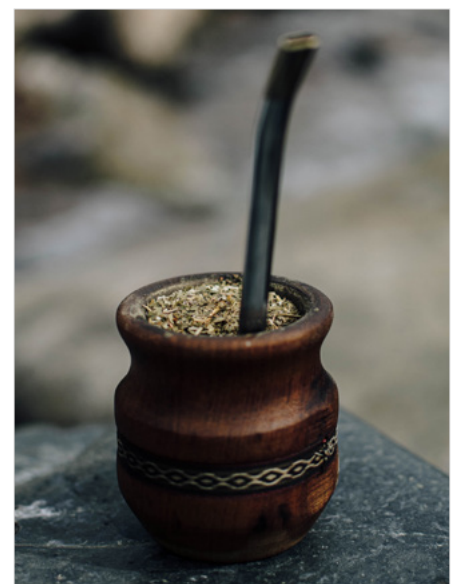


Photo: Lautaro Andreani/Unsplash

was watching the situation. Later, the man has a dream in which he finds new bushes with bright oval leaves that grow everywhere. He follows Yasi's directions: chop the leaves carefully, put them in a small dry gourd, fill it with fresh water from the river, place a thin drinking straw in it, and try the drink. He liked its soft bitter taste, and he offered it to his family. Then he called his neighbours and gave them the new beverage. Soon the 'mate' was passed around from person to person. From that day on the habit of having 'mate' started.

## Legends and CSE: A pedagogic proposal to deal with affectivity

The lesson described in this section is proposed for the first year of secondary school. It aims at working with the Argentinian legend 'Yerba Mate'.

The legend itself is the main content and the aims are to build up subject-matter knowledge, develop critical thinking skills, and to help students become aware of the values that represent a part of their culture as well as analysing the affective aspects in the narrative, such as the characters' behaviour in terms of empathy.

The language introduced is literary-specific terminology (e.g. title) and language to express opinions (I think, I believe). The expected time is four two-hour lessons, which will be implemented over a month, one lesson per week.

### Pre-reading activities

The lesson starts by eliciting the students' prior knowledge of this literary genre. The students are exposed to different titles of legends such as 'Robin Hood', 'La Pachamama' (Mother Earth), and 'La Flor del Ceibo' (The Ceibo Flower) and they are asked if they recognise those titles, what type of texts they are and what they have in common. They are expected to mention that they are legends and to recognise some of the main characteristics of this genre they have probably worked with during primary school.

Then, the teacher will show them a picture (see Figure 1) about the Yerba Mate legend to do a think-pair-share activity, discussing the questions below and sharing their ideas with the whole class.

- What can you see in the picture?
- Who are they? Where are they from?
- What is the object they are passing to each other?
- What do you think the legend will be about?



Figure 1: the Yerba Mate legend

After reading the Yerba Mate legend, students work on reading comprehension activities in order to identify the main characters, the setting, the conflict and the resolution in the plot. The aim of these activities is to help students recognise the typical characteristics of a legend as a literary genre, identifying that all legends have an introduction to the main setting following which the main conflict develops.

The legend is narrated in the third person and it does not include dialogue between the characters. However, students are given some parts of the dialogue that have been prepared in advance and they are asked to include these in the correct part of the story. Once the activity is checked with the whole group, the students choose a character to roleplay using the dialogues so that they get into the story deeply.

At the end of the lesson, students are asked to write simple sentences about their first impressions of the Yerba Mate legend, which will be compared with their opinions after having analysed the legend in depth.

The second lesson begins with some activities to revise the legend. After that, the teacher asks them to think about a similar situation that could happen in their daily lives. They work in groups to contextualise the story and discuss their possible reactions to the situation presented in the Yerba Mate legend. This is the moment in which many interesting ideas could come out, such as bullying, and the opportunity to reflect upon their feelings towards a situation in which somebody is metaphorically in danger.

### Final outcome

The third and last lessons are devoted to reflecting upon the values that the legend represents, such as empathy, compassion and courage. The students work in groups, choose one of the situations they have thought about and create dialogues to produce their own legend based on the one they have read.

Once the dialogues are ready, the students who feel more confident drawing

and painting create a mini-book on paper, including the most important moments of their narrative and the dialogues they have created. Those students who prefer using technology search online for suitable pictures to create an online version of the book using the Story Jumper webpage: <https://www.storyjumper.com/>.

When the books are ready, students retell the legend, and then show their contextualised versions to students from various courses at their school. After the reading, the teacher and the students ask the different groups to write their own reflection on the legend. This is a collaborative way of promoting solidarity, empathy and courage through their productions.

## Conclusion

The aim of this article is to propose a teaching sequence that is expected to be implemented this year, in the first year of secondary school. During the lessons, students will work on the topics that the legend highlights, but also on the legend itself. As such, the structure and purpose of the genre are analysed and prior knowledge is recalled through pre-reading activities aimed at bringing to mind the main characteristics of the genre. Then the plot of the legend is used in order to engage students in a deep reflection as regards the values the text embodies.

The analysis of the narrative allows for discussion that will lead to deep reflection in which affect plays a central role in meeting one of the Argentinian CSE programme goals.

## References

- Congreso de la Nación Argentina. (2006). Ley No. 26,150: Programa Nacional de Educación Sexual Integral. Publicada en el Boletín Nacional. <https://bit.ly/3e30qiY>
- Ghosn, I. (2000). Four good reasons to use literature in primary school ELT. *ELTJ* 56/2. Oxford University Press.
- Ministerio de Educación Presidencia de la Nación. (2009). Serie Cuadernos de ESI. Educación Sexual Integral para la Educación Secundaria.
- UNESCO. (2018, January 6). Why Comprehensive Sexuality Education Is Important. UNESCO. <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/why-comprehensive-sexuality-education-important>

# Materials reviews

## Activities for Mediation: Building bridges in the ELT classroom

Riccardo Chiappini & Ethan Mansur  
Delta Publishing, 2021  
184 pages  
ISBN: 9783125017443



*Activities for Mediation* is an informative, insightful and practical teacher resource book. Chiappini and Mansur present mediation and its role in language learning and guide teachers on integrating mediation skills and strategies into their classroom activities. The authors present tasks for mediation in which the close relationship between language use and language form is evident and the differences in form between languages can be experienced by learners. Based on the 2020 Council of Europe Framework of Reference Companion Volume (CEFR CV), the authors describe the three types of mediation (i.e. mediating texts, mediating concepts and mediating communication) and exemplify how to dovetail mediation with specific mediation strategies. To this end, the authors present a collection of activities to equip teachers with techniques to support the development of mediation skills in language learning.

This resource can be viewed as having three sections. First, to orient teachers who are new to mediation, the authors explain the concept of mediation and the CEFR CV and provide a curated list of mediation strategies, practical suggestions for each strategy and a thorough discussion on scaffolding and other teaching considerations. At the core of this resource is a collection of ready-to-use tasks grouped according to type of mediation and strategy. For each activity, the authors detail the target learner's CEFR level and age group, the step-by-step procedures and task materials. Of particular importance are the specifications for intended language use, differentiation, task variations and feedback. To conclude this volume, the authors outline how to create and adapt the tasks and offer specific guidelines for the assessment of mediation.

Of the many strengths of this resource, three stand out. First, the authors' attention to detail is notable throughout the volume, including their description of each mediation task. Second, the concrete suggestions for adapting each activity to meet specific learners' needs underline the practical focus of this resource. Such adaptations include modifying the task for language and cultural backgrounds and levels of proficiency. Finally, the integration of real-life contexts, social or academic, along with suggestions for use in the virtual classroom, offers insight on how to use these tasks in a vast number of teaching contexts. As a practical guide for the integration of mediation skill development, this title is worth consulting.

**Jennifer St. John**  
University of Ottawa, Canada  
jstjohn@uOttawa.ca

## Working with Emergent Language: Ideas and activities for developing your reactive skills in class

Richard Chinn & Danny  
Norrington-Davies  
Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd,  
2023  
237 pages  
Print ISBN: 9781803881287



This book offers a concise explanation of the term 'emergent language', its relation to teaching methodology, examples of its use in practice and techniques of how to implement it.

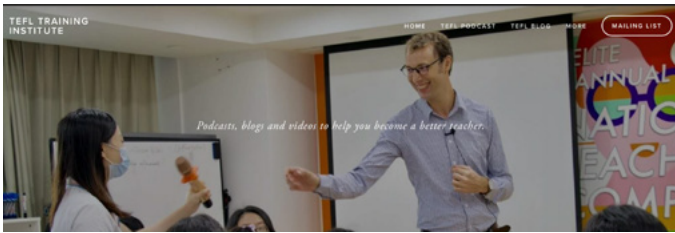
The book content is meticulously organised into theoretical and practical parts. Its aim is to encourage teachers, especially new ones, to try and develop emergent language teaching skills. The provided theoretical aspects, examples, and stories of how teachers use their interactional skills to respond to learner output in the classroom are explicitly described with coherent outcomes.

Teacher educators interested in training teachers on how to use emergent language teaching will also find this book extremely useful because the second part offers very thorough advice with examples of how to introduce this topic in training. Last but not least, more experienced teachers will not only become familiar with a new term, but will also be able to recognise and clearly define the emergent language moments in their own teaching practices and develop this teaching skill further.

The ideas in this book are clearly conveyed and the chapters flow into one another offering the reader the opportunity to become increasingly familiar with the concept, understand its meaning and its practical use. At the end of every chapter, a professional development section offers a great opportunity to reflect on the content and learning, and offers ideas on how theory can be tested in practice. The clear and concise instructions can help both experienced and novice teachers to develop their skills easily through a process of self-reflection and synthesis of their existing skills and the emergent language teaching skills they aim to acquire.

I strongly recommend this book to every teacher or methodologist who is not familiar with the term 'emergent language', and to those who want to challenge their teaching abilities and bring the teaching process to a different level, where learners' output can contribute greatly to the development of their language skills in a learner-centred classroom environment.

**Marija Petkovska**  
State Secondary School of Fine Arts and Design Lazar  
Lichenoski, N. Macedonia  
marija\_vasi@yahoo.com



## TEFL Training Institute

Creator: Ross Thorburn

Link to website: <https://www.tefltraininginstitute.com/podcasts>

TEFL Training Institute (TTI) is a well-known podcast in ELT. Over the last six years, podcast creator Ross Thorburn had hosted over 200 episodes, discussing all things ELT with a range of friends and guests.

Most episodes last just 15 minutes, and focus on 'practical, thought-provoking, or controversial topics' within the profession. They typically follow a Q&A format with Thorburn posing the questions to industry experts, or they are more general discussions between the host and a regular guest. Episodes are often supplemented with links to articles and blogs for further reading. TTI is aimed at teachers, trainers and leaders, and has hosted an impressive list of specialists over the years. These have included ELT A-listers, edtech experts, teacher trainers, seasoned practitioners and change agents from within the profession.

Although short, there is a surprising amount of detail in many episodes, and they provide an excellent springboard for further reflection and research. Areas of ELT that have featured quite often on the podcast include teaching online, assessment, app-based language learning and the nature/value of ELT coursebooks. There have been various episodes over the six years relating to topics one might consider 'trending' – inclusive practice, AI in ELT, evidence-based teaching and the use of L1 in the classroom.

The area covered most comprehensively is probably teaching young learners. There have been episodes on phonics, play-based learning, graded readers, classroom management, task-based approaches with YLs and plenty more, with well-known YL-related guests including Carol Read, Gail Ellis, Chris Roland and Wendy Arnold. There are some very practical episodes for teachers across the podcast, although I would say that the episodes focusing on young learner teaching are often very applicable to the classroom and leave you with plenty of ideas to try out.

This podcast is a great resource for professional development and could be used as a prompt for discussion during teacher training courses. The Q&As with experts are bitesize, meaning that there isn't much time for the host to critique ideas within the episode. Teachers could further explore the ideas presented within their own Communities of Practice or professional learning networks. TEFL Training Institute is certainly very accessible, informative and well worth listening to with colleagues.

Recommended episode: Myths, Wisdom and Science – What Do We Know About Teaching? (with Russ Mayne)

**Pete Clements**  
[www.eltplanning.com](http://www.eltplanning.com)  
[pgclements27@gmail.com](mailto:pgclements27@gmail.com)



## Language Fuel

Link to website: <https://www.languagefuel.com>

The website *Language Fuel* is an on-demand professional development system for English language teachers. A wide variety of courses are offered to English language teachers on a broad spectrum of topics, including language proficiency, technology, CLIL and cultural awareness, among others. The courses, written by 26 authors, are 20 minutes long and portable. The courses can be taken by both new and experienced teachers as they help refresh knowledge and continue professional development.

The platform itself is easy to navigate, user-friendly and intuitive. After creating an account, the platform directs teachers to start with the course, 'Getting started with Language Fuel', which gives guidelines on completing courses on the platform. Following the Eequals self-assessment, the platform offers suggestions of courses to take or alternatively teachers can follow their own path and choose courses from the extensive catalogue. The navigation within the courses is straightforward. Furthermore, teachers can go back and forth between different parts of the course easily, and they can replay the course.

In each course, the topic is introduced through various media, and teachers complete the course by doing interactive tasks while receiving feedback. The courses also provide downloadable materials. I particularly liked that teachers are provided with a downloadable summary as well as a reflection worksheet to complete at the end of each course. When teachers complete a course, they receive a certificate.

While reviewing the platform, I completed three different courses: 'Motivating the unmotivated', 'Feedback in Assessment' and 'Understand and Teach Pronunciation at the Sound Level'. Two of the courses I completed as a refresher and one to further improve on the specific topic. All three took me between 20 and 30 minutes to complete and they were equally accessible from a laptop and a mobile phone.

*Language Fuel* does exactly what it says, and it is, in my opinion, a great way to develop professionally. I think that when the courses are taken in the work environment or along with colleagues, it will be an even more valuable experience as the opportunity to discuss the content and collaborate will be provided, which is also suggested by the platform.

All in all, *Language Fuel* affords a great opportunity for professional development to language teachers. The website is a valuable tool for all ELT practitioners both novice and experienced and I would recommend it to individual teachers and institutions.

**Eleni Nikiforou**  
 University of Cyprus, Cyprus  
[eleninik@ucy.ac.cy](mailto:eleninik@ucy.ac.cy)

# Thank you, Lesley Painter-Farrell

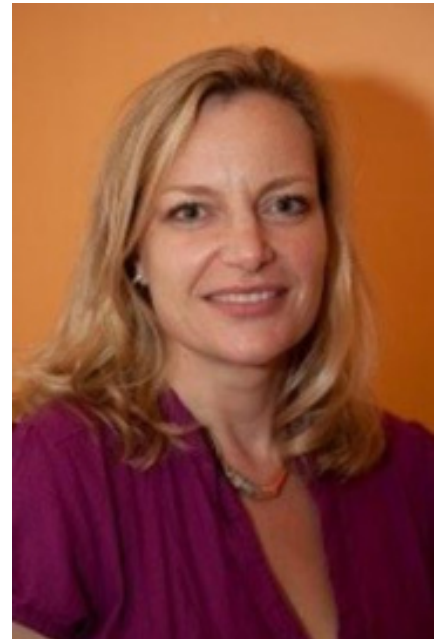


Dear Member,

Having recently returned from the IATEFL International Conference in Harrogate, we have reached the end of an era and new beginnings for the ESOLSIG as **Lesley Painter-Farrell** has stepped down as the ESOLSIG coordinator. The ESOLSIG committee and members would like to take this opportunity to thank Lesley for an unbelievable six years of service at the helm, initially as a co-coordinator with **Oya Karabetcha** and then as sole coordinator. We are very thankful for

all the work that she has done for the ESOLSIG such as coordinating many webinars, PCE Days, Swap Shops, newsletters, ESOL Champions, etc.

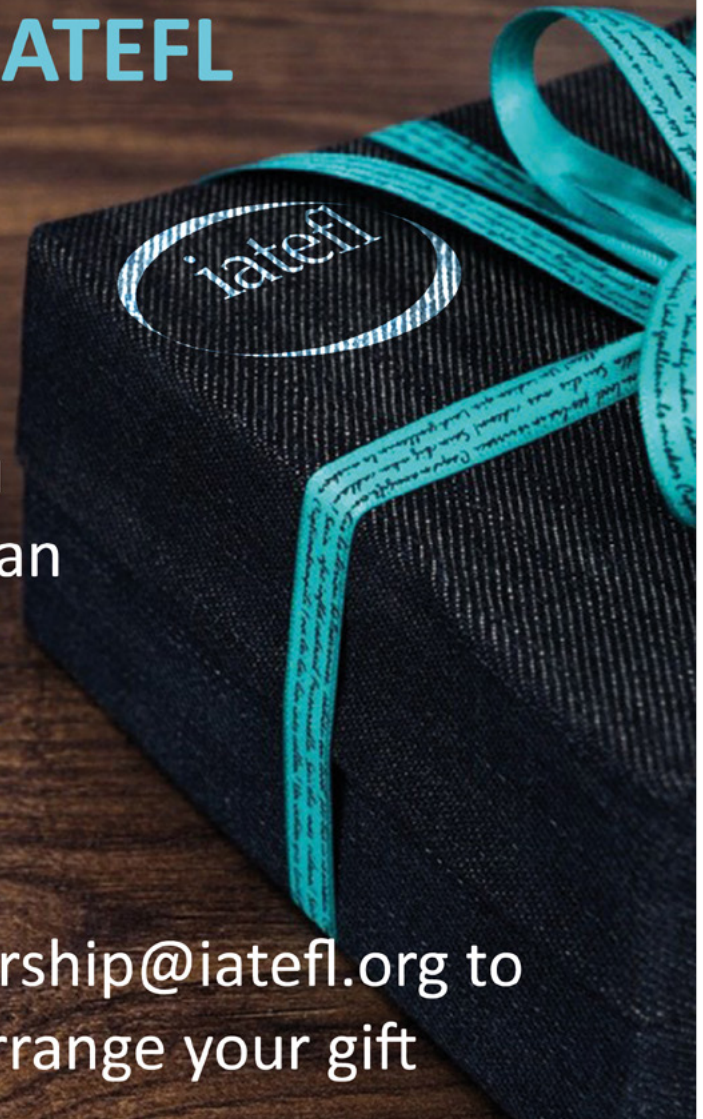
The newly appointed ESOLSIG coordinators **Vivi Bairami** and **Declan Flanagan** along with existing/new committee members **Kathryn Sidaway**, **Lora Agbaso**, **Sundeep Dhillon**, and **Maria Matheas** are ready to continue the important work of raising the profile of ESOL globally. As we do so, the committee genuinely appreciates the time and effort that Lesley has contributed to the ESOLSIG and hope to continue in her footsteps with the same energy and determination. We wish Lesley every success in her future endeavours. Thank you, Lesley!  
ESOLSIG Committee Members



## Make a gift of IATEFL membership

Support someone you know by gifting them an IATEFL membership today!

Contact us at [membership@iatefl.org](mailto:membership@iatefl.org) to make payment and arrange your gift





## Continue your professional development with our 16 Special Interest Groups!



Publications • Blogs • Scholarships • Webinars • Face to face events

To find out how joining our SIGs enhances your IATEFL membership visit [iatefl.org/meet-iatefl-sigs](http://iatefl.org/meet-iatefl-sigs)



# From the Associates

## IATEFL's Associates Representative Jean Theuma brings Associate news



Welcome to the Associates section of *Voices*! We would really like to share your news as much as possible so please get in touch with updates and reports on your events which have taken place. Please send this to me, Jean Theuma, at [associaterep@iatefl.org](mailto:associaterep@iatefl.org).

Every year, except for one year during the pandemic, IATEFL has offered a grant to support a Teaching Association to run a project in their local community to improve language teaching and learning. This is called the IATEFL Projects grant and is open to all IATEFL Associates. Through this scheme, Teaching Associations can apply for full or partial funding for a project that will benefit their members and the wider community, such as teacher training, running a conference,

creating a leadership programme or producing better and more relevant teaching materials.

In 2022, NELTA (the Nepal English Language Teachers' Association) was the winner of the IATEFL Projects fund. Their project was entitled 'Capacity building to marginalised and disadvantaged female teachers in Sudur Paschim province' and was aimed at female teachers who were in desperate need of training in ICT skills. IATEFL provided two thirds of the total cost of this course. Three days of training were organised in early September 2022 for 28 teachers from both private and public schools. On the course, around a third of the participants had never used a computer or laptop before, and just over 80 per cent of them had never used a digital device in their classrooms to access teacher resources.

The course primarily focused on digital literacy with a secondary focus on communication and leadership skills. Basic ICT skills training started with turning on and shutting down a

laptop, and progressed to creating and saving Microsoft Word files, along with naming and renaming the files. Further sessions trained the participants to create an email address and navigate emailing, attend a Zoom meeting, and set up a Google form. Sessions about leadership, presentation skills, giving classroom instructions in English and opportunities for microteaching were all given on the course. The sessions used a hands-on, practical approach, ensuring that the participants maximised their learning by creating resources, habits and practices that are sustainable after the course is over.

NELTA reported that the response to the training was very positive, and the benefits of receiving the IATEFL Projects funding have been felt by many. One of the participants, Abila Bist from Bajhang, said:

Being a female teacher of one of the most remote districts, I had never got any opportunity to brush up my communication, leadership and digital skills. Although there are some computers in my school, I never took



NELTA President facilitating the session on 'Presentation and effective communication skills'



Participants receiving feedback after their presentation

the initiative to use them for my teaching and learning purposes. I was reluctant to use them thinking that my other colleagues would laugh at my poor knowledge of computers. Now, after this training, I have gained some skills and more importantly the confidence to use them. Apart from the obvious benefits to

the participants themselves, NELTA also reported on learning from the course in order to create better sessions, should courses be given in the future. In addition, NELTA coordinated fruitfully with local education authorities to select the participants, encouraging local schools and administration to realise the need

to provide resources for teachers in their classrooms. NELTA also used the closing ceremony as an opportunity to invite NELTA branch Chairs and obtain their commitment to supporting the participants in district-level programmes to motivate them further.

[associaterep@iatefl.org](mailto:associaterep@iatefl.org)



Small grants

can make a

**BIG**  
difference

Visit [www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org) to find out how you could help improve language teaching in local communities by supporting

**IATEFL Projects**

# Coming events

iatefl.org/events  
iatefl.org/iatefl-associates-events

## 2023

### MAY

#### 19-20 Serbia

#### 21st ELTA Serbia Conference, Belgrade

'All seas (Cs) of teaching'

<https://elta.org.rs/2022/06/01/2023-elta-conference-2/>

### NOVEMBER

#### 4-5 Pakistan

#### 39th SPELT (Society of Pakistan English Language Teachers) International Conference, Karachi

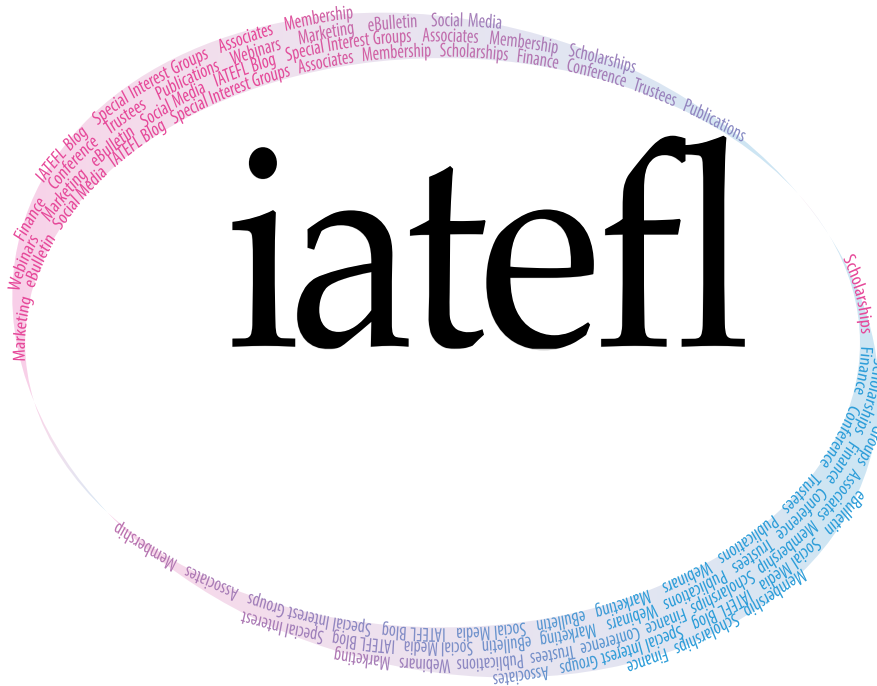
'Teaching-Learning of English Language'

<https://spelt.org.pk/39th-spelt-international-conference-2023/>

Submissions for the calendar are welcome and should be sent to membership@iatefl.org. Submissions should follow the format in the calendar above, and should include submission deadlines for papers for potential presenters.

Webinars are always being added to our Events page and members can access the recordings via 'My resources'.

## Everything IATEFL does relies on the hard work of our committees of volunteers

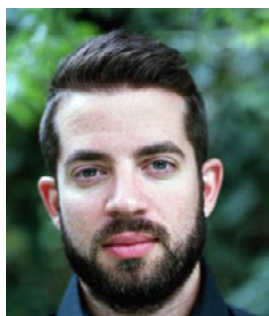
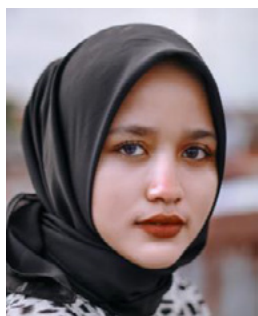


When a position becomes available, IATEFL members are emailed with the details and the opportunity to apply.

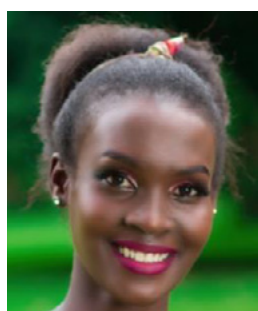
Visit [www.iatefl.org/current-calls-volunteers](http://www.iatefl.org/current-calls-volunteers) today to see our vacancies!



# Volunteer with IATEFL and make your mark in 2023 and beyond!



[www.iatefl.org/current-calls-volunteers](http://www.iatefl.org/current-calls-volunteers)



Join the IATEFL community and help  
us link, develop and support ELT  
professionals worldwide.

# What's missing from your professional development?



Find out more at [members.iatefl.org](http://members.iatefl.org)

For over 50 years, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) has been leading the way in reporting English language teaching worldwide. From our annual conference to a forum for English language professionals to meet and share ideas, we offer a range of opportunities and most international associations in the world.

IATEFL is a global association, and as we remain a community of teachers and other ELT professionals, we offer a range of opportunities for teaching experience.

In 2017, we celebrated our 50th anniversary. The author undertook a project in order to a celebration of this milestone. To understand the role played by IATEFL, not having

IATEFL worldwide members, Red Cross, Up to the Mountains and the Sea, etc.

Small grants making a big difference  
 A project was set up in 2014, offering grants to teachers to undertake a

- Develop a course to upgrade teachers' language skills
- Run a conference to address a particular local issue with the aim of creating solutions
- Develop a leadership skills programme for new teachers

# Are you making the most of your membership?

## *Linking*

Become an IATEFL volunteer

---

Receive monthly eBulletin

---

Exercise your right to vote at our Annual General Meeting

## *Developing*

Submit proposals for the Conference and webinars

---

Receive free copies of *Voices & Conference Selections*

---

Get published in *Voices* or the *IATEFL Blog*

## *Supporting*

Get discounts on a range of ELT publications

---

Access online publication & webinar archives

---

Get discounts on SIG events & the annual Conference