



# TEACHERS OF ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

Ένωση για τη διδασκαλία της Αγγλικής γλώσσας στην Ελλάδα  
A volunteer non-profit professional association

## TESOL GREECE NEWSLETTER

**Ιδιοκτήτης**  
TESOL GREECE

**Εκδότης**  
Evangelia L. Couri  
Pipinou 20  
Athens 11257

**Διεύθυνση**  
Μικράς Ασίας 40-42  
4ος όροφος  
115 27 Αθήνα  
Τηλ.: 210 74.88.459  
Τηλ./fax: 210 74.88.411

**Επιμέλεια Έκδοσης**  
Eftichis Kantarakis  
Linda Manney  
Despena Dalmaris  
Joanna Dimitrakopoulou  
George Korbas  
Maroussa Pavlis  
Katerina Xafis  
Sofia Panaghis

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BUREAU SERVICES

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Επιμέλεια**  
NOTA DIGITAL  
BUREAU SERVICES  
34<sup>ου</sup> Συντάγματος 2-4  
& Ηφαιστίωνος  
157 73  
Γουδής  
Τηλ.: 210 7775388

**Τιμή Τεύχους**  
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## From the Chair



### A year of pleasant surprises and of "new" beginnings!

TESOL Greece will certainly try to meet this challenge. The Board has already planned a number of monthly events, as you will see in this issue, starting with a theme, which we have found is of interest to most of our members: "*Difficulties in the Classroom*." So, Sunday, September 24th is TESOL Greece's beginning **and** pleasant surprise.

Make sure you check the Forthcoming Events column and mark the 28th Annual TESOL Greece Convention dates and theme: Saturday and Sunday, 10th & 11th March 2007, "*The Arts, the Crafts, and . . . the Purposes (EAP, ESP, Exams) in ELT*."

And, as always, September brings us closer to the start of the school year. This is another opportunity for pleasant surprises and "new" beginnings. It is not important how big or small these are. The change(s) they offer and the challenge(s) they present make the difference and bring the "smile" to our hearts. And in our profession, we do need this "smile." I've always felt that a "happy teacher makes a happy learner and brings sunshine in the classroom."

*With my very best wishes for a creative school year full of the warmth and light of the sun,*

**Lilika Couri,**  
Chairperson, TESOL Greece

## From the Editors



Welcome back from the summer holidays! As we reminisce over our long and lazy days at the beach, or our pleasant summer evenings under a midnight sky, we relive those pleasant experiences that sustain us throughout the year. Now that you're feeling rested and rejuvenated, it's the perfect time to turn your attention to our active and vibrant professional organization, TESOL Greece, and the many benefits it offers us.



September is, for all ELT, a time for new beginnings, hence, the topic of this issue. New beginnings for TESOL Greece Newsletter include a new editor, who can only wish he can try to walk in our previous editor's shoes. Dimitris Primalis has left a hard legacy to follow and we thank him for

that. As you reenter the world of work and prepare for the new school year, we invite you to read the many excellent articles in this issue of your Newsletter. For a sensitive description of an island experience, read the article by **Barbara Varsama**, "End-of-year Trip to the Island of Corfu, 9 to 12 June 2006." You will find photos of this trip throughout the page of this issue. You'll also be very happy to find contributions from our regular writers, one by **Nick Michelioudakis**, "Teaching 1-1: Maximising Exposure," which presents several clever practical ideas for teaching private lessons, and another by **Jane and Nick Mantarakis**, in "A Teacher's Toolbox: Emotions and the Art of Teaching," in which they interview **Dr. Anastassios Matsopoulos**, Professor at the University of Crete and expert on emotional intelligence. Other interviews in this issue include "An Interview with **Christine Irvine-Niakaris**," a very thoughtful discussion on

the use of reading strategies in the English language classroom, and an interview with the **LABEL GROUP**, in "The European Language Label Campaign for year 2005 and the Award Ceremony." **Alexander Nikolaou** provides an articulate reminder of how deeply teachers influence their students in his article, "Motivation and Motivating Second Language Learners." For the publisher's point of view, read "So What's 'New' about a 'New' Coursebook?" by **Norman Whitney**, and find out what goes into the creation of a new coursebook. For a clear and thorough discussion of writing instruction in a Greek university context, read the article by **Anastasia Bardi and Gabriel V. Diamantis**, "EAP Writing Skills: Adapting the Writing-Centre Discipline in a Greek Academic Context," which also continues in our next issue. Once you have absorbed the new and useful information from so many sources, go back to the article by **Sophie Nikolettou**, "Break the Ice on Day One!" and get some great new ideas for welcoming and motivating your students on the very first day of class.

In conclusion, we thank all of our writers for their great contributions to this issue of the Newsletter, and we encourage you, our readers, to think about sharing your knowledge with the rest of us by sending us an article to [newslettereditor@tesolgreece.com](mailto:newslettereditor@tesolgreece.com). We wish you all a great new school year, and we really look forward to hearing from you, and to seeing you at an upcoming TESOL Greece event!

*Eftichis Kantarakis, Editor and Linda Manney, Assistant*

The theme of our next issue is Receptive Skills (Reading and Listening).

The deadline for submission of articles is 20<sup>th</sup> October.

The deadline for submission of advertisements is 15<sup>th</sup> November.



# A Message from the Secretary General



"Summer time and the living is easy..." goes the good old song. Listening to it, I felt these words might be a good start for my message to fellow TESOLers! Why? Because at the time I am writing this message it's summer, teachers are not working – well, not so hard at least – and therefore have some time to sit back, rest and reflect...

you are sharing all this with friends. The happy faces of the members who have just attended one more event and their encouraging words are the best motive for the TESOL Greece Board to try harder!

In my opinion, the feeling of sharing this experience is what counts more. Being a TESOL Greece Member is very important for your professional life but being a TESOL Greece Board Member helps you to better understand how lucky you are to belong to this large family of professionals!

On reflection, I decided to share with you the ways in which being a TESOL Greece Board Member have made my living not so easy perhaps but definitely very exciting at times!

Before I wish you a happy and relaxing summer, let me ask you to consider becoming a TESOL Greece Board Member. Come to the General Assembly this year and give yourself the chance to share this rewarding experience with the new friends you will surely make!

When I first decided to offer my services to TESOL Greece little did I know of the workload and effort required to plan and organize the monthly events that it offers to its members, not to speak of the Annual Convention, which is a real experience in itself! Nor could I ever guess how this work and effort would always – and in a magical way – be outweighed by the fact that

**Anastasia (Ansa) Lakioti**  
**TESOL Greece Secretary General**

# From the Corfu End -of- Year Trip





## Call for Participation

**The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual TESOL Greece Convention**  
*"The Arts, the Crafts, and . . . the Purposes (EAP, ESP, Exams) in ELT"*  
**The Hellenic American Union, 22 Massalias St., Kolonaki, Athens**  
**10<sup>th</sup> - 11<sup>th</sup> March 2007**

Dear Colleague,

We are pleased to announce the title, venue and date of the 28th Annual TESOL Greece Convention. Entitled *"The Arts, the Crafts and . . . the Purposes (EAP, ESP, Exams) in ELT,"* the Convention aims to offer a weekend of professional development through presentations, workshops and poster presentations on all aspects of ELT. The convention will be held at the Hellenic American Union **on the 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2007**. We have already contacted a number of first-rate international plenary speakers, and they shall be announced shortly.

We would like to invite you to participate actively in the Convention by giving a presentation, workshop, multimedia demonstration/workshop or poster presentation. If you would like to present, please send us the relevant information by **January 11th 2007**. The application form on the next page **must** be faxed to **(+30) 210 7488411** or mailed to **TESOL Greece, 40-42 Mikras Asias St., 115 27, Athens, Greece**. If you wish to email the application form to **chairperson@tesolgreece.com**, a version in Word can be found on the TESOL Greece website (**www.tesolgreece.com**). However, the other information requested in the form (the presentation title, summary, biography, etc.), **MUST** be sent as a Word document by email to **chairperson@tesolgreece.com**. We regret that we cannot accept handwritten or typed summary information which is faxed or mailed to the TESOL Greece office.

**Please note also that a professional presentation should not be used to advance a book, publisher, author, course or examination.** Members are particularly sensitive to the distinction between commercial and professional presentations.

We invite you to share this information with colleagues, so please feel free to photocopy this letter and the accompanying application form and post them in your office or staff room.

On behalf of TESOL Greece, we thank you very much for your interest and very much look forward to seeing you at the Convention.

*Best wishes,*

*The TESOL Greece Board*



**The 28<sup>th</sup> Annual TESOL Greece Convention**  
**"The Arts, the Crafts, and . . . the Purposes (EAP, ESP, Exams) in ELT"**  
**The Hellenic American Union, 22 Massalias St., Kolonaki, Athens**  
**10th - 11th March 2007**

## Presentation Application Form

This form **MUST** be faxed to (+30) 210 7488411 or mailed to TESOL Greece, 40-42 Mikras Asias St., 115 27, Athens, Greece by 11th January 2007. If you wish to email the form to [chairperson@tesolgreece.com](mailto:chairperson@tesolgreece.com), a version in Word can be found on the TESOL Greece website ([www.tesolgreece.com](http://www.tesolgreece.com)).

### First Presenter

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mr / Ms / Dr  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code: \_\_\_\_\_  
 State/country: \_\_\_\_\_ Home phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Work phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### Second Presenter (if applicable)

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Mr / Ms / Dr

### Title of Presentation (10 words max.)

\_\_\_\_\_

### Type of Presentation (please tick)

- 25-minute commercial (please specify organisation): \_\_\_\_\_
- 50-minute commercial (please specify organisation): \_\_\_\_\_
- 45-minute professional: please tick one of the following types:
  - workshop
  - talk
  - poster presentation
  - other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### Further information

Please include the following information in a separate Word document, to be sent by email to [chairperson@tesolgreece.com](mailto:chairperson@tesolgreece.com). Note: This information may **NOT** be faxed or mailed:

- presentation title (10 words max.)
- name(s) of presenter(s)
- a very short biography for the Convention Programme following this format:  
Name, Title/Job, Affiliation, City, Country  
e.g. Anna Pappa, EFL Teacher, Zeta Language Centre, Athens, GR
- a presentation summary for the Convention Programme (50 words max.)
- a presentation abstract (250 words max.)
- four or five keywords relevant to your presentation  
e.g. young learners      testing      CALL
- an indication of whether the presentation is aimed at teachers with 'Little Experience', 'Some Experience', 'A lot of Experience' in the subject being discussed.

### Equipment

All rooms will be equipped with a blackboard or whiteboard, TV, VCR and OHP. If you have any other requirements (such as a data projector, CD player), please specify:



# Forthcoming Events 2006-2007

## SEPTEMBER 2006

**Sunday, 24 September**

*Registration starts 9:30am, first presentation 10:30am*

The Indianapolis University Cultural Center  
(The former Goulandris-Horn Foundation in Plaka)

**"Difficulties in the Classroom"**

Confirmed speakers:

**Dr. Eleni Livaniou**

**Dr. George Pavlidis**

**Kyriakos Vassilomanolakis**

Estimated attendance: 150

*Opportunities for exhibition and sponsorship are available.*

## NOVEMBER 2006

**Sunday, 5 November**

**Registration starts 9:30am, first talk 10:30am**

IST University, 72 Pireos St., Moshato, Athens

**BIG SIG DAY**

A multitude of talks and workshops on topics in EAP, ESP, young learners, drama and theater activities, technology and language learning!

**Further details to be announced soon.**

**See [www.tesolgreece.com](http://www.tesolgreece.com) for further information.**

Estimated attendance: 200

*Opportunities for exhibition and sponsorship are available.*

## DECEMBER 2006

**TESOL Greece CHRISTMAS BAZAAR**

**". . . Make a wish for Christmas, Make a wish for TESOL. . ."**

**Sunday, 3 December, 10.30 - 18.00**

**"O Horos", 63 Sevastoupoleos St., Ambelokipi, Athens**

**Get into the Christmas Spirit!**

**Attend two "Christmas Crafts and Activities" workshops.**

Free entry to members, non-members, and their learners.

Bring your friends and enjoy "wallet"-friendly shopping!

## JANUARY 2007

**1. Saturday, 13 January**

**TESOL Greece PITA CUTTING EVENT**

**Further details to be announced soon. See [www.tesolgreece.com](http://www.tesolgreece.com) for further information.**

*Opportunities for sponsorship are available.*

**2. Saturday, 27 January**

**6th ANNUAL TESOL Greece PATRAS EVENT**

**"Survival in the ELT Classroom"**

**Further details to be announced soon. See [www.tesolgreece.com](http://www.tesolgreece.com) for further information.**

Estimated attendance: 150

*Opportunities for exhibition and sponsorship are available.*

## FEBRUARY 2007

**Sunday, 11 February**

**YOUNG LEARNERS & DRAMA/LIT EVENT**

**Further details to be announced soon. See [www.tesolgreece.com](http://www.tesolgreece.com) for further information.**

Estimated attendance: 100

*Opportunities for exhibition and sponsorship are available.*

## MARCH 2007

**Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th March**

Hellenic American Union, Athens, Greece

**28th ANNUAL TESOL Greece CONVENTION**

**"The Arts, the Crafts, and. . . the Purposes (EAP, ESP, Exams) in ELT"**

**Confirmed international speakers:**

**Martin Bygate**

**Martyn Ford**

**John Halliwell**

**Further details to be announced soon.**

**See [www.tesolgreece.com](http://www.tesolgreece.com) for further information.**

Estimated attendance: 1000

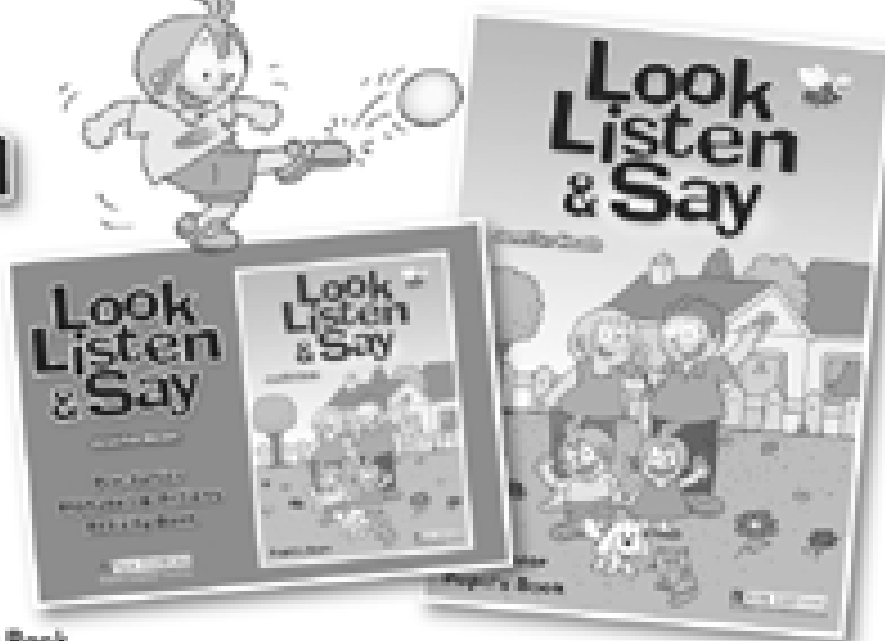
**Opportunities for exhibition, sponsorship of plenary speakers and promotional material, advertising in the Convention Programme, coffee breaks, Friday evening presenters' reception are available.**

*To receive the latest information on these and other TESOL Greece events straight in your inbox, send a blank e-mail to [tesolgreece-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:tesolgreece-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)*

# Look Listen & Say



*Look, Listen and Say* is a brand new pre-junior course which has been carefully researched and specially developed for children starting to learn English at a very young age.



## Look, Listen and Say Pupil's Book

Young learners will be delighted by the picture stories in *Look, Listen and Say*, and will gradually start to produce the key language introduced. Key words and expressions are practised simply and effectively without reading and writing.

## Look, Listen and Say Alphabet & Actions Activity Book

The *Look, Listen and Say Alphabet & Actions Activity Book* can be used to supplement the *Look, Listen and Say* course throughout the year, or at the end of the course.

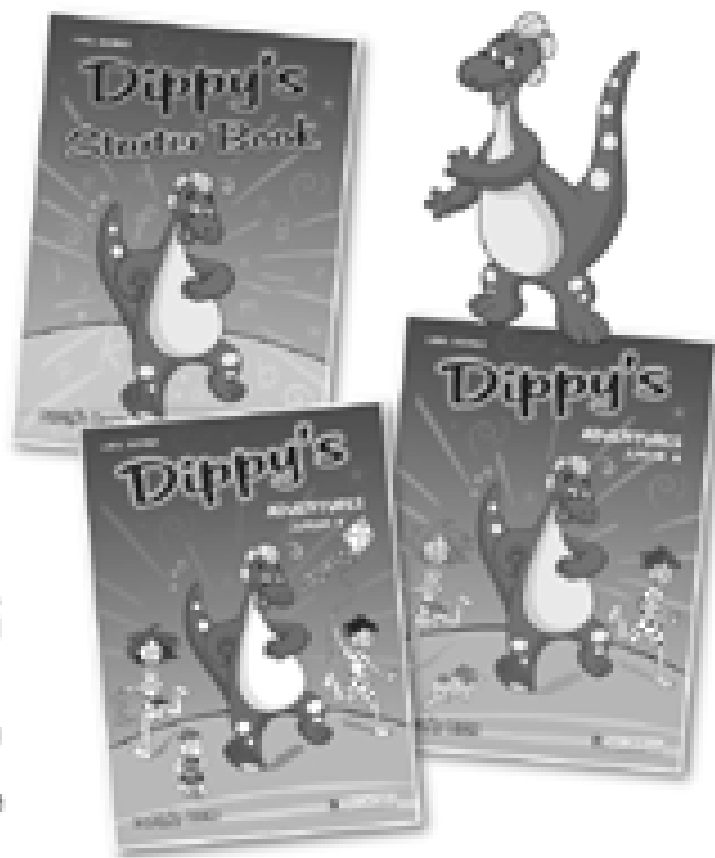
# Dippy's

ADVENTURES

*Dippy's Adventures* is an exciting new two-level junior course for young children learning English. It is designed to motivate and meet the needs of pupils in Junior A and Junior B classes.

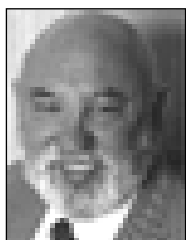
*Dippy's Adventures Pupil's Book A* and *Dippy's Adventures Pupil's Book B* contain:

- 12 carefully graded units.
- clear presentation of grammatical and lexical items.
- systematic recycling of the grammatical and lexical items presented.
- regular reviews.
- gradual development of listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
- plays and extra activities for the end of term and the end of the year.



# So what's 'new' about a 'new' coursebook?

by Norman Whitney



**Norman Whitney, BA, MA, PhD, Dip TEO**

*Norman Whitney studied in the UK and the USA. His ELT career included the posts of Head of EFL at Ealing College of Higher Education in London; editor of the English Language Teaching Journal (published by Oxford University Press); Joint Chief Inspector of The British Council's scheme for accrediting EFL schools in the UK; and senior consultant to the TEFL Unit at the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), with special responsibility for syllabus design and assessment procedures in teacher training. Norman is the author of many ELT books, the latest of which for Greece is *Team up!* He was also course advisor on OUP's latest senior ABC course, *Heroes*.*

*With other colleagues, Norman is currently researching how the internet could be used to help teenage learners, and their teachers and parents. He is currently writing a play for television.*

"Can you write a new book for ..." is the request that every author desperately wants to hear, but also dreads. Authors want to be asked because if a book or course is successful, the rewards can be great, not merely financially, but also psychologically. A success means that one has not wasted four years' work! But at the same time authors dread getting the request because writing ELT materials is very hard work, takes a long time, involves endless compromises, and sometimes ends in acrimonious disputes. All without any guarantee of success, financial or otherwise. Because for every course that succeeds, there are another two or three that disappear more or less without trace. For some authors (who may not in fact be the person responsible for failure), an unsuccessful course can cause anger, disappointment, embarrassment, and frustration. Worse, the lack of success can be hurtful and result in writer's block, and a lack of self-confidence on the author's part.

Writing for Greece (my experience is mostly with courses for Senior ABC classes) is particularly challenging. In my case, the first step is to collect as much information as possible, from anyone and everyone: students, teachers, school owners, sales agents, consultants, managers (in Greece); and editors, designers and the publishing house (in the UK). When I wrote my first senior ABC course (*Open Doors*), the process of collecting information was in its infancy. A few years later, when I wrote my second senior ABC course, (*Team up!*) the same process of collecting information had developed into a fine art.

Some teachers will be surprised to know that in my view, direct experience of, in this case, Greek classrooms is not a pre-

requisite for a course book writer. What is a pre-requisite is a basic empathy for teachers in particular, and for students in general. Teachers make a course into a success or failure. If an author does not understand how teachers think and feel, that author is at a great disadvantage. Authors who ignore or who do not understand their teachers, or who think that they are somehow superior to teachers, are unlikely to prosper.

What do teachers, students and publishers want from authors? Greek teachers are known for the importance they give to grammar: probably greater than in any other country in the world. But they also want, for example vocabulary, skills work, writing, and exam awareness and practice. Young Greek students want the same as other young kids around the world. They like stories, now much more acceptable to Greek teachers than, say, ten years ago, and young students like songs, amusing cartoons, humour, and masses of support. And – a surprise to many adults – children also appreciate structure, clarity, and security. Children want to feel that they are in safe hands. As for publishers and their colleagues in sales and marketing, they want one thing above all: something 'new', and of course commercially successful. For any author all the above amounts to a very tall order indeed – especially that demand for something 'new'.

I do not think that any of the elements such as grammar, vocabulary, skills, can ever be called 'new', though some are subject to fashion, and can go in new directions. Even in Greece, there is less clamour for grammar these days, and teachers have become much more sympathetic to the inclusion of child-friendly material, and cultural material. Years ago, some school owners were rather inclined to treat younger learners as 'adults in waiting' – usually waiting to take one of the Cambridge exams. From a school owner's perspective, it is probably never too early to start getting very serious about exam results. All that is perfectly understandable. Also, school owners – solid republicans all – used to be vociferous about not wanting anything 'cultural' in course books, for example about UK geography and history, let alone about parliament or the royal family! However, child-friendly material adapted to particular age groups is now *de riguer*, and the idea that language and culture can be easily separated is no longer so acceptable.

But if the 'elements' themselves (e.g. grammar, vocabulary, skills, writing) are not new, what is? I believe that 'newness' lies in an author's ability – or lack of ability – to assemble or merge all the different elements into a single, coherent package that can legitimately be called 'new', at least from some points of view. These days of course, the package includes not just a student books and teacher's book, but also workbooks,



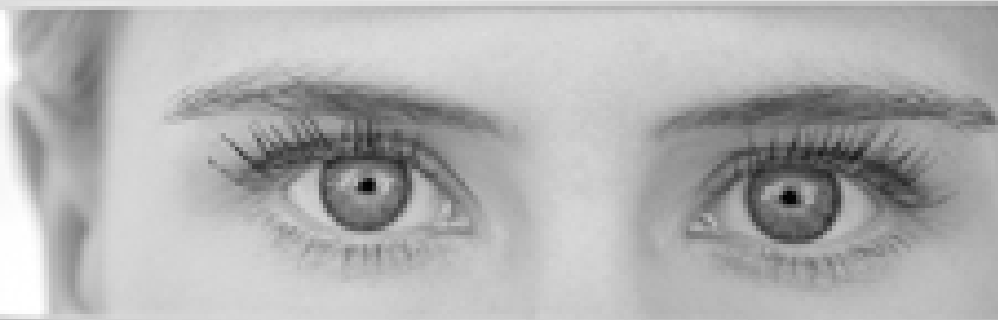
# Hellenic American University

The American University in Greece

**Master of Arts**

**in Applied Linguistics (MA AL)**

**a better point  
of view!**



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Athens Campus: 12 Kaplanon St., 106-80 Athens, (Metro stop: Panepistimio), Fax: +30 210 363 3174

Email: [university@hau.gr](mailto:university@hau.gr) - Web: [www.hau.edu.gr](http://www.hau.edu.gr)

**ΤΗΛΕΦΩΝΗΣΕ ΤΟΡΑ: 210 368 0950**

The Hellenic American University admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, physical disability, or veteran status to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students of the University. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, physical disability, or veteran status in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic or other school-administered programs.



companions, tests, CD ROMs, web-sites and so on. Not all of these are written by the author. But it is the author who, together with the team, sets the tone for the whole package, and gives a consistent, coherent structure around which the package can grow and be sustained. Assembling and merging all the disparate elements of a modern course into one 'new' package sounds easy to do. But it isn't easy at all.

That word *coherent* is very important, and takes us back to the question of the importance of the author having the correct information from everyone involved. I have been exceptionally lucky, in that my publisher's system for supporting the author with useful, detailed information, for example about syllabuses and trends in technology, is very good. If some of the information or advice seemed inconsistent or contradictory, I have been able to discuss the problem with the various members of the course team and to work out a possible solution. I well remember a Greek teacher insisting that she wanted more and more and more reading – 'but no new vocabulary please'. On the face of it, this was (to me at least) contradictory, but going back to that teacher and asking her to explain what she meant soon solved the problem.

Some people think that today, all the courses are the same. I don't think so. Certainly, courses today may have the same basic elements. But the *relationships* between the elements is different in each course, with the result that their inter-connectedness, even their order in the teaching / learning process, is different in every case, and sometimes genuinely 'new'. The treatment of songs is a case in point. These days, all courses have songs. But the position (literally) of songs in the unit and the *purpose* they fulfil in a course are what is really important, and potentially new. In other words, it is not enough simply to 'have' songs. They have to be well chosen, pedagogically *meaningful* and instructive, as well as fun. They have to 'fit' the learning / teaching methodology of the course as a whole. They must be at the right place at the right time.

Similar choices about where, when and why the different elements of any course might appear in a course have to be made about vocabulary, skills, exam material, and yes – you guessed it – even about grammar. Merely having lots of explicit grammar and grammar exercises in a course is not enough, especially for younger learners. After all, the grammatical content in any course for senior ABC is almost identical to the grammatical content of all other courses for the same students. What makes one course different from another is *where* the grammar (for example) is located, and *why*. Teachers and learners want to know *how* the grammar element in a course relates to every other, less grammatically explicit element in that course. Unfortunately, it is not always possible to work out how the various elements in a course interact by just looking at it, as, for example, at a weekend conference just before term starts!.

Whether or not the author's material is coherent is reflected most clearly in the work of the designer. Designers are the unsung heroes (and heroines!) of modern course book writing and their work often accounts for what seems to be, at first glance, the only 'new' thing about a course. If a design works well, it is usually because together with the artwork, it reflects and enhances the coherence and unity of the basic material presented by an author. Poor design on the other hand, may be result of a confusing or over ambitious manuscript, which is trying to please too many different people at the same time. This often happens if there is a change of editor, or if someone (e.g. a publisher, or even an author) keeps changing his or her mind about the priorities of the course. The end result can be a mess, for students and especially for teachers.

If I were to try and define the uniqueness of writing for Greece, I would say that Greece presents authors with challenge of combining relatively high level language on the one hand, with relatively young learners on the other. For, although the language level in Senior ABC can be relatively high (most students around the world meet the third conditional when they are rather older, if ever!), the students in Senior ABC are still young, and very much in need of fun, escape, care, protection, and support.

And although I said above that I do not think that direct teaching experience in Greece has been for me a pre-requisite as an author, I certainly think that close observation of classes, and conversations with key participants such as students, teachers, and school owners, has been an absolute must for me. In addition, my non-authorial professional life - as a teacher, teacher educator, and school inspector - gave me privileged insights into all types of classrooms. It was my job to see, hear, and feel beneath the surface of what was immediately visible in classrooms and institutions. I can only hope that my work as an author benefited from those experiences.

Finally, I have never forgotten what it was like to be a student, and to be taught a foreign language badly. Those memories are probably the key to my search for something better. It is up to others to decide whether any of my books have been, for them, genuinely 'new'.

# End -of- Year Trip to the island of Corfu

## 9 to 12 June 2006

*by Barbara Varsama*



The tradition for Tesol Greece to finish off the school year with a trip to an island or beauty spot continues with the same thrill and interest and is now in its sixth year! This year thirty members took a challenge and visited the island of Corfu.

Corfu is an emerald isle of the Ionian, upon which nature has generously bestowed spots as beautiful as Pontikonisi. Thick greenery crowds down to the shores of harmonious and quiet bays and golden beaches while picturesque Venetian villages emerge from forests of olive trees. The island has always had its admirers from Homer and Xenophon to Casanova and Buondelmonti, to contemporary artists from all over the world who have adored it and have recorded its unique beauty and quaintness in works of world literature, in paintings and in engravings. The mythology and history of Corfu is very rich and its advanced ancient civilisation produced works of the highest standard. This is the Scheria of Homer, the Kingdom of Phaeacians, the apple of discord in modern history between the English, the French and the Venetians all of whom passed this way and left traces of their presence.

Needless to say, that for most of us it was the first acquaintance with Nausicaa's magic island and although the trip was quite long we enjoyed every minute! We started off on Friday noon by coach. We passed through fantastic places such as the Corinth Canal, Rio -with the amazing bridge-, Mesologi -with the famous lagoon-, Agrinio, Amfilohia and Arta. The interchange of dense vegetation with valleys and mountain ranges with the view of the Ionian Sea made us feel really excited. The highlight of the day was sunset in Igoumenitsa. There we took the ferry. The long, slow trip -it took an hour and a half- made us more anxious to reach our destination. After we arrived at the port we took the way to a place called Kanoni. It wasn't as easy as we expected. Through the narrow streets we nearly got lost even though there were signs



everywhere. Finally we reached the top of Analipsi Hill. The luxurious hotel and Mrs. Lilika Couri's good word and smile comforted us. Some of the members ended the day with a drink at the bar of the hotel with live music.

On the following day, Saturday, we started our day with a delicious and filling breakfast and felt really relaxed by gazing at the superb view from the veranda of the Ionian Sea on the one side and the two little islets of our lady Vlachernai and Pontikonisi (Mouse island) on the other side. These places have to some extent become Corfu's trademark. Lots of us reached the first one by a causeway. The view must be one of the most frequently - photographed in Greece!

Then we were ready to stroll around on a guided tour of the town of Corcyra (as it was called) for almost two hours. We started from the entrance to the Old Castle or Fortezza; the fortifications themselves are a masterpiece of the art of the military engineer and the Castle is well worth a visit for that reason and from the view from it.

The large open area, which lies between the town and the Old Castle, is called Spianada. The original reason for which this area was not built on was so that the Castle gunners would have a clear field of fire at any besieging forces. Today, the southern part has been turned into a pretty park, with a bandstand, statues and shady walks, and the northern section doubles as a car park and cricket pitch. Cricket and ginger beer are among the few legacies of British rule; but it was the French who first had the idea of planting trees on the Spianada.

The building which stands on the western side of the Spianada is one of the Corfu town's chief glories. This is the arcaded row of cafes and restaurants known as the Liston, which was built during the brief period of French rule to plans by the engineer Lesseps, father of the man who built the Suez Canal. There is an almost identical series of buildings in the Rue de Rivoli in Paris.

We continued a little way along this area where a square opens out with the Church of St Spyridon. This church is the most famous religious monument in Corfu town (which has a total of 39 churches out of the estimated 800 on the island as a whole). The differences from ordinary Greek churches are apparent inside. There is no trace of the stylised painting and format rigidity of Byzantine art; this work has accepted and been influenced by the Renaissance. The ceiling was originally painted in 1727 by Paneyiotis Doxaras (1662-1729) who had studied in Rome and Venice. Doxara's original paintings were ruined by damp, however and replaced in the mid-19th century by copies produced by N. Aspiotis.

We left the church and visited the Town Hall which was originally the Loggia of the Corfiot nobility and it is the only building in the form to have been constructed of hewn masonry and in 1720 became a theatre and later an opera house. The

open space behind the Town Hall is flanked by two more important Venetian buildings: the Catholic cathedral of St James (1658) and the Catholic archbishop's residence (17th century; later the law courts and now housing the bank of Greece).

When the tour ended some of the members went back to hotel, some others had a cooling drink back to the Listen and a few visited the Palace of Sts Michael and George - a superb neo-classical building in soft Maltese stone which blends in nicely with the surrounding buildings and has a curving Doric facade. It was designed by Col. George Whitmore in 1819 as the residence of the Lord High Commissioner. Today there is the Museum of Asiatic Art, which consists of a large collection of 10.000 different items belonging to Mr. Gregoris Manos. To this rave collection were added more items from the collection of Mr. N. Hatzivassiliou, Mr. I. Siniosoglou and Mr. P. Almanachos.



Christine Irvine-Niakaris and Herbert Puchta gave their presentations in the afternoon after a relaxing siesta. First Christine Irvine-Niakaris focused on effective reading strategies for specific test tasks in L2, which may not only exist in examination conditions but also in the real world. The participants had the opportunity to explore the application of a model of reading strategy instruction to different texts. Herbert Puchta followed with two sessions: Firstly, on Student's Attention Span; various suggestions were made about how teachers can help students at Secondary School extend their attention span and achieve significantly better results in Language Learning. Secondly, on motivating our Learners by developing Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences. We left this practical workshop with a host of techniques and tips on how to motivate our students and make lessons more interesting and satisfying both for us and for them, by drawing on our Students' linguistic, spatial, musical, bodily - kinaesthetic, logical - mathematical interpersonal and intrapersonal cognitive recourses.

After nearly four hours of workshops, we gathered to the Corfu Yacht Club in the fortifications of the Old Castle and had

dinner and a lovely evening with a local-dance performance by the Corfu Lykio Ellinidon Dance group, compliments of the Corfu Palso Association. The dances of Corfu are delightful and expressive, with lively steps, an optimistic rhythm and graceful bending of the waist. The menu was also amazing and filling with local dishes such as Savouro, Burdeto, Sofrito and Pastitsada. The whole moonlit night was magic!



On Sunday we set off for an excursion to the Achillion which was built in 1890-91 for the Empress Elizabeth of Austria also known as Sissy and took its name from her expressed weakness for Achilles. It is an imposing neo-Classical building with fine gardens and an enormous statue of Achilles. There are also busts of the ancient philosophers, of Shakespeare and of the Nine Muses. The ground floor has a room with a small collection of mementos of the royal owners. After Elizabeth's death the house passed to Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany, who used it regularly. From the Achillio we went east towards the coast and entered Benitises, a fishing village for a swim and lunch. We returned to the hotel around 6 and lots of us had another walk in town for visiting some places of interest and shopping souvenirs and the famous liqueur Kumquat.

On our departure on Monday noon had the chance to see the dense block of buildings huddling close together from the ferry. We had mixed feelings of sadness and happiness together, but we had the same thought: that next year's excursion will attract more members and live similar exciting moments!





# An interview with Christine Irvine-Niakaris

One of our Corfu speakers, Christine Irvine-Niakaris, has answered some of our editors' questions on reading strategies and approaches. We would like to thank her for the interview that follows and wish to see her again soon in one of our conventions.

1. What are some examples of reading strategies that teachers can use to enhance or supplement the reading activities in their course books?

Students will benefit from explicit reading strategy training in class, provided the teacher is aware of the purpose of the reading task in the course book. Most course books today have a variety of tasks which focus on a range of sub-skills of reading from skimming and scanning, to reading for gist, reading for specific information etc. However, in many course books focus on the development of these sub-skills is implicit. Teachers therefore need to identify the sub-skill needed to complete the task and strategies that would enhance the use of specific sub-skills. Teachers sometimes miss this important link in the process mainly because they make the assumption that students already possess effective reading strategies and are able to adjust their approach to reading different types of texts. As it was shown in the research I presented at the TESOL seminar in Corfu, this is not the case. Students use the same strategies for reading all types of text – mainly the bottom-up approach focusing on the word level.

Below is a list of common strategies of skilled readers identified by Grabe and Stoller (2002). Teachers can reflect on how useful these strategies are for Greek L2 readers, but they should first consider the appropriate use of the strategies in relation to the reading tasks in the course book. For example, it would not be useful to practice strategies for scanning with an expository text which requires thorough understanding. Bear in mind also that from the research I presented, Greek students do not exploit their knowledge of cognates enough to guess the meaning of words in context so teachers should always be on the look out for cognates and get the students accustomed to recognizing them automatically, despite the orthographical differences.

- Specifying a purpose for reading
- Planning what to do/what steps to take
- Previewing the text
- Predicting the contents of the text or section of text
- Checking predictions
- Posing questions about the text
- Finding answers to posed questions
- Connecting text to background knowledge
- Summarizing information
- Making inferences
- Connecting one part of the text to another
- Paying attention to text structure
- Rereading

- Guessing the meaning of a new word from context
- Using discourse markers to see relationships
- Checking comprehension
- Identifying difficulties
- Taking steps to repair faulty comprehension
- Critiquing the author
- Critiquing the text
- Judging how well objectives were met
- Reflecting on what has been learned from the text

*Grabe and Stoller (2002: P.80)*

I think explicit reading strategy training is important in L2 reading. Students can't be expected to understand texts without using strategies to overcome the linguistic difficulties in an L2 text. If teachers help facilitate use of strategies in the classroom, then students are more likely to become autonomous readers outside the classroom and find reading in the L2 more enjoyable.

2. Some teachers see reading instruction as an interactive process with three main stages of activity: *before-reading*, *while-reading*, and *after-reading*. How does this process approach compare with the reading strategies approach? Are they compatible?

Yes, the interactive process of reading does lend itself to reading instruction which is designed to have the three main stages of activity: *before-reading*, *while reading* and *after-reading*.

The *pre-reading* stage helps to activate the students' background knowledge, helping them to interpret the meaning of the text. The *while-reading* stage of the lesson focuses on the skill of reading for detail and guessing words from context. Here, the teacher's role is to get the students actively involved as a reader and to work to get the meaning out of the text. The *post-reading* activities again involve interaction between the reader and the text. *Post-reading* activities allow for the student to respond to the text and evaluate the content. This stage of the lesson reflects a real purpose for reading.

However, in order for the interactive process to be effective, texts should be carefully selected in terms of topic interest as well as text difficulty. Regarding topic interest, we need to be in touch with our students' interests and select reading topics that students can easily relate to. Course books will inevitably have some texts which are less interesting to our students, so teachers should not worry about covering every single reading activity. Students will make more of an effort to understand a text they are interested in than one which they cannot relate to at all.

In terms of level of difficulty of the text, teachers should take care not to select texts that contain too many unknown words. Students will not be able to be engaged in the interactive process of reading if there are too many unknown words.



Nuttall (1996) suggests that a text should not have more than two to three per cent of unknown words on a page.

With an interesting text and appropriate level of text difficulty, teachers can produce their own three main stages of activity. It is of course much more helpful to busy teachers if these activities accompany the reading texts in the course book. My advice to teachers is to add this to the list of criteria for selecting course materials, as well as evaluating the level of interest of the topic and its potential for providing an opportunity for students, not only to improve their language skills, but to also read to learn about the world in general.

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## From the Corfu End -of- Year Trip



# Adapting the Writing-Centre Discipline

University of Piraeus

*by Anastasia Bardi and Gabriel V. Diamantis*

## Abstract

In Greek academic contexts the English language has been formally assigned an auxiliary role, as the language of instruction is Greek. Reality though suggests that this role should be expanded, particularly because a large number of graduates choose to do their post-graduate studies in English-speaking countries. Inevitably, the development and enhancement of students' writing skills is imperative. The main aim of this paper is to illustrate an experimental attempt to train students to write confidently and effectively in English for Academic Purposes outside the traditional and often inadequate lecture-theatre

## EAP Writing Skills: Adapting the Writing-Centre Discipline in a Greek Academic Context

An obvious starting point, but one which is not always consciously taken into consideration, is that teaching has to be adapted to the educational stage of students. Teaching undergraduates will require a different class design and procedures from teaching a postgraduate or a doctoral course. Not only because the aims will be different, but because the students' background, attitude, aptitude, rate, route and, probably, their learning style, will be different at these stages. In a world where the global overlaps and interacts with the local, undergraduate and postgraduate students of Social Sciences, at non-English Universities, should be able to transfer knowledge between English & their mother tongue, in this case Greek.

## Teaching situation in the Department of International and European Studies

In our teaching situation, the students of the Department of International and European Studies (henceforth D.I.E.S) at the University of Piraeus need to respond to the new local and global demands. To this effect, they must develop and enhance those skills that will make them move with ease between at least two different linguistic, scientific and cultural contexts (i). D.I.E.S was established in 2000. The module of English and Terminology is a core module - a compulsory academic subject taught in four out of the eight semesters in the course of study, which translates into about forty-four hours of instruction per semester. The language presented throughout the course is graded by levels of difficulty reaching an advanced level equal to C1 (i). The backbone of the course is the core materials we use. This is a definite strength of the English Unit of D.I.E.S.

The titles available to all cover a wide range of contemporary topic areas in business, finance, politics, diplomacy as well as public relations, current affairs and prevalent trends in a number of areas, such as computing, sales, management and so on. The topics dealt with cater for information as well as language input. Initially, this appears difficult and prompts some complaints. However, it does provide for realistic work in the sense that language operates as a medium in order to fulfil a real need, that is, as a communication medium to relate information. The range of topics can also be used to support research (collecting and selecting data) and presentation (spoken, written). In other words, they provide the ground for further work in academic skills in English, an indisputably valuable area for all students who plan to pursue postgraduate studies.

More specifically, the undergraduate course in D.I.E.S aims at familiarizing students with the specific tasks involved in using specialist texts and transferring information. Its objectives include:

1. Introduction of basic concepts in politics, international law, trade and finance.
2. Enhancement of research skills such as accessing a wide range of sources of information, selecting, recording and presenting data.
3. Introduction and training in specific areas of professional communication, for example, negotiations, interviews, presentations, business meetings and so on.
4. Use of language as a medium rather than an end in itself by helping students consolidate and utilize their available language resources in English.

At this point, it should be emphasized that attendance to the lectures is not compulsory. It follows that students in D.I.E.S - and most probably in other Greek Universities as well - end up forming three distinct groups, namely, the non-attenders, the occasional or irregular attenders and the regular attenders. The consequences and results of this categorization are discussed in the next subsection.

## Student populations in D.I.E.S

Generally speaking, upon University entrance, students form diverse groups of learners in terms of language as well as background. Most of them appear to have studied English for a number of years in private language schools. Unfortunately, very few have developed the skills required for realistic written communication in context. This is probably due to exclusive focus on exam preparation work and traditional teaching



approaches, which concentrated on 'learning about the language' rather than learning the language as a medium of communication in a social, academic or professional context. Furthermore, attitudes to language and language learning in general encourage a negative, indifferent or, at best, tolerant attitude to language courses at University. As a consequence, the ensuing student populations in D.I.E.S are the following three:

1. Non-attenders (they account for about 45% of the total number of students). They represent a diverse group, that is, on the one hand, we have students whose command of the target language is restricted to pre-intermediate level or below (including non-Greek students from Eastern European countries and transfer students from other Greek universities who have not attended comparable courses). On the other hand, we have students who overestimate their abilities and do not consider language courses important enough (including native speakers from Australia, South Africa, USA and occasionally Britain and proficiency-certificate holders).
2. Occasional/Irregular attenders (they account for about 25% of the total number of students). Working students are not always able to attend classes regularly. Another scenario in the context of the Greek academic reality is that some of them take turns in attending classes and then share materials and lecture notes.
3. Regular attenders (they account for about 30% of the total number of students). This is the category that benefits most from courses.

On the whole, by the end of their studies students can research and access a wide range of English medium sources including books and electronic materials confidently, organize and deliver papers and presentations, and produce acceptable short papers. This attests to the fact that there is an abundance of perfectly suitable material which can be used to develop writing skills, and that focus on process and procedure is of paramount importance in learning, and fosters autonomy.

## The Writing skill in EAP

Developing the students' writing skills in EAP contexts has always been a challenge. Given the teaching situation described in the previous section one can understand that a number of constraints hinder the learning process. Among the most prominent are the students' inexperience in producing pieces of academic writing and their lack of motivation for doing so. The former is something that can be fixed with appropriate training. The latter can only be remedied through raising students' awareness of their actual needs, an issue to be discussed later in the paper. In addition, there is the lack-of-time constraint in combination with irregularly sized classes.

As ESP practitioners, we felt these constraints had to be surpassed and solutions be devised so that our students would

be able to acquire appropriate writing skills for both their present and postgraduate studies. In our attempts to find the most suitable approach for the teaching of academic writing skills in the pertinent literature, we realized that most practitioners and researchers opt for a synthesis of approaches. Even so, the core ones are three in number, namely the product, process and genre approach(iii).

In a nutshell, the product approach focuses on the end product, that is, the text, and deals with surface linguistic features such as vocabulary, grammar and cohesive devices. Learners are provided with a model text, which they learn to imitate going through the stages of controlled, guided and finally free writing (Badger & White, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998; Jordan, 1997 among others). The process approach concentrates on the skills and characteristics of experienced writers, who plan, write and revise as often as necessary and consider purpose and audience thus producing reader-based prose (Flower, 1979; Zamel, 1983; Raimes, 1985). White and Arndt for example (1991), suggest a lesson plan, which takes students from a pre-writing stage and idea-generation strategies through a multiple drafting stage and various feedback techniques to an editing stage and the production of a final draft. The genre approach shares common characteristics with the product approach, namely the model text and linguistic focus. However, it goes well beyond these characteristics by placing emphasis on the social context in which writing takes place, thus considering purpose, subject matter, relationships between writer and audience, and so on (Badger & White, 2000; Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998; Jordan, 1997 among others).

To return to the issue of the synthesis of approaches to the teaching of writing skills, Jordan notes that 'EAP courses should, as far as possible, combine both a process and a product approach to academic writing' (1997, p.176). Dudley-Evans & St.John are in favour of 'the social constructionist approach', as they believe that 'it combines the strengths of both the product and the process approaches to the teaching of writing' (1998, p.118). Badger & White suggest 'the process genre approach, which is informed by a product, process and genre view of writing and writing development' (2000, p.160). In any case, the idea is that product, process and genre approaches all have positive aspects to offer to students and this is the main reason why we should spot those positive things and use them to our students' advantage.

To be more specific, the following points concerning learners' development of writing skills in EAP are made in Badger & White (2000), and they are said to include the strengths of the three core approaches discussed above:

- Learners need to be given knowledge about the structure of the language in a text (product and genre approach)
- Learners can learn through imitation of input, that is exposure to model texts (product and genre approach)

- Learners should be given training in the skills of planning and drafting (process approach)
- Learners should be made aware of the context and social situation in which writing takes place (process and genre approach)

A number of practical implications can be drawn from this list. First of all, some kind of input is definitely needed. Input can take different forms depending on the specific needs of individual learners or groups of learners (Badger & White, 2000). For example, a model of a particular genre is appropriate input for learners who are not familiar with it. Learners who already know something about the genre can be offered linguistic input in the form of language awareness activities or organizational input in the form of flow charts, depending on the degree of students' familiarity. Furthermore, students should be encouraged to 'consider their role as members of a discourse community and what this implies in terms of the style and stance they should adopt' (Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998, p.118). In this case, the required input may be knowledge of 'language appropriate to a particular audience' or skills 'in deciding whom the potential audi-ence may be' (Badger & White, 2000, p. 158). Finally, learners should be guided towards experiencing the dif-ferent stages of the writing process, that is, the thinking stage, which comprises generation, selection, grouping and ordering of ideas, and the subsequent writing stages, which comprise drafting, re-drafting and editing (Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998).

Coming back to the initial consideration of this section, that is the constraints in the Greek context, we can say that we have so far addressed the issue of students' inexperience in EAP writing by describing a suitable approach to the teaching of academic writing skills. The following section then addresses the thorny issues of lack of time and of irregularly-sized classes by introducing the writing centre discipline.

### The Writing Centre Discipline

In the American reality of colleges and universities the writing centre is an entire academic discipline dating back to 1950 and Robert Moore's article, in which he declared that 'writing clinics are remedial agencies for removing students' deficiencies in composition' (Moore quoted in Lerner, 2001, p.9). Back then, the major objectives of a writing centre were:

- To analyze students' writing difficulties
- To provide advice so that writing difficulties could be remedied
- To determine to what extent remedy has been successful

Since then many things have changed and the writing centre philosophy has expanded and moved well beyond the fix-it-shop idea. Writing centres nowadays help students become more effective writers. Their staff act as critical readers and this allows students to see how readers respond to their texts. What is more, students become

sensitized to the context in which writing occurs, so that they can achieve specific aims. Today's reality suggests that writing centres across America and Asia function along similar guidelines (see also the reference list of writing centre web pages at the end of this article):

- They are open to all students
- They offer individual tutoring
- They give students help and guidance at any stage of the writing process
- They clarify writing goals
- They address problems of organization and writing style
- They also deal with surface writing concerns, such as grammar and spelling

BUT

- They do not provide proofreading or editing services
- They do not write papers for the students

We came to realize that devising a writing centre course in our department would be a good solution to our problems and constraints. Our rationale has been that with some adaptation and modification the writing centre could cater for our students' individual needs, as these are defined in the next section. We also felt that it would be a suitable place for us to develop our students' academic writing skills, free from the pressure of too little class time and in the comfort of individual instruction. The following sections will hopefully reveal the 'what' and 'how' of our venture.

### Developing the D.I.E.S Writing Centre Course

Dudley-Evans & St.John (1998) among others refer to the five key stages in designing any ESP or EAP course: needs analysis, syllabus specifications, materials development, teaching/learning, and evaluation. Of course, as they correctly pinpoint, 'these are not separate, linearly-related activities, rather they represent phases which overlap and are interdependent' (Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998, p.121). This also happened in our case but let us unfold the story from the beginning.

Needs analysis

It has to be admitted that in Greece the English language issue of University students is rather painful. The average time since our D.I.E.S students took a language-proficiency examination successfully is three years back. It is perhaps worthwhile to point out that one of the main requirements for the candidates to get a place in this department is to take a language proficiency test in English. However, in practice a very low rate of those students proves to know English up to the level that their certificate or exam score reflects. It follows that the group of students in each semester is not totally homogeneous – a wide range of student backgrounds is usually the case. The question which arises is how can the practitioner obtain enough helpful information about their students' knowledge and skills



to ensure that they cover the appropriate materials, keep a good pace and provide enough feedback and support?

Possible ways are the following:

- Administer simple diagnostic tests in the first week of classes.
- Include supplemental instruction like review sessions, flexible office hours, additional reference material, sample problems and solutions, and models of outstanding student written work.

On the other hand, it is usually the case that the objectives of the practitioners often focus on what they will do in a course instead of what they want their students to achieve. Authorities in the field of applied linguistics have often claimed that teaching does not cause learning; instead, information is transformed into knowledge when a learner has to do something with it. Therefore, it is practitioners who should consider a broad spectrum of learning activities and make sure that the variety of learning activities included in the course matches the range of course objectives.

Towards this direction, we set up a needs-analysis project, which has been both small-scale and informal. This means that, as far as students are concerned, it has only involved the ones who actually participate in the writing centre sessions and not all the students who had initially signed-up. In addition, the two principal methods of data collection have been an informal interview and an informal letter to the practitioner. In both interviews and letters students have been asked to provide information concerning themselves (age, gender, nationality, previous knowledge of the English language etc), their past learning experiences (e.g. what kind of teaching the writing skills they are used to, what sort of techniques they like or dislike), their lacks or deficiencies in writing, and finally their expectations from the writing centre (c.f. Hutchinson & Waters', 1987, analyzing learning needs checklist and Nunan's, 1988, kinds of data in learner-centred curricula).

However, we also needed to collect some information about our students' present and target situation needs – the latter mainly referring to postgraduate studies (see for example Dudley-Evans & St.John, 1998; Jordan, 1997) and take into consideration the possible constraints in our project (West, 1994). The World Wide Web (or www) has proved to be a valuable source of information. There, among other things, we have been able to locate the academic writing genres, tasks and materials used in well-established writing centres. As Dudley-Evans & St.John put it, 'before they approach clients and students, teachers or trainers can trawl the literature for previous needs analyses, available materials, research findings. Not only are they able to do so but we believe that they must' (1998, p.122). Another important source of information has been the head of the English Language Unit of D.I.E.S, whose experience in both teaching and organizing ESP courses helped

us in first, successfully evaluating our www findings and second, coming to grips with any constraints. The results that have so far been derived from the needs-analysis project we have undertaken are summarized in Table 1.

## Goals and objectives

Articulating and organizing the setting of goals and objectives of a course is really a major and fundamental task as well as a crucial step since 'it provides a sense of direction and a coherent framework for the teacher in planning a course' (Graves 1996:17). It is the aim of the writing centre to provide students with the opportunities and skills required in order for them to become more effective writers in both their present and future academic contexts. As far as goals (iv) always transfer to the end if the phrase so as not to stop the flow of the sentence) are concerned, they have been defined as:

- To make students aware of the structure of different genres.
- To expose students to a host of model texts.
- To train students in the skills of planning and draft-ing.
- To make students aware of the context in which writing takes place.
- To sensitize students to alternative types of feedback.

Now, if objectives pave the way towards the achievement of the above goals, then this is what our students will do in order to get to their destination:

A. Activity objectives; these refer to the activities and exercises that the students will do and they appear further down (see List B activities)

B. Mastery objectives; these refer to what the students will be able to do as a result of their participation in the writing centre course:

- Students will be able to produce multiple drafts before arriving at a final written product.
- Students will be able to revise, edit and proofread their written work according to given feedback.
- Students will be able to handle academic writing tasks with confidence.

C. Critical thinking objectives; these refer to the learning skills that the students will develop:

- Students will develop critical thinking skills so that they can dig deeper below the surface of their writing assignments(v).
- Students will engage in critical writing .

The above three categories of objectives have been taken from Graves (1996, p.18) and slightly adapted.

*"this article and list of references continue in our next issue"*



# Break the ice on day one!

by *Sophie Nikolettou*

*Sophia Nikolettou was born in Athens. She is a practising EFL teacher with a fifteen-year experience in teaching Greek learners of all levels and ages. She holds a Master's Degree in Education and the RSA/ Cambridge Diploma (DOTE). She has also worked as a freelance translator and an ELT representative.*

The moment we hear the sound of the school bells again, we realize that holidays are over! Back-to-school time is probably the hardest and most stressful time of the year for students and teachers alike. So far as students are concerned, most of them feel nervous or even scared on the first day. Some of them do not even turn up! The insecurity one feels when becoming a member of a new group, the awareness of the difficulty and demands of the new class as well as the anxiety of meeting the new teacher are our students' most frequent worries at the beginning of the school year, and we all know that adapting to a new environment is not easy for them.

The teacher, on the other hand, needs to take all those problems into consideration and invest most of his/her time in creating comfort, keeping students interested and trying to win their confidence and prove to them that s/he cares about them as people. Unfortunately, half the battle is fought on day one as first impressions greatly influence our relationship with other people and students are not excluded. Thus, instead of setting the rules and talking about assignments and tests when meeting your new students, why not invest some time in some social 'settling in,' and turn their most dreadful day of the year into a day they will look forward to? The tips that follow may prove helpful!

## 1. Start from the classroom

We all know that the layout and design of our workplace can have a great impact on how we feel and work. Likewise, our students should be 'welcome' to a pleasant and harmonious 'working' environment. Make sure it is a place where students will want to spend time and not a cold, impersonal space from which they will want to 'escape'. You may use the following tips to create a student-friendly classroom.

(a) Put up a 'Welcome Back' poster on the whiteboard with the use of blue tack. You can easily make it with colourful cardboard and cut it in the shape of a flower or the sun. You may choose to design it yourself on your computer or download a picture from the Internet and have it enlarged in a photocopy machine. This will make your classroom look more pleasant and will also cover the whiteboard that students dislike!

(b) Arrange all the desks in a large circle with everyone facing the center, so that you can achieve eye contact with all students, give them the chance to meet each other better on the first day and make them feel like being in a friendly gathering instead of school.

(c) Make sure that everything is well-prepared on day one; you may need to visit your classroom some time before your students arrive to check if everything is ready.

## 2. Create a friendly atmosphere

Try to make your students feel 'at home' when entering the classroom. Choose some soft music to play when they come in so that they feel relaxed, and have some soft drinks and plastic cups to welcome them and wish them a fruitful year. Also, to help yourselves get to know each other faster you can prepare some adhesive labels for everybody to write their names on. There is a wide choice of adhesive labels in the market and if you want something more impressive you can prepare your own on your computer using pictures of animals, graphics, or cartoon characters. First, put one on your blouse with your name written on it and have students write their names with a colourful marker you will give them and stick the labels on their blouses as well. These will serve as reminders for the rest of the lesson.

## 3. Let students get to know you

At the beginning of the school year, the first concern in students' minds is what kind of person their new teacher is. So, after talking about yourself briefly, hand out a square piece of cardboard entitled 'Things I would like to learn about my teacher' and encourage students to keep notes on what they would like to ask you. Try to be comfortable and relaxed when answering their questions and use your humour for the very personal ones! In the end, you can ask students to stand up, wander around the room and look at each other's cards to find the most popular question. You can also ask them to conduct a small class survey and rate the questions from the most popular to the least popular one. Ask one student to report the findings to the rest of the class.

## 4. Encourage students to get to know each other

On the first day of school, students are usually hesitant when they are asked to talk about themselves in front of the class as they hardly know each other and they hardly know you, as well. You can make things easier for them by providing each student with a questionnaire on a list of topics such as their family, pets, hobbies/sports, favourite films, actors or singers. Have them write their names as well as their age on them and set a time limit. As soon as they have finished, tell them to exchange their questionnaire with their partner's and using the information on it present their partner to the rest of the class.

You may also give back to each student his/her partner's questionnaire and ask them to use the information and write a brief biographical paragraph about their partners. For the next lesson, each student will have to bring his/her funniest or strangest photograph and two pictures s/he would like to stick to the biographical paragraph (it can be their pet, favourite actor, a new friend they made during the summer etc). So, next time you see them they can bring cardboard, glue and scissors so that you can all create the class collage!

At the end of the first day, children will have a well-formed impression of their teacher and their fellow students. The more time and energy you all invest in getting to know each other, the more you will look forward to the next lesson!!

# « The European Language Label Campaign for Year 2005 and the Award Ceremony »



*Interview with the LABEL GROUP  
European Affairs Unit*

*Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (O.E.E.K.)*

## **Lately the Label Award Ceremony 2005 took place...**

On Monday 29 May 2005, the Label Award Ceremony for Year 2005 took place at the Divani Palace Acropolis Hotel at the centre of Athens. The event was attended by many people involved in foreign language teaching, such as teachers of secondary and tertiary education, teachers of Foreign Language Institutes, school advisers, representatives of the Pedagogical Institute etc.

The President of the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training, Professor Charalambos Botsaris, opened the event with a speech on the role of Multilingualism in Life-long Learning, followed by the award of the prizes for the Year 2005 Label Campaign. The seven programmes that received the Label Award 2005 were organized by state and private schools, by Foreign Language Institutes and the University of Athens Language Teaching Centre.

The event was coordinated by Mr. Loukas Zahilas, Director of European and International Relations, and Ms Vana Kanellopoulou, Head of the European Affairs Unit. Following the prize award, Ms Eleni Zervou of the European Affairs Unit (OEEK), made a presentation on the European Language Label and the Campaign for Year 2005. She referred to the history of the Label Campaign in the European Union and in Greece, a European initiative aiming at the enhancement of foreign language teaching and the promotion of multilingualism. There was a presentation of the thematic priorities for the Label Campaign 2005, while the priorities for the years 2006 and 2007 were announced. Both the European criteria and the procedure applied for the evaluation of projects were analysed. In the second part of the event, the winners of the Label Award 2005 made an extensive description of their projects.

## **Which projects received the Label Award for Year 2005?**

The Label Campaign 2005 had two thematic priorities, which were set by the European Label Group and were common to all European states. The first priority targeted at projects relevant to 'Early language learning', while the second one focused on 'Content and Language Integrated Learning (C.L.I.L.)'

projects. The following projects received the Label Award 2005:

1. «*The illustrated book in teaching English as a foreign language: Persepolis by Marjan Satrapi*», coordinator: Panagiota Dimopoulou, University of Athens Language Teaching Centre
2. «*The English elective programme for senior-year students at the Anatolia College, a Greek Lyceum*», coordinator: Philip Holland, Anatolia College (Thessaloniki)
3. «*Programme for the enhancement of French language teaching with the use of creative writing*», coordinator: Panagiota Kalogeropoulou, Gymnasium of Tzermiades (Lasithi, Crete)
4. «*Searching the method of Content and Language Integrated Learning – students create and learn: Information and foreign language*», coordinator: Vicky Katsiboki, Ionian Foreign Language Institute "Katsiboki" (Preveza)
5. «*European Union and the Constitution*», coordinator: Polyxeni Papaioannou, 4th Lyceum of Iraklio (Attica)
6. «*Learning French through play for children aged 6-7*», coordinator: Konstantinia Stefanidou, French Language Institute "Stefanidou" (Kilkis)
7. «*On apprend en s'amusant : Viens danser and sing with us*», coordinators: Alexandra Lapouridou and Penelope Stavridou, Greco-French College De La Salle (Thessaloniki)





**What are the criteria a programme should meet in order to receive the European Language Label Award?**

The awarded projects need to be comprehensive, ensuring that all elements involved – learners, teachers, methods and materials – help identify and meet the needs of the learners. Moreover, the initiatives should provide added value in their national context, leading to a quantitative and/or improvement in the teaching and learning of languages. In quantitative terms, this might mean involving several languages, and particularly those which are less widely used. In qualitative terms, it might mean the use of a better methodology than before. Some projects might involve the use of new technologies, even though this is not essential. What is most important is that a project makes good use of the resources available to it.

The awarded initiatives should provide motivation to learners and/or teachers, and should also be original and creative. In addition, initiatives should have a European dimension, based upon the linguistic diversity of the European Union and using the potential that it offers to improve understanding of other cultures by means of language learning. Finally, the awarded projects should include innovation which is transferable and a potential source of inspiration for others in other countries and contexts. They might, for example, be adaptable to the learning of other languages or to learning by different age groups than those originally involved.

**What were the selection procedure and the prize?**

The evaluation of the submitted projects was made by a Label jury including seven experts, all of whom are involved in language teaching. The selected initiatives received the special award "European Language Label – 2005", signed by Mr. Jan Figel, Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism, and by Mrs. Marietta Giannakou, Minister of National Education in Greece. Those awarded the "European Language Label Award – 2005" have the right to use the award logo in all their activities and printed material.

**Do you think that the aims of the European Language Label initiative were met for the year 2005?**

The European Language Label has two main aims. The first is to encourage new initiatives in the field of language teaching and learning. The second is to inform teachers and learners about such initiatives, and to inspire them to adapt the ideas and education methodology techniques concerned to their own situation.

In most European countries the Label campaign has been running since 1999, but in our country its regular implementation started in 2005 and the Organisation for Vocational Education and Training (O.E.E.K.) has been the body responsible for it. Even though this was the first time of running the campaign, a significant number of projects was submitted, all of which were particularly interesting. This demonstrates the interest of the education world in improving and promoting foreign language teaching and learning. Both the quantity of the submitted projects and their quality gives us hope and trust in the future prospects opening up for the Label initiative.



**What are the thematic priorities for the next years and who is their target group?**

The thematic priority for the Year 2006 Label Campaign is "Initial and in-service language teacher training" and aims at all those who implement innovative programmes in foreign language teacher training, such as school advisers and teacher trainers in training centers or tertiary education institutions etc. The deadline for submission of proposals for the Year 2006 Label Campaign is Thursday 20 July 2006.

As for Year 2007, the thematic priority of the Label Campaign will be "Diversification of the languages on offer". This priority will target projects that have found creative ways to offer more languages, and especially less widely used and taught languages, for instance by networking different schools, or by relying on community resources (local foreign residents, migrants, business operators) or on exchanges.

*For more information, you could visit our website (<http://label.oEEK.gr>) or contact us:*

O.E.E.K.  
 European Affairs Unit  
 41 Ethnikis Antistaseos Avenue  
 Nea Ionia, Athens 142 34  
 Telephone: 210-270 9108 / 09 / 10 / 11  
 Fax: 210-277 2208  
 E-mail: [tm.eth@oEEK.gr](mailto:tm.eth@oEEK.gr)



# Motivation and Motivating Second Language Learners

by Alexander Nikolaou

*Alexander Nikolaou is Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics and English at the Hellenic American University. He has taught EAP/ESP courses at various private tertiary institutions as well as general English language courses both in Greece and the UK and has also been involved in ELT publishing. He has a PhD from the University of Birmingham.*

Research has long confirmed experts' assertions that motivation is one of the primary determinants of second language acquisition. Research has also established that the teacher has a pivotal role in motivating L2 learners.

Based on their personal experience, the majority of teachers will agree that motivated students perform better than students who are not. However, while teachers are ready to explain their students' failure in terms of their lack of motivation, they are not equally ready to acknowledge their own share of responsibility in failing to make their students more motivated. It is true that each student brings into the learning situation a certain amount of positive or negative affect towards the learning object, but a teacher can be instrumental in engaging learners' interest and increasing the levels of positive affect. This point was admirably expressed by one of the participants at a Foreign Service Institute meeting in the following words "an ounce of motivation is worth a ton of pedagogy" (quoted by Alatis 1975:267). We teachers need to realise that motivation is a powerful tool, which in skilful hands could make up for pedagogical deficiencies.

Teacher awareness of students' motivational needs presupposes an empathic approach to the lesson. This means that teachers must look at the language learning process from their students' eyes (Clement et al 1994). The great majority of EFL teachers in Greece are not native speakers of English, which means that by definition they themselves have been language learners. Thus, when it is asked of them to place themselves in the position of their learners, all that is really asked of them is to relive their language learning experience. At the same time, teachers cannot expect that their teaching situation would be the same as their learning situation was. Each class we teach is a unique mix of learners with different abilities, personalities, learning styles, and even expectations, from any other class. Consequently, it is essential that teachers carry out an objective needs analysis at the beginning of each course and try to establish their learners' profiles.

Following are a number of suggestions which can help improve the teaching situation and, thus, learners' attitudes and motivation.

1. The teacher should set clear and specific learning objectives in each lesson explicitly formulated in terms of behavioural outcomes, e.g. "Today we are going to...by the end of the lesson you should be able to..." Pupils should also

be encouraged to set their own (realistic) sub-goals in writing at the beginning of the course which periodically can be reviewed by the teacher and the pupils in order to determine the extent to which the set goals have been achieved. In this way, pupils will be given a greater sense of control of the learning process by being actively involved in it and made personally accountable for success or failure. Such an attitude of personal involvement and responsibility leads to higher L2 motivation (Dickinson 1995)

2. The teacher needs to be a source of encouragement for the students by communicating high expectations in achieving the learning goals, regularly providing praise and positive reinforcement. This is a good way of increasing learners' self-efficacy, the perception that they will achieve the desired goals.

3. The teacher should provide meaningful and as far as possible authentic input in order to increase the attractiveness of the lesson. One of the main differences between the use of language inside and outside the classroom is that outside the classroom language is used as a means to an end, whereas "the language classroom is, by definition, a contrived context [in which]...the bulk of time...is devoted to practicing language for its own sake..." (Seliger 1983:251).

4. The teacher and the instructional materials should appeal to both dimensions of motivational orientation - integrative (learning English out of a genuine interest in the language or in order to understand, interact and even integrate with members of the target language community), and instrumental (learning English for practical reasons). This can be achieved by increasing learners' interest in the English language per se, e.g., by emphasising cross-cultural similarities and "establishing" in Kramsch's (1993:205) own words a "sphere of interculturality", which requires an empathic approach to the target language culture and enables learners to use the language to make their own cultural statements, and also by stressing the pragmatic importance of English as a tool of educational and career advancement.

5. Teachers do not operate in a social vacuum. Teaching is context-specific and is affected by both the micro and the macro social context. The micro context refers to the processes and dynamics within the classroom. The macro context includes the world outside (Holiday 1994). The classroom reality is shaped by wider social and institutional influences, and it is the teacher's responsibility to explore and gain a deep understanding of how the classroom relates to the macro context. Teachers often fail to motivate their students because they find themselves in conflict with influential motivational forces such as the institutional authorities, colleagues, and parents.



6. The teacher should foster cooperative learning. Cooperative learning has been shown to increase student motivation, improve students' relationships with one another and with their teachers. Cooperative learning promotes inter-dependence among students, discourages individualism and a competitive attitude that focuses exclusively on individual students outperforming their classmates (Dörnyei 1997). A number of strategies are available to the teacher to construct cooperative classrooms. For example, students are assigned to small groups and are asked to work toward single tasks. Each member of the team is responsible for a particular aspect of the task, as well as helping other members with their specific responsibilities. Individual contribution is rewarded by giving marks to each pupil for their relative contribution, but, in addition, a team score is calculated on the basis of the group's overall performance.

7. Teachers need to consider carefully their role as feedback and reward providers. According to Entwistle (1987:142) "in each learning context, it is important to consider which rewards and correctives are used, whether they are being used appropriately, and what behaviours are being reinforced." Feedback should be informative (e.g., comments on performance in classroom tasks and homework assignments) and provide both direct encouragement (e.g., positive comments on a task completed successfully) and indirect encouragement (e.g., focus on low effort as a cause of underachievement, and emphasise that the weaker pupils need to try harder in order to be successful).

8. Teachers should not hasten to adopt imported innovations and methodologies before examining carefully their compatibility with their classroom situation and the predominant educational ethos. As Holiday (1994) points out, state school EFL teachers who are nationals of the countries where they teach, often try to make sense of the methodologies developed in the BANA countries (Britain, North America and Australasia), intended for the wider private EFL sector without addressing the needs of individual socio-educational contexts.

9. Teachers' efforts to motivate their learners are to a large extent contingent on their own motivation. It has been suggested that teacher and learner motivation are related because teachers serve not only as educators but also as role models. Thus, a bored teacher communicates a very low degree of enthusiasm with their job, which sends the wrong message to the students. Teacher motivation has been found to be enhanced by intrinsic rewards (acknowledgment of teaching competence), autonomy, decision-making, collaboration, feedback, administrative support, reasonable workload, adequate resources, decent pay, and opportunities for professional development (Firestone & Pennel, 1993; Johnson, 1990; Rosenholtz, 1989).

Often, teachers are ready to blame students for lacking motivation when at the same time they themselves fail to impart in them the feeling of enthusiasm for their subject matter that a motivated practitioner ought to have. It has been pointed out that the teachers that have the greatest positive impact on their learners are not the more intelligent or

knowledgeable ones, but those who have a fiery enthusiasm and passion for what they teach (Csikszentmihaly 1997). However, enthusiasm cannot be fuelled by passion alone. It needs to be sustained by factors that lie outside the teachers' control, and which more often than not suppress it (e.g., professional stagnation, low pay, hostile management, lack of autonomy, institutional and collegial support).

Finally, it should be also remembered that the ultimate goal of language learning is communication and not the collection of certificates. Motivation, should, therefore, not be confined in the four walls of the classroom, but be the energising force that prompts learners to use the language they are learning, experiment with it and communicate through it; otherwise "a program that fails to produce students who are willing to use the language is simply a failed program" (MacIntyre, Dörnyei & Noels 1998:547).

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## Teaching 1-to-1: Maximising Exposure

by Nick Michelioudakis



*Nick Michelioudakis (B. Econ., Dip. RSA, MSc [TEFL]) has been working in the field of ELT for more years than he cares to remember. He likes to think of himself as a 'front-line teacher' and is particularly interested in one-to-one teaching. When he is not struggling with students, he likes to spend his time in a swimming pool or playing chess.*

Even if you happen to be one of those rare and elusive creatures, a brilliant teacher (that's me out for a start!), the chances of producing a marked improvement on your students with 2-3 contact hours a week are very slim indeed! What is more, students (ss) in a 1-to-1 teaching context often want to talk, which might mean simply recycling the language they already have. What we need are ways to maximize students' exposure to the L2. According to Krashen, comprehensible input is a necessary condition for successful second language acquisition (in Carter & Nunan [eds] 2001). Here are some ways of providing comprehensible input to students.

### READERS

The easiest way is to give ss a reader at the end of each lesson. The advantages are many: it is fun, it establishes good learning habits, it gives students a measurable sense of progress and, more importantly perhaps, it gives the teacher (T) something to talk about during the following lesson! There are many series available; three of the best are the *Cambridge English Readers*, the *Oxford Bookworms* and the *Penguin Readers*. In the past, most companies published only the classics which students often found boring. Now, however, the Cambridge series contains only original fiction specifically written for EFL learners, while Penguin have included in their list a number of major film adaptations such as 'Love Actually' or 'The Godfather'. The key is not literary quality according to a narrow traditional definition; rather, it is quantity and variety! (Richards & Renandya [eds] 2002).

### SHORT STORIES

As ss get older/more advanced, the choice in readers becomes more limited and the books get bulkier. At the same time ss have less and less free time. Then you get to the point where they can actually tackle unsimplified short stories. All of a sudden you are spoilt for choice. There are hundreds of short stories easily available on the net or in collections – some specially selected for EFL learners. The fact that there are so many of them means that learners can choose the genre they like - be it crime, horror or science fiction. With books ranging from 2-3 pages to more than 40, you can choose the ones which best suit your learners both in terms of length and content. Oxford have published five excellent collections in their grey *Bookworms* series.

### MAGAZINES

Think of your teenage ss - given a choice, would they read *Little Women* or *Cosmopolitan*? Tom Sawyer or Top Gear? Magazines are in general a lot more attractive than books, because of their small size, better quality paper, glossy photographs, topical content and - not least - a great variety of topics for ss to choose from. Publishers have noticed that and now there are special magazines available for EFL ss. Two excellent series are the *Mary Glasgow Magazines* ([www.link2english.com](http://www.link2english.com)) and the *Eli* series ([www.elimagazines.com](http://www.elimagazines.com)). One advantage of the former is that they come complete with T's notes and a handout with activities for ss inside each issue.

### DVDs

Let us think about our learners once again - would they prefer to (a) read a book, (b) peruse a magazine or (c) plonk themselves in front of the TV to watch 'Friends'? I would go for (c). The motivational potential of DVDs is immense and I have had students who are unwilling to do anything else, but will gladly watch their favourite series on DVD for hours and hours. One great advantage of the medium is the option of switching on/off the subtitles. In this way, ss can focus on listening (off) or expose themselves to spoken English (on) which often finds its way into their productive language. One might argue that DVDs are produced for native speakers and are therefore unsuitable for EFL learners. This is not the case, however, since most learners are prepared to put up with a certain degree of ambiguity (itself a good thing) while the visual element provides such strong support to the language that ss often form a pretty good idea of what is happening. As an extra bonus, the situational context helps the learners understand when it is appropriate to use certain words/expressions.

Which DVDs should we choose? Well, the good thing about movies is that they come in many different genres, so it would be easy for us to find one which ties in with the topic of our lesson on a particular day. However, many movies may contain lots of action but little language. In my opinion, the best choice is sitcoms which rely on verbal humour, like 'Friends', 'Sex and the City' (despite, or rather because of its risqué content!) or 'Frasier'. Ss get caught up in the lives of the characters and will do (almost!) anything for the next DVD! Moreover, the growing familiarity with the characters makes it even easier for learners to understand what is going on.

### AUDIO TAPES/CDs

While I cannot be 100% certain, I am prepared to bet good money that fewer than 10% of the 20 or so people who are going to read this article have ever listened to a story/play on tape/CD. *Why?* According to Lewis (1993), through reading we improve our vocabulary, but it is through listening that we



pick up the grammar of the L2. Also, quite apart from the fact that extensive listening is excellent for auditory learners, it can have a novelty value for everyone and it can boost motivation. Moreover, unlike DVDs, audio tapes/CDs activate the ss' imagination, while the voice of the actor(s) can help bring the story to life, which does not happen when you are simply reading a book. In addition, lacking the visual supports the ss have to rely on their understanding of language; if they do not understand it, they will fail to comprehend the story.

Which tapes/CDs? Nowadays, there are many 'listeners' available. These are readers on tape, graded for level just like the books. These are good for ss up to FCE/CAE level. For advanced ss, however, there are lots of unsimplified books on tape/CD which are simply wonderful, though they are harder to come by than books. My own not-so-secret weapon is recordings of BBC radio/TV comedies. Ss simply love them! The way I use them is I set the context and we listen to the first part together (for the importance of supporting ss with listening, see Underwood 1989). Then they have to listen to the rest at home and answer some questions or correct some mistakes in a summary.

### CD-ROMs

For sheer motivational value, CD-ROMs are almost impossible to beat! There is something about their interactive nature that makes them irresistible. The ones I use fall into three categories. By far the most interesting are educational CDs, which are nevertheless game-like. Scholastic have produced two excellent series (*Carmen Sandiego* and *The Cluefinders*) where the player has to accomplish a mission, while solving puzzle after puzzle in the process. As many of the tasks are linguistic and the characters speak in English all the time, ss get lots of exposure! Another one is the DK series. These are educational CDs focusing on such subjects as history, animals or the human body, but they are so wonderfully produced that they become addictive! Finally, there are the animated story books like the Disney series. These are brief versions of the major Disney films, where the story unfolds in a few 'pages' in which the user gets to see a short text, listen to it and watch it come to life on the screen. These are perfect for younger learners. Unfortunately, CD-ROMs suffer from a serious drawback: as soon as a new version of Windows comes out, they very often cannot run and they become useless.

### How to use all the above

#### 'Sell' what you do to the ss

Most ss believe that 'unless it hurts it's not doing you any good'. Moreover, they are used to grammar or vocabulary activities which emphasise 'discrete item' learning with a specific goal at the end. Consequently, it is vital that you explain to them the rationale behind extensive reading/listening; otherwise they may simply see it as a waste of time (Dornyei 2001).

### Provide a total product

It is up to you to provide the books/tapes/DVDs. Ss and their

parents are simply too busy with other things to go out and look for such materials. Moreover, it reflects positively on you if you take care of everything related to ELT so that your clients do not have to think of anything once they hire you. The initial investment in readers/magazines may be considerable, but it will pay off in the long run. Moreover, ss often have old readers they will never read again, which they will be only too glad to give to you if you ask them!

### Routine vs. Variety

Ss appreciate a certain degree of predictability. My ss know that they are going to get one book/short story each time and often one DVD as well! However, it often comes as a pleasant change to them if instead of a book they get a cassette or a CD-Rom for instance! Ss should never be 100% certain what you are going to do next!

### Choice

If you have a range of materials, give ss a choice. The simple act of choosing between, say, one book and another, commits ss to reading it! Sometimes, ss may choose a book only to discover that they simply find it too boring/difficult. Rather than do nothing, I have told my ss that in such cases they should choose something else to do instead.

### Level

Ts often worry about getting it just right. This need not be so. Generally, the experience should be enjoyable and effortless for ss, so the level should not be too high. If in doubt, give ss something easier; they will still benefit (Richards & Renadya [eds] 2002). Having said that, though, I would also like to add that if ss like the content a lot, they can often tackle books well above their linguistic level.

### Introduce the materials

Do not just give ss the book/tape/DVD. If you are familiar with the story, spend some time setting the context and introducing the characters. It helps if you tell ss what happens in the beginning - after all, the hardest part in reading a book is getting into it! Do not tell them everything, however, as that spoils the joy of discovery for them.

### Do not spoil the experience with tasks

Many readers contain questions at the end or language activities. Similarly, many Ts feel they are not doing their job unless they ask ss to write a summary or something else on the book/tape. Do not do that (P. Prowse - TESOL Convention 2003). First, most ss find it boring and second, it frames the activity as 'school work' - something you do so that the T can assess you. As far as possible, extensive reading/listening/watching should be seen as something which is done for its own sake.

### Exploitation

Once the ss have read the book or watched the movie/episode, however, make use of that during the next lesson. Here are



some possibilities (for more ideas, see Richards & Renandya [eds] 2002 – p. 297).

**Telling the story:** The simplest idea- all ss can do that. If you pretend not to know the plot, this provides an excellent info-gap - a reason for the activity (see previous article).

**Role plays / Dialogues:** The s and the T can act out a scene from the book and record it. Alternatively, they can write up the script for a dialogue/scene and then compare the two versions.

**What happens next:** Not all stories/episodes end with the death of all characters! 😊 The s and the T can write the possible continuation of a story. For instance, what is going to happen in book 7 of the Harry Potter series? This works perfectly with series on DVD as you can check your predictions immediately afterwards!

**Discussion:** This is the most authentic activity. T and s simply talk about the story, the characters, the relevance of the theme to their own life, what they liked or did not like, etc. - exactly what we all do after we have seen a film for instance. The T should not just set the reading task and then check that it has been done. It is vital that the s is given the chance to reflect on the reading experience (Hedge 2002).

**Write a review/personal response:** This could be given as a task after the s has read the book/watched the film, so as not to spoil the experience. The activity works really well if the s has particularly enjoyed the assignment. It also helps if you tell the s that you want to use this review to get other ss interested in the story (Dornyei 2001). In this way there is a genuine

communicative purpose and the ss are writing with a specific audience in mind.

Now compare an activity like reading a book at home and discussing it afterwards to what normally happens in an EFL classroom. For one thing the former is enjoyable. Moreover, unlike most of the language manipulation exercises we find in coursebooks, it is holistic. The emphasis is squarely on meaning- and this should be the focus of any subsequent discussion. On top of all that, extensive reading promotes learner independence by developing a strategy that the s can use without the T. Last but not least, it frames the teacher-learner encounter as an equal one (Murphey, 1991). So, to quote Renandya and Jacobs 'Why aren't we all doing it?' (Richards & Renandya 2002).

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## From the Corfu End-of-Year Trip





# A Teacher's Toolbox: Emotions and the Art of Teaching

An interview with Anastassios Matsopoulos, Ph.D. *by Jane and Nick Mantarakis*

*[Jane Mantarakis is presently teaching at the American Community Schools of Athens, Greece and Dr. Nick Mantarakis is currently the director of the Psychico College Gymnasium..]*

Howard Gardner, in *Frames of Mind* (1983), proposed a theory that changed the way in which we view intelligence. Initially, Gardner stated that each person has at least seven intelligence preferences, two of which are Intrapersonal Intelligence and Interpersonal Intelligence. Intrapersonal Intelligence is the ability of a person to understand his emotions and act on the basis of that self-knowledge. Interpersonal Intelligence is the ability to make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations and feelings of others and to respond effectively. The term Emotional Intelligence was first suggested by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and was further developed by Daniel Goleman in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* (1996). In his framework of emotional competencies, Goleman describes four domains: Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, and Relationship Management. According to Goleman, these emotional competencies are skills that can and indeed must be learned.

Researchers that identify traits of effective teachers have shown that good teachers must be knowledgeable in their respective fields, have a clear sense of what they are teaching, set goals for themselves and their students and be able to manage their classrooms well. As was pointed out in "A Teacher's Toolbox" (TESOL Greece Newsletter 89) a truly effective teacher, however, a) knows his/her students and understands their needs, b) can differentiate instruction in order to reach those needs and give every student in the classroom the opportunity to learn (Mantarakis, Mantarakis, Nelson, 2006).

In an interview with Dr. Anastassios Matsopoulos, professor of School Psychology and Counseling at the University of Crete, the role of students' emotions in learning and how educators can take them into account for more effective teaching were addressed. According to Dr. Matsopoulos, emotions and emotionality (how one feels about what s/he learns) is a significant aspect of learning to which educators should pay close attention.

Q. Dr. Matsopoulos, you have been involved with research in the area of Emotional Intelligence especially as it relates to teaching and learning. What do you believe are the most important characteristics of an effective teacher?

A. I believe the Emotionally Intelligent Teacher (EIT) is an educator who not only attends to the cognitive side of

teaching which involves preparing lessons, curricular materials, and assessments, for example, but also pays close attention to the emotional development of students and utilizes the power of emotions to make learning more substantial and enjoyable. The EIT realizes that Emotional Intelligence needs to be cultivated and will find ways to offer choices and respect the different paces of learning among students. The EIT will set standards for expected behavior but will respect student responses and provide for discussing values and learning objectives.

Q. What are the main emotional competences or job skills that must be developed and practiced in order to be a more effective teacher?

A. Teachers need to be alert to their own emotions and to reflect often on how their tone, attitude and temperament may affect the interaction with their students. Simply asking oneself "How do I feel today?" can give useful information since the "emotional baggage" one brings to the classroom may affect the learning environment. Emotional self-awareness reflects the importance of recognizing one's own feelings and how they affect one's performance. Likewise, teachers need to try to identify and be understanding of students' emotions as they are expressed both individually and through the general mood of a group. Noting "How are they feeling today?" allows the teacher to modify plans for the instruction, the content and demands on the students. This implies that the EIT is a professional who can "read a situation" or "read emotions of students" and is flexible to make the adjustments necessary for productive learning.

Q. Besides thoughtful planning of lessons and activities to cover curriculum objectives, what else do teachers need to do to be more effective in their teaching?

A. The more connections teachers can make to the students' personal lives, interests, and previous experiences through a variety of teaching methodologies, the more they will enhance students' learning and provide for clearer access to new information and understandings. The EIT adjusts or modifies the learning material and lesson plans when necessary to fit the immediate needs and emotional climate of the class as much as possible. Monitoring students' interest levels, differentiating content-learning and pacing of teaching according to the students' abilities, and presenting material in ways based on students' emotionality will certainly motivate students and contribute to more focused learning in the classroom.

Q. What are some useful strategies to consider when proceeding with lessons and learning activities?



A. Successful teachers combine and balance multiple strategies in order to effectively accomplish curriculum goals within the social context of learning. They recognize that humor and laughter break the ice and can be utilized to put students at ease and focus their attention on tasks to be done. The social aspects of learning are extremely important. Teachers need to encourage and develop students' interpersonal skills through cooperative learning activities. A sociogram (a device that elicits perceived social relationships) may be useful to teachers as they group and regroup students to facilitate stronger working relationships among students. The EIT also pays attention to students' displays of **destructive emotions for learning** such as boredom, disappointment and the feeling of helplessness if success is not experienced with the learning process. Ongoing feedback and intervention should be the expected practice in classrooms as teachers work towards directing students to attend to their own behavior. Direct questioning techniques, reflection and the use of checklists and rubrics, as well as periodic "on the spot assessment" are helpful as indicators of how students are feeling and progressing and can be effective for guiding students and facilitating purposeful learning.

Q. More specifically, how can teachers tap or apply Multiple Intelligences to create a more positive emotional classroom environment?

A. The EIT's goal is to cultivate as many as possible of the students' multiple intelligences. More and more educators are realizing the importance of using an interdisciplinary approach to tap into students' capabilities and to foster students' positive connections to the real world. Some teaching activities and materials that promote self-management and social relationships include: peer tutoring, social events, cooperative learning, simulations, board games, role-playing. Armstrong (1994) comments that such learning experiences require that students "teach it, collaborate on it, interact with respect to it". In addition, self-checking materials, journals, self-esteem building exercises, individualized instruction and choices offered for independent study help students connect what they're learning to their personal lives and make decisions with regard to it. Of course, classroom experiences that utilize music, movement, technology, hands-on learning, number games, theater arts and field trips with authentic connections to topics studied are all examples of MI activities which make for an exciting and meaningful learning atmosphere.

Q. In closing, what other helpful hints would you suggest to teachers as they strive to be more attentive to the emotional climate within their classrooms?

A. Keep reading. Keep trying out new methods. Definitely don't miss out on what can be learned through collaboration with colleagues even to the extent of peer coaching. Teachers can get a good sense of the emotionality

within their classroom from others' observations and feedback. Stay tuned to your students needs and interests. Listen to what students have to say because their actions and words tell teachers a great deal about how effective the instructional program is and whether or not the students are gaining as much as they could. Remember there comes a point at which each teacher needs to sift and filter all the tips, helpful suggestions and knowledge gained from others and to develop his/her own style of delivery within the classroom. Stay alert, positive and flexible and discover how your own personality and emotionality contributes to engaging students in powerful learning and encourages them to interact as positive, responsible beings. Teaching is definitely an art and emotions play an enormous role as we teachers construct and weave together all that we feel is important in providing for positive, purposeful learning experiences.

"A Teacher's Toolbox" draws attention to the importance of planning and implementing teaching techniques strategically in order to reach out to all students and maximize the learning potential of each student. Throughout the interview Dr. Matsopoulos has underscored what research offers teachers in terms of practical ways they can utilize their emotional competencies to uncover the different levels of emotional and social maturity of their students and to cultivate a creative, supportive, productive, inspiring learning environment with their students.

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