



Associació
de Professors
i Professores
d'Anglès
de Catalunya

Contributions

ELT
Convention

Book
Review

... and more.

Index

ELT Convention 2010. Opening Speech	4
APAC-John McDowell Award	6
ELT Convention 2010. Assessment	10
The Britlit Project	14

ELT Convention



What is Grammar? By <i>Michael Swan</i>	21
---	----



Ana Aguilar interviews <i>Mary Slattery</i>	24
---	----



Practical English: Building the New Generation of Europeans by <i>Xelo Fornés</i>	28
--	----



New Ways of Using Songs in the Classroom by <i>Joseph Suller</i>	33
---	----

Contributions



From Global Understanding to Content Learning by <i>I. Delgado i E. Sell</i>	40
---	----



Skype in the Classroom by <i>Cristina Arnau Vilà</i>	42
--	----



An e-Twinning Experience by <i>Ana Leal</i>	47
---	----



A Few Thoughts on TEFL and Key Competentes by <i>E. Buck</i>	53
--	----

Book Review



The Swing in the Tale by <i>Núria Casals</i> .	63
--	----

EDITORIAL AND COMMUNICATION TEAM

Editors

- Neus Serra
- James McCullogh

Col·laboradors

- Paqui Lorite
- Esther Martín
- Mireia Raymi
- Josep Sala
- Neus Figueras
- Miquel Breton
- Ana Aguilar

Disseny

Soluciones al Respecto

Maquetació i Impressió

Impremta Pagès
c/ de Can Planas
Paratge Ca n' Aulet, s/n.
17160 ANGLÈS (Girona)
Tel. 972 42 01 07
Fax 972 42 22 67

Gran Via de les
Corts Catalanes, 606 4t 3a F-G
08007 Barcelona
Tel. 93 317 01 37
Fax 93 342 55 81
e-mail: info@apac.es
<http://www.apac.es>

Revista núm. 69
June 2010

D.L. B-41180 - 1998
ISSN 1137 - 1528

Editorial

Once again, this past February we held our ELT Convention, with very high numbers of attendees and standing-room-only audiences in quite a few sessions. This is a clear indication that there is a great deal of interest among us to stay up to date and to improve our teaching of English. Year after year, a great many of us from all levels of education come together in the Convention to exchange ideas, discover what the different publishing houses can offer us, and socialize with friends and colleagues, especially ones that we don't often see. These three days of contact are necessary and opportune, as they afford us a great chance to renew our energy, ideas, and perspectives. They could be considered a spa for our educational bodies, a balm for our pedagogical souls. This is especially good these days, when, if we had to believe some politicians, we wouldn't be able to say what direction education is heading in.

In the first pages of this issue of the APAC quarterly, you will find the opening address by our president and the results of the surveys you returned to us on the different presentations and events in the Convention. Also, on our web page, you will find the handouts of some of our speakers and even the content of some of the presentations in the form of articles: the use of songs in the classroom; the Selectivitat exam; an interpretation of what grammar is; and an interview with Mary Slattery conducted by Ana Aguilar.

We also dedicate a fair amount of space to BritLit, as it is a good programme for expanding the horizons of our students and bringing them into contact with works and authors in meaningful, memorable ways. This year we had noteworthy visits from such writers as Levi Tafari, especially in schools and venues in and around Barcelona.

As always, we would like to express our gratitude for the generous collaboration of our fellow teachers, who have sent in articles reflecting on the use of new technologies in the classroom, content-based language teaching, and the incorporation of the basic competences into our practices.

Neither salary reductions nor freezes in other areas of educational budgets will clip our wings nor cool our spirits in our quest to be as professional as we can be. As can be seen from our participation in the ELT Convention, our reading of this journal, and our endeavours to be active in myriad educational programmes, we English teachers are determined to be the best we can be.

With that, we on the APAC Journal editorial team wish you all a great summer! We'll get back in touch with you in the fall, with a new issue featuring more articles from speakers in this year's Convention and from collaborators among you who send in accounts of their work in the classroom.

The Editorial Team

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues,

When you read this, summer will have set in. Not always good news. Take Coleridge, confessing the feeling to a correspondent: "Summer has set in with its usual severity". But, whatever the weather, for teachers the summer season has an interesting angle: no students around. And this is really good weather once in a while. Time for rest and recreation. And time for reflection. We, at APAC, are beginning to think deep on how to celebrate our first 25th anniversary in 2011. Twenty-five years! Time for reflection, indeed. I'll keep you posted on developments, of course, and we'd love to hear from all of you on meaningful ways to mark the occasion. This is a collective coming of age. Ideas welcome!

In the meantime, I'd like to point out that our tiny premises have started to host seminars for members. In view of your response we are preparing a number of new seminars (see more detailed information in this issue) for the next academic year. We intend to offer courses on Class Management, Programming, The Press in Class, or The Use of Digital Technologies and Images. It has always been our aim to keep members in contact in between annual conventions and these activities seem to me modest steps in the right direction. But, these days, being in touch and keeping updated can greatly benefit from new technologies and I would like to draw your attention here to our webpage in general and, more specifically, to our Ning social network.

The network was started in November 2008. The goal is to offer teachers of English as a second language a platform on which to exchange ideas through blogs and forums, set up groups to share documents, upload educational videos and give information on events. It is based on the bottom-up principle of 'crowdsourcing' where the website is built up through everyone's input. After 18 months, there are around 250 signed up members on the site from as far apart as North Africa and New York though most members come from Catalonia. We use the network to keep members informed of the association's activities and as a backup to courses run at our premises.

Until July 2010, the social website was free but after July 2010 APAC will pay the owners an annual fee, though it will still be free to join. Why don't you have a good look at <http://apacelt.ning.com> and get an idea of how it runs?

If you happen to think our Ning network might be useful to find a holiday companion watch your wording. I mean, don't do it like my friend the other day: "I did advertise for a holiday companion –capable widow, no sense of humour, some knowledge of haemorrhoids preferred- not a reply."

Have a good summer!

With best wishes,

Miquel Berga
President

<http://www.apac.es/forum/seminars.html>

Opening Speech at the ELT Convention 2010

Good afternoon. The rector of Universitat Pompeu Fabra has asked me to give you, on his behalf, a hearty welcome to all and I'd like to thank him and this University for the kind hospitality they offer us with a substantial discount. Here with us, there is Mr. Jordi Baldrich, representing Casio who have been generous enough to offer an additional prize to winners of our awards in the form of the exciting pack that includes one of his famous electronic dictionaries and the vocabulary learning game that goes with it. We are also thankful for the presence of Mr Carles Martínez, on behalf of Conseller Maragall. Carles Martínez, as you know, is the Director General de Programació. And, once again, I'm happy to have Mr Chris Brandwood, director of the British Institute with us. This is likely to be Chris last time with us at this convention since I heard he is moving soon. I'd like to thank him for his continuing support since he arrived in Barcelona and may I ask him to have the floor...



Senyor Director General, Sr. Director de l'Institut Britànic, Sr. representant de Casio friends and colleagues,

It is a great pleasure to see you all back at APAC's convention. It is great to see so many happy faces in this room, all ready for three days of reflection on our teaching practices and ready

to welcome a great number of speakers that will, no doubt, bring about new developments and latest research in our field. My first words on behalf of APAC's board, should be of gratitude for your unfailing loyalty and support. You make this event meaningful and APAC's members have proved, year after year, their personal commitment to pedagogical issues and the improvement of class-



room practice in the teaching of a foreign language. Let me tell you a secret: No school system could do without the likes of you. Thank you very much for that.

The program for this convention has reached APAC's members with the added value of our quarterly magazine which, apart from many other things, gives notice of some courses and activities that are taking place in our extended offices in Gran Via. Remember you are all welcome to attend and to explore ideas for new courses and activities along the year. You have also got a copy of our latest volume in the APAC Monographs series. It is devoted to "Classroom management in EFL" and we hope you'll find it a useful tool in the current debates. There will be a chance to get deeper into that in the ad-hoc round table we have scheduled for tomorrow. It will be chaired by Tom Maguire, who is himself one of the main contributors to this volume.



Chris Brandwood has referred to the recent Brit-Lit activities that have been made possible through cooperation with APAC and a number of schools. It has been a really successful joint venture and I know that it has been enriching and valuable for students and teachers alike. It is only fair to mention how instrumental Lesley Denham in the British Council and our dear Vice-president Neus Figueras have been in making all this happen. Anyone interested in exploring the potential of the Brit-Lit project should not miss Tony Mitton's session later on.

The motto of this year convention (Skills for Life: ELT and Education) suggests our concern in not overlooking the essential aim of education while we are flooded with new technologies and resources. Both, the opening lecture today and the keynote speech tomorrow will address what is, at the end of the day, the real issue in our professional concerns. We think this is particularly pertinent when most schools are facing a real upturn

in the traditional use of materials with the stated aspiration of the Department d'Educació to favour digital materials for all. No doubt the Director General will throw light into that today but we are concerned about many issues: How about teachers opting for a co-habitation model? How about in-service training for schools adopting the new resources? What is exactly the balance between promoting the system through extra-funding and improving on what we already have? Are we in a terrible hurry to get the sort of news headings that flatter the ear of the voter or are we enhancing a sustainable and reasonable plan to make things work for the better and in the long run? Well, nothing was ever easy in the kingdoms of the earth but

as APAC's president I would like Mr. Carles Martínez to pass on the message to Conseller Maragall. I am aware that we are in the last year of this administration but this is precisely the time to look ahead, the time to mix audacity and tenacity and make sure that promising "enterprises of great

pitch and moment"- to put it like Hamlet, get really consolidated. And I like here to mention the two initiatives that are absolutely at the heart of the future of English teaching and learning in Catalonia: The so-called Pla d'impuls de l'anglès and the recent set up of the Education Masters that have taken the place of the old CAP. There is still time to prove that audacity and tenacity are the trademark of Conseller Maragall.

As usual, we have plenty of food for thought, occasions for rich debate in plenty, and a plentiful display of publishers materials in the overcrowded big hall outside with some 30 stands. Thank you all for coming, and thank you for being the chief actors of an event that is, by general consent, the very best of its kind in Spain. Thank you.

MIQUEL BERGA
APAC's president

APAC - PREMI John McDowell 2009

Acta del jurat:

Abans de procedir a llegir el nom dels guanyadors de les diverses modalitats d'aquesta edició del Premi APAC-John McDowell, m'agradaria mencionar que enguany, i per gentilesa de Casio, cada premi tindrà l'extraordinari bonus d'un pack Casio que inclou una traductora i el joc d'aprenentatge que l'acompanya.

En la **Modalitat C, treballs presentats per grups classe**, el jurat ha concedit un premi i un accèssit.

Premi: Consisteix en un val de 500 euros per a material didàctic.

Ha estat concedit al treball **OUR DIARY WRITTEN DURING OUR EXCHANGE EXPERIENCE**, un blog on alumnes catalans i suecs intercanvien les seves experiències. Aquest treball el presenten els alumnes de **4t d'ESO** de l'**IES Guillem de Berguedà** de Berga. Passa a recollir el premi la seva professora, la Cristina Arnau, en representació del centre.

Accèssit: Consisteix en un val de 100 euros per a material didàctic.

Ha estat concedit al treball **EUROPE'S TOUR**, una obra de teatre on un grup de persones viatja per diferents països d'Europa. En són els protagonistes els alumnes de **6è de primària** del **Col·legi Sant Josep** de Navàs. Passen a recollir el premi un grup d'alumnes en representació d'aquest centre.

Pel que fa a la **MODALITAT B, treballs de recerca presentats per alumnes de Batxillerat, i per primer cop aquest any, també presentats per alumnes de 4t d'ESO**, el jurat ha concedit un premi i un accèssit.

Premi: Consisteix en un miniordinador portàtil (netbook). Ha estat concedit al treball de recerca **GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER WITH IDIOMS**, on l'autora del treball analitza les expressions idiomàtiques des d'un punt de vista cultural. Presenta el treball la Marta Oreja Bernal, de l'**IES Argentona** i ha estat dirigida per la seva tutora, la Ingrid Cervera. Passa a recollir el premi la Marta.

Accèssit: Consisteix en un val de 100 euros per a material especialitzat. Ha estat concedit al treball de recerca **Learning by Doing**, on l'autora crea un moodle per tal que els seus companys aprenguin coses noves sobre una de les seves grans aficions, en aquest cas la música. L'autora és la **Jordina Torrents**, de l'**IES Constantí** i ha estat dirigida pel seu tutor, en **Joan García**. Passa a recollir el premi la Jordina.

Pel que fa a la **MODALITAT A, treballs presentats per professors**, el jurat ha concedit un premi i un accèssit.

Accèssit: Consisteix en un val de 100 euros per a material especialitzat i ha estat concedit al treball **GOOD LUCK. DISCOVERING READINGS**. L'autora, la Mercè Segú, parteix del llibre *Good Luck* i crea una sèrie d'activitats i materials amb els quals pretén que els seus alumnes aprofundeixin en aspectes lingüístics a través de la lectura. Passa a recollir el premi la Mercè.

Premi: Consisteix en un curs al Regne Unit patrocinat pel British Council i ha estat concedit al treball **THE OLOA PROJECT: ON LINE AND ON AIR**, una seqüència d'aprenentatge a la web on l'objectiu final és aconseguir crear un programa de ràdio que cada grup haurà de penjar en el seu blog. La seva autora és la **Mireia Grané**. Passa a recollir el premi la Mireia.

El jurat vol felicitar a tots els guanyadors i animar a tothom a participar en la propera edició dels Premis Apac-John McDowell 2010.

EUROPE'S TOUR

Have you ever been travelling around Europe by bus and with your best friends?

This is what all the pupils of 6th primary of Sant Josep school did for some days.

It was an amazing tour because we practised lots of English and we enjoyed "visiting" some of the best European countries.

First of all, we prepared the bus. It was red, with windows and a good sightseeing at the top.

Then we arranged a song, you can listen to it at our school English blog: <http://blocs.xtec.cat/amazingfacts>

After that we started our trip visiting Italy and going to taste a delicious pizza in one of the most famous Italian restaurants. Then we travelled to Paris. We went to a fashion show there. It was incredible! Some of the girls and boys in the class became excellent models. The rest of the group was the public. Marc and Moisès presented the show.

Later we went to Amsterdam to visit Van Gogh's museum. Maria called her mum there. Gerard bought a postcard and sent it to his family.

After that we travelled to London. In London we had to change money, you know Euros to Pounds. We also had to buy tickets for Mamma Mia show. Marcel played the guitar, and some of the girls in the group sang and danced brilliantly.

Alba bought a souvenir in London too.

Last of all, we travelled to Catalonia again and we finished our tour in Berga. We went there to celebrate the traditional festival called La Patum.

It was a great experience in fact. Everyone enjoyed recording, acting, singing, dancing, and speaking in English,...

By Fina Vendrell



Learning by doing

This work is based that by means of the design of a Moodle course (the most recent virtual learning tool) with different topics on a treated subject, in this case, Musical Computer Science, I can transmit theoretical knowledge like a classic class. Consequently, I will prove the assimilation of the matter after the accomplishment of the practical exercises or the follow-up of the performance that the students will achieve throughout the course.

At the same time, the pupils will improve their level of English an enjoyable way and will learn more knowledge about the world of music. This helps me to prove that Moodle (VLE) can be an important assistant as a complement to a standard classroom.

Jordina Torrents Barrena

The OLOA Project¹ is a learning sequence structured as a **webquest** designed for learners of English as a foreign language. Level **A2** has been taken as the starting reference level for the design of activities and adaptation of web resources. The final task to accomplish in this project, a **radio news bulletin to be posted to a team's blog**, is pre-recorded and has to follow a given model suitable for basic users. Learning objectives, contents and assessment criteria have been designed according to the language curriculum for 4th of ESO students in Catalonia². The final task is not only language-related. It is part of a wider context which will give it full meaning. Integrating ICT and radio into the sequence is what gives name to the project: **On Line and On Air**. Learners follow the learning path of the webquest (On Line) to create a news bulletin to share and exchange with a real audience (On Air). *The OLOA Project* guides the students throughout this process of pre-recorded news reports in English transforming the information into knowledge and activating thinking skills in order to find, relate, interpret, analyse, synthesize and deduct at different levels of complexity promoting **reflection** and **self-assessment** as learning tools. In a digital world, our students should be able to develop their knowledge and skills and apply them to different real-life situations using basically the spoken word. Among all technologies available, **radio** offers many aspects which make it appealing to both teachers and students. It helps us achieve creative, innovative, efficient and critical use of ICT tools. At the same time, using radio as a learning tool gives students a chance to develop most of the competencies in the curriculum for this age group. Our main **aims** are, on the one hand, to equip students for the challenges of a **competency-based curriculum** helping them develop the skills, abilities and attitudes needed for the fast changing society we're living in and, on the other hand, to **promote** the use of **ICT among teachers** to enhance planning, teaching and learning.

By Mireia Grané

¹ <http://www.xtec.cat/~mgrane/webquests/OLOA/home.htm>

² *GENERALITAT DE CATALUNYA. DOGC núm. 4915, de 26 de juny. Decret 143/2007 pel qual s'estableix el currículum de l'educació secundària obligatòria, àmbit de llengües.*

http://phobos.xtec.cat/edubib/internet/file.php?file=docs/ESO/llengues_eso.pdf

Good Luck- Discovering readings is a course for adult people who are tired of traditional courses specially based on grammar exercises and who are eager to do a different course. The English level required to do the course could be B2- B2+ because the level of the reading is quite high and demanding.

The aim of this project is to make students enjoy new readings as *Good Luck*, by Àlex Rovira and considered a self-help book, and at the same time make them aware of their learning process from the very beginning.

The book is an ideal book for adult people, considering that their age can vary from 25 to 70 years old and with a good cultural background that can help them in the debates.

New tools as Internet, a digital "portafoli" and a blog as a diary are some of the ideas introduced to them even if it is also possible to do the "portafoli" and the diary in a written form. They are also asked to evaluate their learning process at the end of each unit. The evaluation sheets make reference not only to their learning process but also to the units and activities in them.

The relation between teacher and students become, then, closer because of the diaries and can also be very rewarding for both sides.

Considering that this is a course designed more to consolidate a level than learn new grammar aspects. The oral part, always considered the weakest part of students, is emphasized and in all the units students are forced to participate actively in the class.

In the book there are lots of good statements to comment on and motivate people, but my favourite one is: The Good Luck story never comes to you by chance.

Mercè Segú, professora de l'Escola d'Adults Fòrum de l'Institut Municipal de Tarragona.

APAC - John McDowell Award 2010

Concurs per a professors i alumnes de llengua anglesa de tots els nivells educatius

BASES

Oberts a professorat i alumnat de llengua anglesa de tots els nivells educatius

Com cada any, l'APAC (Associació de Professors i Professores d'Anglès de Catalunya) us convida a participar en el **Premis APAC - John McDowell**, que tenen la finalitat de reconèixer l'esforç realitzat tant per professors com per alumnes en els seus treballs en llengua anglesa. Els premis volen promoure la recerca i la innovació pedagògica del professorat i donar un reconeixement a les activitats d'aula de l'alumnat. És per això que l'APAC us anima a presentar tant els vostres treballs com els dels vostres alumnes.

- **MODALITAT A: TREBALLS PRESENTATS PER PROFESSORS (o futurs professors)**

(Matèries optatives d'anglès, treballs d'investigació, projectes, memòries, treballs acadèmics, etc.). Els treballs presentats en aquesta modalitat han de ser inèdits i han d'incloure: objectius, continguts i conclusió. En el cas de les matèries optatives també s'hi ha d'incloure el material per utilitzar a classe i les activitats d'avaluació. Pel que fa als treballs d'investigació han d'estar relacionats directament amb aspectes de la llengua anglesa.

1 premi que consistirà en un curs de dues setmanes al Regne Unit, esponsoritzat per l'Institut Britànic (l'anada i la tornada al lloc de destinació serà a càrrec del professor/a premiat/ada)

1 accèssit que consistirà en un val de 100€ i una traductora CASIO

- **MODALITAT B: TREBALLS PRESENTATS PER ALUMNES (Treballs de recerca)**

Tots els treballs presentats en aquesta modalitat han d'incloure objectius, contingut i conclusió i han d'estar directament relacionats amb aspectes de la llengua anglesa.

1 premi que consistirà en un mini-portàtil

1 accèssit que consistirà en un val de 100€

- **MODALITAT C: TREBALLS PRESENTATS PER GRUPS CLASSE (Vídeos, DVDs, projectes, revistes, pàgines web, etc.)**

Els treballs presentats en aquesta modalitat han d'incloure una introducció del professorat de la matèria indicant els objectius de l'activitat.

1 premi que consistirà en un val de 500€

1 accèssit que consistirà en un val de 100€

Bases generals

- És condició indispensable que tots els treballs siguin en anglès.
- Tots els treballs s'han de presentar en un sobre o paquet tancat. La informació imprescindible que hi ha de constar és:
 - Modalitat en la qual participa (Modalitat A, Modalitat B o Modalitat C)
 - Nom, adreça, correu electrònic i telèfon de contacte del concursant
 - Nivell educatiu o curs (en cas dels alumnes i grup classe)
 - Escola i nom del professor/a
- **El termini de presentació dels premis finalitza el dia 31 de desembre de 2010.**
- El jurat estarà format per cinc membres d'APAC.
- Els premis es lliuraran en el marc de l'APAC- ELT Convention 2011
- APAC es reserva el dret de publicar totalment o parcialment els treballs presentats a la revista i / o a la web d'APAC.
- Tots els participants al Premi APAC han de ser socis d'APAC amb l'excepció de les modalitats B i C.
- Tots els treballs s'enviaran via e-mail, per correu postal o en mà a: APAC
Gran Via de Les Corts Catalanes, 606 4rt 2a Despatx F-G, 08007 Barcelona info@apac.es
- APAC no es responsabilitza dels treballs no recollits abans del dia 30 d'abril del 2011.

APAC

ELT - CONVENTION 2010

Skills for Life: ELT and Education

Dear friends and colleagues,

The June issue of APAC of News traditionally publishes the assessment of the yearly ELT-Convention (February 25, 26 and 27), and this will be no exception. The contents of this letter reflect the ratings and remarks of the annual delegates and is used by the organizing committee to improve future editions.

Some figures as an appetizer. This year we counted 585 participants (588 in 2009, for you to compare) with this profile: 11% of teachers with more than 20 years experience, 17% from 11 to 19, 7% from 8 to 10, 14% from 4 to 7 and 8% teachers with less than 3 years experience. These figures vary slightly year after year, but the general profile is that we teachers look for new

ideas and forums for sharing and learning no matter how un/experienced we are.

If we have a look at the professional field the picture looks like this: 26% secondary teachers, 20% come from Primary, 14% teach in language schools – private or estate-, 2% come from university, we have an increasing number of students, 15%, and 16% of delegates did not answer this question. Figures do not differ dramatically from last year and the bottom line is that the Jornades are more popular among mainstream education

teachers than in any other working fields, a fact that, in turn, has a clear influence on the program design and contents.

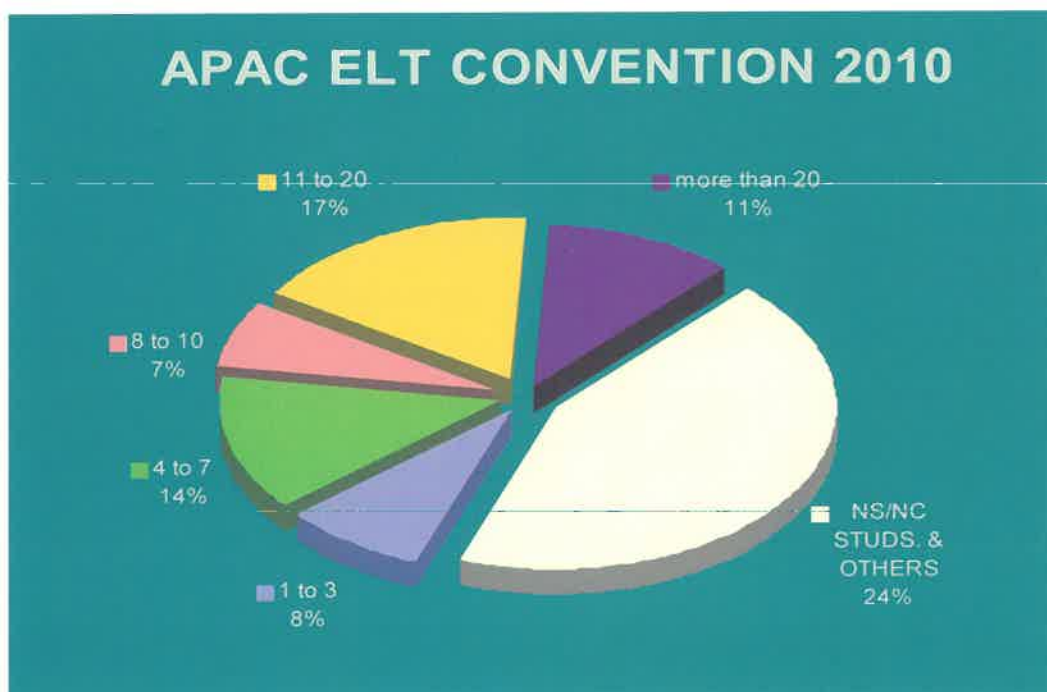
The program scheduled 61 speakers (67 in 2009) from all over Catalonia, Seville, Valencia, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Dublin and Vienna, featuring grassroots teachers, professors, writers, teacher trainers, actors, musicians and journalists.

The exhibition hall was once more packed with a wealth of materials, from classic to new, paperware to high-tech offered by regular ELT-related publishers and enterprises and a few newcomers. Thanks to all, once again, for your sponsorship, your presence and your very colorful and professional displays.

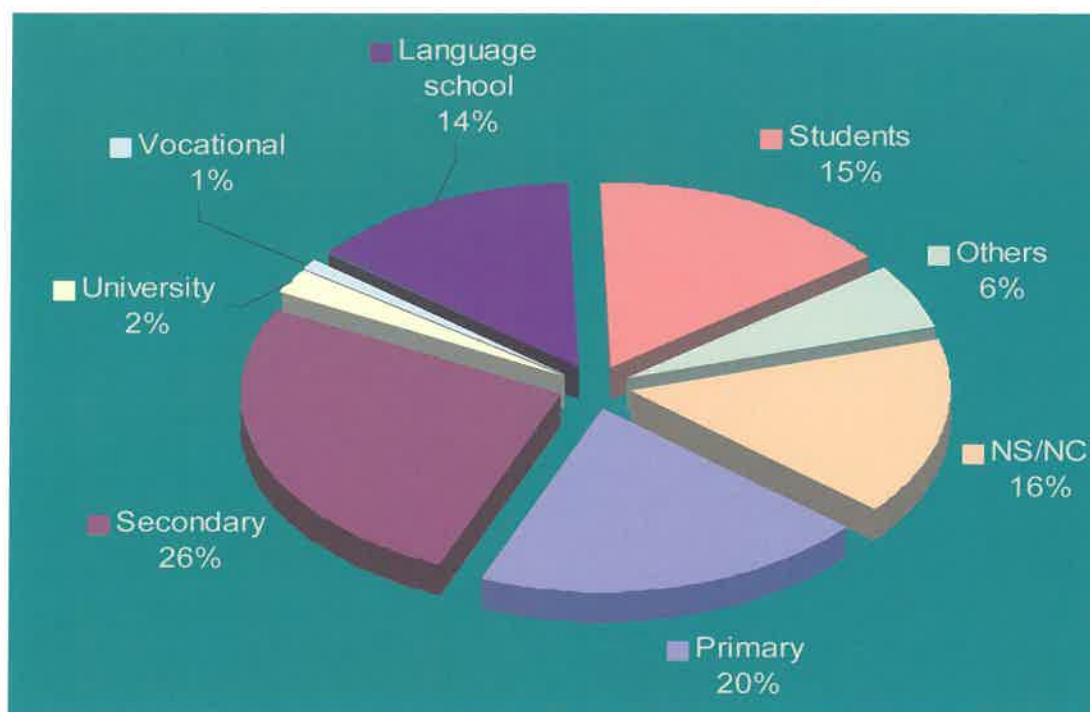
Thursday 4pm is time for the Opening Session with the protocol speeches and awarding of the

ELT CONVENTION 2010
585 ATTENDING
61 SPEAKERS

Years of Teaching



Professional Field



Primary	Secondary	University	Vocational	Language school	Students	Others	NS/NC	TOTAL
117	154	14	5	81	89	34	91	585

APAC-John McDowell prizes. The 5pm opening paper was delivered by professor John McRae, an old friend of APAC and a thought-provoking humorous speaker. With his “Being a Teacher – Imagination, Education and the Five Skills of English” he framed the 60 other proposals of the APAC-ELT Convention’s 23rd edition “English and Education: Skills for Life”. The whole event has been posted at www.apac.es as from March.

The three plenary sessions on Thursday afternoon, that is, teacher and writer Tony Mitton’s “Working the Words”, professor Carme Muñoz with her comparative study on “Early Language Learning in Europe” and Scott Thornbury’s “Six big Ideas and One Little One” had the favour of the audience. The only complaint came from room 40 002, where many secondary teachers had to squeeze in to attend Scott’s very crowded session.

Professors Seidlhofer and

Widdowson, from the University of Vienna, delivered the keynote speech in the Auditorium on Friday morning, introducing “English as a Lingua Franca: What’s the Use in Education?”. When reading the assessment, we get a picture of a divided audience. Some thought it to be groundbreaking and enlightening, some found it too theoretical for a too big and crowded room with sound problems in the back rows. On the contrary, their Saturday 11:30 follow-up session took place in a smaller room with a group of interested teachers and it proved to be a much more fruitful format.

The Auditorium it is not the best of rooms if we look at the ratings of the 12:00pm sessions. In the Roundtable on Classroom Management, chaired by APAC’s webmaster Tom Maguire, with Natália Maldonado, Pilar Olivares and Scott Thornbury, the “stage” made the contact between speakers and audience difficult. Roundtables aim at bridging the

speaker-audience gap and this did not happen. Some teachers wrote their impression of a too theoretical approach with constant references to the articles the speakers wrote for APAC’s latest monograph and very few examples and experiences to discuss. For some it was a useful presentation but more experienced teachers missed the chance to talk and share in a more dynamic way.

Most participants show their agreement with the general schedule but some keep insisting breaks between sessions are too long. There are several reasons for this: the cava and coffee breaks are the natural forums for socializing, the Friday morning tempo is slower because of lack of room availability at the UPF, and the 30-minute breaks between workshops on Friday afternoon and Saturday morning are vital for setting up the presentations, most of them increasingly technified. There are unexpected situations when preparing the 7 to 9 simultaneous sessions and both

speakers and technicians need time. You will see what we mean if you keep on reading.

The other two Friday 12:30 simultaneous sessions unexpectedly suffered a blackout! When we realized it affected the whole system in the area and it was not simply a room failure, we decided to move rooms but 30 endless minutes had already gone by. Mary Slattery managed to present "Teaching Young Learners: How Can Language Learning Connect with General Education?" and Borja Uruñuela his "Magic Ingredients for Primary Learners" with great success and professionalism. They both had follow-up workshops with very high ratings with a few disagreements.

On Friday afternoon the 60-minute workshop strands start off and run until Saturday 2:30pm. The first strand had two favourite presentations for Secondary/Batxillerat/Adults by Josep Suller on music and Ben Goldstein's "The Power Of Image", and two for Primary: Chris Roland's "Reg and Lellow!" and Theresa Zanatta's "Scrapbooks".

The 4:30 strand had two champions for Primary, Borja Uruñuela with "Flow" and Imma Piquer's experiential approach to "ELF to Young Learners – Setting the scene" and one for Secondary, Susan Dreger with a session on ICT that started with some technical problems that took 15 minutes to solve. Susan had a bounty of information to deliver and she had to hurry through the 40 minutes left. No wonder some of us are still scared of ICT: it can stand you up any moment! Stephanie Williams, same time, one floor above, was in dire straits when showing the usage of an IWB. Our apologies to the audience and speakers for not having been able to foresee what happened. But a call to speakers as well to try with more down-to-earth presentations. Unfortunately, the sky is not the limit here, but time, technology and human factor!

The last Friday strand had a clear favourite for Young Learners: Victòria Gasch's MI approach to Infant FL class and three highly rated sessions for Secondary and +: George Kokolas' "Learning a Language is Like Building a House" for its clear ideas, Chris Roland's "Stuff for Teens of All Levels" for the bunch of hands-on materials, and Judith Leary's session on video and listening materials, with a few objectors.

Saturday 9:30 presentations had several champions: Ricard Garcia gave a very much celebrated session on Collaborative Tools, David Hill's "Writing Stories" gave an interesting counterpoint to technologies and so did Ceri Jones with her "Practical sed the interest of less experienced teachers. And, related to late Primary-early Secondary, David Piñeiro's question "Can we work with Reality Shows in the English Class?" was answered with flying colours, according to most attendees.

After the coffee break, the moment when gather in the exhibition hall over a drink and some snacks—that never seem to be enough, nine more sessions started at 11:30, three of them considered to be paramount. For Secondary and +, Robert Campbell and Robert Metcalf's "Why Use the Moving Image in Class?", David Gatrell's "Even More Glamorous Grammar" and Monika Gora's and her team's very dynamic session "Exploring Creative Arts as an Instrument in EFL Teaching", addressed to teachers of all levels.

And from the last Saturday strand, ratings highlight Mary Slattery's "Teaching With Bear", a hands-on session that could have lasted for two hours and Michael Buck's session on Literature for Batxillerat and adults was described as useful and practical, and Tony Mitton captivated the audience again with his performances of poems and stories for the youngest.

Two sessions polarized the

audience: Cristina Arnau her Webcasting because technology failed again and too much information had to be delivered in a rush—though her introduction to this particular field of ICT was considered very enlightening by many—, and the EOI team of Julià, Mussons, Naves, Pallarés, Pallàs and Picó, with the proposal "Who is Afraid of Virginia CLIL".

Time to finish and draw some scattered conclusions the next Convention should offer some more ICT, ICT sessions have to be carefully planned or the tables turn on speakers, the auditorium is not the best of places to foster communication (but where else can we host more than 300 people at the same time?), there will never be enough sandwiches for everybody on Saturday ...

And a piece of news: 2011 is APAC's 25th anniversary! The 2011 Convention will be a time for reminiscence and celebration, to delve in history and to look forward, further than ever. If we are favoured by the stars, Mother Nature, call it what you may, Do Coyle who had to cancel this year as you remember, will be with us next February. Luke Prodromou will be there too after more than 10 years away from Catalonia. Hugh Dellar has penciled down February 24th-26th on his notebook, for sure. Some other plenary speakers are still to be confirmed and former APAC board members will also have their place.

Till then, have a nice end of the school year and a pleasant summer.

Warm regards,

APAC
organizing committee

...



Associació
de Professors
i Professoras
d'Anglès
de Catalunya

TEACHER TRAINING COURSES ORGANIZED BY APAC



Reconeguts pel Departament
d'Educació.



"LES COMPETÈNCIES BÀSIQUES A L'AULA DE LLENGUA ESTRANGERA"

Les sessions del curs es dedicaran a la revisió dels aspectes dels decrets 142/2007 i 143/2007 que tenen més rellevància en la didàctica de l'anglès; s'analitzaran aquells aspectes que s'han d'incloure en les programacions de la matèria i en les unitats didàctiques dels diferents cursos; es presentaran tècniques per posar-las en pràctica.

20 hores: 15 hores presencials + 5 no presencials

DATES : Novembre 6, 12, 19
Desembre 3, 10

HORARI : De 16h a 19h.

INSCRIPCIONS : Telf. 93 317 01 37 · Fax. 93 342 55 81 · info@apac.es

LLOC : Gran Via de Les Corts Catalanes, 606 4rt 2a Despatx F,G, I, 08007 Barcelona

**El preu és de 70 euros per als associats.
160 euros per als no-associats**

Places limitades a 10 persones.

Formadors: Neus Serra i Tom Maguire

<http://www.apac.es/forum/seminars.html>



The BritLit project

BARBARA LEONARD

Levi Tafari's visit to Catalan schools as part of the BritLit project was a lesson in **bringing English of the most authentic kind into the classroom**, inspiring young learners and breaking down barriers among the city's diverse communities

Unity in verse LEVI TAFARI Poet

First published in **CATALONIATODAY** • March 2010

You were an active performer from an early age. Did that come from your parents?

—My parents emigrated from Jamaica to Britain and my mum in particular was keen to keep Caribbean traditions going. The oral tradition is an important art of our identity as well as food and music. Our family also kept links and traditions alive by visiting relatives in Bradford and Birmingham.

Which cultural heritage did you feel most associated with as a child?

—Well, the strongest influence was clearly from my Jamaican parentage. Before I went to school I was immersed in the strong community we had in Liverpool and of course both my parents were from Jamaica. It might have been very different if I had had one parent from a different culture. When I went to school then things changed radically and I began to see things in

a different way. It was a link to other cultures but I also became aware of segregation and discrimination and was exposed to skin-heads and overt racism for the first time.

You trained in classical French cuisine and worked in the catering industry for some time. Which skills do you think are the most transferable to the world of performance poetry?

—I'd say both require good communication skills and creativity. As a chef I fed people's bellies and now I am hopefully feeding their thoughts! Catering is a much harder world than performance poetry but both demand correct preparation and dedication. I suppose the biggest difference is that a mistake in catering can have terrible consequences; people could become ill or even die if you don't prepare food properly, whereas



with a performance the worst that can happen is that they don't like the poems and they tell you so. Dedication and effort are really essential to both. I don't like this recent change towards a culture of celebrity in the UK where people have risen to become famous for being famous and not on the back of any significant talent or ability. I think it sends out the wrong message to the young.

Your excellent communication skills are evident. Do you think this gives you a right or an obligation to act as a spokesperson for your community?

—I don't know that I have a right but people have been kind enough to support my work and what I do, so I suppose you could say they approve of my work. I am particularly proud of being asked to record my poetry to welcome visitors to the World Cultures Gallery at the World Museum in Liverpool so I suppose that does show that I have been accepted as a spokesperson by some.

What about your musical links?

—I have worked with a lot of very talented musicians. My type of poetry lends itself to music and I have worked with reggae, soul and funk bands. I spent two seasons with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, too, the first focusing on dance and the second on the human voice. It was an exceptional experience.

How do you start writing a new poem?

—The starting point is to take a topic and consider what I think about it and then what I want other people to think about it. It was like that with the poem *Melanin*. There are already a lot of poems about discrimination and I wrote it because I wanted people to think about skin colours in a different way. Our skin colour is part of our identity but as *Melanin* in the poem is personified many younger children think it is a woman.

*Oh! Melanin your beauty
is far richer than the eye can see
my Melanin embraces me
from my head to my toes
Oh! Melanin I would never forsake
this I want you to know.*

They are also confused by the end when *Melanin* is revealed as skin pigmentation, a word they may not have come across before. It is another way to widen their experience and knowledge of the world and sometimes to introduce them to subjects or concepts they otherwise may not encounter.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Author of four poetry collections: *Duboetry* (1987), *Liverpool Experience* (1989) and *Rhyme Don't Pay* (1998) and *From the Page to the Stage* (2006).

Tafari's plays have been performed at the Unity Theatre and the Playhouse in Liverpool, as well as at the Blackheath Theatre in Stafford.

He has also worked on educational projects running creative writing workshops in schools, colleges, universities, youth centres, prisons and libraries.

Levi Tafari has made a well-received film on Rastafarianism for BBC television's *Everyman* programme entitled *The Road to Zion*.

His musical projects include work with Ghanaian drum and dance ensemble *Delado*, the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and his own reggae fusion band, *Ministry of Love*. He has also played with *Urban Strawberry Lunch* and *Griot Workshop* and has recently worked with jazz musician *Dennis Rollins*.

What has been your impression of working with the children here in Catalonia?

—First of all it has to be their level of English and then they seem to be very aware of social and environmental issues. They have certainly made me very welcome here today at all the schools I have visited. I feel completely at home.

“They have certainly made me very welcome here today at all the schools I have visited”

What do you hope you have achieved?

—The main aim must be to make people think, encourage them to read – this is a vital starting point – and then inspire them to write themselves. If we don't inspire this generation then the oral tradition will die out and we will have lost an important part of our history. I also hope that it has been useful to start or continue a series of debates about subjects that effect us all.

How do you hope this project will develop in the future?

—That it will continue to grow and inspire new authors who will keep the oral tradition alive. I also hope it will motivate some people to start writing and performing, people who otherwise might not have given it a go. Sadly low self-esteem often stops people from trying to express themselves because they worry about criticism and think others won't be interested in their thoughts.

And your own personal goals?

—I suppose I would say that my two main regrets are not learning another language or being able to play a musical instrument but it may be too late now.

BritLit in action

Just under five hundred 14-17 year old pupils hanging on your every word; which English teacher would not give their eye teeth for that?

Let's not pretend it's easy, but Levi Tafari held his young audience from secondary schools around the Barcelona area and Valls under a spell in the performance of his poetry at Caixa Forum in Barcelona last month.

The Liverpool born Rastafarian poet had come as part of the BritLit Project organised locally by APAC (Associació de professors d'anglès de Catalunya) and the British Council.

The aim of the project is to help teachers around the world to make better use of English literature in the classroom as a language tool. His poems covered a number of topics from racism and discrimination to environmental issues, valuing family relationships and inspiring youngsters to achieve their potential.

Levi visited and worked with pupils and teachers at Betania-Patmos and IES Menéndez y Pelayo in Barcelona, IES Pau Vila in Sabadell, IES Bellulla in Canovelles and IES Vilatzara in Vilassar de Mar.

The enthusiasm he engendered in the students was evident. As he arrived, he was greeted enthusiastically and his own personal warmth and interest and commitment to the project were obvious.

The performance of his own poetry was captivating and students from Valls returned the honours with a performance of their own work.

The central aim of BritLit is to help teachers from around the world to exploit English literature in the classroom as a tool to motivate students and give them the experience of real language in context. Although its beginnings were in the British Council in Portugal, it has now spread to

other countries around the world and been enthusiastically received by teachers and students alike.

The project has developed a series of resource kits using paper, CD-Rom and web based materials that teachers use to construct lessons adapted to their students. The APAC teachers association has been involved in the project since 2004, inviting BritLit authors to their yearly convention and consolidated this interest in 2008 when they published a special monograph together with the British Council Barcelona.



It is this partnership that is currently working to make BritLit a force across Catalonia. "Bringing the author to a school is an incredibly motivating factor, which brings out great creativity

from the students. It's really great to see English being used in this way – imaginatively, to communicate with an audience – and the project itself often brings together different subjects within a school, to create cross-curricular relationships.

All in all, the project really does seem to inspire 'best practice' in English teaching, and the teachers involved in the project are to be hugely congratulated for their achievements", says Joanna Dossetor, BritLit co-ordinator from the British Council.

"APAC is happy to be instrumental in the dissemination of projects like BritLit which are good in themselves but also which allow us to go into classrooms and work with grassroots teachers, getting a better grasp of how the profession feels and of what APAC as an association can offer", says Neus Figueres from APAC.

Download a selection of poems from Levi Tafari, read by himself, at <http://podcast.cataloniatoday.cat>

Levi's Performance at Cosmo Caixa

On the 28th of January came one of the highlights of Levi's visit: a performance in Cosmo Caixa, with over 150 secondary school students in attendance. Students came from IES Bellulla, from Escola Cor de Maria in Valls, and from IES Consell de Cent, in the inner city suburb of Parallel. Levi performed a number of poems including several of his poems to do with the environment, such as 'The Liquid of Life' and 'Plastic, Fantastic'. Students from Cor de Maria, led by their teacher Laia Aixalà, also got up onto the stage and entertained the audience by acting out some poems that

they had written, and at the end of the performance, they gave Levi a model of the 'Castellers' from Valls. It was a wonderful success, Levi Tafari connected brilliantly with the students, and his warmth, humour, and desire to communicate as well as educate, came across as loudly and clearly as his poetry. The performance was very uplifting for the teachers who were present and for the schools who were involved.

By Laura Nogués

John McRae visits EOI Badalona

By Víctor Alarcón

John McRae came to Barcelona in February to give the opening speech for APAC's 2010 ELT convention and, as part of the BritLit Project, he agreed to visit some *Escoles Oficials d'Idiomes* the following week. We were very pleased that he was able to visit *EOI Badalona* and do a literature session with a group of advanced level students.

His opening speech at the convention had been entertaining, witty, insightful, and charismatic (the list could go on), and I was more than eager to see him "taking over" one of my classes. We met during the convention and more or less agreed on the different texts he would be working on (basically short stories), but, apart from that, I was not too interested in what he would actually do with them; I wanted it to be full of surprises for me as well (and it was!). The students, for their part, had not been told much about the session either. And it worked like a dream.

Once in front of his "audience", I thought a brief formal introduction was in order, although I did not want to steal his thunder. He immediately, almost butting in, dropped the formalities: "Hi, I'm John". He was that close and friendly.

John showed us how much we can learn, guess and imagine by delving into a tiny bit of text, a small chunk of a story, a few lines of dialogue.



The Disinterested Arbitrer

He started off reflecting on the structure of stories. "Beginning, middle and end", one of the less tongue-tied students suggested. John agreed but remarked that not necessarily in that order. John then quoted William Labov and his more elaborate classification into Premise, Development, Complication and Resolution and set about exemplifying this with a joke from "*Pulp Fiction*" and from another short fable -which was also a joke of sorts- called "*The Disinterested Arbitrer*". He did this by uncovering parts of the story on a transparency and having students guess what could go next, reflecting on the different parts of the story. He also pointed out how expectations are raised on the part of the reader due to the rather formal tone of the words used, but are finally shattered by the last line, actually a punch line (the Resolution).

The Return

The next story we worked on was called "*The Return*" by Singapore writer Catherine Lim. Actually, John only handed out one small paragraph from the short story and proceeded to read it aloud for everyone. It was a pleasure to listen to him bringing the characters to life with his voice.

The students had to guess which part of the story the

passage belonged to -it was clearly the Complication- and to look for binaries in the text, along the lines of *good/evil*, *affluent/deprived*. Using those binaries John managed to have students work out the rest of the story, the characters' motivations and finally hit upon one of the main themes in the story, relating it to the title, namely, a return to harder times.

In between all this work, John also pointed out aspects of literary style, in this case, the use of Free Direct Thought.

The Force of Circumstance

Another great performance followed. John chose a dialogue-rich excerpt from *The Force of Circumstance*, a short story by W. Somerset Maughman, to read out. Once again he kept asking students to try and place the passage in a wider context. The piece unveiled a story rich in gender and class issues and generated a great deal of contributions, some of them with opposing views. John accepted all the points of view, empathising with them. A language question from a student led to a quick change of pace with a few further vocabulary questions, which students welcomed and John duly answered.

Hemingway's war

After a short break, it was time to change tack. The students were presented with a series of lines, which had been jumbled and which they had to put in the right order to make up a short narrative text. The students found themselves in familiar territory and eagerly engaged in the task they had been set. But it was no easy task and it came with a hidden catch! Someone was soon aware of it: "There are no connectors". John smiled, acknowledging this. Students started to find other elements of cohesion in the text, on which John drew to elicit a possible order for the sentences, acting out the scene as if he could see it through a camera lens. The original text was finally unveiled, a short, grim vignette about the Spanish Civil War by Ernest Hemingway.

A Non

John wanted to end with a complete short story. He chose a piece entitled "A Non", by another Singapore author, Gopal Baratham. Again, he read it aloud for the students and everyone was struck dumb as they listened to an account of a miserable, anonymous life. On finishing it, he asked: "Do you like it?" to which he himself provided a prompt response: "Well, I LOVE it..." almost in a whisper.

And that was, I thought, the perfect word for what John had done: He had shown us his love and passion for literature, for language, for stories, and, ultimately, for life. I am sure that the students, and me as well, will remember John McRae's visit for a long time and look forward to seeing him again around these parts. Thank you, John!

Some reflections on John McRae's visit to the EOI Terrassa

Prior to this year's APAC convention all I knew about John McRae was that he was the author of books on using literature and multicultural texts with students and that on the following Monday morning he would be coming to one of my classes to work on reading skills. After listening to John's opening speech at this year's conference, I had no doubt that his visit to the EOI Terrassa would be a success. His speech was witty, entertaining, thought-provoking and the gist of what he was saying coincided with my own beliefs and practice: that we cannot treat language-learning purely as a technical skill, as for example we might consider learning to use an unfamiliar computer programme, but rather as an activity which uses language as its starting point and leads us to reflect on our feelings, ideas and experiences, what might be termed a holistic approach to the subject. Language is communication (of course) but not only communication understood in a narrow functional way, it is also the most sophisticated tool we have for expressing ourselves; to use a culinary metaphor, it is a dish to be enjoyed, savoured for its subtleties and commented on, not fast-food to be consumed as quickly as possible.

My students, a varied group of adults from all walks of life and ranging in age from university students in their early twenties to people in their fifties and sixties, were used to doing work on literary texts since it is a particular interest of mine and something I include in the course on a regular basis and they are (I imagine) fairly typical of adult groups in 'escoles oficials'. I gave them no previous warning about John's visit and on the day itself gave them only the minimum amount of information about what he would do with them: that is to say, some work on reading skills.

It was obvious from the atmosphere during the session that students were enjoying the activities and their comments to me afterwards and during the following class confirmed this. John has the ability to put people at ease, entertain and enlighten and this combination ensured that students felt confident and relaxed enough to participate and contribute with their ideas and opinions throughout.

Since the format and materials of the session were very similar to those explained in a parallel article in this magazine, I would like to focus instead on what I feel are the implications for our teaching practice and draw some conclusions having observed John 'in action'.

Whilst John's flamboyant personality is without doubt an important element in his success when working with students (in fact some of my students said to me afterwards that there was a touch of the showman about him), as teachers and 'experts on the language' all of us have the ability to bring texts alive for our students. We need to transmit our knowledge and enthusiasm for a text to the students and draw their attention to the key elements. It is simply not enough to ask students to do extensive reading work at home and then test them on it in class. Students need the necessary guidance in order to be able to enjoy literary texts, which means that the teacher has to help them.

What does this mean in practical terms? The following list includes some of the aspects which could be covered: background information on the author, background information on the setting, how characters are presented and developed, plot development, the characteristics of a literary genre, the analysis of language and style. What the teacher needs to do is to involve the students in these activities and avoid giving ready-made answers to these questions and whilst it may well be necessary that he/she gives the lead, with careful elicitation and suggestion students are capable of achieving the aims the teacher desires. Once they are familiar with certain techniques and concepts, students should feel confident enough to work on their own and give feedback, participating with their own ideas. And as John demonstrated so well in the class I observed, students will respond if they are 'pointed in the right direction'. In fact their insights may be as interesting and valid as those of the teacher.

One final lesson I learnt from this experience is not to be 'on the defensive' about using literary texts: I have often felt slightly apologetic when using this kind of material. In fact when John showed me the texts he was going to use, I had felt a little apprehensive about his choice, thinking perhaps that they were not overtly interesting or exciting enough. How wrong I was! As John worked on the texts with my students, I realised how much there was I had not noticed and what's more he managed, by asking the right questions, to elicit these unnoticed elements from the students. Which all goes to show that, as Vladimir Nabokov said: a good reader, an active and creative reader is a rereader.

Tony Mitton's visit to Badalona

Tony Mitton is the author of a large number of illustrated children's books, as well as a collection of poetry, Plum, which has just been republished. He has also written books of 'raps' for slightly older primary students. You can find some of his materials at the British Council BritLit site:

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/britlit.

Tony was here recently to give a plenary talk about picture books at the Apac conference in February, and while he was here, he also went to visit a primary school in Badalona, CEIP Progrés, where Julia Bórrega had been working with his story 'Down by the Cool of the Pool'.

This is a lovely story, with beautiful illustrations. All the animals come down to the pool where the frog is, to join in the party and to splash in the water until the sun goes down. Julia worked with this story with 3^o primary. She found some masks for the children to wear (www.sparklebox.com), and they acted out the story for Tony. Since not all the children could be wearing masks, the others had little onomatopoeic signs like 'Whoop!' and 'Wheee!' to hold up at appropriate moments.

With her 4^o primary class, Julia had worked with the poem '10 by the day', which is a simple poem where the numbers rhyme with another phrase, such as 'One, one the rising sun'. The students had taken the poem, and adapted it by writing their own simple rhymes and then illustrating them.

Finally, with her 5^o primary class, Julia used the 'Robin hood rap', from the BritLit site. She particularly liked this poem because its 'Maid Marion'

character has a very strong and lively personality, which makes a change from the more demure and passive personalities that girls' heroines often have.



Once again, the students took the poem and adapted it slightly by adding their own ideas. Both classes presented Tony with a lovely illustrated book, with all their poems in it, and he was delighted.

Tony performed a number of poems, and read a number of his picture books to the children. He had all of them laid out at the front of the room, and it was a great way for the children to see just what an author can do, and perhaps to get some inspiration themselves!

All in all, it was a very successful visit. Tony commented on how charming the children were – well behaved, but expressive too, and a very good audience. Julia had prepared the students very well for the visit, and achieved some excellent results with their English.

We had hoped that Tony could also visit CEIP Gerbert d'Ohrlac in Sant Cugat where Julia Breda had also been working with Tony's books. On this occasion it wasn't possible, but hopefully there will be another opportunity in the future!

I wanna be a star

rap by
Tony Mitton

I wanna be a star
I wanna go far.
I wanna drive around
in a big red car.
I said yeah yeah yeah

I wanna be a star. (click,click, click)
I wanna be a hit.
I wanna be it.
I wanna see my name
all brightly lit.
I said yeah yeah yeah

I wanna be a hit. (click,click,click)
I wanna be the scene.
I wanna be on screen.
I wanna make the cover
of a magazine.
I said yeah yeah yeah

I wanna be the scene. (click,click,click)
I wanna be a star.
I wanna be a star.
But I've only got a job
in a burger bar....
so far....



INSTITUT BRITÀNIC

Advanced English Courses

THE BRITISH COUNCIL
OFFERS A RANGE OF
COURSES TO HELP TEACHERS
MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE
THEIR SKILLS AND
KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH

Contact us for more information:

Amigó, 74-83

08021 Barcelona

T 932 419 700

cursos.barcelona@britishcouncil.es

examens.barcelona@britishcouncil.es

www.britishcouncil.es



What is Grammar?

by Michael Swan
APAC-ELT Conference 2009

Summary of Michael Swan's talk at APAC-ELT Convention done by Ana Aguilar and James McCullough

When I was about three years old, I had a nagging question in my mind, and I decided to go to my mother and ask her: *Mum, why do cats have tails?* She looked a bit irritated, shuffled her feet and said: *Well, they would not look complete without them, would they?* Even at such a tender age, I could see that the old lady did not know the answer at all. Kids are brilliant at asking those sorts of questions, questions that you think you know the answer to until somebody asks you them.

Saint Augustus, in the 4th century, said: *Time, I know well enough what time is, provided nobody asks me. If anybody asks me and I try to explain it, I am baffled.* Doctor Johnson, compiling his dictionary 14 centuries later, had reached the letter "L" and had done the easy work with "lazy" and "leg." But, then he reached the word "light" and said: *We all know light, but it is not easy to tell what it is.*

We all know what grammar is, we use it all the time, we recognize it when we see it, but suppose somebody asks you what grammar is, what would you say? If we look up the definition of "grammar" in a dictionary, it says: *The rules in a language for changing the forms of words and combining them into sentences.* This is not very helpful. It does not say what it is for.

We could ask the same kind of question I asked my mother: *Why do languages have grammar? Why do they have to have these rules?* We could answer, like the old lady, that languages would not look complete and orderly without their rules. They would be chaotic, a mess, people could not communicate coherently without them. But why?

In this talk, I want to explore exactly this question. I want to explore how far we could get without the rules of grammar, because a good way to analyze what something is is to see how one could manage without it. I also want to explore it a way that would be comprehensible for an inquisitive young learner in his or her initial exposure to foreign language learning.



So, let us do a thought experiment and look at language without grammar. Let us imagine that we are at the birth of language, that we are inventing language. Of course, nobody exactly knows how language started out, so we can give our imaginations free rein.

Let us go back five hundred thousand years. We are not yet humans but highly intelligent primates, and we are on the verge of inventing language. We are going to imagine that we are sitting at the door of the cave on a warm summer afternoon with nothing to do. We have done a lot of hunting and gathering. We have plenty of food, and we decide: *OK, let's invent language, actually a system of communication assigning a meaning to different noises.* We are going to call these meaningful noises **words**.

We invent a word for each of the persons, animals and things around us. But, this does not work because there are too many things around us, and when seeing a new thing, one cannot communicate without a word for it. So, we have brilliant idea and decide that we are not going to invent words for individual things but for **categories, classes**. So the word "tree" does not refer to that particular tree in front of us but to every tree. The same with "stone," "river," "cave," "cloud"...

Then, we come up with a very powerful mechanism, a remarkable tool for referring to single members of the categories, to individual things. How do we manage to do that in a language? Namely by putting together different categories of words in context, and then they refer to an individual

thing. For example, if I see my wife going upstairs, I might ask her: *Could you bring me my old yellow sweater?*

- My
- Old
- Yellow
- Sweater

These are four categories that comprise millions of things. By putting them together in a string, we are referring to a concrete and unique item of clothing.

We can ascertain that in this primitive language we are concocting, meaning could be conveyed by combining words with no grammatical rules. With no grammar we have been able to draw attention to the existence of things around us, express time, situations, states of affairs, wants and needs, and identify single instances of a class by putting words together. If we say *red-hat-chef* we know that the hat belongs to the chef. A great part of the meaning of words is given by context, gestures or facial expression. If we have the words “baby,” “eating,” “bear,” it is more likely that bear does the eating. Our knowledge of the world helps.

Is there anything we cannot do without grammar, just by combining words? There are three main categories of problems in language that cannot be expressed without grammar:

- **Relations** between things (cause and effect, like one thing killing another), position (in front/behind), time (before/after). Just with vocabulary, we have no means of expressing which way the relationship is going.

- **Uncertainty.**
- **Make Questions.**
- **Modality.**

What possibilities are there to solve these deficiencies? How do languages manage to express all the above concepts? There are three major solutions:

1. Word order so that if we have the words: *big bear cave* we make a rule by which the order of words will represent either:

The big bear is in the cave.
The bear is in the big cave.

- It is also a way to decide who did what, a relationship problem. With *bear, eating, baby* if we put the doer in front we know who did the action or the opposite. There are languages that put the object before the subject. Word order is also used in

many languages to differentiate statements from questions.

2. Changing the form of words to show what their function is. Latin did this an awful lot, putting endings on words to show whether they were the subject or an object, and also to show time relationships. Welsh also uses this system, but the words are changed at the beginning rather than at the end. **Intonation** is another way of changing the form of words. If we say *bear cave?*, with a rising intonation, we might turn the utterance into a question. But, *bear cave*, with falling intonation, becomes a statement. Intonation goes into the same basket as endings.

3. Inventing words that are not vocabulary but grammar. These words do not refer to the outside world. They are words to show what other words are doing: **function words or particles.** For example, in Japanese you say a sentence and at the end say “*ka*”. That means it is a question. Chinese does it with “*ma*”. French does it by saying *Est-ce que?* at the beginning of the sentence.

It is very simple: three solutions for three problems. So, why do we make it so complicated? Why is grammar so very difficult at times? One reason is that once the tools were created, we applied them to many different things. The languages we are more familiar with put time into their grammars (there are tenses), and number into their grammars (we have singular and plural), but a lot of languages do not have either time or number in their grammars. And others exaggerate some of these concepts and have, for example, a form for one, another for two, another for three, and another for more than three.

Some languages put things into their grammars that are very strange to us. In some American Indian languages there are many verb forms, and you would need to express “**evidentiality**”. The verb form shows the speaker’s assessment of the evidence for his or her statement. If I wanted to express “*Fred is ill*” I would have to express how I know this. If I know it because I saw him, I would use one verb form. If somebody told me, I would use another verb form. If I know it because it is common knowledge, I would express it through a third verb form. That may seem very weird to us, but the American Indians might, in turn, look at our languages with all their tenses and think that we are really obsessed with time.

A lot of languages put social relationships into their grammar, for example, oriental languages. You might need different verb forms to talk to a superior, an inferior, a man, or a woman. Those languages

are very difficult to learn because we are not used to that.

Another reason for complexity is that complexity breeds complexity. Look at computers. The basis for computing is zeros and ones, or ones and offs. In other words, computers run on binary systems; but, by combining these pairs of elements, one can reach unbelievable levels of complexity in computer programs.

It is interesting that different languages go overboard with different solutions. Some languages focus on **word order**, like English. Other languages pay less attention to word order because they are expressing what they want to express through word **endings**. Spanish does that an awful lot with all the verb endings, and it is rather complex for foreign learners. Latin had much more of this. Russian has lots of different endings for different classes of words. To say, for example, *in my garden* in English, one only needs to know three words, plus the right word order and the difference between singular and plural. Saying the same in Russian becomes an ordeal for the foreign learner. For “*garden*”, one has to choose among the endings in the singular, depending on which gender it belongs to (masculine, feminine or neuter) and the form it takes after the preposition “in”. “*My*” might end in 13 different ways. For just that one utterance, you have to choose from among 923 possible combinations. Nine-hundred and twenty-two of them are wrong. Even Spanish is easier. And other languages do not have word endings but have particles, function words.

Another reason for complexity is historical developments. Things can start tidy and get untidy as time goes on because of phonetic change or whatever. An example of that would be the many forms of *to be*: *am, is, are, was, were, been*.

One possible explanation for so much complexity is that human societies do not like their languages to be too regular and simple, because then people from outside the group can learn them perfectly and you can no longer know who your own people are and identify the outsiders. A language, a dialect, a variety is a badge of social cohesion. If the language is so difficult that only the children of the tribe can learn it, you know who are members of your group and who are not. Esperanto is a simple regular language. But Esperanto-speaking children are beginning to introduce irregularities into it, and it is evolving into an ordinary human language.

To conclude, I think this little exploration is valuable pedagogically in two ways:

1.- I would have loved an explanation like this at age of twelve, when I was introduced to French or

Latin, with the nominative, accusative, vocative, genitive, dative, and ablative cases. It was all a complete mystery to me. I could not understand why these languages did these crazy things. And that is the case for any child starting a foreign language. So, if children are brought to see that languages have to have grammar, that it is there for specific purposes, and that there are different solutions which different languages have found to similar problems, it might help them to be more sympathetic.

2.- The other value is in general education. It might help to see what language is, how it works, and why. In biology, they study the reason for the working of things around us. But, despite using language all the time, speakers might never look at what they are doing when using it.

Michael Swan is a writer specializing in English language teaching and reference materials. His publications include Grammar (in the “Oxford Introductions to Language Study” series) and Practical English Usage (OUP). He is also co-author, with Catherine Walter, of the “Cambridge English Course” series, and of “How English Works” and “The Good Grammar Book” (OUP). His most recent publication is “Grammar Scan” (OUP2008), written in collaboration with David Baker: this is a comprehensive set of diagnostic tests to accompany Practical English Usage 3rd Edition. Michael Swan’s interest include pedagogic grammar, mother-tongue influence in second language acquisition, and the relationship between applied linguistic theory and classroom language teaching practice. He has had extensive experience with adult learners, and has worked with teachers in many countries.



INTERVIEW with Mary Slattery

by Ana Aguilar

A.A. You taught foreign languages before going into ELT and then you moved into Teacher Training. What caused you to move in this direction?

M.S. Well I often think it was just by chance! In the late 1980s I was asked to take a small group of Spanish teachers for English lessons and when doing this I found that everything in my previous experiences seemed to come together. So you could say that this one single experience showed me that I was suited to a combination of ELT and teacher training. It was the beginning of a new phase of work and one that I enjoyed more than anything I'd done previously.

A.A. In which way has living in a bilingual environment (English and Gaelic) conditioned your approach to foreign languages and foreign language teaching?

M.S. I'm sure it has had a big effect. Like many Irish people I could

probably write a book about how Irish was taught in the past. Then maybe I learnt a lot from seeing the mistakes of that time. I think the approach is very different today and in certain areas it has improved greatly. In my own case my mother was very supportive and spoke Irish to me in a naturally meaningful way. So as well as giving me a love of the language she also gave me my first lesson in how to learn a language.

A.A. The use of the student's mother tongue in the ELT classroom has always been a rather polemic issue. What about ensuring comprehension? For example have you observed lessons where the teacher took for granted general comprehension just because a few reacted adequately while the majority did not follow?

M.S. The matter of balancing student's mother tongue and English in teaching depends on many fac-



Mary Slattery is a teacher trainer and writer. For the past 20 years she has worked on teacher development programmes in university and on in-service courses around the World. Meeting and working with teachers in schools has inspired her to research how children's language learning can be supported through cross curricular development, visual arts and puppetry. She is co-author of *English for Primary Teachers* and author of *Vocabulary Activities* and *Teaching with Bear* (winner of the 2009 Duke of Edinburgh Award – Best Entry for Children, Short listed for an ELTon Award 2010). All are published by Oxford University Press

tors that only the individual teacher can judge – teacher confidence ... information about different classes and other specific considerations. Children spontaneously use their mother tongue... very young learners in particular need the security of knowing that they are understood. Best practice would suggest that we use as much English as possible making use of the children's mother tongue when it is appropriate to support their language learning.

In *Teaching with Bear* I gave many examples of how we can provide more use of English. I started with the view that

when teaching an additional language to children in school the teacher should use this new language as much as possible - but in a meaningful way.

children understand not just by listening to sounds but by seeing and understanding a situation – the whole context is the focus of their attention.

children learn by being engaged and actively involved in their own learning. I developed the idea of a puppet as a language assistant to encourage teachers to use English as much as possible with a puppet who would always understand what was said in English and would always respond appropriately. This means the teacher has a resource that can be used at any time in his or her lessons. Many teachers need encouragement to use English throughout their lessons so I tried to show teachers how they can do this in stages. The main message is simply that hearing their teacher use the language is the best example a teacher can give their pupils in their language learning.

A.A. In many of the primary lessons I have observed (not only foreign languages) the linguistic environment was not rich enough. Children spend too much time colouring, drawing, finding the odd one out rather than listening to stories, singing, reciting rhymes or



poems. Do you not believe that class time is too precious to be wasted on learners doing paper and pen activities rather than oral ones?

M.S. I think everything depends on how you do an activity. Drawing and language games such as *odd one out* can always become speaking activities. Drawing for example can be *listen and draw, draw your favourite part of the story and tell us about it, draw a new set of clothes for Bear and tell Bear about them* etc. And we know that visual associations support recall for future speaking activities.

Odd One Out can involve the children "telling" the teacher, or in my case Bear, which one is odd and why. As with all language games as soon as children understand how a game is played I let them work in groups to make their own. For *odd one out* they can cut out pictures from old magazines and or draw some items. I help them explain why the one picture is the odd one out. Then they can swap games with the other groups and be ready to give the explanation again.

These tasks all build confidence and understanding. Of course there are some pen and paper activities that are a waste of time – such as pointless copying!!

A.A. Children learning English need a linguistically rich envi-

ronment. What do you think about using activities such as TPR, stories, songs and rhymes?

M.S. I think teachers today know about the great variety of activities they can include in their lessons – songs, stories, make and do activities etc. and so much has been written and said over the last two decades about how to use these resources and blend them into an interesting lesson for young learners.

TPR is very useful. It was included in *English for Primary Teachers, Unit 2 Listen and Do* because it's a particularly good way for a teacher to begin using English for communication in the classroom. When teachers see how quickly children become familiar with these repeated directions in English they are usually encouraged to

continue giving classroom instructions in English. And of course I think every teacher knows that stories are wonderful resour-

ces. Visuals, actions and gestures offer a world of supported meaning. Picture books are especially useful since they can provide contextualised language with illustrations that help to clarify and establish meaning. Stories stimulate children's imaginations and creativity as well as giving them more practice at listening, speaking, reading and writing in English. And children love singing songs and saying rhymes or chants. They build their confidence and give them a great feeling of achievement. Many teachers I know have used Carolyn Graham's wonderful chants – they cover such a wide variety of topics and can be used in so many different ways.

A.A. How can we help children move from using individual

Stories stimulate children's imaginations and creativity as well as giving them more practice at listening, speaking, reading and writing English



words in English to using phrases and speaking for longer?

M.S. There's a lot to say about this! So to give an answer here I'm just going to emphasise some general stages children go through when beginning to use a new language in school. As I'm sure is clear from my other answers I'm going to begin by saying that we always have to remember that we teach English by using it during the lesson. So children can begin by listening and showing that they understand and by repeating phrases that they hear their teacher using. As they receive more input from their teacher and the resources used in their lessons their confidence should also increase. And a teacher can also use several supportive techniques. One teacher I knew always helped her young learners to enjoy speaking by offering the structures while the children supplied the vocabulary. This form of support – reminiscent of Vygotsky's view that what a child can do in co-operation today, he can do alone tomorrow – means that children enjoy their earlier speaking efforts and feel great sense of achievement. In *Teaching with Bear* I explained other ways of doing this. Because all the children I met in schools were interested in Bear they wanted to talk to him! Of course children will naturally speak in their

mother tongue but since Bear never responds unless he hears English the children had a reason to make an effort to speak in English. Of course in my experience they often needed support ask their question or make a comment. So I used to recast... recasting means repeating what the child asks or says in their mother tongue in English. The children could then repeat what they wanted to say and Bear always responded! Lots of the children also made paper, sock or finger puppets. Then they used their puppets to practise all the English they were familiar with. By starting with simple greeting dialogues and expanding with two or three extra questions they created longer interactions recalling the language for topics they had done in previous lessons. In that way they could put together all they knew about age, food, holidays, clothes etc. And the activity was a freer speaking activity because the children chose answers to suit their individual puppets. These are just a few examples of how speaking can progress ...there are many more such as using stories and other interesting

In that way they could put together all they knew about age, food, holidays, clothes, etc. And the activity was a freer speaking activity because the children chose answers to suit their individual puppets.

resources that teachers know will suit their particular learners.

A.A. You have visited many countries. Is there anywhere a really efficient foreign language development programme for primary learners anywhere that we could learn from?

M.S. Most countries develop their own language learning programmes to suit their particular educational systems and cultural goals. Because all educational systems are deeply interwoven into the fabric of society obviously any one country could not just take another country's language education model and use it. But of course we all learn from one another and we can choose elements from many sources that can be adapted to suit our needs. One great development

in Europe today is the emphasis on examining and sharing best practice in all the member states.

A.A. You've been training teachers for the past 20

years. Have you noticed improvements in this new generation of teachers?

M.S. Yes ... especially in the area of young learner language acquisition. While some teachers in the past had opportunities to learn languages in school many only learnt a second language as teenagers or young adults and then with a pointed exam focus on reading and writing. Nowadays there have been many changes for the better. Younger teachers may themselves have learnt English in primary school and so have a greater personal understanding of the best approach to use when teaching English to children.



ETC

Over 21 years of experience but always aiming to provide the same service: a stimulating, relevant and enjoyable English language theatre.


etc
English Theatre Company

Learning English Through Theatre

ETC

ETC (English Theatre Company)
a "made to measure" English language theatre with specific plays for specific ages and levels where each performance is tailored to suit each audience

2009
2010
2011



ETC English Theatre Company info@englishtheatrecompany.com www.englishtheatrecompany.com +0034 938 963 151

Kelly's Day Out

For beginners and lower level students
Suitable for Primary school learners

Kelly's Day Out is a comic play about chance and the consequences of simple actions. The story is about what happens when Kelly gets on the wrong bus on her way to school one day. That simple

However, it's a special bus that can take you anywhere - whether past, present, or future and where you can meet anyone - whether real or fictional. The problem is knowing what you would like to do.

So where does Kelly go? Who does she meet? What adventures does she have? Watch and see in **Kelly's Day Out**, a fast-moving comedy, filled with music where the ending very much depends on what the children say.

Serendipity

For lower level students
Suitable for older Primary and younger Secondary school learners

Serendipity is an interdisciplinary English language play specifically written for this age group and is a small ode to the pleasure of learning - not an easy task to convey to this age.

Our hero, Tom, is the typical bright, popular, lazy schoolboy whose main aim at school is to pass his exams with the least possible effort on his part and never, never, ever let school work interfere in his real life with his friends, his sports his games, his music and all the other many entertainments he has. He has so much to do that there simply isn't that much time for such things as studying.

One day something happens that takes Tom on a journey which makes him discover, to his astonishment, that learning can not only be useful, but can often be fun in itself.

MeTV

For lower intermediate
and intermediate level students
Suitable for Secondary and High School learners

MeTV is the story of Ben, a schoolboy who is crying out for something exciting to happen to him. MeTV is about what happens when two peculiar strangers, Agents Smith and Jones, decide to make him famous - by whatever means they can.

MeTV takes an extremely satirical look at a media world that applauds success above intention, rewards the famous above the deserving, glorifies wealth regardless of how this wealth is used and promotes above all the notion of self over any concept of the group.

Through a series of sketches put together to form a narrative **MeTV** takes a hilarious, yet somewhat chilling, look at a world that perhaps is given much more importance than it in fact merits.

Sherlock Holmes and the Case of the Missing Whatsit

For higher intermediate
and advanced level students
Suitable for High School and Adult learners

The Missing Whatsit is our affectionate, cheeky yet respectful, look at Sherlock Holmes.

It is both a conventional comedy play and an interactive piece of theatre, full of humour, which fondly parodies the classic take on the world of who is, undoubtedly, the world's most famous "consulting detective".

The Missing Whatsit is Holmes' forgotten case and is a comic ETC play in our home style together with most of what you would expect from a Holmesian story, put together in an accessible, humorous and original way.

www.englishtheatrecompany.com

info@englishtheatrecompany.com

Practical english: Building up the next generation of Europeans.

(FOCUS ON P.A.U. 2012 ORAL TESTS)

by Xelo Forés Rossell

INTRODUCTION

FACING NEW CHALLENGES: P.A.U. 2012 ORAL TESTS AND BOLOGNA PLAN.

The application of the **Bologna Plan** to our university system and the need to have a real command of English in the framework of the **European Higher Education Area** are also bringing on **direct consequences to the secondary education**. Being the most imminent the next P.A.U. oral tests to access to university.

The creation of the optional subject Practical English for Batxillerat in Valencia means an extraordinary opportunity to **develop communicative competence through a new approach, with an open syllabus and the chance to put into practice all the socio-cultural aspects and topics** we usually have to relegate because of time and a heavy programme.

Having in mind the ultimate aim, **to prepare our students for the oral test in P.A.U. 2012 and for the real life in the adult world they are reaching, we will use technology, media and debate as useful tools for our purposes**: opening their minds, awaking curiosity, fostering critical thinking and maturity with tolerance and respect, arising consciousness about the reality around us and the possibilities of positive change.

The objective of my presentation is to show **a different, maybe unconvencional, humanistic mul-**

tidisciplinary methodological approach which I hope could be inspiring for other teachers, because all these contents and this methodology could be used from 4t ESO to 2nd Batxillerat, conveniently adapted. In all those levels where students have already an intermediate command of English language and we could **introduce more complex ideas to help them in the process of becoming independent users (B1-2) and responsible citizens**.

WHAT IS IT?

A NEW SUBJECT DEMANDS A NEW APPROACH: THE OPEN SYLLABUS IN A HUMANISTIC FRAMEWORK.

This is the first year we have the opportunity of teaching Practical English as an optional subject for 1st and 2nd of Batxillerat in the Valencian Community. In my case, as a Head of the English Department in a Valencian high school, I managed to offer this new optional subject in 1st of Batxillerat, getting the support of 15 students who chose it, the minimum number required to set up the group.

I apply the term open syllabus, in a broad way, to

XELO FORÉS ROSSELL started her career as a secondary school English teacher in Catalonia in 1998. She has worked in fifteen centres in four different regions and has attended several methodology courses in U.K. Nowadays she works in Valencia as the Head of the English Department in IES Els Évols (L'Alcúdia) and is associate professor at Universitat de València (Màster de Secundària). She is also graduated in History and has a Master's Degree in Journalism and Communication. She collaborates on the press and is involved in local socio-political activism. She is interested in teaching English as a means to make students think for themselves, being critical and conscious about reality.

the secondary school context in our country, adopting and adapting this concept to our needs and particular circumstances, making it useful and meaningful for our purposes. This way, **we leave our students room for their creativity, involvement, collaboration and responsibility.**

Students become conscious of being protagonists, so we gain their involvement in the activities and, through these, in the whole educative project.

Of course, we have **an official curriculum fixed by the educational authorities (DOCV Num. 6051/7-7-2009)**, which we have to accomplish. But, as this is a new optional subject, **we are given a general outline with enough space for imagination.** So, as in most aspects of education, what can be done depends on us, on our implication and our ability to adapt the new ideas to a real context.

Our determination and leadership will be crucial to transmit the humanistic sense of this project. Quoting Nelson Mandela, I firmly believe that "EDUCATION IS THE MOST POWERFUL WEAPON TO CHANGE THE WORLD". **I understand English not just as a subject, but as a key to open a wide range of possibilities:** learning, leisure, personal relationships, work, etc.

In short, **a great chance to improve and grow in all human aspects, to open their minds and get a richer vision of the world around us.**

TEACHER'S GUIDELINES AND STUDENTS INVOLVEMENT: THE TEACHER'S ROLE AND THE STUDENTS' ROLE.

The guidelines of this project are established by the official curriculum, but **with the principles of freedom and imagination as our basis, the syllabus will be shaped progressively with the collaborative work of our students.**

This way, all topics can be redefined, but not the humanistic principles which are the pillars of this project. This method of work implies an extra effort, it demands our creativity to develop the syllabus and make it progress in a meaningful way with the collaboration of our students.

In class, we have to guide the process, supervising, counselling and assessing, but giving progressively more responsibilities to our students. This acquisition of autonomy and maturity, brings our students a valuable practice for getting ready for further studies or adult life. On the other hand, **students are encouraged to take part actively in the whole teaching-learning process.** Their suggestions and contributions are

vital for the success of this project. We hope to get their comments and ideas about activities, topics, materials, etc. Their collaboration is essential to improve our work and benefit the class. **The project is alive if we manage to get our students' involvement.**

BUILDING UP YOUR OWN SYLLABUS: A PROJECT UNDER WORK.

As I mentioned before, we have to apply the official curriculum to our particular educative context and make it work. Taking into account the official curriculum but thinking about the topics which could motivate my students, I have selected the contents where I feel more interested and confident.

The contents in our syllabus are concrete, but general enough to introduce the contributions of our students, and also the changes or modifications we estimate necessary to make the project progress.

The starting point is the syllabus stated by the teacher as an outline, more or less general, which will be specified through the collaborative work of students and teacher. That is, we can extend or reduce some aspects of the contents, depending on our students' reactions and, of course, our own criteria.

We divide the contents into **three big blocks, distributing the topics in three main areas, one per term: English for Personal Purposes, English for Public Purposes and English for Professional Purposes.** There are **four units in each block, mainly based on practical contents,** but there is always **a shorter and more theoretical unit at the beginning** of each block to introduce the rest of topics of the term. There is also **a unit in each block which deals with different aspects of Anglo-Saxon culture** and in the third term we will end the course with **a final project.**

WHAT FOR?

IMPROVING WEAK POINTS: GETTING READY FOR NEXT P.A.U.'S ORAL TESTS IN 2012.

The imminent oral tests in the exam of access to university is in part the reason for offering this optional subject. But it is also true that it gives us an opportunity for doing all those things we always want to do but we never can, mainly because of time.

In a conventional English class, we are determined

by a quite rigid schedule. We have to fight to finish all the topics previously fixed, most of the time without the collaboration or the implication of our students, who usually adopt, in the best cases, a passive role just waiting for our explanation or our correction.

In those circumstances teaching is meaningless, especially for a foreign language. So, from my point of view, **in the current situation of secondary education, the active skills are the most difficult ones to develop in our students.** I mean, all which implies effort and collaboration on the part of the student. In this sense, it is obvious that speaking and writing are the skills we need to improve. **Having in mind the Common European Framework for Languages, we should work to make our students achieve B1 communicative competence, as independent users.**

AMPLIFYING CULTURAL CONTENTS.

The aim of contents should not be only linguistic, but also humanistic, which means reinforcing socio-cultural aspects to help our students achieve B1 competence as independent users and, what is even more important, grow and mature as responsible and active citizens.

I am sure among the aspects we have to relegate or treat superficially, more often than we want to, because of time and other circumstances, there are the cultural contents.

Our syllabus brings along the opportunity to develop these **socio-cultural contents in an extended way**, becoming the basis for most of the activities, spoken or written. Those contents which usually have a secondary role in class, in favour of grammar, vocabulary, etc, **are now made explicit** and treated as widely as possible.

These contents, which are **essential for understanding informations and situations of everyday life**, will also help students to manage in a real context and more complex situations.

INTERACTIVE SITUATIONS: MAINLY ORAL, BUT NOT ONLY ORAL.

The main skills treated in Practical English will be speaking and writing, with special attention to oral English. The aim is to gain communicative competence at B1 level, according to the European Language Portfolio.

We will develop a series of interactive activities, as close to reality as possible, to introduce our

students in a sort of real English communicative context, where they will have to put into practice all their theoretical knowledge.

To do this **we will work both formal and informal aspects, spoken and written skills, active and passive strategies through oral and written activities.**

WHICH RESOURCES TO USE AND WHY?

CREATING AND PREPARING NEW MATERIAL.

Our methodology is multidisciplinary and even unconventional. With a humanistic approach to select and treat the material, based on three main tools: technology, media and debate. Consequently, I have chosen and prepared the materials and resources which I have considered more appropriate and motivating, being always receptive to the comments of my students.

Pros and cons of working without books. As we don't have a conventional printed method by a publishing firm, we have to build our own one. That means extra work, but exciting and motivating if you are not afraid of challenges. This way we have room to create our own material, putting into practice our imagination and creativity to invent or re-invent activities for our students.

Massive use of audio-visual resources and multimedia to be exposed to real and motivating material to illustrate different socio-cultural aspects: O.V. films and series, TV programmes, songs and videos, web pages, etc.

Extensive use of press and media to contrast the information and help our students to think for themselves: TV news, magazines, newspapers, digital press, etc.

Debates as a useful tool to engage students and make them being critical. Using news and P.A.U. texts to prompt the debate, express opinions and give reasons to support them. We will have to moderate the debate and sometimes play the devil's advocate to make students participate.

Students' contributions and suggestions. Always taken into account as a valuable source to improve the teaching-learning experience.

HOW TO USE THEM, WHERE AND WHEN?

DEVELOPING YOUR OWN SYLLABUS: TIMING, SCHEDULE, PROGRAMMING.

As an optional subject for 1st of Batxillerat in Valencia, Practical English disposes of 4 hours a week to be taught.

Distributing contents and activities in a way which helps us to develop skills and motivate students is one of the keys to succeed in this project.

A good knowledge of **our students' profile** is basic to take advantage of all situations in class and get the best of the possible activities.

Also we have to **take profit of all the available resources**, such as the digital whiteboard, internet, etc.

Besides we need to **take our timetable into account**, because we know it is not the same giving a class at 9am in the morning as at 3pm in the afternoon.

I know this optional subject doesn't exist now in Catalonia, so you could consider these ideas, activities and contents as orientations, to be adapted to your own personal circumstances and professional features. But I am also conscious of the difficulties involved in the teaching of a practical matter in a basically theoretical context as a classroom, without a specific timetable for those practical purposes.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT.

We will organize the class and the available resources according to the contents and their objectives, by using individual work and all types of grouping, from pairs to teams, through different kinds of interactive activities, as stated previously, such as pair and group role-playing, individual interview, team presentation, group conversation, class debate, etc.

Our open syllabus is a source of constant methodological renewal and educational enrichment. Guided by the idea of **keeping teaching-learning practice alive** and not to let interest fall down, we should **let the class flow**, which means that **not everything is planned, but it is under control** if we have the necessary leadership and the appropriate resources to conduct the class.

Following this **almost "zen" idea** of letting the class flow, I can mention **some illustrative examples** of what can happen. As when the class was related to travelling and we ended talking about types of trips and **reasons to travel**, with a discussion about **religious pilgrimages**. Or the day I asked my students to look for information about **Guy Fawkes**, related to the celebration of the Bonfire Night, and we went on talking about **Alan Moore's comics**, such as "V of Vendetta" or "Watchmen", and **other literary dystopias** like "1984" or "Brave New World".

STUDENTS' FEEDBACK AND TEACHER'S RELOADING: ADAPTING CONTENTS AND MATERIALS AND KEEPING A RECORD.

As it has been said along this presentation, students' participation and collaboration is not only welcome but also absolutely necessary for the success of this project. This way we will enrich each other, and with us all the teaching-learning process. **Students' feedback is essential for teacher's reloading, which means adapting contents and materials, depending on their reactions and comments.**

As the project is currently under work, we have to keep a record of everything interesting happening in class or related to it. The idea is to show the results and conclusions in depth here next year, when we will have a complete vision of the evolution of this process, with the additions, reductions, extensions, changes, modifications, etc.

CONCLUSION

In brief, I think **we should take charge of the challenge which entails directing learning in the way that leads to independent and critical thinking, trying to develop personal criteria in our students in order to make them responsible and active citizens.** That means disrupting the routine, defying passivity and apathy with "shock-treatment" attitude, showing them different points of view, sometimes contradictory, sometimes complementary, but always interesting.

We can use **English as a means, not only to improve communication but also to help students gain maturity, making them more independent** by using English language with concrete purposes, mainly expressing themselves properly with confidence and respect, and **managing in more complex contexts and situations.**

We will go beyond the usual linguistic approach to introduce a wider humanistic vision through an open syllabus which is based on cultural contents, chosen and designed to motivate, even defy students' passiveness.

Our positive attitude and active guidance will be vital for the success of the process. **It depends on us to assume as our final aim, not only as English teachers but also as educators, the challenge of contributing to build up the next generation of European citizens,** applying a whole humanistic approach. You have in your hands both possibilities: to stay as a passive member of the educational system, transferring just fossilized ideas, or to try to become as much active as possible in the formative process. **So now the challenge is up to you!**

Visit our web page for the complete article. <http://www.apac.es>

Atenció! Oferta exclusiva per als socis i sòcies de l'APAC



El comprimís amb l'educació de CASIO no té límits, com el coneixement de l'anglès. Per això, posem a disposició dels professors i professores de l'APAC una eina indispensable per a l'ensenyament i l'aprenentatge de l'idioma anglès, a un preu molt especial:

CASIO EW-S200

- Tamany ultra compact de butxaca
- Pantalla LCD QVGA de 104,1 mm d'alta resolució
- Pantalla amb il·luminació
- Múltiples funcions de recerca i 2 nivells de zoom
- Conté:
 "Gran Diccionario Oxford"
 "Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary"
 "New Oxford Thesaurus of English"

PVPR (camb IVA) **179€**

Preu especial Professors/es APAC 99€
 (IVA i ports inclosos)

I a més, ET REGALEM EL JOC QUIZ, per a què els teus alumnes reforcin els seus coneixements d'anglès mitjançant una divertida classe amb qüestions de gramàtica, vocabulari, sinònims, antònims... en 2 nivells: elementary i intermediate!



CONDICIONS DE L'OFERTA: Oferta no acumulable. Pagament mitjançant transferència bancària. Ports de l'enviament de la comanda inclosos. Només seran vàlides les comandes degudament complimentades i signades que adjuntin el comprovant de pagament.

DADES OBLIGATÒRIES SOL·LICITADES

Nom i cognoms _____
 Adreça completa _____
 Població _____
 DNI o NIF _____ Telèfon _____ Horari per contactar _____
 e-mail _____
 Nom del seu centre escolar _____
 Adreça del centre _____
 Forma de pagament Pagament per transferència Compte Flamagas, S.A. Signatura _____
 Num. 0049-1600-49-2910147061 _____ de _____ de _____

Envii còpia degudament complimentada d'aquesta pàgina per fax juntament amb el comprovant de la transferència bancària.
 Fax de comandes: **93 291 05 47**. Li confirmarem (per telèfon, fax o e-mail) l'enviament de la seva comanda.

En compliment de l'art. 5.2 de la Llei Orgànica 15/99 del 13 de desembre, li comuniquem que les dades relatives a la seva identificació seran incorporades a un arxiu de dades de caràcter personal per la comunicació d'informació relativa a productes i activitats didàctiques CASIO, sense cessió de les seves dades a tercers. Vostè pot exercir en qualsevol moment els drets d'accés, rectificació, cancel·lació i oposició. El responsable del fitxer és FLAMAGAS, S.A., amb domicili a C/ Metal·lúrgia, 38-42, 08038 Barcelona.



New Ways of Using Songs in the Classroom

by Josep Suller

The vast majority of foreign language teachers use music in the classroom, both as a tool for teaching and as a means of motivating students. Most students are exposed to English songs in their everyday lives, on the radio, on television, in TV commercials etc. They often buy music by English artists, and can usually recognise and sing a few of the lyrics. Music is a fun way of approaching the language.

All teachers will agree that songs provide us with a natural context for most common structures, they are an excellent way to look at culture and their melody and rhythm will help students remember new vocabulary and structures much better than just by doing a repetitive and boring exercise.

However, if we just resort to one or two kinds of activities with songs (typically fill-in-the-gap exercises), this valuable tool may not be as motivating and useful for our students. In this workshop, I showed some exploitations that I have used in my classes (both with secondary level and EOI students) that have always worked really well for me. Some of them are more “traditional” and can be easily carried out in the regular classroom with just a CD player. Other activities will involve the use of ICT and we will need to use a computer room or, at least, a computer should be available in the classroom.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 1

VOCABULARY COMPETITION: Divide the class into groups of 3-4. Play a song once. The students' job is to try to write (or remember) as many words as they can catch. Go from group to group asking for a word from the song and taking “only 1 word from each group”. Write each word on the board next to each group's name. Keep going until they can give no more words. If they repeat a word already said or say a word that doesn't belong to the song, they miss the next turn. The group with the most words wins.

Josep has a degree in English Philology from URV (Universitat Rovira i Virgili). He has taught English and computer studies at Escola Sant Gregori (Barcelona) and Escola Joan XXIII (Tarragona). Since 2004 he has been teaching at the EOI Tarragona, where he is also the ICT coordinator. He has published several articles and has done some teacher training courses & talks on the use of ICT for ELT (Departament Educació, APAC, URV, EOICAT, UAB, ESADE, Macmillan, etc.)

As a musician, Josep has been playing the guitar for more than 20 years. He studied in the “Taller de Músics de Barcelona” and has played with some famous bands or singers such as Lausengiers, Mikel Herzog or Chicanos. He has appeared on the radio, TV and music magazines many times and has performed concerts all around Spain.

<http://www.josepsuller.com> - <http://www.singalongproject.com> - jsuller@xtec.cat

ACTIVITY NUMBER 2

RUNNING DICTATION: The teacher divides the song into different parts (ex. verses) and sticks each part on the board. Students are divided into groups (the size of the groups should be equal to the number of parts in the song). In turns, each student is responsible for one part and he/she has to go to the board, read his/ her part and try to remember as many words as possible. They come back to their group and have to dictate as many words as they can remember until the verse is finished. Then it's another student's turn. The purpose of the game is to dictate the whole song correctly. Then the teacher plays the song and students check.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 3

INDIRECT TRANSLATION. Teacher gives a translation of the song (as literal as possible) in Spanish / Catalan. Students in groups have to translate the song back into English (it is highly recommendable to let them use a dictionary for this activity). Then, they listen to the song and check how close their translations were.

After translating these lines, play the song several times (at least 3 times). Students should try to write down the whole lyrics with the help of their translations.

When the teacher prepares the exercise, it's very important to try to provide students with a "literal translation" – it does not matter if the lines don't sound completely natural in Spanish or Catalan. The purpose of this is to enable your students to "guess" the highest amount of lines.

This translation exercise might seem a bit "traditional", but in fact it is really motivating and useful for students. They are absolutely delighted when they see that some lines in their translations coincide with the original song.

It's very important to remind students that in any translation, there is not just "one" correct alternative. Teacher should check different alternatives and accept the correct ones even though they may be different from the actual song.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 4

DISCRIMINATION / MULTIPLE CHOICE: The teacher asks the students to choose the correct word from different alternatives (beforehand, while or even after listening-). Then, they listen to the song and check.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 5

SONG WORD PUZZLES: Choose a "secret word" which is connected with the topic of the song. Select some words from the song and create a puzzle with some definitions: each word should contain at least one letter from the secret word. Arrange these words in such a way that the secret word can be seen after the puzzle is complete.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 6

MISTAKES: Insert common mistakes your students make in a lyric sheet you prepare for hand-outs (spelling, sg. & pl. agreement, tenses, prepositions...) Students should try to find the mistakes before listening to the song. Then, they check.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 7

DID YOU HEAR IT?: Prepare cards with words (50% refer to words that actually appear in the song and the other 50% are distractors, or words that do not appear in the song but whose sound is similar to that of the words that really belong to the song). Divide the class into teams. Each team has to take 8-10 cards / words at random. They should put the cards on the table and you play the song. Students pick up a card if they hear the word. The team with the most cards picked up wins. You should check if the cards / words they picked up belong to the song. If any team picks up a card whose word is not from the song, they don't score the point and they lose an additional point.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 8

JUMBLED WORDS / DOMINOES. Prepare cards with words / sentences from the song. Students are given the cards and have to try to arrange them while they are listening to the song.

ACTIVITY NUMBER 9

TRIVIA QUIZ: Prepare a quiz related to the song / singer / topic / vocabulary & grammar appearing in the song / cultural background, etc. of the song you are going to play. In groups they have to try to guess as many questions as possible. This is very good as a warm-up exercise before listening to the song.



ACTIVITY NUMBER 10

MATCHING: You split up the lines of a song into 2 halves. Students have to match the beginnings with the corresponding endings (beforehand or while listening).

USING ICT: Hot Potatoes

WHAT IS HOT POTATOES?

With this great (and free) programme (<http://hotpot.uvic.ca>) we can easily create interactive exercises for the Web that work with any modern web explorer (Internet Explorer 6 or 7, Mozilla, Firefox, etc.) We do not need to know anything about .html language, JavaScript, etc. The only thing you need to do is enter your data — texts, questions, answers etc. — and the programs will create the Web pages for you. Then you can post them on your Web site or work with your activities locally. In a few minutes, one can learn how to use this programme and create his/her own activities with exercises of all kinds (multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching, ordering and gap-fill exercises.)

USING HOT POTATOES

When we start “Hot Potatoes” we’ll see a screen with 5 applications or “potatoes”. We’ll select the screen we want to work with:

- JCLOZE: To create gap-fill exercises
- JMATCH: to create matching exercises
- JQUIZ: To create question-based exercises (multiple choice or short answers)
- JCROSS: we can create crosswords
- JMIX: to create jumble exercises



ELT Convention

CREATING AN EXERCISE WITH HOT POTATOES:

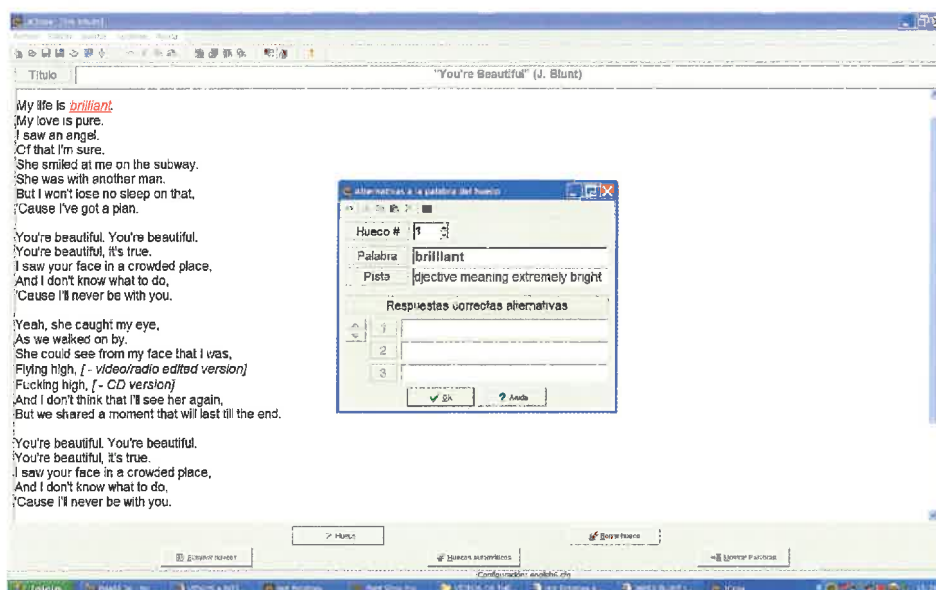
The best way to get used to Hot Potatoes is by following the tutorial included in the programme. In a few minutes we will know how to create a simple activity. It's very important to register (it's free and it will take you less than 5 minutes), otherwise the programme options will be very limited.

In the workshop I showed how to create an activity with a video-clip from YOUTUBE with "JCLOZE" as an example. All the other potatoes are really similar and once we know how to use one, we will know how the others work quite intuitively.

JCLOZE:

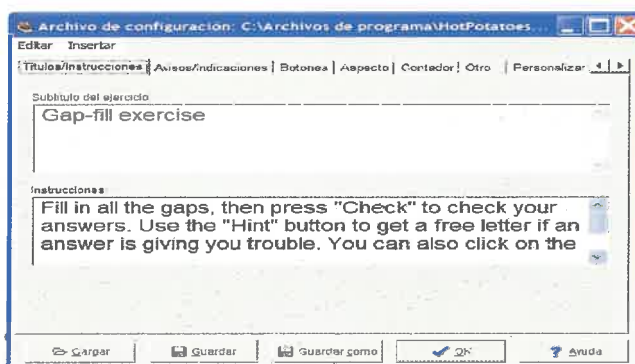
We need to follow **3 steps** to create any activity with Hot Potatoes.

1.- Introduce the title, the text and the questions or gaps. Afterwards, we will have to choose the words we want as gaps. We can include clues and give alternative answers, too.



It is very important to save the exercise beforehand: Go to FILE / SAVE AS and then give the exercise a name. You are going to save it as a .jcl file. This will not be the web page or exercise, but a data file (teacher's file) we will have to open if you want to edit the activity later on.

2.- We have to configure the file output format. (OPTIONS / CONFIGURE OUTPUT).



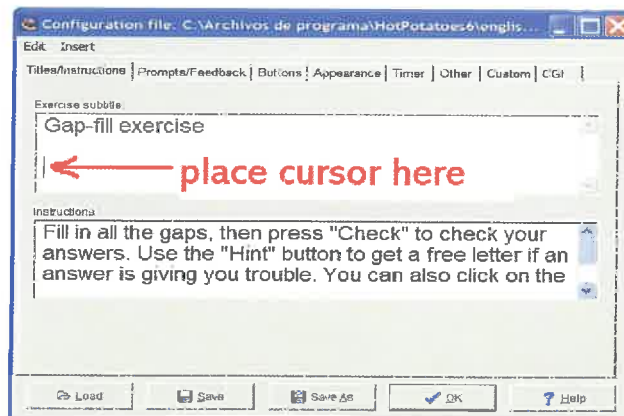
In "Configuration File" we will see a screen with several tabs: (Titles-instructions / Prompts-feedback / buttons / appearance / etc.).

ELT Convention

2.INSERTING A VIDEO DIRECTLY FROM YOUTUBE: We can embed a video from the internet simply by copying the “embed” code that some websites (such as Youtube) provide. Then, we will have the .html exercise on our hard disks (or websites), but we will be using a video from an external server / Internet.

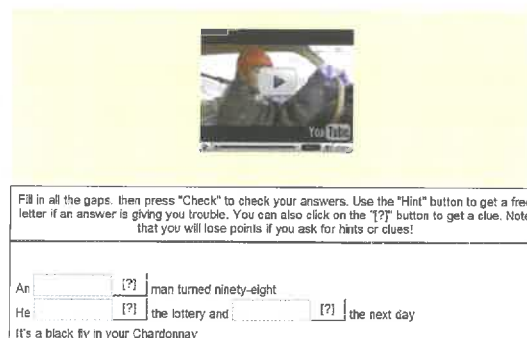
To do that, copy the “embed code” that Youtube videos provide

In the file output format (OPTIONS / CONFIGURE OUTPUT), you should place the cursor at the end of “Exercise Subtitle” inside the tab titles-instructions under the default “gap-fill exercise” sentence. Before inserting the video, press the Enter button a couple of times to separate the video from the exercise subtitle. We will then paste THE CODE we have copied from Youtube



You should paste the “embed” code from Youtube here and press OK.

3.We will create the activity (html file) at this point: ARCHIVO / CREAR PÁGINA WEB / PÁGINA WEB PARA NAVEGADORES and we'll have a “very small” .html file with a video.



Hot Pot exercise with an embedded video from Youtube.

Remember that if you are using Internet Explorer, you will probably have to let your explorer **show “active contents”** for the video to appear.

In order to work with this activity, our students will have to double click the **.html** file we have created (not the data file .jcl), which we can save in another folder, just in case we want to edit the hot potatoes exercise later.

It's very important to have the latest version of Internet explorer, Firefox or other modern web browser for our “potatoes” to work properly.

These interactive activities created with Hot Potatoes are ideal to be used in the computer room. As students have control over the video, they can repeat the sections they have problems with and fast forward the sec-

tions that they have already understood. They can work at their own pace. Besides, they can use the clues that the teacher has prepared and in this way you can almost have an interactive self-access learning centre. Alternatively, you can send these files to your students by email, include them on your website, blog or moodle, so that they can work with them at home.

USING ICT: Let's Karaoke!

"Karaokeing" is a great activity you can carry out in class taking advantage of a PC + Projector. There are a few "FREE" karaoke players available on the Internet:

www.vanbasco.com

www.karafun.com

The great advantage of Computer karaokes is that, apart from being completely free, they allow you to "adjust" the key of any song, so that anybody can become a "singer". Can you imagine your students (or you) singing any song by Mariah Carey, Freddy Mercury, Police, etc. effortlessly?

It's extremely easy to find any "FREE" karaoke song on the Internet using "Google" or any searching engine:

Karaoke files usually have the extension: **.kar**

Example: type: **every breath you take police .kar** to find hundreds of webs from where you can download that song by Police (in Karaoke format) "completely free".

Using Van Basco Karaoke Player:

1.- First you should go to **www.vanbasco.com** and download the latest version available of their free player. To install it, simply double click on the file you have downloaded and accept everything.

2.- Start the programme and make sure that the following buttons are activated in the main control panel:



Playlist: allows you to create play lists of songs

Control: opens a screen where you can change tempo & key

Karaoke: it's the screen where lyrics will appear synchronized with the music

Output: On this screen you can mute any instrument you don't want to hear: ex. Guitars, main lead vocals, etc.

3.- Van Basco Karaoke player also has a tool to search for free karaoke files (.kar) on the internet: Click on the lens (on the right of the main panel)



4.- To play any karaoke song, simply double click on any ".kar file" after installing Van Basco Karaoke player. Karaoke files will be associated with it and it will automatically open and play the song. You can also use the *playlist* screen to browse files on your hard disk and play them.

ELT Convention

Obviously, you cannot expect a professional sound quality from this sort of free karaokes. The music sounds a bit “synthetic” and not-natural, but it’ll be more than enough to motivate your students to learn English through songs and have a lot of fun in the class.

Apart from trying these ideas, all those teachers who are interested in using music as a complement to your classes, I would really recommend you to visit the following website: www.singalongproject.com This website is a project that I have created with Barbara Latham, another teacher working at the EOI Tarragona, and who is another enthusiast of using songs as a way of approaching the language.

I’m sure that all these ideas (or at least most of them) will be really successful in your classes and will help you motivate your students a bit more by using music to learn English. Let’s rock to learn!

If you are interested in the exercises that go with the different activities, visit our web page:
<http://www.apac.es>

Everything in English

- General & Business & Text Books
- Resource Books for Language Teachers
- Grammar & Skills Books
- Games & Posters
- Dictionaries
- Graded Readers
- Official Exams
- Classic Literature
- Fiction & Non Fiction
- Kid’s Corner

come in

librería anglesa

C/ Balmes, 129 bis. Barcelona. Tel. 93 453 18 06

www.libreriainglesa.com

SPECIAL
DISCOUNT
SHOWING YOUR
APAC CARD



From Global Understanding to Content Learning

by Inés Delgado - Echagüe Sell

Bilingual Education in English is now. Our children are starting their bilingual education at the Infant or preschool levels and then continue throughout the Primary and Secondary cycles. As a language of wider communication, English is a medium that prepares us and our children and other students for the realities of a global environment. But, it is important to understand the most effective methodologies that promote true bilingualism or multilingualism. CLIL certainly is one avenue. However, a caveat as to how we institute teacher training for CLIL and CLIL classrooms is in order.

Most of our pupils begin to study a content subject in English as early as *Primero de Primaria*. In their first or second session they are given a content subject textbook in English and they are expected to learn the code (decoding) and to appreciate the content (reading). As a result, the chil-

dren “pretend” to be reading, the teachers “pretend” the children are reading and when the textbooks arrive at home for the daily homework routine, parents “pretend” they believe the system is working. This shared “pretending” makes the gap between our desired meaningful education and a harmful meaningless repetition become larger and larger. Have these children been taught to read? Have the children become competent readers all by themselves? The answer is “no.”

We believe that no content subject can be followed if the children are not explicitly taught to read. Our pupils are losing out on the content subjects and they are not making headway in English as far as comprehension and communication go because of misguided methodology that attempts to ‘teach English’ without understanding that ‘studying in’ English and ‘learning’ English represent differing sides of a coin.

Inés Delgado-Echagüe Sell is responsible for The **CLIL Phonics Programme**, Madrid, Spain.

Mrs. Delgado-Echagüe has worked as a teacher and teacher trainer in Spain for the past 20 years. She has given courses and talks for the British Council and for local government teacher training departments in many of the Autonomous Regions in Spain. She currently works as freelance literacy and bilingual education consultant and material writer. She specialized in CLIL, focusing on the relationship between a well-built literacy proficiency and academic success. Her expertise extended to the use of synthetic phonics in order to teach reading and writing to very young children. She has presented her method in several papers and articles and is regularly guest speaker at conventions and workshops.

CLIL Phonics is well aware of these problems and we have been working on the solution for a number of years now. We are not “re-inventing the wheel”, as we have some excellent people to thank for that, but we know how to use it in order to help teachers and students develop competency in the sound system of English and how to develop and stabilize strategies for fluent, comprehensible speech and reading in students.

CLIL Phonics believes in a global understanding approach:

- Comprehension instead of translation
- Participation instead of repetition
- Communication instead of oral production

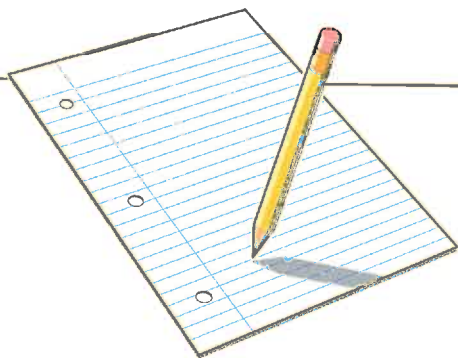
We believe in implementing the Literacy programme through the development of the topics that integrate the Infants and Early Primary Curriculum. We propose the teaching of synthetic phonics using appropriate techniques in a systematic order, following a multisensory and fun approach and in a meaningful context. Of course, it is crucial to continue developing the phonics system at the primary and secondary levels.

Luckily, we are not the only ones working on

this approach. We have found a partner in our particular crusade and this partner is *Inglese Dinamico*. This project is committed to developing meaningful oral language strategies and skills upon which true literacy acquisition and reading comprehension rest. Our common views on the subject and our determination to help teachers and students have resulted in our Weekend Workshop Series. We are proud to be able to offer this comprehensive set of interactive workshops that promote effective teaching and learning.

Our proposal has found some very generous collaboration in the Colegios Gredos Guadarrama, Madrid. Mr. José Luis Berenguer, the head teacher, has made our project possible by offering us the school premises to hold the Workshops. Being Independent Teacher Trainers, our only way to reach out to you is to count on the support of other education professionals who share our views. The publication of this article is, in itself, one more show of the support we are so very thankful for.

Find out more about the Spring Weekend Workshops Series in www.clilphonics.com professional development page. We hope to see you there!



CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

APAC welcomes the contributions of teachers who want to share their experiences and their thoughts, both for our quarterly magazine and for our annual convention. Articles or presentations dealing with new materials, new techniques and new methods are most welcome. We are also interested in methodological and educational issues related to the teaching profession.

Reviews of books, interviews and other texts are also published regularly. If you have read a book you would like to recommend or if you have the opportunity to interview somebody who you think may be of interest to our readers, or you have had an experience, attended a course or been to a lecture you would like to tell other teachers about, please write it down and send it to us. (info@apac.es)



Skype in the Classroom

by Cristina Arnau Vila



1.- WHAT IS SKYPE?

Skype has experienced a rapid growth in popular usage since the launch of its services. Everybody talks about Skype, most of the people use it, but what is it? what is it for? According to its official website, Skype *is software that enables the world's conversations. Millions of individuals and businesses use Skype to make free video and voice calls, send instant messages and share files with other Skype users. Everyday, people everywhere also use Skype to make low-cost calls to landlines and mobiles.* Nowadays, by means of the last version of Skype 4.1.0.136, you can even share your computer screen during your Skype conversations.

According to wikipedia, Skype was written by Estonia-based developers **Ahti Heinla**, Priit Kasesalu and **Jaan Tallinn**, who had also originally developed **Kazaa**. The Skype Group, founded by Swedish-born entrepreneur **Niklas Zennström** and the Dane **Janus Friis**, has its headquarters in **Luxembourg**, with offices in **London**, **Tallinn**, **Tartu**, **Stockholm**, **Prague** and **San Jose**.

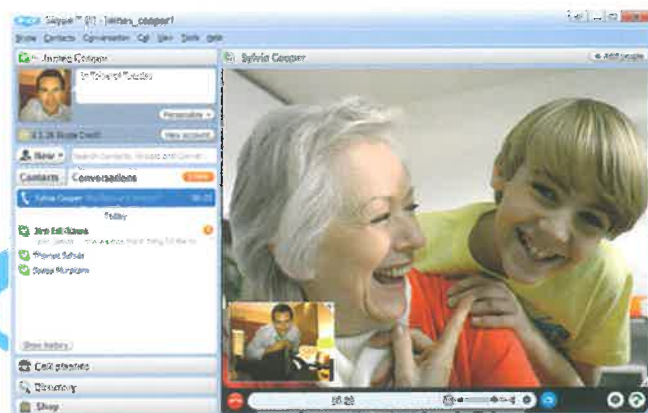
One of the initial names for the project was "Sky peer-to-peer",

which was then abbreviated to "Skyper". However some of the domain names associated with "Skyper" were already taken. Dropping the final 'r' left the current title "Skype", for which domain names were available.

2.- HOW DOES SKYPE WORK?

The most important thing is to download the last version of Skype or to update your old version. You will learn if you use it, it is very simple.

Download Skype here: <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-gb/download/skype/windows/>



Cristina Arnau Vilà holds DEA (Diploma of Advanced Studies) from the University of Vic and a degree in English Philology from the University of Barcelona. Now she is a teacher of English at a state secondary school in Berga. She is currently following a PhD. Programme in the University of Vic. arnau22@xtec.cat , arnau22@gmail.com

You can find thousands of tutorials on how to download, install and use the program.	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sodMDs7rEEk http://www.lovemarche.com/skype.htm
Many Skype tutorials on Spanish language.	http://www.aulaalic.es/articulos/skype.html http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3m4CgFU4hl0 http://www.aulaalic.es/internet/secuencias/skype.htm http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=RFIhbXdBey8 http://foro.khmaniacs.com/t13388/tutorial-skype/ http://www.skype.com/intl/es/help/guides/
Skype for Linux version.	http://revver.com/video/513705/videtutorial-como-instalar-skype-en-linux-ubuntu/
Other links related to Skype.	http://mirari2863.blogspot.com/ http://internet.comohacerpara.com/n1221/como-hablar-por-telefono-por-skipe.html

3.- SKYPE IN THE CLASSROOM

Skype has an enormous potential for classroom use, but much of that potential has not been fulfilled yet. I think one of the greatest benefits is that teachers can quickly and easily invite guests from all over the world to speak to their students. For example, foreign language teachers could use Skype to connect with other classes in foreign countries. Arts teachers could connect with the authors of works pupils are reading or drawing. A science teacher could demonstrate a lab activity using Skype's video or invite a researcher to discuss the latest developments in his/her field. A social studies teacher could connect to a museum guide to show a museum. A music teacher could work together with another class and perform a concert together and so on. Additionally, students could make presentations to other classrooms within/outside their country or collaborate on a project using Skype.

Skype can be used in different ways, here are some ideas and experiences:

For teachers

Skype takes some similar functions to those of the Messenger. You can create group discussions on collaborative projects. That means you can prepare, organize and do follow-up activities among different groups. It offers incredible functions in the area of the audio and the video and, especially, introduces constant innovations that can be used by better performance from the didactic point of view. Skype helps:

- To practise the oral language, improve oral communicative competences.
- To investigate, develop and validate pedagogic innovative models for a social learning that helps the students to obtain their aims of a self-guided way and to establish social nets.
- To create a group of discussion with other pupils which allow them to learn on other cultures, traditions, countries and so on.
- To create real educational situations, one learns when one practise in real situations.
- To work in collaboration with other schools, other teachers, parents, etc.

For Students

This programme turns out to be so familiar for teenagers as the SMS of their mobile phones. The image that they have of it is centred on its playful aspects and on the need of constant communication by friends. In addition it allows them:

- To share files with their partners.
- To create groups of discussion with their friends.
- To learn about other cultures, traditions, countries.
- To meet other people and practise other languages.
- To request advise to their teachers or friends.
- To share thematic chats

For Schools

- It is a tool of communication which can transfer voice, video and information among schools, teachers, parents, etc.

Contributions

Real Experiences

Interview to Domingo Mendez, a teacher who works through Skype and Videoconferences with his students from Cieza (Murcia) Spain and students from Antonio (La Plata) Argentina.	http://puentesalmundo.net/node/23 http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=JkI3ItW1vE http://es.youtube.com/watch?v=UoQjuyDraaq
Using Skype in the Spanish Classroom. Some students from New York (USA) and Caracas (Venezuela).	http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvZdhahgUKE
Watch two primary classrooms who talk about butterflies and themselves: one in Oregon (USA) and the other in Quebec (Canada).	http://www.teachertube.com/view_video.php?viewkey=5754c52095e930d61e36
Reading among students.	http://www.wildvoice.com/pilara/Posts/Lectura-Alba-Pilar
In Tarragona, two primary schools exchanged their information during the music class.	http://blocs.xtec.cat/stactgn/2009/04/01/videoconferencia-amb-skype/
Moodle of Pilar Soro with a variety of experiences and online course during the summer.	http://www.tutoravirtual.com/
A very interesting Project by Silvia Tolisiano using Skype: <i>Around the World with 80 countries</i> .	http://langwitches.org/blog/2009/01/03/around-the-world-with-80-schools/
Here you will see different school experiences using Skype.	http://www.csmonitor.com/2007/0816/p13s02-legn.html?page=1
The Mixer is a free educational community for language learners and teachers to find a language partner for a language exchange . The language partner is someone who speaks the language you study as their native language and is studying your native language. As a member of the Mixer community, you can communicate with your language partner via Skype to practice speaking.	http://www.language-exchanges.org/

4.- SKYPE IN THE EFLCLASSROOM

Skype is a free and easy way for teachers to open up their classroom and their students to a world way beyond their campus. With Skype, students can learn from other students, connect with other cultures, and expand their knowledge in amazing ways.

Most of the educational advertisements teachers can find are similar to that:
My name is I am an EFL teacher in I teach a group of students (aged ...) who would love to Skype with teenagers from foreign countries.

As an English teacher, one of my main objective is to help students to be more autonomous in the process of learning a foreign language, to teach students to communicate in English, above all to develop their communicative competence and to teach new contents. Thus, I think Skype is a tool that can help us to teach English achieving these objectives, although it may not be always easy.

Skype is a good tool to improve the oral communicative competences. All English teachers know that in secondary schools students sometimes get a good level of reading and writing skills but they never get a good level on listening and speaking. We have to bear in mind that English is a language and not just a list of things to learn in a mechanical way. Con-

tinuous and daily work is required as well as constant and active participation on the student's part. Not only does the student need to learn concepts but also put them into practice and use the language to fulfill certain realistic tasks and functions. Therefore, Skype is a tool that can help students to practise English in real tasks, in real life.

Skype has many extra tools, for example PAMELA.



It is a useful tool because we can ask our students to record their Skype conversations and, then, they can create a podcast and upload it into their blog. Thus, we can listen to it and assess it. Pamela is very easy to use, available to everybody.

5.- CONCLUSION

Skype can help students to improve their English level, above all the oral skills. There exist so many activities to perform with Skype, that we may choose those activities related to our syllabus and also related to topics which are of most of the teenagers' interest. The methodology we are using is one of the most important issue, the activities must be very well-designed to reach our objectives. For the foreign language teaching community, the communicative approaches to language learning are not new; the challenge now is to structure lessons and meaningful tasks into the skype framework.

However, there are disadvantages too. We do not have enough time to surf on the internet to find partners, or it can be sometimes difficult to find partners who you can trust with or who share the same aims as you. Furthermore, the new technologies do not sometimes work so well in our schools. So when you switch on the computer, you often find problems and they are so slow that you waste a lot of time. Moreover, there are not always enough computers for all the students in the high school and not all the students are interested in the new technologies.

We should try to be positive and try to use Skype since it can be a perfect tool to help students to improve their communicative skills.

WEBGRAPHY

WIKIPEDIA (28 July 2009).
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skype> [Look up: August 2009]

SKYPE OFFICIAL WEBSITE
<http://www.skype.com/intl/es/> [Look up: August 2009]

FURTHER READING

50 Awesome Ways to Use Skype in the Classroom. (Teaching Degree.org Blog)
<http://www.teachingdegree.org/2009/06/30/50-awesome-ways-to-use-skype-in-the-classroom/> [Look up: July 2009]

Skype en la educación (Internet en el Aula).
<http://internetaula.ning.com/events/skype-para-la-educacion> [Look up: June 2009]

RODRIGUEZ, J. Curso de formación Skype en la Educación.
<http://www.webcastacademy.net> [Look up: June 2009]

Subscriu-te a
CATALONIA TODAY
News in English from a Catalan point of view

36
€/any

Tarifa completa

27
€/any

Subscriptors d'El Punt o de l'Avui

18
€/any

Tarifa especial alumnes i professors



Ara també pots escoltar una selecció dels nostres articles llegits pels nostres col·laboradors. També disponible a iTunes.

CataloniaToday for iPhone/iPod/iPad

Available on the App Store

Envia'ns un correu amb les dades necessàries a:
subscriptions@cataloniatoday.cat

Nom i Cognoms

Adreça Ciutat CP

A/e Telèfon

DNI / NIF

Número de compte (20 dígits)

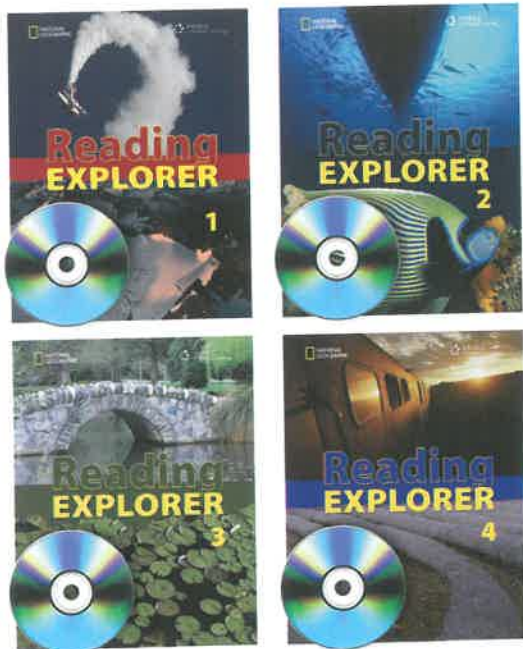
O omplena la butlleta i envia-la a:

C. Santa Eugènia, 42 | 17005 GIRONA | Tel. 972 18 64 38

C. Tàpies, 2 | 08001 BARCELONA | Tel. 93 227 66 20

www.cataloniatoday.cat





Explore Your World! with Reading Explorer 1-4

- Four-level, content based reading series
- Elementary to Upper Intermediate
- 12 units in each book with integrated activities
- Features video from National Geographic Digital Media
- Student's CD-ROM includes video, audio and practice activities

Read, Listen and Watch as the world comes to life with the Footprint Reading Library with video from National Geographic

- 100 content based graded readers
- 5 themes:
 - Incredible Animals
 - Fascinating Places
 - Amazing Science
 - Remarkable People
 - Exciting Activities
- 8 levels from Pre-intermediate to Advanced
- Photocopiable activities and tests for the teacher
- DVD and audio available for every reader



Reading Explorer and the National Geographic Footprint Reading Library have been developed through an exclusive partnership between Heinle, a part of Cengage Learning, and National Geographic

elt.heinle.com/ng

Distributed in Catalunya by SGEL



Tel: 932 616 986
Fax: 932 616 992
Email: heinle@sgel.es / Email Heinle ELT: lola.reyes@cengage.com



An eTwinning Experience

by Ana Leal

A few years ago I started working as an English teacher in secondary education. Things had changed a lot since I was a high school student –due to dramatic changes in society and educational policies–, so I decided to look for teacher training courses to update my teaching performance and to adapt to the new context. And that's how I bumped into a course on eTwinning organised by the Spanish Education Department. I had never heard the term “eTwinning” before, so I decided to enrol in the course and discover its meaning. Actually, it turned out to be a really interesting and challenging experience since I had the opportunity to participate in a real eTwinning project and find out the teaching and learning potential of such a tool. So in this article I would like to share my eTwinning experience with you, teachers, hoping that you may find it inspiring enough to engage in similar adventures.

• What's eTwinning?

E-Twinning is an essential part of the eLearning program launched by the European Commission in 2004. The main goal of the eTwinning action is to facilitate cooperation between European schools using

ICT to learn from one another, to share points of view and to make friends. For this purpose, the eTwinning website (www.etwinning.net) has an extensive database of European centres interested in forming school twinnings. Besides, it provides students and teachers with the necessary technological tools and pedagogical resources and ideas to succeed in their projects.

• Getting started with eTwinning

To develop an eTwinning project I had to take different steps. First of all, I had to register in the eTwinning website and fill in a form with my personal details, information about my school and my group of students and the type of twinning I was interested in.

Once registered in eTwinning, I got a username and a password that allowed me to access the eTwinning Desktop, a tool aimed at facilitating contact between schools through a huge database of contacts and different communication tools. At this point I had to find my eTwinning partner(s) and I could either join an existing twinning between schools or develop a new project. I chose the latter option, so I spent a couple of months getting in touch with teachers from all around Europe and sharing ideas with them. Eventually I found

Anna Leal Batlle is a member of the APAC who is currently working as an English teacher at IES Santa Eugènia, in Girona. She has been teaching English and French for four years now. She holds a degree in Translation and Interpreting from the University Pompeu Fabra and used to work as a translator before she had her first teaching experience as a Spanish language assistant in France.

Contributions

an English teacher from France that was interested in developing a similar project to what I had in mind, so we agreed to work together.

The final step was to register the project in the eTwinning platform. To do so, my partner and I filled in a questionnaire about our project and then we submitted it to the National Support Service (NSS) of both countries, France and Spain. After checking the information received, the NSS informed us that our project had been approved, which gave us access to the Twinspace, a virtual space to help us to develop the eTwinning action. Besides, we were awarded with an eTwinning Label and Certificate as a means of acknowledging the effort made by our students and schools. In addition to that, eTwinning also offers the possibility to request a Quality Label or an eTwinning Award for those projects that have reached a certain quality standard both at national and European levels.

• Our eTwinning project

Since it was our first eTwinning experience, my partner and I decided to engage in a simple project in which our students would communicate in English through email, so we decided to call it "Dear e-pal". Throughout the academic year our students (aged 11 to 13) exchanged information about their daily lives, their countries and their traditions.

Overall, the objectives of the project were the following:

- 1.- To learn about another European country and culture.
- 2.- To compare teenagers' daily lives in different European countries.
- 3.- To make friends using English as communication the language of.
- 4.- To improve the students' writing and reading skills in English.
- 5.- To develop the students' ICT skills.
- 6.- To establish links with another high school.

Besides, the specific features of the project gave us the opportunity to work on different key compe-



tences of students, such as:

a) The **linguistic communicative competence**

Students improved their writing and reading skills in English, dealing with real texts about their own interests and daily lives. Besides, they were usually asked to share information about their e-pals with a classmate, so they improved their listening and speaking skills.

b) The **learning to learn competence**

Students learnt to use dictionaries and other reference material to correct their own mistakes.

c) The **digital competence**

Students developed the ability to use e-mail as a communication tool.

d) The **social and civic competence**

Students learnt about the culture and traditions of another European country, they compared teenagers' lives around Europe and they discovered the pleasure of maintaining correspondence with someone else.

As for assessment, each mailing gave us the opportunity to evaluate the students' learning progress in terms of key competences and use it as part of the ongoing assessment process. For this purpose, I established the following criteria to assess the degree of achievement of the different key competences:

- 1.- To use e-mail to communicate with foreign teenagers.
- 2.- To produce coherent messages using the appropriate text structure, polite expressions, syntactical and morphological elements and vocabulary.
- 3.- To correct one's mistakes using dictionaries and other reference material.
- 4.- To understand general and specific information of e-mail messages.
- 5.- To interact with classmates and share information about e-pals.
- 6.- To show interest in communicating with foreign students.

• Organising the project

Before implementing the project, there were some organisation issues that had to be tackled.

Contributions

1.- Choosing an e-pal

In order for students to choose an e-pal with similar interests, first the Spanish students sent an e-mail message about themselves and their personal interests to the French teacher. Then, she printed those messages and distributed them among her students so that they could choose their best partner and e-mail them back.

2.- Matching the number of students

The French class had a larger number of students than the Spanish group, so we decided that in some cases two French students would share the same Spanish e-pal, who was usually a highly motivated student.

3.- Topics and schedules

Before each e-mail exchange the French teacher and I agreed on the topics that students

were going to deal with, so that their messages were guided and they wrote about relevant topics. We also scheduled the dates of e-mail exchanges, having in mind that Spanish and French school holiday periods were not always the same.

4.- Asking for parent's permission

To create an e-mail account students had to provide the email service (Gmail) with their personal details, so first we asked for the parents' permission through a letter.

• Implementing the eTwinning project

Once the project "Dear e-pal" was organised, it was time to put it into practice. So I planned the following lessons to start e-mail correspondence with our new partners.



Lesson 1

Timing	Activities	Interaction	Resources	Space
10'	Class discussion: What's an e-pal? Have you got any e-pals or penpals? What's your perfect e-pal like?	SS - T		Classroom
10'	Brainstorming: Top 5 things you want to know about your e-pal/ Top 5 things you want your e-pal to know about you	S / SS - T	Notebook	
15'	Text analysis: Have a look at several samples of e-mail messages and identify the main features of this text type	S - S / SS - T	E-mail samples and notebook	
20'	Reading: Read e-mail messages carefully and answer questions about them	S / SS - T		

Lesson 2

Timing	Activities	Interaction	Resources	Space
15'	Internet search: Look for basic information about our eTwinning partners using the Internet. Where are they from? What languages do they speak? What's their school like?	S - S / SS - T	Computers and notebook	Computer room
20'	Creation of an e-mail account: Create your own e-mail account following the teacher's instructions	T - SS	Computers and digital projector	
20'	Practise using e-mail: Add contacts following the teacher's instructions and practise sending and receiving email messages with your teacher and classmates	T - SS		

Contributions

Lesson 3

Timing	Activities	Interaction	Resources	Space
10'	Text building: Reorder the paragraphs of an e-mail message. What information is in each paragraph?	S – S / SS - T	Worksheet	Classroom
15'	Grammar and vocabulary practise: Fill in the blanks of an e-mail message with the appropriate words.	S / SS - T	Worksheet	
15'	Writing plan: Answer questions about you and your personal interests.	T – SS	Notebook	
15'	Writing task: Write a draft text about you and your personal interests to your new e-pal. Use email samples as models.	S	Sheet of paper	

Lesson 4

Timing	Activities	Interaction	Resources	Space
15'	Analysis of dictionary entries: Look at the several dictionary entries. What information is included?	S – S / SS - T	Worksheet	Computer room
15'	Dictionary practise: Look up the meaning of underlined words in different sentences.	S – S / SS - T	Worksheet and bilingual dictionaries	
15'	Self-correction of draft texts: Correct your own mistakes using the teacher's notes, dictionaries and other reference material.	S	Draft text and bilingual dictionaries	
15'	Writing: Write and send the final version of your e-mail message to your teacher and the French teacher.	S	Computers	

Lesson 5

Timing	Activities	Interaction	Resources	Space
15'	Reading: Check your e-mail account, read your e-pal's reply message and fill in a grid with his/her personal information and interests.	S	Computers and notebook	Computer room
15'	Speaking: Talk to a classmate and share information about your e-pal's	S – S	Notebook	
30'	Speaking: Introduce your e-pal's the rest of the class and describe his/her personal interests.	S – T/SS		

In the following e-mail exchanges, I used lesson plans 3 to 5 with slight modifications depending on the topic we were dealing with (our town, our routine, our family, etc.), the language functions we were studying (describing places, routines, people, etc.) and the learning strategies we were developing (use of online dictionaries, monolingual dictionaries, etc.).

Conclusions

On the whole, this first eTwinning project had very positive results for both the students and the teachers. Most of the students were strongly motivated by the project since they loved writing about their own lives and experiences and sharing them through e-mail with a real audience. As a result, they improved their writing skills, they learnt how to use e-mail (surprisingly most of them could not use it before) and they enjoyed getting to know other

teenagers and learning about them. In fact, some pupils became really good friends and they even used Messenger to chat in their spare time!

As for teachers, this project made our jobs much easier because we did not have to struggle so hard to get our students writing long and interesting texts. It also allowed us to assess our students' performance in real communicative situations and to evaluate different skills at the same time. Besides, collaborating with a colleague from another country was a real challenge that gave us the chance to share points of view and learn from one another.

Although I must admit that organising an eTwinning project and putting it into practice can be a hard and time-consuming process, it is really worth the effort. In fact, the results of this eTwinning experience were so rewarding that my French partner and I decided to keep collaborating the following year and we even extended this cooperation to other colleagues in our schools. Therefore, I strongly recommend that you give it a go and experience the eTwinning potential yourselves!

Project Work, a powerful tool to integrate the "Basic Competences"

How can we integrate the "Basic Competences" into the class contents and involve students in learning the foreign language? There are different ways to involve students through their interests while teachers integrate the "Competencies" into lesson plans. Along the seminar series of workshops... we will explore and examine examples of succeeded projects, and all participants, with guidance, will be invited to produce their own according to their students needs and interests.

CAMBRIDGE

GLOBAL GRAMMAR COMPETITION

Your students could **WIN**
a two-week English course in Cambridge

**GRAMMAR
GREMLINS**

Is your students' grammar gremlin-free?



Have they got what it takes
to win the competition?

www.cambridge.org/elt/grammarcompetition

Don't let them miss it!



Brought to you by



www.cambridge.org/elt/inuse

Competition entry deadline is 30 June 2010



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS



A Few Thoughts on TEFL and Key Competences

by Elizabeth
Buck

Questions, doubts, helplessness, uncertainty, etc. This is what many teachers feel or think when they are told that they now have to base their teaching programmes on the eight 'key competences'; a new way of organising their lessons that is not always welcome and that can be seen as something useless, tiring, difficult or even complicated to apply. New laws, new systems, new ideas, new philosophies, new experiments... This is, in fact, part of our profession: being able to adapt to changes, trying out new ways of doing our job, taking up challenges and always questioning ourselves. We have to be willing to advance and learn more, we have to be thinking teachers and be convinced that if we stop learning ourselves, we stop being a useful teacher.

We cannot stand still, we need to reflect upon our practice all the time and, first and foremost, adapt our teaching to what our students need and will need in their future, once they become adults and enter the professional world. Showing them the meaning of learning and connecting what we teach to what they will need and have to develop throughout their lives and education is, or should be, our main goal as teachers.

In the following pages you will find a sample of a didactic unit for first-year ESO students. As a thinking teacher, I want to stress that this didactic unit is open to any necessary changes. It is just a way that I personally find easy to use when planning lessons, after comparing many different grids and discussing many different approaches, I would choose this one as it is, to my mind, the most straight-forward and complete grid I have found. It is clear and interrelates everything, which is an important goal that we have to achieve as teachers: being able to relate our teaching objectives and contents to area objectives, key competences, area competences and assessment criteria

Contributions

The eight key competences that we have to take into account when teaching and planning are directly related to our main aim of turning our students into competent citizens.

'Being competent' is what today's society is looking for. People who are able to display a wide range of talents, people who are able to work in a team and use new technologies, people who prove to have values, people who respect each other and other cultures, people who can speak languages and show interest in learning about other ways of life, etc. This is what our students will be asked for in their future, in a few years' time when they walk out into the 'real' world. But, before that, we must bring the real world into our schools and relate what we teach to what happens outside, in order to prepare our students and make them as skilled as possible.

Key competences are *"those competences a young person should have developed at the end of compulsory secondary education to allow him or her to enter adult life successfully, become an active citizen and develop lifelong learning"*.

Key competences are *"capacities to use knowledge and abilities in a transversal and interactive manner, in contexts and situations that need the intervention of knowledge related to different contents, which implies comprehension, reflection and discernment taking the social dimension of each situation into account"*. (Royal Decree 143/2007 of 26 June 2007).

In that sense, we can say that *"the capacity to act effectively in different situations, complex and unpredictable, depends on knowledge, but also on values, abilities, experience ..."* (Eurydice, 2002).

Key competences have to be included in our everyday classroom activities and students must be aware of their existence and the need to work on them. In order to meet this objective, teachers must first of all show a deep understanding of what key competences are and why they have appeared in our teaching lives. They have to be accepted and seen as a strength, a quality or an ability that will give our students an advantage.

Planning our lessons around the eight key competences does not mean radically changing our way of teaching. It is just about improving and reinforcing our activities and being totally aware, while designing them, of their meaningfulness and use outside the walls of our schools. It goes without saying, as well, that as teachers we always need to refresh our skills and that, in that case, learning about key competences and making them part of everyday life is something enriching and

necessary in our present society. As citizens and educators of future competent citizens, we must prove that we are also 'competent' and capable of using these skills in our professional and personal lives. We must not forget that teachers often act as models for their students...

The eight key competences include many areas relevant to developing skills that will be needed lifelong. They were born from exchanges and dialogues about the need to have competent citizens in today's society. One characteristic of the eight key competences is that they mingle concepts, procedures and values all together. To meet our society's demands and needs for new technologies, team work, a sense of responsibility, becoming autonomous citizens, acting effectively in different contexts, adapting to the new needs of the economy, universal access to information, etc., we have to train our students to select information and sort it out, being critical and capable of finding their way through it all. It is crucial to include all these aspects in our schools to prepare our students for working life, the real world that is waiting for them outside the school's walls.

The main ideas are to use tools in an interactive way, autonomously and in heterogeneous groups. The eight key competences include transversality, functionality, autonomy and interaction.

It is important, therefore, to make sure we work on all of them, using authentic, real and varied material encouraging reflection and analysis. Our method must be to introduce students to a demand or a need and set them to work on contents in this context, to solve a given problem or find a way-out of a given situation. As teachers, we guide them towards the answer, through knowledge, abilities, attitudes, etc. This way of working, making students feel the need to learn and try to sort it out by themselves, in a context that is as real as possible, is not new and many teachers were already working like that before the eight key competences were introduced. This idea has just been reinforced and now all teachers are strongly encouraged to work in that direction. This means that teaching is not lineal and does not work in one single direction. Teaching goes everywhere and reaches everybody. It must be understood as a network, a group of people and things that are all related and direct us towards one same aim: solve a problem, satisfy a need, all together and putting different strategies and different subjects and knowledge into practice. This philosophy makes the learning process much more interesting and meaningful. Everybody is related, subjects are linked to one another, everybody collaborates and knows what everybody

Contributions

is doing, etc. A clear image or picture of how society is formed or what society is looking for and wants to create.

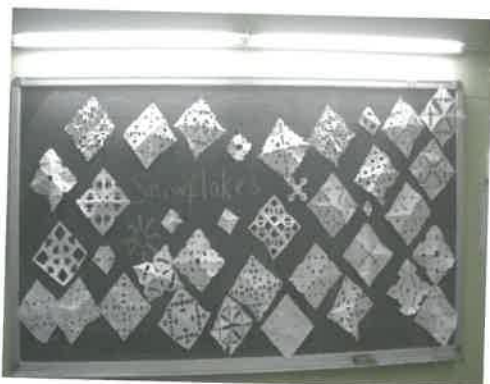
This all means a big change in the organisation of schools. The inclusion of key competences in our lessons is not that complicated. But including them in our schools and making all the members of the school community cooperate and share their projects around the key competences is challenging and requires a shared language, common beliefs and convictions, consent, abilities, incentives, resources, guidelines, etc. The method changes when working with competences (specific and common to all subjects, or cross-curricular).

HOW CAN WE INTEGRATE THE EIGHT KEY COMPETENCES INTO TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE?

Here are a few ideas on how we can work on key competences easily in our English lessons.

LINGUISTIC AND AUDIOVISUAL (C1): writing, reading, listening, speaking activities, using different types of support and real material.

ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL (C2): approach to English-speaking countries' culture and other students' cultures. Traditional food, celebrations, festivals, traditions, folklore, etc. Design of posters, campaigns, etc. Using students creativity.



INFORMATION AND DIGITAL TREATMENT (M3): strategies (skimming, scanning, planning, guessing, ordering, classifying, inducing, inferring rules, etc.). And use of ICT for e-mail exchanges with other students, research tools, etc.



MATHEMATICAL (M4): surveys (calculating percentages, making graphics, etc.), quantities (recipes), currency (convert pounds, dollars, euros), telling the time, organising timetables, etc.



LEARNING TO LEARN (M5): improve language abilities, strategies (skimming, scanning, etc.), accept errors/mistakes, identify strengths and weaknesses and find ways to improve, understand the importance of self-assessment, etc.

Contributions

TEST YOURSELF!

What can I do in English?

What did I do in English outside class?

- Listen to music
- Read a book
- Read a magazine
- Watch a TV programme, film, video or DVD
- Write an e-mail or chat online
- Surf the Internet
- Other activities:.....

AUTONOMY, INITIATIVE AND DECISION-MAKING (P6): carry out projects with responsibility and critical thinking. Give ideas, share opinions, solve problems, take risks, etc.



IN GROUPS (6x5)

- Tasks/Roles
- Chef
 - Seamstress
 - Weather Forecaster
 - Culture Minister
 - Linguist



BACK TO THE GROUP

- Prepare poster + handout (synthesis for the group)
- Present poster ✂ FRAMES
- Handouts + debate



AWARENESS AND INTERACTION WITH THE WORLD (H7): learn about other countries, what happens there, ways of life, active learning, experience things, contact with the outside world, (practical) application of English in students' own world.



SOCIAL AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT (H8): learn to respect other ways of thinking and become competent in team work. Interaction. Respect rules.

Contributions



OUR CLASSROOM RULES:

- I will always be punctual.
- I will respect my friends, my teachers, my school.
- I will try to use English whenever I can.
- I will come to class with all the material I need.
- [...]

Another way of working on key competences is organising activities outside the classroom. Students can conduct surveys, organise campaigns and advertise a school concert and write invitations. They must see that English can be used effectively outside class. It is also interesting to bring the outside world into the classroom so students become aware of how close English is to them: films, musicals, plays, etc. (depending on their level).

It is not that complicated to take them to see theatre plays, to go to the cinema, to take part in a linguistic gymkhana, to participate in theatre workshops, to interview tourists (in camp sites, on the beach, etc.), to organise a stand (information point for tourists), to visit the library (to look for books, DVDs, etc. that they can borrow and explain why it is useful), to watch documentaries or to listen to talks and lectures with foreigners living in their town (interactive talk: suggesting places to visit, giving advice, etc.).

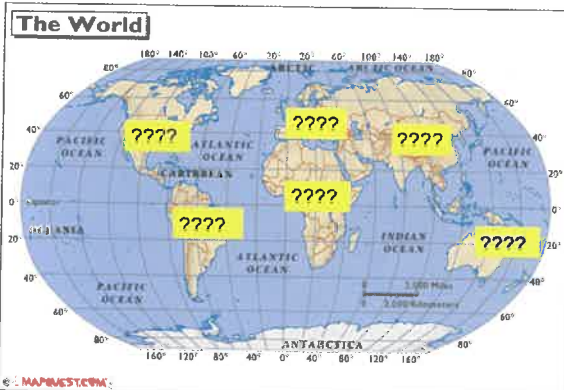
All these activities would contribute to acquiring the eight key competences.

Cultural aspects are excellent as well to help us deal with the diversity of the classroom. Culture should be the main motivation and the main theme of didactic units. Language and culture cannot be separated, so the teacher should repeatedly stress this aspect during the lessons. The tasks should be dynamic and interactive and every student should find his or her place in the classroom and feel a sense of belonging to the group. We must avoid routines, surprise our students and use dif-

ferent starting points and challenging, attractive and authentic material and tasks. Students should also be in constant contact with new technologies. Some of them do not have a computer at home, so it is important to give students the opportunity to use the Internet at school. The use of ICT ranges from online exercises and research to participating in an e-pal project with a secondary school in an English-speaking country. Students send each other e-mails, share experience, exchange views on cultural aspects of their country and learn about other ways of life. This encourages them to continue learning and increase their level of motivation. They see that language gives them access to information about a foreign culture. They learn about the life of other students in English-speaking countries and adopt a critical attitude to the socio-cultural context of the English-speaking world. Thanks to this kind of project, they will see the Internet as a tool to communicate with other parts of the world and learn about a totally different culture which has a great influence on our society.

Students will also learn how to use ICT for research, design, presentations, etc. We must teach them how to use the Internet effectively, be critical, filter information, select what is appropriate and what is not, etc.

Other resources used in class can be the students' own productions, attractive material, realia and visual prompts. Projects and group work or collaborative work will be very useful to provide diversity and develop key competences.



WHAT? WHERE? WHY?



Contributions

KEY COMPETENCES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

When teaching a foreign language, communication skills must be the focus of our lessons.

Communicative competence means carrying out oral exercises (listening, speaking); working on written communication (reading, writing) and developing audiovisual communication (ICT in the English classroom).

Information and communication technologies offer the possibility to communicate in real time with any part of the world and also give immediate access to a constant flow of information. Learning a foreign language provides the ability to communicate in it. In addition, the foreign language creates functional and real contexts for communication.

Plurilingual and intercultural competence goes hand in hand with the social and citizenship competence. Languages promote social communication, but are also a vehicle for communication and cultural transmission. Learning a foreign language implies a knowledge of the features and cultural facts linked to its country.

Finally, **literary competence** can be very useful for teaching intercultural competence by means of traditional songs, chants and stories.

When planning our lessons, there are many things to take into account - the first being our students (their age, their interests, their needs) – if we want to make our teaching meaningful to them. It is important to plan well, structure our minds and be able to write down clearly what we expect to do with them in class. As I was once told during my training as a teacher, we must not forget that we are planning the teaching of students, and not the teaching of a lesson. While we are planning, we must think of our students' present and future needs, and include the eight key competences and cross-curricular contents in our lessons.

I want to emphasise that a teaching programme must be a realistic programme drawn up in the context of secondary state education. We might have great ideas and great projects, but if they are not based on reality they will turn out to be unfeasible because they don't match the needs of our students. Or, being more positive, these great plans and great ideas might seem too ambitious to us, but if we try them out we might be surprised and see that our students are able to follow us.

What I mean is that, as teachers, we must not be afraid of taking risks, but we do need to keep our students in mind at all times and set realistic goals if we want them to learn something. It is all about striking a good balance.

The role of the teacher in the classroom is to act as a facilitator, a guide, an organiser, make all the students participate, engage them and make them feel involved in every task. We must foster creativity and use their own productions as classroom material.

To conclude, I would like to say that teaching is not a profession. It is a vocation, a passion. Our priority as teachers of English is to transmit our love of languages to others and make others appreciate them and see the use of and interest in learning them.

Training young people to become competent citizens and making them aware of the world they live in is a challenging experience. Teaching English goes hand in hand with teaching a number of other skills and values and with forming our students to become competent, respectful and autonomous citizens in today's society.

We cannot expect to behave the same way in different classrooms and in different schools. We have to adapt to our students and, just like chameleons, change colour to match the surroundings! Everything depends on our students. But the success of a lesson also depends on the way the teacher engages the students. We have to be motivated. We should always be critical about our practice and try out new ways of teaching. It is also important always to bear the students in mind, considering what they need and what they want to learn. We should be aware that we can also learn a lot from them.

In the following pages you will find a sample of a didactic unit for first-year ESO students. As a thinking teacher, I want to stress that this didactic unit is open to any necessary changes. It is just a way that I personally find easy to use when planning lessons, after comparing many different grids and discussing many different approaches, I would choose this one as it is, to my mind, the most straight-forward and complete grid I have found.

It is clear and interrelates everything, which is an important goal that we have to achieve as teachers: being able to relate our teaching objectives and contents to area objectives, key competences, area competences and assessment criteria.

Feel free to comment on it, criticize it and use it as you please. Food for thought!

AREA OBJECTIVES		KEY COMPETENCES	AREA COMPETENCES	CONTENTS	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA		
1. COMPREHENSION OF THE WORLD	LINGUISTIC AND AUDIOVISUAL C1	PLURILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL P	PARTICIPATE IN ORAL, WRITTEN AND AUDIOVISUAL INTERACTIONS P	PARTICIPATE IN ORAL INTERACTIONS ABOUT KNOWN TOPICS, USING STRATEGIES TO FACILITATE CONTINUITY WHEN COMMUNICATING AND PRODUCE CLEAR AND APPROPRIATE DISCOURSE.	1	GUIDED USE OF ICT TO SEARCH FOR, ORGANISE, EXCHANGE AND PRESENT INFORMATION.	6
5. CONTENTS, PLEASURE	ARTISTIC AND CULTURAL C2	ORAL COMMUNICATION O	UNDERSTAND/COMPREHEND ORAL, WRITTEN AND AUDIOVISUAL MESSAGES U	UNDERSTAND THE GENERAL IDEA AND SPECIFIC INFORMATION IN SIMPLE ORAL DOCUMENTS OR AUDIOVISUAL MATERIAL, EXPRESSED SLOWLY AND CLEARLY.	2	USE STRATEGIES TO BECOME AUTONOMOUS LEARNERS	7
6. AUTONOMY, ICT	INFORMATION PROCESSING AND DIGITAL COMPETENCE M3	WRITTEN COMMUNICATION W	EXPRESS ORAL, WRITTEN AND AUDIOVISUAL MESSAGES E	IDENTIFY THE MAIN, SPECIFIC AND GENERAL IDEAS IN SIMPLE WRITTEN DOCUMENTS, IN PAPER OR DIGITAL FORMS, ABOUT TOPICS FROM DIFFERENT KNOWLEDGE AREAS AND RELATED TO THE STUDENTS' AGE.	3	SHOW A RESPECTFUL INTEREST IN DIFFERENT LANGUAGES, CULTURES AND WAYS OF LIFE.	8
7. INTERACT IN A COHERENT WAY	MATHEMATICAL M4	AUDIOVISUAL COMMUNICATION A	LANGUAGE FUNCTION F	PRODUCE SHORT ORAL AND WRITTEN PRESENTATIONS PAYING ATTENTION TO COHERENCE, CLEAR PRONUNCIATION, CORRECT PUNCTUATION AND SPELLING, FOLLOWING AN EXAMPLE GIVEN	4	SHOW INTEREST IN COLLABORATIVE WORK	9
8. UNDERSTAND GENERAL AND SPECIFIC INFORMATION	LEARNING TO LEARN M5	LITERARY COMPETENCE L	REFLECTION ON THE LEARNING PROCESS R	OBSERVE REGULAR PATTERNS IN THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND INDUCE ITS RULES.	5		
9. READING COMPETENCE	AUTONOMY AND PERSONAL INITIATIVE P6		MULTILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL DIMENSION I				
11. LANGUAGE FUNCTIONING	AWARENESS AND INTERACTION WITH THE PHYSICAL WORLD H7		AESTHETIC AND LITERARY DIMENSION L				
13. RECEPTIVE ATTITUDE & PARTICIPATION IN THE LEARNING PROCESS	SOCIAL AND CITIZENSHIP H8						

DIDACTIC UNIT NUMBER: 1**TITLE : MY WORLD IN ENGLISH****MOTIVATION :**

In this unit students will get used to their teacher and find out how the course is going to work (contents, assessment and class rules). They will become familiar with classroom language and feel the need to use it. The teacher will have the opportunity to get to know the students, not only their level of English, but also their motivations and interests. In this unit, students will talk about themselves, assimilating the verbs *be* and *have got* in the present simple tense. They will talk about their family, what they are like, etc. The teacher is going to introduce the e-pals project and the partner school, so students will feel motivated and encouraged to learn more. Students will explore the website, write an introduction e-mail and receive their first answer from their new American e-pal.

SPECIFIC AIMS:

At the end of this unit students will be able to:
 know how the subject will work and how it will be assessed
 communicate in English in the context of the English class and talk about classroom objects
 become familiar with the e-pals project and explore online resources
 ask and give personal information
 compare different societies in terms of family relationships
 describe oneself and other people
 assess participation and progress in their learning process

METHODOLOGY :

All sorts of resources will be used (worksheets, blackboard, Internet, etc.). In this unit students will get engaged in learning English with the aid of an e-pal project and the use of new technologies. The teaching will be based on communicative skills though in this unit the teacher is the one guiding them most of the time. The sessions will be held both in the classroom and in the computer room. Pair and group activities will be used in order to make all the students feel involved (for example, show students will help elaborate the posters with the pictures and drawings). To learn a language interaction is absolutely necessary.

KEY COMPETENCES										AREA COMPETENCES					CONTENTS							AREA OBJECTIVES	SESSIONS	ASSESSMENT CRITERIA								
C1	C2	M3	M4	M5	M6	H7	H8	P	O	W	A	L	P	U	E	F	R	I	L	1, 5, 13	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9			
X			X			X		X	X				X					X			X								X			
X		X					X		X				X					X		5, 7, 13	2								X			
X	X				X			X	X				X		X				X	7, 8, 13	3			X	X				X			
X	X	X			X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X				X	7, 8, 9, 11	4		X	X	X				X			
X	X	X			X		X	X	X				X		X			X		1, 5, 7, 11	5			X				X				
X	X	X			X		X	X	X				X	X	X					5, 11	6			X	X			X				
X	X				X			X	X						X					5, 7	7			X	X							
		X			X			X			X			X				X		1, 6	8					X	X	X				
X	X	X			X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X				X	1, 6, 7, 11	9			X		X	X	X				
X	X	X			X		X	X	X		X	X						X		1, 5, 6	10		X			X	X	X				
	X				X			X	X								X			11, 13	11							X				

ATTENTION TO DIVERSITY:

Students will help each other when working in pairs or in groups. Stronger students will help weaker students in the conversations and other activities. All the activities are flexible and can be easily adapted to each student's needs.

ASSESSMENT:

Assessing the previous knowledge of the students and their starting point. Detecting students' needs (learning difficulties, high ability, etc.). All the information will be taken into account to foresee problems in the programme and change or adapt content in advance. All the activities will be part of formative assessment and there will be no written test at the end of this unit.
Oral exchanges with the teacher and the partners will be emphasised. Self-assessment is essential. Individual assessment will take into account every session's work, both oral and written.
Teacher's self-assessment at the end of the unit.

CROSS-CURRICULAR CONTENTS:

Use of new technologies ; geography

Session	Learning activities	Material	Session	Learning activities	Material
1	-Teacher's explanation of the course, its contents and assessment (15') -Name game (spell names) (15') -The English-speaking world (30')	Maps of English-speaking countries. Material provided by the teacher	2	-Vocabulary corners (alphabet, colours, numbers, school objects, etc.) (20') -Classroom objects and classroom language activities to learn useful vocabulary and expressions for the English class (40')	Vocabulary cards Chart produced by students Material provided by the teacher
3	-Expressing likes and dislikes; favourites, etc. (25') -Producing a poster in groups and displaying it in the classroom (35')	Dictionaries Poster	4	-Greetings/introducing oneself (10') -Finding out about a famous person (David Beckham) (20') -Asking another student questions (identity card) (30')	Text Teacher's guidelines for the interview to their partner
5	-Family vocabulary (10') -The British royal family tree (15') -My family: drawing my family tree and introducing its members (35')	Worksheets	6	The Simpsons' family (20') Talking about family relationships (40')	Worksheets
7	-Parts of the body (15') -Describing myself and family members (15') -What do little draculas look like? (30')	Little Dracula's family	8	-E-pals platform (username, password, etc.) Teacher's explanation of the project. School of Brewster, New York. Becoming familiar with the website, exploring online resources, etc.	Internet Material provided by the teacher
9	Writing an introduction e-mail to our foreign friend (name, surname, age, nationality, place of birth, family, etc.) and sending it to the teacher of Brewster School for pairing	Model for writing Internet	10	Pairing (15') Reading answers from our American e-pals (15') Information about the USA (30')	Internet
11	Progress check / Self-assessment	Self-assessment sheets			

Book now
for 2010-11



IPA Productions - Motivating English through theatre since 1997
Tel 933 219 346 ♦ info@ipaproductions.com ♦ www.ipaproductions.com

The Sting in the Tale

by Núria Casals i Arqué

Revisiting classical fairy tales through two unusual collections of bedtime stories.

Fairy tales such as “Cinderella”, “Snow-White” or “Little Red Riding Hood” are deeply embedded in Western children and adults, thus becoming a practical medium to practise the English language without being dependant on intercultural understanding. However, tales are perceived as childish and boring by teenager and adult learners, in part due to the sugar-coated Disney versions we are used to. *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* and *Revolting Rhymes* provide a completely different vision of the stories to that of Disney and the like. Both collections display an array of alternative characters who perform their roles within the borders of what seem to be classical stories, but end up reversing the complete morale of the tale.

Each author and book deals with the original narratives in a completely different way, yet becoming an equally pleasant reading for the advanced learner or the public in general. In his *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, James Finn Garner presents a wide range of alternative life-style characters depicted in a world in which political correctness does not only govern the language but also conditions the moves. Among many others, we can discover an independent-minded tailor who challenges absolute monarchy in “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, environmentally-conscious pigs who struggle not to become a Banana Republic in “The Three Little Pigs”, or a dwarf attending a Little People’s Empowering Seminar in “Rumpelstiltskin”. And all this variety of characters and situations is masterfully put across using politically correct language taken to the limit of ridicule. Part of the fun in reading Garner’s stories is to be found on the fact of recognising the irony through which he does not only criticize nowadays society but also our (or at least some people’s) obsession with political correctness.

In contrast, in *Revolting Rhymes* Roald Dahl clearly enjoys the use of blunt language. The stories are not politically correct at all, they are loud and using many spoken expressions both for the sake of rhyme and for the sake of impact. The reading of this collec-

tion becomes more dynamic and creates a direct effect on us. The first story, “Cinderella”, already shows the style we are about to encounter in the book:

“I guess you think this story

You don’t. The real one ‘s much more gory”

In fact, the narrator considers classical tales as being “phoney”, “soft” and “sappy”.

Again, this book offers a peculiar display of characters who do not match the classical stereotypes: the prince in “Cinderella” goes around chopping off heads, in “Snow-White” the king looks for a wife in a magazine and the dwarfs are ex-jockeys, Little Red Riding Hood keeps a pistol in her knickers. . . . Roald Dahl rhyming stories are extremely revolting, but at the same time extremely hilarious and enjoyable.

We, as English teachers, have been provided with a set of tools which can be used with our higher-level students. Apart from the usual reading activities, these stories provide us with other learning opportunities: expanding vocabulary based on politically correct lan-

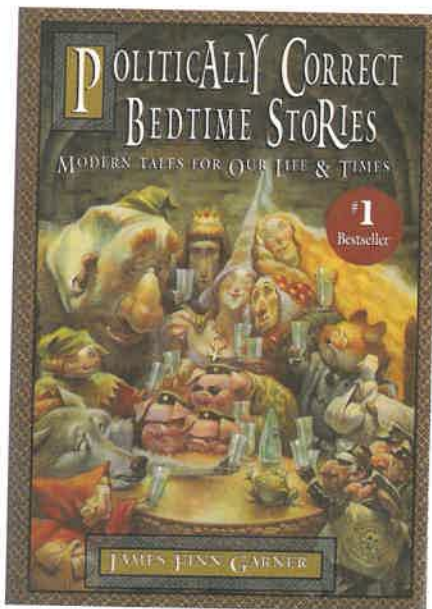
guage, picking culture-bound irony in the text, recognizing spoken bits of language, learning and practising pronunciation and intonation, and many others we may find for our students. However, if you happen to teach basic levels, you can always read the books for your own pleasure.

WORKS CITED:

Dahl, Roald. *Revolting Rhymes*. London: Puffin Books, 2001.

Dahl, Roald. *Revolting Rhymes and Dirty Beasts*. London: Puffin Audiobooks, 2005.

Garner, James Finn. *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories. Modern Tales for Our Life and Time*. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1994.





Oxford › making **digital** sense



Find out why Oxford is making **digital sense** for ESO

Three brand
new titles

In flexible
digital formats

Plus a World of
Support



Teacher's Support Service: 902 876 878
www.oupe.es

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS