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“SA NOSTRA” CAIXA DE BALEARS

Obra Social

SA NOSTRA Caixa de Balears
Dear colleagues

APABAL is reaching its sixth anniversary with a lot to celebrate. We have to celebrate first of all that we have managed to keep the association alive, overcoming all sorts of different hassles. Endless, bright and boring working hours have been devoted by board members to put together a broad range of activities that were to be received with generosity and enthusiasm by many of you, members and non-members.

Four annual conventions have taken place with an average participation of 150 teachers from all levels; lectures and film series have been organized each autumn aiming to motivate not only teachers but also students and members of the community interested in the English language and culture; groups of teens have been sent to England to improve their English; pub quizzes, teachers’ days, contests, and Creative café have given us the chance to meet, share and learn from one another.

In the middle of it all, the CITA project (Cooperation and Innovation in Teachers Associations) made its appearance. This two-year project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union (2014_1_ES01_KA200_003382) , which comes to an end coinciding with the publication of this magazine, has injected a lot of energy and innovation to the association which we hope will help launch new activities in the upcoming years. The project has been coordinated by APABAL and carried out with IATEFL-Hungary

(International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) and LAKMA (Lithuanian Association of English Teachers). We want to thank our Lithuanian and Hungarian companions in this adventure for their creativity, expertise and good humour which have helped smooth the rough patches. We also need to thank the 22 members of APABAL who have participated together with an equal number of Lithuanian and Hungarian teachers in the three main training activities organised by the project: a course on CLIL that took place in Vilnius, the Budapest course on the English Teacher’s Profile and the two jobshadowing experiences in Lithuania and Hungary. Without their enthusiasm and knowledgeable experience, the results wouldn’t have been as interesting. Check out their experiences in some of the articles of this issue if you want more information.

The findings and results of the project are available to all in the publication “CITA Guidelines for Running Sustainable Associations” (online version at www.apabal.com)

The APABAL Magazine, whose last issue we are proud to present to you now, has been with us all along this process. Six issues have been published, some of them monographic (number 5 was on CLIL), which together with our webpage and Facebook have been useful platforms of communication open to the contribution of all.

Needless to say that membership issues: payment of fees, renewals and all the paperwork involved in organizing and certifying the activities have been some of the hardest matters we’ve had to deal with. Still, the board wants to thank all members for their cooperation and attendance. May we ask though an extra effort from you? What can you do for us?

- Bring at least a colleague or a friend every time you attend any of our activities.
- Pass on all APABAL information to colleagues and friends who could be interested
- Volunteer for the board, we need fresh air.
- Set up a SIG group (Special Interest Group): CLIL, special needs, talented students, ICT…
- Organise APABAL activities in your area (part forana, Menorca, Eivissa, Formentera?)
- Send contributions to the APABAL magazine
- Present your experiences at the annual convention

Let us celebrate then that we are here with renewed strength and initiative but remember, WE ARE ALL APABAL, WE NEED YOU! Enjoy your well-deserved summer.

The APABAL board

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JOB SHADOWING REPORT: HUNGARY & MALLORCA

by Enikő Siró and Aina Trias
**Introduction**

English Language Teacher Associations play an important role in promoting the professional development of teachers in diverse countries and regions. Within the framework of the EU funded Erasmus +CITA (Cooperation and Innovation in Teachers’ Associations) project, three teachers’ associations (Hungary (IATEFL-H); Lithuania (LAKMA) and the Balearic Islands (APABAL)) brought teachers together to learn from each other by sharing experiences and perspectives. Using job shadowing, the project offered an excellent opportunity for teachers to learn about themselves as communicators, as personalities and as representatives of their countries.

The experience consisted of visiting the host teacher’s school for five days in order to observe lessons; participate in different activities; get involved in the school routine; and, moreover, adapt methodology ideas for the ‘home’ school to ensure that this educational experience would be enriching for everyone. But job shadowing also consists of much more. The experiences in a foreign school are also combined with learning about a foreign country by visiting interesting sites and learning about its history; meeting local people and becoming immersed in its culture.

The Hungary-Mallorca partnership was undertaken by two primary teachers, Enikő Siró (Budapest) and Aina Trias (Esorles). Their job shadowing experience consisted of two components:

**Job Shadowing in Budapest**

The first job shadowing took place at the Karinthy Frigyes Hungarian-English Bilingual Primary School in Budapest, between October 4-10, 2015. For this segment, Aina visited Enikő’s English and Civilization classes, observing how the thirteen year old students prepared for the Cambridge PET exam and how they were helped by native English teachers from the USA. Aina also participated in school activities and told Enikő and her students about Mallorca, her school and students in Esporles, and Mallorcan traditions and festivals. The students were really interested in learning about a foreign country, especially about a different language. Aina was asked to speak a little Spanish; the students were so enthusiastic that some of them started to learn Spanish. Aina also observed Enikő’s colleagues’ CLIL lessons (content-language integrated learning) and the native teachers’ English lessons in lower primary classes. Additionally, Aina learnt about the features, benefits and challenges of bilingual education and CLIL for teaching a foreign language to young learners. She also got insights into the Hungarian educational system and learnt about professional issues in workshops, talks and informal chats at the 25th IATEFL-H Conference. During their free afternoons, Enikő and Aina visited famous sights in Budapest and tasted homemade Hungarian food.

**Job Shadowing in Esorles**

In the second project segment, Enikő travelled to Mallorca and spent a week between February 7-13, 2016 at Aina’s school in Esorles, CEIP Gabriel Comas i Ribas. This school is different from the Hungarian Karinthy School because it isn’t a bilingual Catalan-English school. All the subjects are taught in Catalan, except for Spanish and English. Enikő observed all of Aina’s lessons; she got involved in the class dynamics and did some peer teaching. Enikő also taught some language games that matched up with the course material and did a presentation about Hungary, Budapest, Lake Balaton, her school and festivals for the 6th graders. Pupils asked questions about Hungarian traditions and everyday life. The interaction with Enikő provided students with a motivating example of why it is important to study English as a means of making contact with people from other parts of Europe, and for getting information about different countries.

Enikő Siró is an English teacher at the Karinthy Frigyes Hungarian-English Bilingual Primary School in Budapest. Aina Trias is an English teacher at the CEIP Gabriel Comas i Ribas in Esporles.
Enikő participated in school activities that Aina had organized for the general school curriculum, e.g., Pancake Day: the students were privileged to have two English teachers helping them to make pancakes and organize the pancake race. Enikő also learnt about Mallorca’s educational system, the curriculum, and requirements for teachers and students; plus, she got an inside view into staff meetings and the English teachers’ weekly planning sessions.

Enikő’s Mallorcan week ended with the APABAL conference, where she gave a presentation about her experiences in the CITA job shadowing project. During their free afternoons, Enikő and Aina went sightseeing, including a fantastic Palma city centre tour, guided courtesy of Apolònìa Alou.

Conclusion

During the project, the two teachers discussed and compared their experiences and methodology issues, and developed and shared materials appropriate to their teaching situations. By learning about each other’s culture (including everyday life, history, famous sights, traditions, food, etc.) they had the opportunity to compare and contrast their two countries and widen their horizons.

The project’s impact goes far beyond the two-week collaboration. On a professional level, the two teachers will keep in touch by sharing materials and ideas by e-mail and by getting the students to exchange letters. On a personal level, the two weeks represent the beginning of a lifelong friendship.

Both Enikő and Aina found job shadowing to be a very meaningful project wherein teachers and students gain a lot by learning about other cultures while sharing the same language. English became a necessity for communicating with foreign teachers and students. This is the best way to demonstrate that English is a valuable tool for opening doors to knowledge.
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Aina Trias with Enikő’s pupils in Karinthy School (Budapest)
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES OF JOB SHADOWING: THE EXPERIENCE IN VILNIUS AND CALVIA

by Apolonia Alou and Lina Morkuniene
Job shadowing can be one of the greatest, most versatile experiences for teachers – as long as the international counterparts from the different countries understand what they are supposed to do, both as guests and as hosts. In the case of my Lithuanian counterpart and myself, we perceived job shadowing as an exchange programme for teachers, which involved spending time alongside the host teacher in their day-to-day work and leisure time.

The job shadowing experience we are going to describe took place under the umbrella of the CITA project (Cooperation and Innovation in Teachers’ Associations) funded by the European Union’s Erasmus+ programme and it was coordinated by APABAL, the Association of Balearic English Teachers. APABAL has joined forces with LAKMA (Lithuanian English Teachers’ Association) and IATEFL-H (the Hungarian branch of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language) to develop teacher training activities that impact not only the participants but also their school environment, among other objectives. Job shadowing came in handy as a triangular reciprocal activity where representatives of all the associations could peer-teach and observe good educational practices in foreign contexts; and the experience of hosting a teacher from another country would be very enriching for the schools involved.

Lina Morkienė, an English teacher who works at Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium in Vilnius, and Apolonia Alou, an English and Social Science teacher at IES Bendinat in Mallorca, were involved in a job shadowing exchange in October 2015 and February 2016. These job shadowing weeks were a truly positive experience, mainly because we both understood it in the same way. We not only considered job shadowing to be an exchange programme learning about a foreign country’s education system, but also as a way to get involved in the host person’s way of life. The main objectives were to observe the lessons and to compare the different methodologies and education systems in order to learn from them and improve not only our daily practice but also, whenever possible, to introduce interesting projects and initiatives at our schools.

At Vilnius Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium (October 11th – 18th, 2015)

Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium is one of the most prestigious secondary schools in Lithuania. Established in 1985, it has sixty-five teachers and about eight hundred students with a high level in various subjects. It is a ‘Gymnasium’, which means that the students need to pass entrance examinations to be admitted. Foreign languages, above all English, are relevant subjects. In Lithuania, students start learning English at the age of eight. They have two English lessons a week in primary school; three in middle school (until the age of fourteen). In ‘Gymnasium’ (high school for fifteen to nineteen year olds), the English class is split into two groups, in which there are never more than fifteen students. Lina (my Lithuanian counterpart) has mainly taught the eleventh and twelfth form students (aged seventeen to nineteen) whose English level is B2 and C1. We shared the week’s twenty English lessons in order to be able to observe each other. Due to the fact that we had to prepare a talk for the International LAKMA conference (focused on CLIL),

Apolonia Alou, (IES Bendinat, Calvia, Mallorca) and Lina Morkienė (Vilnius Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium, Vilnius, Lithuania) are English teachers who participated in job shadowing as part of an international CITA project. Apolonia has degrees in History and English Philology. She has been teaching English and History in English (European Section) in Bendinat since 2005 and coordinates the European Section programme. Lina has a degree in English Philology and has been working at Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium since 2010; she is also a founder of the school’s European Club, through which teachers and students have participated in various local, regional and international projects.
we decided to concentrate most of our job shadowing practice on this methodology. Thus, we did it in a way that not only involved Apolonia’s CLIL lessons, but also Lina’s lessons: she arranged a successful Chemistry lesson coordinated with the content teacher. David Marsh’s definition of CLIL as any activity “in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject, in which both language and subject have a joint role” (Marsh 2002:58) summarized our motto and was the starting point for preparing nearly every lesson we gave. Lina was especially interested in observing a real CLIL lesson (Apolonia has been teaching Social Sciences in English for more than 10 years), as it is not a common methodology at the Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium. Therefore, it was arranged that Apolonia would teach the Geography lesson “Advantages and Disadvantages of Tourism”, a topic related to one of the first term’s units. It was also decided that Apolonia would talk about the Spanish education system, focusing on the Balearic Islands and IES Bendinat High School peculiarities. Apolonia also gave some Spanish lessons in English, again using CLIL methodology. The Lithuanian students’ response was extremely positive. They were continually interacting with both teachers and showed great interest in each topic.

**At IES Bendinat in Palma (February 8th - 12th, 2016)**

The preparation for working at IES Bendinat went quite smoothly as we had already had the first job shadowing experience in October in Vilnius. During our week in Vilnius, we planned some of the Palma classes, so we felt quite confident when preparing the teaching material for the IES Bendinat students. We frequently discussed the job specifics via e-mails; prior to Lina’s arrival, everything was totally ready for a new teaching experience in Palma. Various other teachers observed several of the classes. Host teacher Apolonia Alou presented the following three lessons: Crisis in the Middle Ages and Gothic Architecture, during which students made presentations about the magnificent Palma Cathedral (both CLIL lessons); an analysis of the movie *Freedom Writers*; and, Job Sectors. Two other English Department teachers presented other classes that were observed: reading comprehension in a mixed ability class and horror story writing with native English speakers, taught by teacher Maite Ruiz; and, unsolved mysteries with teacher Carmen Moreno. Observing lessons from three different teachers provided deeper insights into various methodological approaches, and also the chance to get acquainted with the students’ evaluation system and gain some experience in working with a language assistant.

Lina also gave some lessons. Probably the most interesting one was Exploring Lithuania, where students became acquainted with fascinating facts about Lithuania while watching a presentation and some short films; then, they filled in crosswords and questionnaires to check how much they had learnt. Another lesson was A Brief History of Lithuania; and, Life and Traditions of MBG (Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium). The week at IES Bendinat (just as in the case of Vilnius) was extremely beneficial. The best ideas for organizing the class, different teaching methodology and evaluation schemes were learnt. It was extremely rewarding to sense the curious eyes of students eager to broaden their horizons and know more about the world outside their country.
Several differences between the two schools were noticed while working at Mykolas Biržiška Gymnasium and IES Bendinat. The first difference was the number of students learning foreign languages. In Spain, there is a huge class for language teaching with more than twenty students. However, in Lithuania, a class is split into two groups and usually has twelve to fifteen students in each group. That was the first challenge to cope with. Other new things included the length of the lessons and the break system. A lesson is forty-five minutes in Lithuania and there is a break after each class; in Spain, the lessons are fifty-five minutes and the first three lessons are in a row without any breaks. That was another issue to be experienced and gotten used to. Another difference was how students address their teachers by their first name in Spain, while in Lithuania -- no matter how friendly a teacher is with students -- the latter would never dare to call the teacher by their first name.

Conclusions

All things considered, after spending a week in a different educational system and an utterly strange environment and after meeting a wealth of people and being shown around, we have realised how interesting the job shadowing experience is for a teacher’s professional growth and for motivating students to get involved in the experience. It is essential to get in contact with the partner teacher several weeks prior to the visit, to find out about the other person’s personality, curriculum, needs and expectations; as well as for discussing the activities, materials and the whole procedure for the upcoming week. Once the job shadowing has taken place and the best of the observations has been made, teachers can improve their performance based on what they’ve learnt. Despite some minor challenges that job shadowing may have, it is definitely a beneficial experience that we would dive into again without hesitation, if offered the chance. All in all, job shadowing has been a rewarding time full of challenges that will help us improve our own teaching in the future. We would like to express our special thanks to APABAL and LAKMA board for giving us the chance to take part in the project.

Bibliography

Marta Torrens, directora de Ocidiomes.

-¿Cuáles son los programas lingüísticos que más pide la gente este año?

-En las academias nos piden mucho preparación de exámenes oficiales de la Universidad de Cambridge. Además este año están siendo muy solicitados otros idiomas como el ruso o el alemán. Para los niños a partir de 3 años, tenemos los campamentos de inglés… ya se están apuntando muchos alumnos, porque es la mejor manera para aprender inglés jugando. Y para niños a partir de 10 años, la demanda se centra en los cursos en el extranjero. Los destinos son fantásticos: Bournemouth, Cambridge, Dublín, New York… ideal para aprender idiomas y disfrutar viajando.

- ¿Cómo empezó Ocidiomes?

- Empezamos hace casi 30 años con cursos en Reino Unido, y desde entonces hemos ido ampliando los programas y los destinos. Hoy tenemos colegios en más de 50 ciudades de todo el mundo y en Mallorca organizamos actividades extraescolares y campamentos en muchísimos centros educativos. Además tenemos 3 academias Ocidiomes en las cuales impartimos clases de chino, italiano, ruso, catalán o francés. Sin olvidar el área de empresas, con las que gestionamos formación bonificada. Aprender a coste cero.

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- Sí, y de hecho, desde hace años contamos con el área de Responsabilidad Social, porque consideramos que es fundamental ayudar a los que más lo necesitan. Ocidiomes invierte parte de sus beneficios en acciones sociales. Tenemos convenio con Cáritas y con la Fundación Indig y también, hemos realizado aportaciones a colegios en la India, hemos hecho donativos para niños de Mallorca que viven en hogares de acogida, impartido clases de inglés a los alumnos en riesgo de exclusión social y en la actualidad, tenemos un programa de becas y descuentos especiales para parados y jubilados.

- Sin duda, les aconsejamos estudiar un curso en el extranjero. Es la manera más eficaz y rápida. Estando en Londres por ejemplo un mes, aprendemos más que aquí durante medio año. El programa de curso convalidable en Irlanda y Estados Unidos es el que aconsejamos para jóvenes de 10 a 17 años que quieran tener un nivel bilingüe de inglés. Además de aprender el idioma, vivirán una experiencia única. Cuando yo estuve un año en Estados Unidos terminé pensando y soñando en inglés, esto es lo que consideramos el objetivo ideal: ser bilingües

- ¿Qué edad recomendarías empezar con clases?

- Cuanto antes, la verdad es que tenemos niños de un año y aprenden con muchísima facilidad.

- Dónde pueden contactar con vosotros?

- A través de la web: www.ocidiomes.com, por teléfono (971726440) o por email (info@ocidiomes.com)

- Muchas gracias.

- A vosotros. Espero que Ocidiomes se convierta en vuestra inversión de futuro.
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FOREIGN LANGUAGE EXCHANGES AT IES FELANITX: PERSPECTIVES
Part I

Perhaps some of the parents who are now sending their children to school at IES Felanitx will remember that at the beginning of 1993 -- when they were the ones sitting behind these classroom's desks -- the school received a visit from a group of American students. These Americans were in Mallorca to complete the second part of a school exchange between IES Felanitx and a school in Pennsylvania; the previous September, the Mallorcans had visited the USA. Given the technological limitations of the time, venturing into a project of that scope involved a lot of external organization to take care of all the formalities and procedures. Moreover, at the beginning of the exchange, students only had a vague notion of the partner on the other side of the Atlantic: prior contact, if any, was made by ordinary mail or a call on the landline phone.

A generation later, it is a common sight during the first half of October to see groups of Danish and Swedish students walking around the halls and corridors of IES Felanitx, attending classes and lectures, participating in activities, working in the library and interviewing members of the school community in preparation for their research projects. These foreign students are among us as participants of two exchanges that our school has organized in the past few years with two schools from Denmark and Sweden. Technological advances in recent decades have allowed communications to improve dramatically; this fact has made direct contact between schools, teachers and students much easier, giving a boost to the development of exchange projects.

The Swedish exchange started in the 2004-05 school year; participating students are in the first year of Batxillerat. Apart from the cultural and fun aspects that such an experience involves, the exchange has a clear educational goal: participants carry out research and present their conclusions at the end of their stay. The bonds between Vasaskölan from Gävle and IES Felanitx have been strengthened over the years. Now, the exchange is a well-established project that has become a tradition for both schools.

The “little brother” project -- both due to the age of the participating students and for the number of years that it has been in existence -- is the exchange with Hurup Skole from Denmark. This project started in the 2011-12 school year; it involves the third of ESO students who take part in the European Section program. Although some activities are carried out at IES Felanitx, the exchange has a more recreational side, allowing the Danish visitors more opportunities to go on cultural excursions and nature walks.

English is the main language of communication during these exchanges; IES Felanitx's Foreign Language Department has led these projects from the start. However, it is the joint effort on the part of the various members of the school community that make our school exchanges such a success: the unconditional support of the board team; the involvement of many of the school departments, either in collaborating on the visitors’ activity program, or as teachers who accompany our students to Sweden and Denmark; and last but not least, the contribution of the participants’ families, as welcoming hosts who do their best to make foreign teenagers feel at home.

Given the exchanges’ positive outcomes to date, we feel that it is worth the effort to continue working together in order to
guarantee the continuity of such an enriching experience for the future.

Antònia Bennàssar Burguera

Part II

Taking part in an exchange is much more than just travelling and visiting a foreign country. It’s like dropping your classroom into the real world, where both teachers and students are faced with a new environment. The pretend textbook dialogue where you practice your foreign language oral skills in a classroom setting is converted into a role-play in the real world.

I remember the first time, some years ago, when I went on the Danish exchange with the third of ESO students: one of the students raised his hand and asked, what was the point of being in a host family if staying in a hotel was more fun? At that point, I thought he might be right. Staying with classmates in a hotel (as on many school trips) seemed like an awesome experience in comparison to being alone with a host family i.e., strangers related an assigned partner who wasn’t even a friend, a new bedroom (sometimes shared), not to mention new food types, etc. At that point, I thought that any of the advantages of the homestay rather than a hotel that I pointed out wouldn’t be considered very valuable by any of my students. So, I decided to ask my first of Batxillerat students -- who just had returned from Sweden -- to make a brief presentation and explain their host stay experience. It worked. The whole class listened carefully to the older students’ feedback. Sometimes, the most amazing resources are right at hand.

The Swedish exchange is now a classic component of the IES Felanitx calendar, after more than twelve years of working together. One of the programmed activities is observing and participating in classes at the foreign school. The fact that IES Felanitx offers an international program in English allows us to participate actively at the Swedish school in a subject usually chosen by our students. This year, I took my students to the social studies class. Everything went smoothly until just after the Swedish teacher’s presentation in English, when he decided to continue his lesson in Swedish. My first thought and feeling was, ‘Oh my God!’ That lasted for about the first five minutes. Then, I realized that I could take advantage of the new situation and focus on other aspects apart from language. First, I observed my students: they appeared to be very anxious. Some of them had even started playing with their mobile phones or looking at me as if I had to give them an explanation of what was going on. Then I observed the teacher and how he addressed his students and interacted with the whole class.

Exchanges are a great opportunity: not only to improve the students’ skills in a foreign language, but also to deal with everyday situations that are part of life and form the basis of learning experiences.

Antoni Rosselló Nadal
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In one of his wonderfully inspiring TED talks, Sugata Mitra describes how he used British grandmothers on Skype to work with schoolchildren in India, an event the children referred to as “the Granny Cloud.” He also recounts how he asked a young woman to work with some students by using the “method of the grandmother,” one of encouragement, of standing back and saying, “Wow! How did you do that?”, delighting in the process of learning.

How often do you take delight in the work you do with your students? How often do you look at what they give you and say, “Wow! How did you do that? What else can you do?”

If you’d asked me that question five years ago, I’d have answered, “Rarely, if ever.” At that time I was working with small groups of children, preparing them for a series of exams. Unlike their classmates on the playground enjoying a respite from their morning classes, my ten to fifteen reluctant learners were squirming around in their seats while I tried to engage them in games involving comparative adjectives and there is/there are.

One day, while watching yet another lesson unravel, with one child getting up out of his seat to play and then another and another, I felt a sense of helplessness and even anger. I’d spent so much time crafting what I’d hoped would be a fun lesson, and all I could do was watch it fall apart as the rest of the children shifted their attention from my explanations to the lucky ones who were jumping ship. It wasn’t the first time. None of the classroom management techniques I had tried worked for very long; the children eventually became immune to both the rewards and punishments. “If only they would just cooperate with me and go along with the plan!” I thought. “Then they’d see what fun learning could be!” I was convinced that if I could just control their behaviour long enough, they would enjoy a game designed to help them practice describing the weather.

I don’t remember now what I said to the children to get them to sit down again. But I’ll never forget how I felt when one of them, a boy named Germán, looked straight at me and sadly stated, “You don’t like your job.”

Trying very hard not to let the children see how much his comment had hurt, I assured him that I did like my job, that I loved it, but that he and his friends weren’t letting me do it properly. Germán wasn’t convinced and neither was I.

In one of his wonderfully inspiring TED talks, Sugata Mitra describes how he used British grandmothers on Skype to work with schoolchildren in India, an event the children referred to as “the Granny Cloud.” He also recounts how he asked a young woman to work with some students by using the “method of the grandmother,” one of encouragement, of standing back and saying, “Wow! How did you do that?”, delighting in the process of learning.

How often do you take delight in the work you do with your students? How often do you look at what they give you and say, “Wow! How did you do that? What else can you do?”

If you’d asked me that question five years ago, I’d have answered, “Rarely, if ever.” At that time I was working with small groups of children, preparing them for a series of exams. Unlike their classmates on the playground enjoying a respite from their morning classes, my ten to fifteen reluctant learners were squirming around in their seats while I tried to engage them in games involving comparative adjectives and there is/there are.

One day, while watching yet another lesson unravel, with one child getting up out of his seat to play and then another and another, I felt a sense of helplessness and even anger. I’d spent so much time crafting what I’d hoped would be a fun lesson, and all I could do was watch it fall apart as the rest of the children shifted their attention from my explanations to the lucky ones who were jumping ship. It wasn’t the first time. None of the classroom management techniques I had tried worked for very long; the children eventually became immune to both the rewards and punishments. “If only they would just cooperate with me and go along with the plan!” I thought. “Then they’d see what fun learning could be!” I was convinced that if I could just control their behaviour long enough, they would enjoy a game designed to help them practice describing the weather.

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Ever since my days as a young university student, I’d wanted to teach English to those who didn’t know it. I’d moved to New York City to pursue a career in ESL and had continued when I moved to Spain. I’d taught everyone from lawyers to prisoners, immigrant grandmothers to spoiled jet setters, university students to businessmen – EVERYONE – and in all those years what had marked me as a teacher was my enthusiasm and my passion. But it took the simple and direct observation of a 9-year-old boy to wake me up and shake me up. Thank you, Germán.

He was right. I didn’t like my job. I was tired of submitting progress reports, checking off homework, administering mock exams, responding to administrative directives. As the demands grew for measuring what the students could and could not do, so did my doubts as to what purpose it all served. I was looking for solutions but ignoring the problem. Finally, one day at a meeting I heard, “They’re not there to have fun. They’re there to learn.” That single pronouncement was exactly what I needed to make me realize that I was in the wrong place, doing the wrong thing. I profoundly believed then and still do that learning should be a positive experience, for both teacher and student, and that if I wanted that to happen, I had to stop blaming everyone else and make some changes.

HAPPY TEACHER, HAPPY STUDENTS

I’m fond of telling the students, “Happy teacher, happy students.” I tell them that the first one who needs to be happy is the teacher, that a happy teacher leads to happy students. They get it. And when they see me, they see someone happy with what she’s doing. Four years ago I applied for a job as an auxiliar d’angles, an English language assistant, a job whose only requirement is to be a native speaker. The main objective is to help the students use their English in a more informal situation, particularly with speaking and listening. I began working with ESO and Primary, but this year I’m working mostly with just ESO students ranging from twelve to sixteen years old.

From the very beginning, I began to experience a sense of joy and excitement all over again about what I was doing and learning. For the first time in my career, I was completely free to choose the materials and set the goals. I would also be working closely with their regular English teacher, something I’d never
done. Best of all, I would not have to grade the students or evaluate their work with a number that would determine their place in the system. These three factors -- autonomy, support, and no grades -- changed everything about the way I looked at learning and teaching, and I increasingly wonder why it doesn’t happen in more centres, giving more teachers the chance to enjoy the same kind of freedom I’ve experienced as a language assistant.

“WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?”
I love it when the kids ask, “What are we doing today?” and better still “Why?” My goals for my lessons are very clear to me and I share them with the students. First and foremost, I want to show them things that interest that and me will, I hope, interest them as well. A science experiment. A math trick. A line dance. A game. I want them to walk out of the classroom with something to think about, something to share with their families when they get home. I want to help them understand the vocabulary involved in each lesson but don’t insist that they write it down and commit it to memory. I know they’ll run into the words again; there’s no expiration dates on them. I want it to be unconditional learning, with no strings attached. Surely we all agree that real learning, the kind that takes root and bears fruit, takes nurturing, the right conditions, and time. I’m not interested in seeing how many words they can cram into their short-term memory, holding on to them only long enough to get a satisfactory mark on a test. The students know this, but they pay attention anyway. The second goal? Getting them to communicate their ideas with whatever means they choose to use. A shrug of the shoulders, a nod of the head, a frown of confusion are all preferable to the all-too-common poker face (no expression, no eye contact) and dead silence, that disconnect that increases as they come up through the system. I tell them that Spanish and Catalan are acceptable if they’re unable to say it English, that we have a room filled with bilingual and trilingual people so someone will be able to translate their words. I tell them the same thing when I ask them for written feedback or freewriting. I’m interested first and foremost in knowing what they think. We can work with ideas, we NEED ideas, everything begins with ideas, but we can’t work with silence or a blank piece of paper. Once the students believe that you genuinely respect them and like them just as they are, the communication develops into connections, which turn into collaboration and cooperation and compromise, all of which are vital to a successful classroom experience. Conflicts and angry confrontations decrease dramatically once we feel like we’re all working on the same team with the same goal: to learn and improve.

Over the years, just like a grandmother, my perspective has changed. I’ve been around long enough to see that most students do want to be able to communicate in English and will do so as soon as they feel competent and sure of themselves. In the meantime, why must they remain silent? If we create an atmosphere of curiosity and acceptance of the messy process of learning and focus on the value of working through problems and errors instead of treating them like a virus, we will all benefit, teachers and students alike. I’m not promising Utopia. There will still be conflicts, there will still be struggles. But the attitude with which we tackle those problems can work wonders. And that attitude starts with the adults in charge. No sarcasm, no rude remarks, no shouting for silence, no humiliation should ever come from us. To put it more bluntly, if you want to grow it, show it. We must always model the behaviour we want to see.

SHOW AND TELL
You close the door to your classroom and what happens goes unheard and unseen by anyone else but the students. I’ve come to believe that this can work against not only the students but also against the teachers themselves. Before my current position I worked with a great group of teachers whose unfailing support and dedication helped me when I was at my unhappiest. We all used to get to work early and have a good laugh while discussing lesson plans or materials or problems we were having. Now, as a language assistant, I get to work closely
with the teachers in Primary, and in ESO I give the lesson with the teacher in the classroom. The support, generosity, and good will I’ve received have all allowed me to try lessons I might otherwise have been afraid to do for fear of failing. This trust from the teachers (and the administration) just makes me want to work harder. At times I get to observe them in action and watch the students, and I always take something away from the experience. We all need time to observe, just to take it all in and reflect on what’s going on around us. Throughout my career I’ve always felt like I’ve done my best work when surrounded by colleagues who care as much about their students as I do, and who share both their hits and misses with the rest of us. A lively teachers’ room can be a lifesaver when you’re a new teacher or an older one in need of some inspiration. But there is no substitute for observing a lesson in action, and to do that we need to throw open our doors, overcoming our fears of being judged and criticized.

“WHAT’S MY MARK?”
Once, back in my pre-language assistant days, I had some children sitting in a circle passing around a little teddy bear. With bear in hand, each child had to tell a piece of a story that they were making up on the spot. When it came time for Maria’s turn, I held my breath. She cried frequently if she felt like she couldn’t do the work required, and so I crossed my fingers that she’d feel good about her contribution. To my surprise and relief, she came up with a lovely addition to our story. When I praised her she smiled happily and asked, “What mark do you give me for my story?” I was stunned. A spontaneous exercise in creativity had turned into a kind of transaction. Maria was still very young, but she’d already learned how the system worked. All of us have our own stories to tell about students and marks and evaluations, and I’m willing to bet that most of them don’t end well. Whether it’s a depressing pile of exams waiting to be dissected and weighed and calculated or a meeting with angry parents, who want to know just why their children got the mark they did, I am more convinced than ever before that we are absolutely going down the wrong path if we continue to grade our students’ work with a letter or number. Consider the following and see if anything sounds familiar:
• You return their exams and the students immediately set to work to find any mistakes you might have made in your calculations of their marks. Or they just look at the number and return the paper unexamined.
• You feel disheartened by the fact that so many don’t see to care about the material; they just want a good mark. If only they cared about learning, the marks would go up at once! Well, they do want to learn. I think we all want to learn. It’s something innate, isn’t it? We all have a need to learn and to work, but we want to have a say in the matter whether we’re three or ninety-three. We want to be considered, not just ordered about and treated as if we were all just numbers in a grade book. But once children hit third or fourth year in primary they’ve figured out how the system works, and how it works is this: You need good marks to advance. And you get good marks by having the correct answer, which is the answer the teacher says it is. Period. That is how the system works. Oh, some may insist that attitude also matters, so much so that it, too, will be given a mark. And then that mark will also be cause for conflict when a student aces the exams but has a “2” in the column marked “Attitude.” Likewise with homework, if it’s given a mark. If a student feels like it’s simply rote repetition and unnecessary -- and if we’re honest we’ll acknowledge that often it is just that-- she’ll receive a low mark. Or worse still, if she’s made an honest effort to do her best and failed to satisfy the teacher’s criteria, her low mark will surely do little to inspire her to keep working harder on the homework supposedly meant to help her learn. How ironic it is when you think about how we say that we learn from our mistakes, yet so often it is for that very reason -- their errors -- that students are punished with low marks. What a tragedy that is, because their errors can tell us so much.

DIGGING DEEPER
There was a time when I believed that I had to highlight or correct every single error in a piece of student writing so that the student could see the errors and eventually stop making them. I read each piece of writing with that thought in mind: Get out the
red pen and find those mistakes. I told myself that the content mattered, of course it mattered, but I needed to correct the errors first before addressing anything else. Needless to say, I used to spend many Sunday evenings filled with a sense of dread when I’d look at the stacks of essays waiting for my red pen and me. Eventually I’d bite the bullet and go at them, red ink flying. I felt utterly helpless and my poor students felt utterly demoralized.

If only I’d trusted a wonderful professor I had in graduate school, Ann Raimes, who insisted that multiple drafts, students writing about their ideas, and written feedback from the teacher rather than red ink was what new and inexperienced writers needed. Constructive feedback, another chance to get it right, time to think and reflect and grow. Who had time for all that? There were schedules to be kept, exams to be administered, grading periods to be followed. There was no time to dig deeper and find out what the students were truly capable of. Earlier I mentioned asking the ESO students for written feedback or freewriting. I ask them to stop talking, stop asking questions, and just start writing. If they get stuck for ideas, I tell them to write just that they’re stuck for ideas. If they don’t know how to write it in English, I tell them to write it in their first language, their second language or in all three. It’s our chance to have a conversation. Once I have the papers, I sit down to read them. I still read with a pen in hand, but this time it’s black or blue and used primarily for responding to what they’ve written, either to answer their questions or to share my own thoughts with them. I also make corrections, but now instead of doing so with a heavy heart, thinking how far they have to go to succeed on the next exam, I feel like I’m genuinely helping them, again, with no strings attached. And oh what a difference it has made.

Now, when I hand their papers back, they sit and read everything. The same paper, in fact, is often used for the next writing they do. Even though they know that I understand them in Catalan and in Spanish, they continue to try to write and speak in English, continue to ask, “How do you say that in English?” They may moan and groan when it comes time to write, but they tell me that they know it’s good for them and necessary. They do want to learn. They need no threat of extra homework or a test the next day. What they need is time, the kind of time that may not fit neatly into a grading period. And they need a chance to learn from their mistakes without fear of being punished for them. We’re working in a classroom, not an operating room. We need to look at each error as bringing them one step closer to the right way instead of a tragic setback and sign of failure.

**FINAL THOUGHTS**

So, what have I learned from four years of working as a language assistant using the method of the grandmother? More than I could ever hope to include in this article, but the lessons I consider most important are the following: The exams and homework and marks that are currently given do far more harm than good. They discourage those who are most in need of encouragement, create a mentality of haggling for the highest possible mark for the least amount of effort, and do nothing to further learning. They are a heavy burden on both student and teacher and create an adversarial relationship between the two. We must work with the students, not against them and not over them. Leading by example must be our guiding principle rather than “Because I said so.” Common courtesy, a kind tone of voice, and taking into account students’ wishes accomplish much more than anger, sarcasm, and punishment and rewards. As teachers we must keep both our doors and our minds open to what’s out there to learn and explore. We need to follow what other professionals in our fields are doing and writing, and to grow along with our students. TED, Edutopia, Brilliant or Insane - Education on the Edge, Taught by Finland, The Answer Sheet, Alfie Kohn, Ken Robinson, Nancie Atwell, César Bona, Rita Pierson, Ali Carr-Chellman, Larry Ferlazzo, and, of course, Sugata Mitra are just a few of the websites and people that have excited and inspired me with their ideas. Let us hope we can do the same with our colleagues and our students.
HE WAS A WICKED TEACHER. IT’S BARE ADDICTIVE. THIS IS ME:

‘GO HOME INNIT’

TEENAGERS AS LINGUISTIC INNOVATORS. AN OVERVIEW OF BRITISH TEEN TALK.

By Ignacio M. Palacios Martínez
It is generally assumed that a language should not be regarded as something permanent and fixed but as an evolving and continuously changing system. Several internal and external factors are responsible for this state of perpetual change; there are also certain groups of speakers that exert a particularly strong influence on the development of language, who introduce the kind of innovations that gradually may be incorporated into what is generally considered to be the standard variety. Such is the case with adolescents and teenagers, who can be regarded as real linguistic innovators. In this paper I will try to justify this claim, outlining some of the most distinctive features of the verbal expression of this group of speakers.

Before dealing with this issue in detail, we should address the question of what exactly is meant by teenagers’ language, since this will be the starting-point of our discussion. By teen talk we mean the language used by individuals between 13 and 20 years old in their interactions with their peers. This last point is important, because teens often revert to standard language forms when speaking to parents, teachers and adults in general. Over recent decades the characteristic speech patterns of teenagers have received scholarly attention, with publications such as Eckert (1988), Andersen (2001), Rodríguez (2002), Stenström et al. (2002), Androutsopoulos and Georgakopoulou (2003), Tagliamonte (2005), Stenström and Jørgensen (2009), Palacios (2011a), Spiegel and Gysin (2016), to mention just a few. However, broadly speaking, there is still a shortage of studies in this area and there is lot of scope for further research. Apart from the fact that teen talk influences the development of language in general, it should be borne in mind that teenagers are an extremely important part of society, and that by studying their language we can arrive at a better understanding of teens within their social groups. Furthermore, youth represents a crucial time in the life of an individual, since it is at this stage of human development that the adult personality begins to be shaped and consolidated. Linguistically speaking, teen talk is particularly rich and interesting at all levels of linguistic analysis, especially at the lexical level; it is influenced by a rich combination of cognitive factors and other more socially bound variables, such as gender, social class, cultural level and ethnic group. It has also been observed that there are some general trends that can be identified across languages; that is, some traits in verbal behaviour may be generally common among younger speakers, independent of their mother tongue.

To study teen talk in detail, we need data that can be regarded as representative of this group’s forms of speaking and interacting. In my analysis I have examined information extracted from comics and magazines (Bliss, Sugar, The Beano, The Dandy, Shout, Pop Star!, Mizz, BBC Girl Talk), books, brochures and advertising for young people. I have also consulted Internet forums and other websites, as well as emails and SMS. Furthermore, glossaries and dictionaries are available which also provide interesting information, such as the Urban Dictionary and the Teenspeak Dictionary for ‘Rents’. Finally, linguistic corpora of teen talk also offer fascinating data, most notably: COLT (The Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language), LEC (London English Corpus), and SCoSE (Saarbrücken Corpus of Spoken English). The first of these, COLT, contains approximately 500,000 words of spoken language, a total of 100 tapes equivalent to 50 hours of conversation. This corpus was collected in London during the early 1990s by a group of researchers from the University of Bergen (Stenström et al. 2002). It consists mainly of spoken
interactions by 31 male and female adolescents who self-recorded themselves in their everyday interactions. The second corpus used, LEC, consists of transcripts of informal conversation-like interviews with one or two speakers and a fieldworker, and some self-recordings. The transcripts are from two Economic and Research Council funded projects: *Linguistic Innovators* and *Multicultural London English*. It was compiled by Cheshire and her associates between 2004 and 2010 in inner (Hackney) and outer London (Havering). It is quite a large corpus, containing over 2,391,000 words in total. To a certain extent it can be compared to COLT, in that both were compiled with data provided by young speakers from the same areas in London and following similar criteria for their sampling and collection. The final corpus, SCoSE, consists of seven parts, one of which contains London teenage talk dating from 2008. Compared to the other two corpora it is rather small, composed of only 12,000 words, which were elicited by means of interviews conducted with a group of boys and girls whilst at school. I will organise the following account of teen talk according to three levels of analysis: conversational structure; lexis and vocabulary; and grammar.

As regards the conversational structure of verbal interactions, we can identify certain phenomena that are typical of spoken language in general, not only of teen talk. This is the case with the prevalence of very short turns with a high frequency of overlapping and interruptions. However, in addition to the former trait, adolescent speech is also particularly crowded with forms such as invariant tags, which serve to keep the interlocutors’ attention while not necessarily counting on or demanding their participation. The following are the most characteristic invariant tags found in the expression of London teen talk: *yeah*, *innit*, *OK*, *right*, *you get me*, *you know what I mean*. Consider the following extracts:

(1) *I have a plan right. I plan my homework this year start of the week. I plan my homework, okay? See I’m gonna be able to say, right do that Saturday night. Homework’s got to be such and such a thing [to do] right? So I had it all planned out.* (COLT)

(2) *Yeah yeah I do- do I mean I do that, yeah. I dunno.* (COLT)

(3) *but skateboarders is not all that in Hackney yeah? if you think about it skateboard no you will never see anybody in Hackney skateboarding you get me they’ll probably look at them and say “you freak” you get me so why have they got why they think but the skateboarding is like not all that you get me?* (LEC)

In fact, it is at the lexical level where teenagers’ most distinctive language traits are found. Notable here is the large number of expressions with an indeterminate or vague meaning. These include *placeholders*, that is, nouns with a general reference (*thing(s)*, *thingie/y*, *thingybob*, *thingummy*, *thingamajig*, *whatsit*, *whatshisname*, *whatsername*), *quantifiers* (*loads of* and *general extenders* or *final tags* and *and like*, *and stuff*, and *and things*, *and this/that*, *and everything*, *or something*, *or whatever*). Underlying this use of vague language is a specific discourse strategy, in the sense that all these expressions serve to reinforce the sentiments of the peer group, also functioning as a kind of identity marker:

(4) *How do you reckon you did in that French thingie today?* (COLT)

(5) *They just dance and that.* (COLT)

(6) *we’re just wanna work and stuff and actually do something with our lives.* (LEC)

(7) *I always spend my money on loads of shit.* (COLT)

Teen talk is also well known for its large quantity of taboo and swear words, many of which are related to sex. This is motivated by the tendency of youths to go against the norm, and also functions as a means of provocation and self-assertiveness. Stenström et al.
list the following items according to their frequency, from the most to the least common: crap, arse(hole), dick(head), bastard, bitch, take the piss, fuck(ing), wanker, suck, cunt, bollocks. Here are some examples of their use:

(8) It’s a load of crap. (LEC)
(9) I’m not like that you dickhead. (LEC)
(10) I don’t understand why you always take the piss out of me for my voice. (COLT)
(11) Oh what an arsehole! (COLT)
(12) They’re just wankers that’s all. (LEC)

Stenström et al. (2002: 80) also show how male and female teens use swear and abusive words differently. Firstly, male speakers tend to use such terms more frequently; and secondly, boys opt for more offensive items such as fucking or shit. In contrast, teenage girls prefer to resort to less abusive words such as god or bloody.

Although insults and abusive terms are also very common, on many occasions these are not employed with offensive intent but with the aim of creating solidarity among the members of the peer group. The following have been recorded as the most frequent: stupid/clumsy/, snobby/dirty cow, peanut head, fat/fucking cunt, dickhead, bloody chiefer, fucking/stupid/fat/lazy/sad/bent/thick/crafty/little/old/rotten slag/bastard and little wanker.

(13) What you doing? Peanut head. (COLT)
(14) She’s a bit of a clumsy cow. (LEC)
(15) My dad is black you cunt so is my grandad. (LEC)
(16) They were going fucking wanker, fucking wanker, you cunt, you cunt. (COLT)

The use of old-fashioned words with new meanings is also significant. This is the case with adjectives such as massive, sad, wicked, bad, mental, which, on many occasions, are used to express something positive, as in the following:

(17) Her hair look wicked!

Thus, wicked in (17) does not convey any negative connotations, but quite the opposite: the speaker means that the hair looked great. With regards to grammar, due to space limitations, I will just mention three main features: negation, intensifiers and quotatives. Teenagers use far more negatives than their adult counterparts because they are more spontaneous in their speech and do not feel the need to mitigate their language so much (Palacios 2011b). Furthermore, they are very fond of double negative constructions.
(also known as negative concord) and vernacular negative forms such as ain’t, standing for am/is/are/has/have plus not, Nap and Nope, instead of the short reply form No, and don’t for the third person singular present instead of doesn’t. Witness the following:

(18) I ain’t got no headphones.  (COLT)
(19) So you didn’t play any sports at the week-end, Nope.  (LEC)
(20) She don’t wanna come in here.  (LEC)

Intensifiers have also been the focus of study, as young speakers tend to overuse a number of adjective and adverb intensifiers i.e. really, so, pretty instead of very, which is more closely associated with adults. Some swear words, for example bloody and fucking, are also used with an intensifying function and this also applies to the adverbs well, just and right which very rarely occur with this function in the language of adults.

(21) I was well drunk.  (COLT)
(22) They’ve been right bastards to you.  (COLT)
(23) fucking sad you are!  (COLT)
(25) That wasn’t really good this year.  (LEC)

Moreover, we find two emerging intensifiers, proper and bare, with some particular uses, as in the following:

(26) It’s bare addictive.  (LEC)
(27) we’re shovelling down the chips down and coke, proper coke they were drinking.  (COLT)

Finally, teenagers also tend to make more frequent use of alternative quotatives (verbs introducing direct speech) rather than those that are more typical of adults, such as ask, tell or ask. Thus, like, be like and this is + pronoun.

(28) I was like, “I didn’t say anything”.  (COLT)
(29) But I was to say it’s different. Like, Linsey goes to me, “cos I’ve got a black kitten”, he goes, “what are you gonna call it?” I goes, “dunno”.

Although this is just an overview of the main traits of teenagers’ language, I hope I have at least piqued the reader’s interest in this speaker group. In my view, as teachers of English, we should try to keep up with the evolution and changes in the language: this applies in particular to the code used by speakers who in many cases most resemble the age profile of the learners in our own classrooms. It is true that at primary and secondary levels it is necessary to establish priorities, and these may demand a focus on standard forms, but without doubt there are certain features of teen talk that might usefully be introduced into our language teaching at these levels.

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TAKING THE ‘E’ OUT OF E-LEARNING
These days, who hasn’t heard of MOOCs and online courses? Whatever your role in teaching, you’ve probably come across someone who has or is taking an online course. e-learning has become a buzzword that many of us feel we should learn more about.

But let’s face it, with our busy schedules, how many of us have the motivation or time to sit down in front of our laptops or tablets? Furthermore, many people see online learning as cold, distant and lacking in the human element that face-to-face Continuous Professional Development (CPD) provides. How could we possibly develop -- especially in our profession, which is so ‘hands-on’ -- from just reading a load of text in PDF format?

**Content**

In actual fact, nothing could be further from the truth as regards e-learning. These days, online courses include a lot more than endless PDFs and links to suggested ‘further reading’. I first became aware of the potential of online courses when I did the Cambridge Delta Modules. As a participant, I was amazed at how easy it was to feel part of the group, give and receive advice from my coursemates and tutor and, of course, share ideas and other resources. Since becoming an e-moderator for the British Council’s TeachingEnglish online courses in 2011, I can honestly say that many courses are well worth investing not only your time, but also your money and your precious effort.

While there is some variety in how courses are designed, they principally include material which appeals to different types of learners. There can be quizzes to test what you know about the topic; texts related to the theme of the unit; and videos of teachers from around the world carrying out activities in their classrooms. Certain courses may have end-of-unit or module projects that are evaluated together with your participation to give you a final grade.

Forums play a major part in your online learning. These are created mainly by the moderator who posts the topic under discussion and questions for the participants to reflect and comment on. The online environment in forums can be the most productive and fulfilling part of the course. Even more productive than your everyday staffroom -- the only missing elements (and sometimes they aren’t if you’re organised enough) -- are tea and biscuits! In our staffrooms, we see the same faces day in, day out -- whereas an online forum can provide you with a global community of teachers. You get the privilege of meeting people from all over the world and learning about a range of teaching contexts that you would otherwise have no opportunity to learn about.

Looking closely at what can be achieved when there is a group of committed participants can help us to see the human side of online learning, i.e., the communities of inquiry and constructivist development that are a very real and essential part of e-learning. Many course participants feel that more learning takes place when they collaborate and create ideas with other teachers, rather than by reading methodology books. Online learning promotes the use of twenty-first century skills and allows you to develop: a depth of knowledge based on communicating ideas with your coursemates; the critical thinking that is required in forum discussions; and the collaborative skills necessary for online tasks and creative thinking. These are all typical social aspects of the up-to-date online course.

**Webinars**

In many cases, online courses include webinars where you can become better acquainted with the other participants whom you are working with in the course. These webinars provide ‘just-in-time’ learning: any doubts you may have on course content can be dealt with then and there. Webinars can be an exciting new experience for many, but don’t think that you will just sit back and listen: you may be
expected to participate actively in different tasks and add your ideas using your microphone -- and even collaborate in tasks with your peers.

**Sharing and reflecting**

Many of us may have already taken part in teacher exchanges in which the opportunity to learn from colleagues with a different perspective has enriched our own teaching lives. An online course is the next best thing: access to a wonderful variety of opinions based on a diverse range of teaching contexts.

One other -- but no less important -- human element of online learning is the amount of sharing that takes place. Participants in e-courses are encouraged to be ‘givers’. Are we not in an era of giving, in which we find ideas and adapt them to suit our needs and learners? Think of Pinterest, Twitter, Diigo and other sites and applications that allow teachers to build, share and learn from their Personal Learning Network.

Just having access to this wealth of information is not enough: reflection is an essential element of professional practice. In quality online courses that try to develop your teaching skills, it is standard practice to take the time to review your teaching and to consider areas for improvement or where new ideas could be implemented. It is a real learning curve.

**Applying what you learn**

Much of what you learn online can be easily recycled into your own classroom practice. If you haven’t frequently used platforms or tools like Moodle, Adobe Connect or Edmodo, an online experience can make you feel far more confident in applying the e-learning strategies that you have picked up from your course. By encouraging your own students to interact in online forums, you can replicate the idea of the ‘classroom without walls’ and help promote the idea that learning goes beyond the school timetable. The experience you gain on an e-course can give you first hand knowledge of concepts such as Blended Learning and the Flipped Classroom.

**Tips**

So, what would my tips be to someone intending to do an online course?

Well, first of all -- and this may seem very obvious -- be very careful about the timeframe you choose for joining a course: you may be surprised at how much of your time online learning can take up. It’s not something you can do on your smart phone on the bus! Secondly, try to programme study time regularly throughout the week, in order to keep up with the forum discussions -- this is where you will really learn.

Thirdly, don’t think that you have nothing to say: you are the expert on your teaching situation. Your experience will always be different from other teachers’ experiences; you will have a different perspective, which may have some similarities with the other teachers, so your opinion is always valid and worth sharing.

Finally, don’t be afraid to admit you have no idea: there will always be several of your coursemates wanting to ask exactly the same question as you. By admitting that you are a little lost, you will receive loads of appreciation from your peers, and more importantly, timely support from your tutor.

Whatever your area of interest, there is likely to be an online course that meets your needs -- so why wait any longer?

**Find out more**

If you would like to find out more about e-courses, have a look at the TeachingEnglish Teacher development page, where you will find plenty of information and a range of courses to choose from: http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teacher-development.

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ENGLISH:

A CURRICULUM PRIORITY
Interest in English is not new, but in recent years it has increased in an extraordinary way. Everyone wants to be able to hold a conversation in English – at least at a ‘user level’ – in a globalized world where English is clearly the ‘lingua franca’. But if that’s what we want for ourselves, it’s not enough for our children. We want them not just to speak English, but to speak it fluently. Leaving aside the fact that it has become a basic requirement for any qualified job, no one wants their children to experience the unpleasant feeling of being in a conversation that they barely understand, not daring to talk out of pure shame.

It seems clear that, with regards to educational content and the widespread social demand, the public school system should have a clear and resolute strategy for incorporating English into the curriculum. You can't say that we haven't all heard about trilingualism, TIL, CLIL (the 2015 June edition of the APABAL magazine was a comprehensive monograph on the latter), European Sections and other different initiatives – all with the common objective of increasing English competence in our students. I recently attended a conference organized by the Conselleria d'Educació on the CLIL method. Funnily enough, the organizer was Mrs. Camps’ s School Board and most of the attendees were teachers, many of whom had maintained a hostile attitude to the way the CLIL method was implemented by the Language Integrated Treatment decree (TIL). Surprisingly, both the PP administration and the participants showed a clear and resolute strategy for incorporating English into the curriculum. You can't say that we haven't all heard about trilingualism, TIL, CLIL (the 2015 June edition of the APABAL magazine was a comprehensive monograph on the latter), European Sections and other different initiatives – all with the common objective of increasing English competence in our students.

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The time may have come to assess the achievements of the principles of the so-called educational reform movements that today, in 2016, can no longer be considered innovative. Other school subjects, such as mathematics, have introduced partial segregation of students according to their level: Maths A and B are part of the official curriculum. Diversification groups are themselves an example of grouping levels. European Sections, as we all know, involve a selection of students according to their level. So the first goal would be to prevent tutorial related objectives from dragging down the progress of students who are truly progressing. It might even work as an incentive for those advancing at a slower pace. Perhaps we should also consider prioritizing resources, both human and educational (but especially human), to set lower rates for slow learners’ classes. Problems of an organizational nature should certainly be considered. The simultaneous timetabling of slots for all English classes is an obvious difficulty. Perhaps it would be easier to start by implementing it in the first cycle of ESO. Either way, the school authority should be accustomed to prioritizing projects of special interest. Given the interest aroused by English in general and its importance in a region that lives on tourism, I can think of few projects that can rival its importance.

Collection and dissemination of good practice: As mentioned above, there seems to be agreement – at least among English teachers – regarding the benefits of the CLIL method. Language learning through non-linguistic content has created a trend in English teaching – the 2015 June issue of the APABAL magazine is just such an example. But not only has CLIL been discussed in conferences and publications: schools and colleges have had to apply TIL. This experience – regardless of political considerations (which are not the subject of this article) – has produced educational material that cannot be ignored. Surely we can make a compilation of those experiences that, at the discretion of the teachers who implemented them in the classroom, can be considered positive. And most importantly, this experience is exportable to other educational settings in schools with similar conditions in terms of student proficiency and access to additional resources such as conversation assistants, etc.

I know of primary schools that were teaching Natural Science in English long before the introduction of TIL. Presumably, during the last two years there has been a lot of additional material in the same or other subjects, if only to comply with the new law. Similarly, I know of high schools that have been teaching Social Science in English, also prior to the introduction of TIL. Additionally, European Sections are part of practically every high school educational offer – in some cases, in more than one subject. But this is only the public sector. The private sector is way ahead of us in incorporating the English curriculum. Last October, in an orientation conference for conversation assistants and welcome centres, a private school told us about their experience of integrating English and Social Sciences, in which the role of the conversation assistant was crucial. It’s hard to believe that with such extensive and varied resources, a method for selecting and disseminating good practices to the rest of the educational system has not yet been developed. These two aspects (i.e., school organization that makes English a priority; and, the gathering and dissemination of good practice) require urgent involvement by the School Board. A more flexible school organization should be allowed; and seminars for the compilation and dissemination of good practice should be promoted. This could be achieved by redesigning either the CEPs’ objectives or the aims of the Department of Innovation. This is the School Board’s responsibility, and it should not be delayed any longer. But it’s not just the School Board’s responsibility. Professional associations in the educational field have shown extraordinary dynamism in recent years. However, if something has been lacking, it is the definition of a plan. Protesting and demonstrating, teachers have centred their demands on more teachers and more resources – which is just not enough. If we truly want to be respected and have our expertise valued, we need to start moving to provide a roadmap based on what we have. In my opinion, we already have much more than we think.
THE MUSE AND THE SEA:

ENGLISH-SPEAKING TRAVELLERS, ARTISTS AND WRITERS IN MALLORCA (1900-1965)

An Exhibition at the Palma Municipal Archives, June 11th - October 23rd, 2015

By Sarah Brierley
Last summer and fall, the Palma Municipal Archives had a fascinating exhibition at their Can Bordils site, detailing a veritable who’s who of English speaking-travellers, artists and writers, humanists, scientists and researchers who spent time in Mallorca between 1900 and 1965. The exhibition was in fact many exhibitions rolled into one: art work (sometimes inspired by Mallorcan landscapes); a retrospective of vintage Mallorcan guidebooks, posters, brochures and post cards; a bibliophile’s delight of first editions and cover designs; a survey of travel writers; and a vision of poet and author Robert Graves’ Mallorca and the figure of the mother goddess.

As the exhibition brochure states, “the island gained renown as a place conducive to inspiration and creation, a place of active intellectual retreat. The people who comprise this portrait series were not marauding tourists; on the contrary, they enhanced the international reputation of the island where the muse and the sea had taken them in.”

The exhibition’s bilingual catalogue (Catalan and English) makes an interesting resource for upper level English students: copies (20 euros) can be obtained by phoning the Archives’ Can Bordils office: Carrer de l’Almudaina, 9, Tel. 971-22-59-63 between the hours of 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The catalogue contains a description and a picture of the exhibit items; and biographical notes on the various authors, artists, thinkers, etc. It also features the following articles:

- The Muse & the Sea: the old era and the new Eve. by Manuel Oliver Moragues
- The Best Beloved Guides: the start of it all. by Rafel Pons Company
- Travellers on the Isle: between the Word and the Deep Blue Sea. by Eduardo Moyà Antón
- A Paradise Open to the World: British and North American Artists in Majorca 1900 - 1965. by Climent Romaguera Rubí
- Inspiration and Creation in Majorca: English-speaking authors on the island in the first half of the twentieth century. by P. de Montaner
- Robert Graves at the Orange Grove. by P. de Montaner
- Niki de Saint Phalle: from Majorcan microcosm to universal archetypes. by Concepció Boncompte
- Interview with Toni and Eva Bonner about Niki de Saint Phalle and her husband Harry Mathews. by Concepció Boncompte
- Three Majorcan Pendants with Chains from the Eighteenth Century by Elvira González Gozalo
- A French Aside: Miomandre’s Magical Majorca by P. de Montaner

These articles touch upon various interesting elements: the distinction between a traveller and a tourist; evolving ideas of paradise; the idea of andother Mallorca’ and a ‘magical Mallorca’; the conditions necessary for creativity; the dilemma of the travel writer (to reveal or not to reveal paradise’s location).

One can only hope that the current phenomenon of visitor hordes passing through Mallorca will also eventually produce items (be they literary, artistic, thought-provoking, etc.) of note!

Related Topics:

- Literary itineraries: Walking on Words: Mallorca Literària
  “. . . an invitation to tour Majorca in good company: . . . the words of Jules Verne, Frédéric Chopin, Robert Graves, Julio Cortázar, Josep Pla and Villalonga, etch out new paths in the landscape and give extra depth to our own view of each place we visit. They connect history with the present, architecture with the countryside, cuisine with our traditions. Walking on words takes us beyond words, and opens new doors so we can admire our heritage . . . to show the island as never before. Walking on words, in short, is a guided tour around the real Majorca, revealing the delights of a paradise full of history, life and literature.”
  http://walkingonwords.com/en/

- Entre la calma y la inspiración: Diccionario de autores anglofonos en Baleares by Juana Maria Seguí Aznar i Patricia Bastida Rodríguez

This literary dictionary describes 174 English-speaking authors from the twentieth or twenty-first century who visited or lived in the Balearics at some point in their lives, and how their island stay is reflected in their literary production.
FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF DOROTHEA BATE (1878-1951)

Magdalena Balle Garcia has a B.A. in English Language and Literature. She has taught English and German in secondary and adult education. At present, Magdalena is part of the CEPA (Centre d’Educació de Persones Adultes) Son Canals school board in Palma and a part-time lecturer at the Universitat de les Illes Balears. She has published articles on TEFL in magazines and books, e.g. “Keys to Upper Grade Vocational Studies” and “Success in University Access for Over 25s”. Magdalena has coordinated four European educational projects; done training material development and curriculum design; and she is on the official exam commission for the Conselleria d’Educació del Govern Balear. In 2008, her book, “Media and Multicultural Education” received first prize for ‘most innovative book’ from the Education Council of the Balearic Islands. Since 2009, Magdalena has coordinator of the Apabal Magazine. In 2010, as co-author of Del conte al portafoli multicultural: un exemple de tasca competencial, she received first prize for ‘best book’ from the Education Council of the Balearic Islands. Magdalena is also co-author of two digital books: Approaches on Minority Languages and Minority Target Groups; and Lady Cafe: Approaches on Feminism.

by Magdalena Balle
When visiting the Palma Archive’s exhibition ‘The Muse and the Sea’, ordinary mortals like you or me might be impressed by the apparently endless number of outstanding Anglo-American figures who stayed in Mallorca and who seem to have gone relatively unnoticed.

Did you know, for example, that Agatha Christie wrote part of Murder on the Orient Express at the Hotel Illa d’Or in Pollença? And that, in 1955, Ava Gardner stayed at Robert Grave’s home in Deià? Writer Anthony Burgess, most famous for the film version of his classic A Clockwork Orange, also spent time in Deià. Author Kingsley Amis, leader of the group of writers known as ‘the Angry Young Men’, also spent several months in this picturesque village. Over the years, Deià has also been home to several internationally famous musicians e.g., Bob Dylan, Mick Jagger and Mark Knopfler. Graves’s powerful appeal also attracted future geniuses, e.g., a young García Márquez and Stephen Hawking (who was only ten when he visited the Graves home with his mother, who was a good friend of Beryl Graves).

The Archive’s interesting exhibition has provided the inspiration for creating a series of cultural itineraries that feature various significant female figures that sojourned and produced part of their work on Mallorca. The idea is to increase awareness about Anglo-American female writers, artists, travellers and entrepreneurs by creating a series of walks that guide the reader through these women’s footsteps on Mallorca. These walks can be used as a didactic resource for Batxiller English classes or History in English classes (CLIL).

Dorothea Bate: an intrepid explorer, a pioneering fossil-hunter and the scientist who discovered the Balearic Myotragus, a now extinct dwarf goat-rabbit-pig-like mammal who inhabited Mallorca and Menorca prior to 3000 BC.

But why was Dorothea so special? Why is she the focus of our first significant female figure itinerary?

First of all, because Dorothea was a self-taught palaeontologist and scientist, a feminist with a lot of drive, who was adventurous, fearless and even reckless. By sheer force of personality and hard work, Dorothea fought against the early twentieth century prejudice that existed towards women in the sciences.

On her own impetus, Dorothea discovered very significant sites in Cyprus, Malta, Crete, Mallorca, Minorca, Palestine and China.

Throughout the itinerary detailed below, students can track down Dorothea’s findings in Mallorca and try to imagine just how hard it was for a woman at the beginning of the twentieth century to do what she did: travel in primitive conditions, wear the era’s restrictive clothing, hammer off muddy rocks containing fossil samples, deal with smugglers and the patriarchal world of foreign fishermen and male guides. Prior to travelling all around the world in search of extinct animals, Dorothea worked as a piece-worker for the Natural History Museum in London, paid by the number of fossils she prepared -- a job that lasted for fifty long years.

Her life can be described as pure tenacity: her work on Mallorca was no exception.

As Karolyn Schindler remarks in the biography Discovering Dorothea, this intrepid woman’s task on Mallorca was Herculean. Mallorca is a mountainous island,
largely made up of limestone; it has an indented coastline, with thousands of caves and fissures that had not been properly mapped in Dorothea’s time. In her work, Dorothea was a lone woman surrounded by workmen and a male guide (a geologist and naturalist) who didn’t speak English. In the social sphere, Dorothea also had to deal with the prejudiced attitudes of powerful and well-positioned men. In fact, she was sexually harassed by the British Vice-Consul in Mallorca; Dorothea wrote in her travel diary, “I do hate old men who try to make love to one and ought not to in their official positions.”

Despite parental pressure to find a husband and lead a conventional life, Dorothea refused to abandon her career. In that era, no man would have accompanied her on her explorations around the world. As well as having to walk for endless kilometres or ride on mules, Dorothea had to deal with bandits and sleep in hovels infested with fleas; she had to work outdoors in all extremes of weather: punishingly hot in summer and numbingly cold in winter. She often had to wade through deep water to reach unmapped, isolated cliffs caves. Sometimes her mode of transportation was a springless cart that was agonizing for her sciatic leg.

Because Dorothea mainly explored areas by the sea’s edge, she was usually wet and covered in clay. In her experience, she knew that it was often the least likely looking sites that usually produced the most remarkable findings. Fossils were mainly found in holes and crevices in the sandstone, where they were protected from the full force of the sea’s breakers. Dorothea worked with hammers, shovels, picks, collecting bags, nets, insect boxes, and even dynamite.

Finding and rescuing the fossil samples was a race against time: Dorothea succeeded in tracking down mammal bones in countless hard-to-reach caves. The personal achievement of finding a bone deposit was like discovering a needle in a haystack. In order to make her eventual discoveries in thirteen or fourteen caves in Mallorca and then later in Minorca, Dorothea had to visit and probe hundreds of caves. Challenges included Dorothea and her team getting lost several times; moreover, she often could not make herself understood with either the guides or local people. At night, Dorothea sometimes had to sleep in filthy hovels where she “provided food for a lot of fleas”. Several times she had to sleep on straw mattresses on the floor. However, the key to Dorothea’s success was her great efforts and perseverance in pursuit of knowledge.

Dorothea also had to face a host of other perils: ferocious mosquitos; a poor road network and delays in transport; intense summer heat and the Tramuntana’s strong storms; fierce waves, altitude, sea sickness and overpowering fishy smells. At one point, she was thought to have malaria; she worked tirelessly despite a long-standing sciatica. Moreover, Dorothea was under continual pressure to justify her work in order to be awarded grants. To make matters worse, Dorothea felt guilty about having ‘lost’ five years of scientific exploration when she was taking care of her sick father.

Grand Hotel (First and second visit to Palma)

The Grand Hotel is the oldest historic Art Nouveau hotel in Spain. It is part of Palma’s historic city centre. The Grand was designed by Lluís Domènech i Montaner, one of Antoni Gaudí’s disciples; it was completed in 1903. It was one of the first hotels to have electricity and a lift. It hosted many British travellers who were doing the Grand Tour, e.g., Margaret d’Este, author of the book With a Camera in Majorca and Mary Stuart Boyd, who wrote The Fortunate Isles.

The Grand Hotel was a pioneer of Mallorca’s luxury tourism industry. On par with the Ritz Hotel in Madrid, the Grand was one of the most luxurious hotels in Spain when it debuted. Later, it also opened a seaside branch, the Hotel Villa Victoria, which offered clients the possibility of enjoying the seaside and picturesque views onto the Bay of Palma.

On Dorothea’s second visit to Mallorca, she remarked that the sophistication of the Grand Hotel and the Opera House (the current Teatre Principal) contrasted greatly with the primitive state of the second-class ferry cabin from Barcelona to Mallorca. During each visit, Dorothea only stayed one day in the comfortable Grand before setting off in search of bone deposits.
Bellver Mountains (Palma)

The first findings related to Myotragus balearicus are credited to the well-known Sardinian geologist Alberto Ferrero della Marmora. He found a bone fragment of Lagomys, a sort of rodent, in the Bellver area. Unfortunately, his bone samples and the information about the deposit’s location were lost. While Dorothea never did explore this specific area, it was the necessary catalyst that set her off on her Mallorcan adventures.

Miramar (Valldemossa-Deià)

Archduke Ludwig Salvator thought highly of intelligent women and Dorothea was not an exception. For example, he made a point of getting acquainted with Mallorcan poetesses and publicizing their work. He was very interested in palaeontology and hosted Dorothea at Son Gual and Son Moragues. These two country manor houses were where the Archduke hosted his most distinguished guests, e.g., Edouard Alfred Martel -- the ‘father of modern speleology’ -- who was a pioneer explorer of the Cova del Drach cave near Porto Cristo, where he discovered the largest underground lake known at the time.

Other distinguished visitors included French painter and writer Gastón Vuillier; historians Bartoli and Cartailhac; Spanish naturalist Odón de Buen; botanist Roberto H. Chorat; writer Margaret D’Este; poets Rubén Darío and Jacinto Verdaguer; and the Archduke’s second cousin, Empress Sissi, who shared his love of nature. She was enchanted by Mallorca and came to visit several times. Nowadays, the Archduke’s estate at Miramar hosts a museum with objects, documents and artwork related to the world of the Archduke and Ramon Llull, the medieval philosopher and linguist. Near to Miramar lies another of the Archduke’s former properties, Son Marroig, which can also be visited. It hosts the Archduke Ludwig Salvator Museum, featuring a valuable collection of nineteenth century Mallorcan paintings and ceramics.

Balearics Natural Sciences Museum and Cova de Moleta (Sóller)

The William Waldren Collection (housed at the Balearics Natural Sciences Museum) features a real masterpiece: an entire Myotragus skeleton, consisting of original bones pieced together from Sóller’s Moleta cave. Recently, this museum hosted the book launch of Goats on a small island by British author and Sóller resident Anna Nicholas, all about the last century’s discovery of the extinct Myotragus balearicus.

Capdepera:

In Capdepera in March 1909, Ashington Bullen wrote a letter to Dorothea telling her about the existence of a bone breccia on Mallorca’s east coast; eventually, Dorothea collected samples there. Her investigations uncovered good quality bone deposits, including the skull of what Ashington Bullen described as a remnant of an extinct mammal.

Sa Cova de sa Bassa (Sa font de sa Cala) was where Dorothea found her first remnants of Myotragus balearicus: this cave proved to be a very productive site, prompting her to visit it during both of her
Mallorcan forays. Her findings there demonstrated to Dorothea that it would take years to properly examine all of Mallorca’s coastline and caves.

Protestant community at Capdepera

In the late nineteenth century, Protestantism -- specifically, Methodism -- became popular in Capdepera. This was the only protestant outpost on Mallorca. In 1879 Bartomeu Alou, a local resident, had set about establishing Capdepera’s Methodism. Given that the Catholic Church had prevailed for centuries, why did people in Capdepera adopt a different religion? What were the keys that made this religion so popular among Capdepera’s inhabitants?

Part of the answer was that the Methodist community opened free schools in a village where there had never been free education. Women were allowed to have religious functions and could become teachers. The Methodist community fostered the labour movement and offered medical assistance. The era’s Protestant press describes Capdepera as a ‘Methodist oasis’. It seems that Dorothea kept in touch with Capdepera’s Protestants. Some historians are currently investigating Dorothea’s Capdepera visits and her relationship with its Methodist community. An interesting contrast, featured in Shindler’s book, is that it seems Catholic nuns cared for Dorothea during her second visit to Capdepera. She had a very high fever and was thought to have malaria; in the end, it proved to be scarlet fever. Thus, she had contact with both of the religious communities that managed to co-exist peacefully in Capdepera.

Sa Fonda in Capdepera

Dorothea stayed at Sa Fonda (the Inn) in Capdepera. Nowadays, Sa Fonda no longer offers lodgings, but there is a pub on the ground floor; some of the former guest bedrooms on the first floor have been preserved almost untouched. The current owners are in the habit of kindly showing these rooms to curious visitors.

La Cova dels Coloms near Porto Cristo

This was Dorothea’s second most important cave, where she uncovered more Myotragus balearicus fossils. This enormous underwater cave (located between Calas de Mallorca and Portocristo) is like a maze of lakes with huge impressive ancient stalagmites and stalactites. The cave can only be visited under the guidance of either a local fisherman who knows the terrain or a speleology expert.
TEN TIPS FOR TEACHING PRONUNCIATION TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

By Yolanda Joy Calvo Benzies
Introduction

Pronunciation has been traditionally neglected in EFL classes to the extent that it has been referred to “as the poor relation of the English language teaching world” (Brown, 1991), “the orphan” (Gilbert, 2010) or “the Cinderella” (Underhill, 2013) in language lessons. Reasons for this neglect include the fact that teaching pronunciation is regarded as time-consuming (Szypra, 2015); and, some non-native EFL teachers either lack training in teaching pronunciation and thus avoid teaching it (Szypra, 2015); or, as non-natives, they do not consider themselves good pronunciation models (Foote, Holthby and Derwing, 2011; Szypra, 2015). While English pronunciation is a difficult language area to teach (mainly due to the irregular correspondences between English spelling and pronunciation), there are some points teachers can take into consideration to make teaching pronunciation easier and more effective both in the short and the long run.

Tip number 1: Explain the importance of English pronunciation to students

As previously mentioned, pronunciation is a difficult part of the English language. Students need to learn that changing a single sound in a word may change its meaning and that, depending on the context, pronouncing a word incorrectly may make it difficult for the listener to understand the message the speaker is trying to get across. Give your students examples of serious misunderstandings caused by mispronunciation so that they become aware of the importance of at least trying to pronounce in an intelligible way.

Tip number 2: Integrate pronunciation into daily EFL lessons as much as possible

As mentioned above, one of the reasons why less time is commonly spent on speaking - and hence, on pronunciation tasks - is because teaching this oral skill is considered time-consuming, i.e., it requires more time and dedication. However, as Rubio and Schwarzer (2011: 68) point out, “the act of speaking requires less time within a session than other activities (such as writing)”. Moreover, Marks and Bowen (2012) and Marks (2014) affirm that specific pronunciation activities do not necessarily have to be very long; a lot of pronunciation work can be integrated into other activities, such as vocabulary, listening or grammar tasks. Thus, it is important to teach pronunciation in an integrated way in our everyday lessons. This may seem difficult to begin with, since most general EFL obligatory and post-obligatory secondary textbooks tend to present pronunciation in isolated tables that stand out from other sections (Calvo, 2016); nevertheless, you can focus on pronunciation in nearly every type of task. For instance: a) in a ‘fill in the gaps’ grammar task, in which students have to insert the correct past tense of regular verbs, you could save a few moments for explaining/reminding them that -ed endings in English can be pronounced in three different ways, depending on the ending sound in the base form; b) when teaching idioms such as dig in your heels, hang in there, blew me away, knee-high to a grasshopper, bear with a sore head or spill the beans, ask your students the homophones of heel, there, blew, high, bear and bean. You could also get them to say minimal pairs for some of the words – there: share, fare, fair, dare, rare, pair, bear; etc.

Tip number 3: Compare English to the sounds that exist in your students’ native language

Obligatory and post-obligatory secondary EFL textbooks are normally full of tips and theoretical explanations on grammatical and/or lexical features like The present simple is used for X whereas we use the present continuous for Y; the verb look’ can combine with many prepositions and adverbs to form new verbs such as look into, look around, look up, look like, look up to, look down, look through, look forward to, etc. On the other hand, it is very rare in these teaching materials to find
examples or pieces of advice that help students learn English pronunciation (Calvo, 2016). For this reason, whenever possible, try and compare English sounds to sounds in students’ native language(s). For example: a) /t/ is a dental sound in Spanish/Galician. To pronounce it, we place our tongue between our teeth. In English, this sound is not dental: it is alveolar. You have to place your tongue just behind your top teeth. Moreover, this sound is aspirated in English, meaning that you release air when you say it -- this does not happen in Spanish/Galician; b) English has three vowels of -a quality whereas Spanish/Galician only has one. /æ/ is pronounced between an -a sound and a -u sound. It is similar to the interjection ‘ugh’ that people say when they are bored or not interested in something. /æ/ is similar to the Spanish/Galician /a/: it is the beginning sound in ‘apple’, ‘angry’. /a:/ is the sound the doctor asks you to say when you open your mouth wide so they can look at your throat.

Tip number 4: Personalise your classes with your own difficulties and experiences

Making mistakes is a natural process that everyone goes through when learning a foreign language (Folse, 2006). Some of your students will probably feel embarrassed if they make a mistake in class, especially when they make it in front of other people who may mock them. Despite these negative feelings, Ramón (2008) points out that mistakes are a useful resource for teachers, since errors help them see what students have learnt and which aspects still need to be emphasised or revised. Try and create a non-threatening and friendly atmosphere in your classes where students are not afraid of making mistakes and participating. Tell your students anecdotes or stories about your own English learning process.

Tip number 5: Focus on correcting mistakes that are unintelligible and may cause misunderstandings

It is impossible to correct every single pronunciation mistake our students make (Lane, 2010) but this does not mean you should avoid correcting all mistakes. It is important to especially focus on those errors that are unintelligible and may cause misunderstandings, e.g., pronouncing comfortable as /k_mft_b_l/ instead of /k_mft_b_l/. Furthermore, it is important to correct serious pronunciation mistakes as soon as possible to avoid errors becoming fossilised by students. For instance, I have heard many students -- even at the university level -- pronounce the preposition since as /sa_ns/ and the verb focus as /f_kj_s/ instead of /s_ns/ and /f_k_s/: it is very tricky for students to overcome this mistake after having incorrectly pronounced it for years.

Tip number 6: Praise your students

One of the main tasks of teachers is to correct their students’ mistakes in order to help them learn. However, I am in total agreement with Harmer (2007) in that it is also important to praise students when they pronounce a difficult word correctly, or speak intelligibly in a role-play or a debate, etc. Praising students is another way of creating the non-threatening atmosphere mentioned in the previous tip.

Tip number 7: Vary the type of activity as much as possible

Students will probably get bored if every unit’s pronunciation activities follow the same format -- something that continues to be quite common in modern EFL textbooks (Calvo, 2016). Try and introduce different types of activities: on one occasion, use debates; on another, role-plays or simulations; another day, use a song, then a game, etc. Nowadays, there are hundreds of authentic materials that can be used to teach English pronunciation in the classroom, including software programmes, magazines and newspapers, games, songs, recipes, TV programmes and so on.
Tip number 8: Use materials you know your students are likely to enjoy

It is important to use materials that are suited to your students depending on their age, hobbies, religious beliefs, etc. In other words, select materials and design tasks that your students are likely to enjoy. Teenagers will probably benefit more from active types of games that imply moving around the classroom and with songs of bands they like. Songs sung by Justin Bieber, Miley Cyrus, Selena Gómez, Auryn, One Direction, Olly Murs, Little Mix or Muse are more appropriate than Elton John, Tom Jones, the Beatles or Abba. Give students articles on sports, music, and computer games instead of always using less interesting ones on general issues like health, religion, politics or economy.

Tip number 9: Get students to speak as much as possible in class

Take advantage of every chance you have of getting students to speak in the classroom. It is impossible for students to learn how to pronounce English if they do not actually produce oral language. Textbooks addressed to Spanish learners include many tasks which emphasise perceptive skills such as listen and choose, listen and underline, which of these words is pronounced with a different vowel? However, these teaching materials give students few opportunities for actually producing real spoken language (Calvo, 2016). Thus, correct their grammar or vocabulary homework aloud; ask them questions about words in a text; have them orally summarise a text; get them talking about their weekend, hobbies, and feelings on certain issues; discuss the difficulties they had in writing a particular essay; express their opinions on a certain topic; give the reasons why they chose a certain option in a multiple-choice listening task and not another one, etc. In other words, integrate pronunciation whenever you can in the classroom by emphasising oral production as much as possible (see tip number 2).

Tip number 10: Include both explicit and implicit pronunciation tasks

Apart from explicit tasks in which the main pronunciation aspect(s) being practised is obvious (e.g., in a discrimination task where students have to distinguish the three ways in which past tense regular verbs are pronounced: final /t/; final /d/; or /d/), it is important to introduce tasks in which students are not aware that they are practising the pronunciation of certain sounds. Examples of how to do this with traditional board games such as Trivial Pursuit or Monopoly can be found in Calvo (2015). Other types of implicit activities include using songs with a high number of words with a particular sound; or designing a role-play in which students are forced to frequently use certain words or expressions. Consonant clusters can be practiced with semi-scripted role-plays between two people: for example, between a supermarket worker and a customer who is complaining about a packet of crisps (bought the day before) that is out of date. Give the students a list of words they must use; five or six of the words should contain consonant clusters, e.g., crisps, the verb to spot or spoon.

Conclusion

As explained in the introduction, pronunciation is often considered a difficult language area to teach; however, taking into account the tips and topics addressed in this article will make the teaching process much easier. Although completing some teacher-training in how to teach pronunciation is extremely useful, it is not necessary to be an expert in the field; simple steps such as those explained here can really help your students improve their spoken skills.
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KEY TECHNOLOGIES THAT CAN IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

By Russell Stannard
Russell Stannard is a founder of www.teachertrainingvideos.com, a website that provides step by step help videos to help teachers incorporate technology into their teaching. The website receives around 300,000 visits a year. Russell has won educational awards from the University of Westminster, the Times Higher Education, as well as a British Council ELTons award. He is an international speaker and writes regular columns in the English Teaching Professional, The Teacher Trainer and a Danish publication entitled Anglo Files. Russell is also an associate trainer with NILE (Norwich Institute for Language Education) where he tutors on the MA in TESOL.

I have been running teachertrainingvideos.com now for nearly 10 years. It provides free technology training to teachers who are interested in integrating technology into their teaching. Many people ask me what my favourite technology is. Well, the answer is actually quite easy: screen capture technology. It is probably the most relevant and useful technology a teacher could ever learn to use -- and in this article, I am going to explain why.

What is screen capture technology?
Screen capture technology allows you to record the screen of your computer as if you had a camera pointing at it. You simply click a button, mark the area on your screen that you want to record and then start recording. At the same time, it also records you voice. Screen capture will record whatever you have open on your computer screen. So, for example, you could have a list of words that you want to read out to your students and record as a video; you might want to open up a grammar explanation and record yourself explaining it to the students; you might want to record yourself giving feedback to your students. I began doing this in 2006. You could also use it to demonstrate model examples. For example, imagine you were teaching the students how to describe a picture or summarise the information in a table: you could record yourself doing it using screen capture software and then share the 'model example' with your students. You could even get your students to use screen capture technology. There are some great free tools like JING and Screencast-O-Matic. So it is possible to get students to record themselves talking over a picture or giving a PowerPoint presentation.

Thinking outside the box
If you begin to ‘think outside the box’, you can start to see some of the incredible things you could do. For example, students could send you their written work, you could open it onto your computer, turn on the screen capture technology and then record yourself giving feedback to your students. I began doing this in 2006. You could also use it to demonstrate model examples. For example, imagine you were teaching the students how to describe a picture or summarise the information in a table: you could record yourself doing it using screen capture software and then share the ‘model example’ with your students. You could even get your students to use screen capture technology. There are some great free tools like JING and Screencast-O-Matic. So it is possible to get students to record themselves talking over a picture or giving a PowerPoint presentation.

How easy is it to use?
As I have mentioned, there are many screen capture tools around but my personal favourite is SnagIt. SnagIt is not free: it is a one-off payment of $30, but it is well worth the money. It does a great job of video capture and image capture and has many options that the free tools do not offer. You can download a trial copy for 2 weeks to test it. You simply upload SnagIt onto your computer and then you can access it whenever you want. Recording the screen of your own computer is technically not that complicated, so the tools tend to be very easy to use. With SnagIt, you just mark out the area on the screen that you want to record and then click a button. SnagIt doesn’t care what is on the screen. It makes no difference if you have a picture open, a graph open, a PowerPoint document, a PDF file or a Word document. Indeed, if you turned on the screen capture technology and began recording your screen, it will simply record whatever is on the
screen. So if you opened a series of pictures, or moved from one slide to another, all of that would come out in the recording.

**Screen capture is everywhere**

You might not have realised it, but screen capture is everywhere. You may have heard of the Flipped Classroom, the Khan Academy or perhaps MOOCS. All these resources and ideas make enormous use of screen capture. You may have gone onto YouTube to watch a ‘how to’ video about something. For example, you might have been learning to use PowerPoint and needed to watch a video that shows you how to create a transition in PowerPoint; well, that video that you watched was made using screen capture.

**The technology has really moved on**

I first came across screen capture technology in about 2001 and I immediately saw its potential. However, it has vastly improved and the latest technologies make recording your screen and then distributing the videos really easy. For example, if you have a Gmail account, then you can directly save the videos you create using Snagit into your Google Drive. However, what I most like is saving my videos to YouTube. If you have a Gmail account, then you have a free YouTube channel. You don’t need to know anything about this channel. You simply open Snagit, add in your Google email and password and then you can immediately create a video, save it onto YouTube and then share the link with your students. I can’t stress how easy this is. Once you have added in your Google address and the password, the two devices will always be linked. You can create a video, upload it to YouTube and then share it with your students in just 3 clicks.

**The future**

Education is certainly going through a lot of changes at the moment. There is a lot of talk about on-line delivery, Flipped Learning, MOOCS, blended learning, etc. What is clear is that in some form, more and more content will be on-line. Whether it is teachers talking over a PowerPoint; or going over a grammar rule; or reading through a list of words and pointing out where the stress is, screen capture is very likely to play a huge role in the production of much of the learning content that we will access in the future. It is well worth learning.

**References**

1 A video where I demonstrate 10 different ways of using screen capture technology:
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3 5 screen capture tools:
   http://goo.gl/IbpbPK
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   http://goo.gl/NZffzs
5 Trial version of Snagit:
   https://www.techsmith.com/download.html
ALL YOU NEED IS WOOL: URBAN KNITTING IN ARTÀ

By Julie Fairweather

Julie Fairweather is a teacher of English, Art and Science with The British Council Bilingual Project at the Na Caragol Primary School in Artà. She is the author of *Art World 3 Teacher’s Guide* (Edelvives 2009) and *4 Tune Tales: A New Concept in English Learning*. 
Although this may sound hard to believe in these
days of high technology and digital advancement, the
most successful collaborative project to date at our
school has nothing to do with apps or laptops. There
is no need for smart screens or fast Internet, either. All
you need is wool . . . and without a doubt, plenty of
love, too, for the people around you and the world in
general.

Our learning tools are knitting needles, crochet hooks,
wool and the firm belief that we can knit a better
world. “Tejiendo un mundo mejor” is the motto behind
the collaborative knitting project, which has marked a
place in the heart of our school community and caught
the eye of the press (TV coverage on IB3, Canal 4, and
reports in Diario de Mallorca).

At the beginning of the first term, Noraya Minnick,
mother of two of our primary students and a keen
knitter, asked if we could help to knit blankets
for refugees in war-torn Syria. A group called “La
manta de la vida” was sending hand-made blankets to
the Asociación de Apoyo al Pueblo Sirio, an NGO based
in Madrid specialising in direct humanitarian aid. We
did not hesitate: we saw this not only as an opportunity
to raise awareness regarding the plight of war victims
in Syria, but also as a means to promote solidarity and
collaboration within our local community.

First, we asked grandparents and family members
to help show our pupils how to knit and crochet.
Various knitting lessons were organised thanks to our
volunteers, all with great results. Whilst the younger
ones made pom poms and chains for decoration,
older students made knitted squares to sew together
in true patchwork style. The local council and the ONG
Artà Solidari played an equally active role, organising
official “quedadas” (knitting get-togethers) and paying
for the wool. Fifty-six beautiful blankets were the result
of this amazing combined effort, which we sent off
with messages for peace from our pupils.

The project proved so popular that we decided to
make another positive statement with our knitting
needles, again in conjunction with the local council
and Artà Solidari. This time an Urban Art installation
was created following a technique known as ‘yarn
bombing’. The orange trees of the main street were
to be dressed in knitted or crochet coats to celebrate
International Women’s Day. Each tree was to have a
message to raise awareness and respect for women’s
rights. Once again, parents, grandparents, friends
and neighbours answered our call to yarn bomb the
trees, knitting individually and in groups. Our high
school students helped our primary pupils to measure
and count the trees; with their Technology teacher,
Magdalena Fuster, they designed tree maps with all the
necessary statistics.

The results are quite spectacular: the tree-lined
street has been transformed with a beautiful array
of colours and textures on each trunk. The fact that
the Urban Artists behind this eye-catching initiative
are all volunteers makes the project even more
powerful. Bringing people together for a good cause --
whether to knit blankets for those in need or to create
a colourful Urban Art installation -- has proved to be
a highly successful and enriching experience for all. So
please join us to knit a better world . . . All you need is
wool!
INTERVIEWS
VILNIUS & BUDAPEST
ETP Course Budapest: October 26-30th, 2015
Interview with Elena Serra

Could you briefly describe the CITA Teacher Profile course you were involved in?
The CITA Teacher Profile course was a CPD activity with a European dimension designed to share, discuss and reflect on the five challenges that English teachers face nowadays: CLIL, World Englishes, Attention to Diversity, CPD and ICT.
I really liked the sessions’ structure: they started with some input, followed by teaching experiences, and finished with group discussion dynamics.
Although all the sessions began with a short lecture, the methodology used by the speakers was active and engaging. I really appreciate the ‘hands-on’ and reflective methodology used throughout the course.
It was very easy to work in teams thanks to the welcoming and inclusive learning environment that was created by the ‘getting to know each other’ activities. Additionally, all the participants’ presentations were appropriate for the issue in question.

What were the benefits of being involved in an International Teacher profile course?
To start with, I would say that it has been a very enriching course for me and it has had an impact in my work. All the lectures, activities, presentations and group discussions were very interesting and appropriate for the twenty-first century English teacher: all these things have made me reflect on my own practice. Although most issues covered were very familiar to me and I have had quite a lot of experience dealing with them, I learnt something new and thought provoking from every single lecture, presentation and discussion. It has been a great opportunity to learn from each other, as well as learning about the situation in other European countries. Furthermore, meeting teachers from other countries gives you the opportunity not only to share worries, ideas and materials, but also to start new projects in common.
In conclusion, I would say that the course has provided me with new colleagues with whom I can share experiences, ideas and materials; new reflections about my own work; and new ideas and apps to use in my lessons.

Are the implementations in the three countries very different? After the swap shops and the feedback sessions, all the country participants agreed that we face similar challenges in the classroom and in education as a whole, although each country has its own peculiarities with regards to implementations. I am looking forward to getting the whole picture by reading about the course findings, which will be published in June.

Is the idea of including a swap shop of practical ideas very helpful for your future practice? In my opinion it is very helpful, as the swap shops and the feedback sessions offered the opportunity to share experiences, ideas, worries, difficulties, etc. Looking for possible solutions together was very engaging. It was a pity we could not discuss the issues in more depth. In my opinion, learning from each other through a ‘hands-on’ methodology fosters a reflection of one’s own practices and also provides motivation for implementing new ideas and experiences.

Should English teachers devote more time to reflect on their own practices? Yes, I think so. “Professional development is understood to be teacher learning that arises as part of personal reflection, professional interaction and external input” (Professional Development: A great way to avoid change by Peter Cole). It seems that action research is the best CPD strategy. We should change our attitude about observation with regards to observing a colleague and being observed. We should also take into account our students’ feedback.

Is the exchange of good practices a real solution for solving some of the problems teachers face nowadays, e.g., burnout symptoms; increasing academic failure; lack of integration of immigrant students, etc.? I wouldn’t say that it is the solution, but I certainly think it may help a lot. I like the metaphor that one of the speakers, Frank Prescott, used during the course: he compared teachers to sharks, as sometimes we teachers can feel very lonely in a hostile environment. So sharing good practices, interests, problems, etc., could be of assistance when one is feeling lonely, tired and insecure. I strongly believe that teamwork is essential for solving the aforementioned problems.

Has this course fostered an exchange of practices after its implementation, by means of participating in programmes such as job shadowing, eTwinning, etc.? In my case it has fostered a collaborative project with my second grade students and some second graders in Lithuania. The project focuses on their school bags and school supplies. The outcome of the project was several different videos in which our students showed and explained what they had in their bags. It was very engaging and motivating for everybody. See more at http://englishcorner1415.blogspot.com.es/p/our-school-bag-project.html
What have you incorporated into your daily practice after the course? As I mentioned previously, the course helped me reflect on my own teaching strategies and methodology, so I take everything I learnt into account when planning my new lessons. The activity about mixed ability groups was very emotional and made me think twice about the learning strategies I use in my class to address diversity. Although I plan open activities and use lots of collaborative work and scaffolding strategies to try to guarantee the progress and success of all students, sometimes it is ‘easy’ to ‘forget’ about some of the students’ needs, specially the ones that are not ‘labelled’.

I haven’t incorporated any new activities yet, but I will apply some of the activities done and shared during the course. For example, I really liked the ‘snowball fight’ presented by Jolanta from Lithuania. Additionally, I discovered new ICT tools and interesting web pages, as well as ideas on how to use them in the classroom.

ETP COURSE. BUDAPEST 26-30 October, 2015

Interview with Magdalena Estelrich

What were the benefits of being involved in an International Teacher profile course?
As always in these international courses, you are given the chance to interact with other teachers from different countries. Although we have different teaching environments we have something in common; which is teaching a foreign language and in many cases we have to face with similar situations.

Are the implementations in the three countries very different?
The fact that we were different types of teachers, primary, secondary and university gave me the chance to experience new teaching contexts. Most of the times we have to cope with different situations which are similar in the participant countries. Social realities such as migration or multicultural groups are common aspects most countries have to deal with today.

Is the idea of including a swap shop of practical ideas very helpful for your future practice?
Exchanging ideas from teachers who are working with their current students in their classrooms is always worth it. It is a way to share something that really worked in your teaching practice and some aspects can be adapted in your own classroom. Fortunately, we can share many on line tools, which allow teachers to have a common learning framework to design our lessons. For example, it is easy to exchange activities with other teachers no matter they come from. The course in Budapest gave me the chance to exchange many activities. The continuous contact with some teachers from the three different countries is still possible thanks to these common tools I mentioned before.

Should English teachers devote more time to reflect on their own practices?
English teachers and any teacher should do it. There is always a need to reflect on what you are doing. Other teachers observing you and observing other teaching methods can be helpful. I understand teaching as something dynamic. There is always a new approach and a new way to learn things. For instance, I would say that comparing my teaching when I started to my teaching today is different; always in a positive way, of course.

Is the exchange of good practices a real solution to solve some of the problems teachers face nowadays, e.g., burnout symptoms; increasing academic failure; lack of integration of immigrant students, etc.?
It can help. Teachers who are ready to exchange their good practices are usually the ones who are capable of tackling these problems. They are the ones who think there is a way to deal with a hard situation. Furthermore, I’d dare to say that those teachers get hardly ever burnout symptoms and usually give you a hand at school when you are in a difficult situation or simply they are ready to listen to you when you want to share a classroom activity.

Has this course fostered an exchange of practices after its implementation, by means of participating in programmes such as job shadowing, e-twinning, etc.?
Not yet. However, after the course our high school was involved in a Project with the primary school in town. Very briefly, our 2nd and 3rd ESO students prepared a storytelling project in English for the primary students. In groups they told and acted out their made up stories to the children.

What have you incorporated into your daily practice after the course?
My attitude to teaching has changed. I think I am more ready to share my teaching practice with other teachers. In other words, I consider what I am doing in my classroom as valuable as other practices. Since I like reading other experiences I think that mine can be worth too. We, teachers, need to charge batteries to do
our job properly. Sharing each other new approaches and good teaching practices help you do your daily work efficiently.

CITA TEACHER PROFILE COURSE REPORT by Nela Hidalgo (27th-29th October 2015 Budapest, Hungary)

The course started with the presentation of CITA, a project which I really found very interesting. The representatives of the project (APABAL, IATFL.H, LAKMA) explained the international dimension and how one of their aims was to link it to the needs of the English teachers and CLIL teachers, as well as working towards the new profile teacher.

Adequacy of the proposed methodology and materials in the teaching
From this course I would like to stand out how it has worked. The morning sessions where held by an expert/teacher (conference sessions) and they were very interesting but this is what it is expected in courses, but the afternoon sessions where amazing, there were not workshops but swap shops. These swap shops have been really the cherry on the cake, being able to interact, work, share, build with teachers from other countries with different backgrounds has been the best from this experience. I have attended another Erasmus+ course for teachers and the interaction among teachers was very limited due that usually in courses you listen, take notes and there is a lot of input but very little output. In this course the interaction among teachers has been a real thing. The organizers made sure that everybody was interacting with people from different countries and different teaching backgrounds. All that I can say is that it has been a really rewarding experience.

Impact of acquired knowledge in your professional future
The impact of the acquired knowledge has been specially to strengthen knowledge about CLIL and the role of the English teacher in this approach. It has also made me realize that for me the best way of learning is collaborating and exchanging experiences. I would like to promote peer teaching and teaching tandem. One of the most interesting sessions has been the one about practice reflection. This course has also helped me to build up new contacts in my professional network and to share my own knowledge and skills with other teachers.

Changes and improvements in teaching
I could say that in some way I have refreshed my attitude towards teaching after this course. I am trying to experiment new learning practices but especially I am reflecting more on my teaching. One of the sessions that has made me reflect more was the one about mix ability groups and dealing with diversity. Another session that has had an impact in my teaching was the one about gamification with sample activities and projects. Then in the swap shop afterwards I got a lot of very useful websites and mobile apps that we all shared.

Interesting cultural activities
The cultural activities held during the course have been a thread to continue with the swap shops. Being able to visit a city like Budapest guided by teachers from that city has been great. The treasure hunt in the city was really well prepared. One thing I would like to point out here is the possibility of the course taking place in a school, it has been an extra bonus because we have been able to see the classrooms and some of the work done by Hungarian students. It was a pity not being able to observe one lesson taught by an English teacher in Budapest because students were in a school break.

Future training needs
One of the swap shops was about CPD and there was also a session about action research, both of them dealing with the topic of teacher training. From the swap shop I would highlight collaborative work, sharing experiences, open lessons, peer observation, workshops on specific skills (with experts among teachers), flipped classroom, mentoring and teacher exchange as practical ways to develop as a teacher.

In the session about action research I would point out different ways of improving as a teacher such as: observing and being observed, interviewing, recording and videoing, getting feedback from students, keeping a journal, sharing and discussing and being part of a community practice.

Strategies to disseminate experience, knowledge and materials
It has been a month since we have done this course and a lot of teachers have continued in touch and sharing experiences though a Facebook group. I have contacted two of the teacher though eTwinning and we are planning to do a project with our students. Some of the teachers from Hungary are writing reports for their magazine.

The material of the course has been shared through internet but I think it could also be shared on APABAL webpage, so it would be available for other teachers as well.

To write this report I have taken a look at my notes and pictures that I haven taken during the course and I have found one of the last activities that we did the last day. It was about “What would you take home?” And this is what I wrote:

“I would like to take home all the beautiful memories a long with new friends, interesting apps, websites, lots of laughs and good moments shared.
I take home with me wonderful experiences, unforgettable moments and lots of things to reflect on. My luggage full of ideas to do in class and ideas to share with my colleagues"

I want to thanks once more to APABAL for the organization of this course, thanks to all those teachers who have made this project/experience possible.

Conference session Swap shop

Interview with Eva Maria Vives Centelles

Could you briefly describe the international CLIL course you were involved in? During the course, thirty participant teachers from Hungary, Lithuania and Spain reviewed CLIL methodology and compared CLIL contexts in their three respective countries. However, it should be emphasized that the course concentrated on CLIL’s practical aspects rather than theoretical elements, namely: teacher competences; use of materials; language needed; how to transfer and scaffold input; lesson planning; and, microteaching.

What were the benefits of being involved in an international CLIL course? In the first place, I think being involved in an international course makes the experience multicultural and more enriching, since one can share ideas and practices with colleagues from other countries as well as establishing new European links among schools and the possibility of developing projects. Similarly, it renews the teacher’s motivation to continue teaching and at the same time teaches new methodological approaches and tools for the CLIL classroom.

Are the CLIL implementations in the three countries very different? We all realised that, as teachers, we face the same challenges everyday.

Although in some countries, such as Hungary, they have been teaching CLIL for more years than in the Balearic Islands, the implementations are quite similar.

Are there any common aspects to CLIL approaches among these countries? We saw that in the three countries there is a need for CLIL teachers to be trained; there is a fear of not ‘having enough linguistic level in the foreign language’ to teach content; and the necessity of creating our own teaching materials, as sometimes the textbooks (when available) do not live up to our expectations.

How would you describe the CLIL situation in the Balearic Islands? CLIL became a thorny topic due to the former Balearic government’s desire to implement it in all schools and at all levels. The ideal is a gradual implementation plan starting at an early age, based on the European Sections (Seccions Europees) format; the latter has proved to be really successful over the last few years -- not the compulsory plan that the government tried to impose.

Can you suggest any ways in which CLIL development in the Balearic Islands could be improved? First of all, I truly believe that training is a key concept for CLIL teachers. Courses such as the one we attended in Lithuania provide excellent tools for facing the challenge of teaching a CLIL class. Unfortunately, in the Balearic Islands, CLIL teachers are not normally offered such great opportunities: most CLIL courses typically focus on theory and not practice. In the same way, I think it is important to provide linguistic support to CLIL teachers with courses and/or EFL teachers at their schools.

What course elements have you incorporated into your daily practice? After such an enriching course, the following elements have become part of my teaching practice:

- Have students do more work cooperatively in groups rather than in pairs or alone.
- Adopt the role of facilitator and be less ‘teacher-centred’.
- Be less traditional and more ‘fun’, incorporating more kinaesthetic activities.
- Use the new methods learnt in the course to introduce new vocabulary.
- New template models for evaluations.

Interview with Julie Faiweather

1. The Clil course was a very dynamic consolidation of the main CLIL elements through practical and theoretical sessions from experts of the three participating countries. As well as educational and training development the course also catered for cultural and social interactions that allowed us

Interview with Julie Faiweather
to become familiar with Lithuanian customs and traditions.

2. The main benefits were the chance to compare different systems and approaches, to be able to work in mixed-nationality working groups, the expertise of international lecturers, and the personal enrichment gained from interaction with such a diverse enthusiastic international group.

3. The implementation of CLIL seems generally accepted as a move forward in all 3 member countries and depending on the school / area / authorities there are different degrees of engagement. Perhaps the major difference in regard to our Balearic context is the lack of certainty and commitment from above, with the TIL laws having seriously damaged the general opinion and acceptance of CLIL practice.

4. My experience working with some teachers from Lithuania and Hungary on micro-teaching part indicated that the subjects of Art and Social Studies were particularly favoured for CLIL teaching in all of our primary school contexts. The approach preferred is communicative, dynamic and hands-on in all countries.

5. The CLIL situation unfortunately and due to political reasons is not too positive. As a trainer I provided a lot of courses for teachers at CEPS in Palma and Manacor in previous years, including intensive English weekends to improve teacher’s English skills and confidence. This year, no such courses are being offered and there has been a massive drop in interest. At least the European Sections have recuperated the value they had prior to TIL and perhaps teachers will start to contemplate voluntarily giving their subject in English if they feel prepared to do so.

6. I would reinject enthusiasm for CLIL by offering courses for teachers and by openly sharing all good practices achieved in this area. (Conferences, Workshops...) I would facilitate the “exchange” option for teachers and older students by having an “ERASMUS” Advisor in each area responsible for setting up/ informing / assisting European projects.

7. I have incorporated some of the wonderful communicative activities and the ideas for alternative group making. I have taken all the steps to find and become a part of an Erasmus School link called “Bridging Cultures” which we hope to carry out from 2016 if the project receives funding. (Fingers Crossed) !!!!!!
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