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ELT NEWS

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Practical, Creative Techniques for Integrating Language Skills

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD DO TO BECOME A BETTER EFL TEACHER

A NEW SERIES OF LANGUAGE TESTS DEVELOPED BY PEOPLECERT

Contents

STUDY SKILLS: IMPORTANCE & APPLICATION

PRACTICAL, CREATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR INTEGRATING LANGUAGE SKILLS

USING AUTHENTIC LISTENING MATERIAL

ΙΧΝΟΓΡΑΦΗΜΑ. ΑΝΙΧΝΕΥΟΝΤΑΣ ΠΙΣΩ ΑΠΟ ΤΑ ΣΧΕΔΙΑ

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ELT NEWS is a monthly edition published TEN times a year.

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The 4 Language Skills

ANASTASIA SPYROPOULOU

anastasia@eltnews.gr

When we learn a language, there are four skills that we need for complete communication. When we learn our native language, we usually learn to listen first, then to speak, then to read, and finally to write. These are called the four 'language skills':

In traditional teaching the emphasis tends to be on the students doing reading and writing, probably because it seems to keep them quiet and it is easier to organize. Similarly most teachers probably do most of the talking while the students do most of the listening, with a questionable amount of understanding.

In real life, it is not so easy to separate these four skills, as most language skills are preceded or followed by a different skill. Most teachers try to incorporate all four skill areas into their planning, though some classes may focus more on one set of skills or the other, due to the course and learner objectives.

When learning new language material, the order of acquisition is generally this, for both second language learners and children learning their first language:

- Listening: The learner hears a new item (sound, word, grammar feature, etc.)
- Speaking: The learner tries to repeat the new item.
- Reading: The learner sees the new item in written form.
- Writing: The learner reproduces the written form of the item.

When you are planning to present a new teaching item (sound, grammar point, vocabulary word, etc.,) keep the order of acquisition in mind. It is best to expose the learners to the item in that same order, so that they are exposed to it as a listener before they are called on to use it as a speaker, and that they hear it before they see it in text.

In this way, the order of learning a second language is similar to the way a child learns his or her first language. He/she will be able to understand the new item for quite a while before he/she is able to produce it and use it in communication.

In technical terms, the difference between being able to understand an item and being able to produce it is known as *passive* versus *active knowledge*. So it is important to expose learners to a large amount of material using the new item before they are able to actually employ it in communication.

Even though it is not apparent, your learners will be absorbing the new items on an unconscious level. Consequently, you should expect that the learners will go through a period of being exposed to new language and internalizing it before they can produce. They will be able to understand, but will not be able to produce. It is because of this so-called "silent period". This means that the teacher presents material that does not require the students to respond verbally, but rather allows them to show comprehension without having to actually produce speech in the target language.

Many teachers, in addition to the coursebook, use supplementary materials. These include skills development materials, grammar, vocabulary and phonology practice materials, collections of communicative activities and teacher's

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resource materials.

Supplementary materials may come from authentic sources, for example, newspaper and magazine articles, video, etc. Some coursebook packages include supplementary materials and activities, especially designed to fit the coursebook syllabus, and there are also many websites where you can download supplementary materials.

Reasons for using supplementary materials

- To replace unsuitable material in the coursebook.
- To fill gaps in the coursebook.
- To provide suitable material for learners' particular needs and interests.
- To give learners extra language or skill practice.
- To add variety to your teaching

The most common situations where supplementary materials are useful include when the textbook:

- provides insufficient or ineffective examples
- provides too few examples
- is too simple or complex for your students
- fails to cover an item of language at all
- can't be conveniently or logically suited to a complete class due to time constraints.

> *"Some coursebook packages include supplementary materials and activities, especially designed to fit the coursebook syllabus, and there are also many websites where you can download supplementary materials."*

Coursebook vs supplementary materials

Coursebooks are organised according to a syllabus, and are often graded (grammatical structures, etc. are presented in a helpful sequence for learning) so that Ss' knowledge of the language builds up step by step through the book.

Supplementary materials and activities can provide variety in lessons and useful extra practice, but it is important to make sure that they fit into the learners' programme, are suitable for the class and match the aims of a particular lessons. Supplementary materials and activities will not totally replace coursebooks.

Supplementary materials can be:

Class library of readers

Advantages

- Encourages extensive reading.
- Gives learners confidence.
- Learners work at their own pace.

Disadvantages

- Language is sometimes too simple and may not be challenging.
- Language is too difficult and may be discouraging.

Skill practice books

Advantages: Focus on individual skills.

Disadvantages:

- May not fit aims in the syllabus and/or coursebook.
- May not provide useful feedback.

Websites

Advantages

- New ideas for lessons for teachers.
- Variety of lesson plans, teaching materials, other resources.

Disadvantages

- May not suit lesson aims, learners' levels, needs/interests, etc.
- Sometimes difficult to find the right materials for the learners

Video

Advantages:

- Provides visual context
- Source of cultural information
- Shows body language

Disadvantages

- Equipment may not always be available
- Language may not be graded
- Lack of cultural background

Electronic materials

Advantages: Familiar technology for learners

Disadvantages:

- Difficult for teacher to control how learners are working
- Little or no feedback

Games

Advantages:

- Enjoyment

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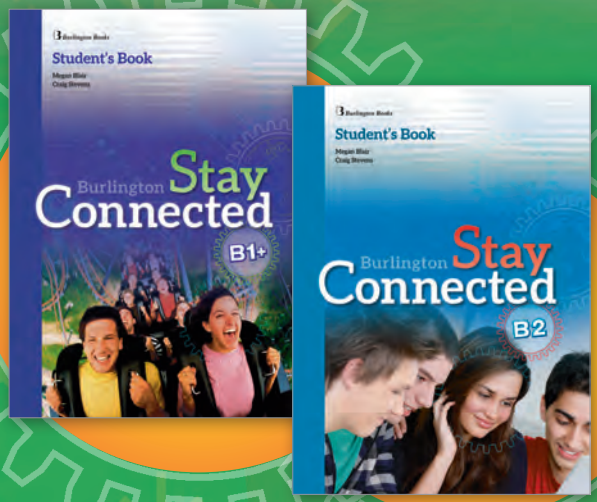

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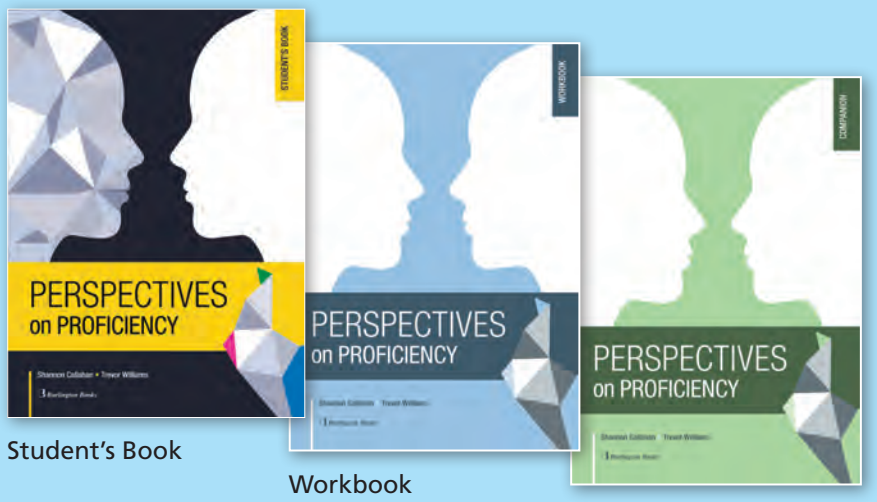

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- Language practice

Disadvantages

- May not be suitable for older learners
- Problems with other classes (noise)

What to consider when selecting supplementary material

Supplementary materials are not always accompanied by teacher's books, and the aims of activities may not be clear. Therefore, when selecting material, you need to think about how it will replace or improve materials in your coursebook.

It may be useful to use authentic material, which is not designed for a particular level, in order to give learners the experience of working with more challenging texts and tasks.

The activities in materials designed to develop individual skills often include the use of other skills, e.g. learners need to read a text before they carry out a listening task, or to do some writing as a follow-up activity after a speaking activity. When selecting materials and activities, think carefully about all the skills that are required.

Many publishers produce materials for practising separate language skills at different levels. Teacher's resource books, too, usually list tasks and activities according to level. However, you should check how appropriate the level is for your learners. Think about the language they will need to understand or to produce.

Use of supplementary materials and activities

1. Learners get used to the methodology in their coursebook. If you are using supplementary materials with different procedures, you may need to give special attention to instructions.

2. You can adapt many supplementary materials for use with classes at different levels. The texts used in these materials may not be graded, but you can grade the activities by making the learners' tasks more or less challenging.

3. Games and extra communicative activities can provide variety and make learning fun. But you need to think about your reasons for using them, so that your lesson still has a clear purpose. Older learners may want to know why they are doing these activities.

Conclusion

No coursebook or skills book can work wonders. The key to acquire and master a foreign language is PRACTICE. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE it as much and as often as possible.

ESB

2017 Format

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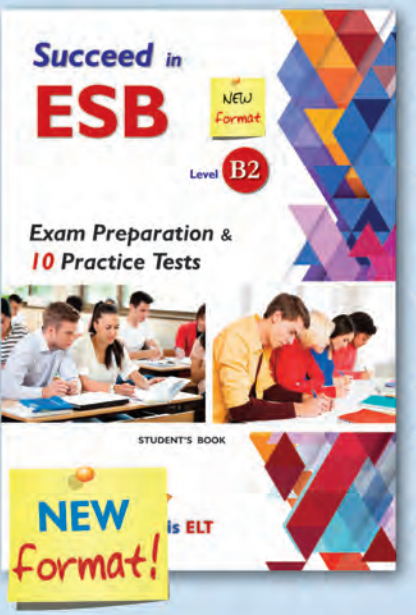

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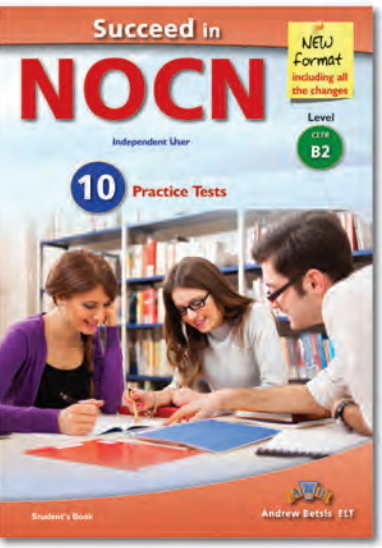

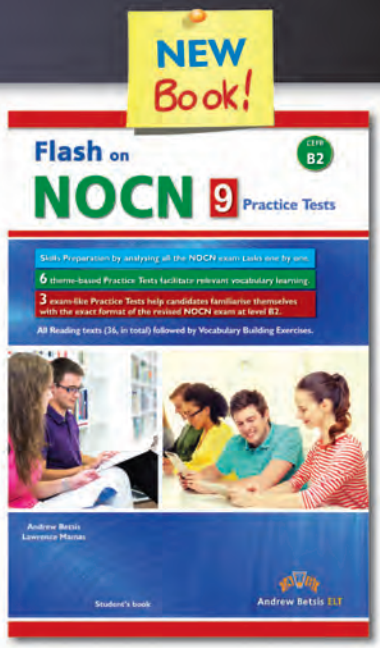

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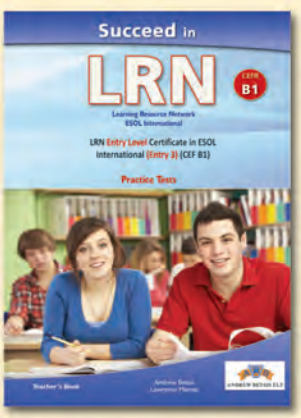

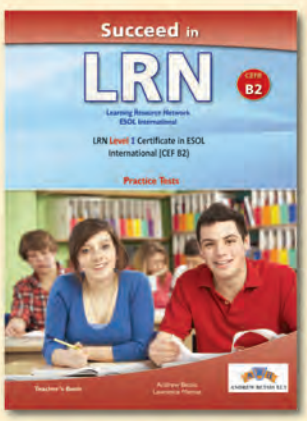

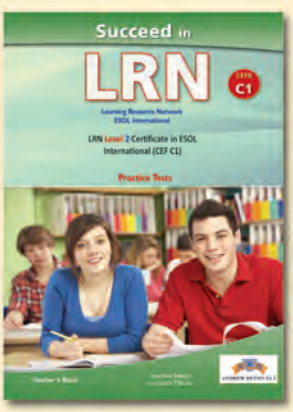

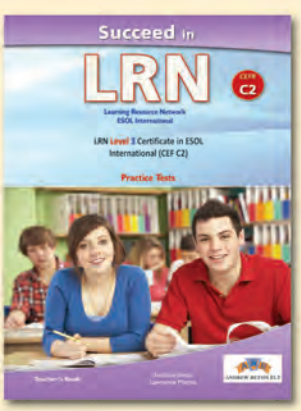

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LanguageCert International ESOL Qualifications

A new series of language tests developed by Peoplecert

Peoplecert, a global leader in the certification industry that delivers millions of exams in over 180 countries has developed the next generation of English Language Certificates; LanguageCert International ESOL.

LanguageCert International ESOL is a suite of English language qualifications designed for communication purposes, for study or work anywhere in the world. The introduction of

From left: Marios Molfetas (Business Development Director, PeopleCert), Andrew Staunton (British Embassy), Byron Nicolaides (CEO, PeopleCert), MIke Milanovic (Chairman of Advisory Council & Member of Board of Directors of LanguageCert)

LanguageCert International ESOL qualifications was made at the hospitable premises of the British Ambassador's residence in Athens last September, in front of an audience comprising of Foreign Language School Owners, DOS of private schools, teachers, examiners and publishers.

The evening opened with **Andrew Staunton**, Deputy Head of Mission, who welcomed guests at the beautifully designed garden of the British Ambassador's residence. **Byron Nicolaides**, Chairman and CEO of Peoplecert followed on the podium and briefed the audience on the activities of Peoplecert, on its achievements and the projects which are under way focusing specifically on the suite of LanguageCert International ESOL qualifications. The new qualifications cover all ages and levels from young learners to C2 Level, have been developed by a group of experts including **Mike Milanovic**, Chairman of Advisory Council & Member of Board of Directors of LanguageCert and **Nigel Pike**, Director Assessment at Cambridge and are targeted at an international candidateship.

LanguageCert International ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) examinations are offered at six levels (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), all fully aligned with the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The qualifications assess all language skills: Listening, Reading, Writing & Speaking. All the International ESOL examinations are regulated by Ofqual in the sector subject area "Languages, literature and culture of the British Isles". Up to now, LanguageCert has gained similar recognition from countries where English is the official language such as New Zealand and Wales and is in the process of acquiring recognitions globally, having already succeeded in countries like the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Spain.

The Qualifications in English, which are regulated by Ofqual (Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation) and are recognised by ASEP, will be administered 11 times per year in Athens and 4 times per year in other towns in Greece.

LanguageCert has some innovations that differentiate the LanguageCert International ESOL examinations from the others in the country:

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Byron Nicolaides, Chairman and CEO of PeopleCert

For the delivery of its qualification exams, LanguageCert deploys state-of-the-art, innovative and flexible exam administration technologies and systems developed by PeopleCert. To date, LanguageCert exams are delivered through more than 165 test centres in over 25 countries. LanguageCert will be present in 150 countries during the next 18 months.

Byron Nicolaides, Founder, Chairman & CEO of PeopleCert Group, made the following statement: "*We are very proud that LanguageCert, the most innovative and advanced ESOL qualifications in the world, is making its entrance in the Greek market. Taking advantage of PeopleCert's new technologies such as Online Proctoring and having by our side the most prominent and experienced Advisory Council, this British-native ESOL qualification is the next generation of English Language Certificates*".

Dr Michael Milanovic, Chairman of Advisory Council & Member of Board of Directors of LanguageCert and former Cambridge English Language Assessment CEO declares: "*LanguageCert is an exciting combination of heritage and innovation. It's a unique, forward thinking suite of English language examinations characterised by professional quality, modern operational systems and sophisticated technological solutions. I am very pleased to be working with the excellent LanguageCert team*". ●

Mike Milanovic, Chairman of Advisory Council & Member of Board of Directors of LanguageCert

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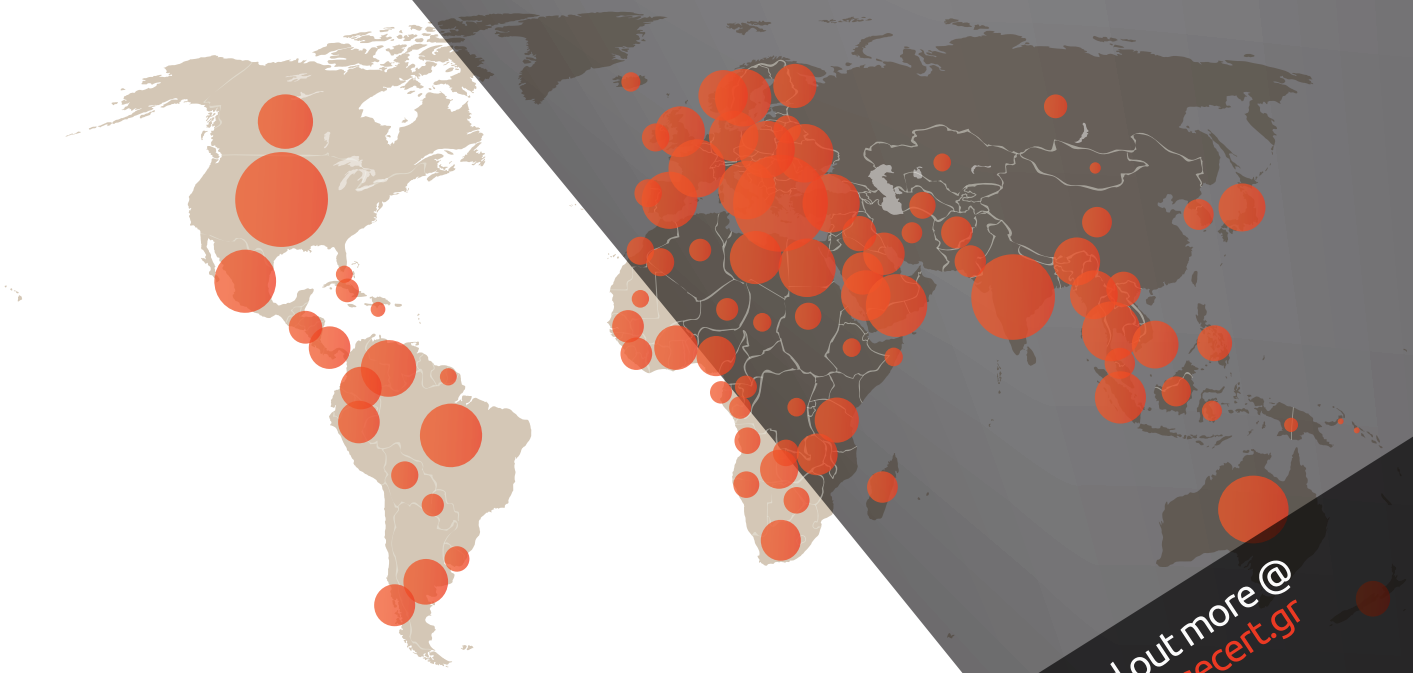

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FOREIGN LANGUAGE learning in EU

Currently there are 24 official languages recognised within the European Union (EU), in addition to which there are regional, minority languages, and languages spoken by migrant populations.

In 1958, legislation specified German, French, Italian and Dutch as the official and working languages of the European Union's (EU) predecessor, the European Communities. There have always been fewer official languages than EU Member States, as some share common languages, for example in Belgium where the official languages are Dutch, French and German, while in Cyprus the majority of the population speaks Greek. Since Croatia's accession there are 24 official languages recognised within the EU. In addition there are indigenous regional, minority languages (such as Catalan, Galician and Basque in Spain, or Welsh and Scottish Gaelic in the United Kingdom), and languages that have been brought into the EU by migrant populations, notably Arabic, Turkish, Urdu, Hindi and Chinese. Some regional languages, such as Catalan and Welsh, have gained a status as co-official languages of the EU.

School and other educational institutions provide the main opportunity for the vast majority of people to learn languages, while linguistic diversity is actively encouraged within many further education establishments and workplaces. This article presents statistics on language learning in primary and secondary schools of the EU Member States, EFTA and candidate countries.

Primary education

Within primary education, a clear majority of pupils choose to learn English in the vast majority of EU Member States. All or nearly all (99–100 %) primary school pupils in Malta, Cyprus, Austria, Spain and Italy learnt English in 2014, as was also the case in Liechtenstein, Norway and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. More than nine out of every ten primary school children learnt English in Poland, France and Croatia.

Many of the eastern and northern European Member States that joined the EU in 2004 or 2007 were characterised by the fact that learning Russian was compulsory in the past. This situation has changed rapidly and in most of these countries there has been a marked increase in the proportion of pupils learning English — by 2014 it often exceeded 50 % of all pupils. In Romania, Estonia, Latvia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia this share was between 69 % and 82 % in 2014, rising to more than 90 % in Poland.

Luxembourg is also of particular interest, insofar as there are three official languages, with most pupils receiving instruction in Luxembourgish, German and French in primary education; English is only introduced at secondary school. A similar situation is observed in Belgium, with the focus in primary schools on learning French or Dutch (depending on the community and/or region), rather than English.

Apart from Luxembourg, the only other EU Member State where more than one quarter of primary school children learnt French as a foreign language was in the United Kingdom, where this share exceeded two thirds (70.2 %) in 2012. German is the main foreign language taught to all primary school children in Luxembourg, while around one fifth of primary school children were taught German in 2014 in Hungary and Croatia.

Secondary education

Turning to language learning in secondary general some 94.1 % of all EU-28 students at this level were studying English as a foreign language in 2014, compared with less than one quarter (23.0 %) studying French, while less than one fifth were studying Spanish (19.1 %) or German (18.9 %).

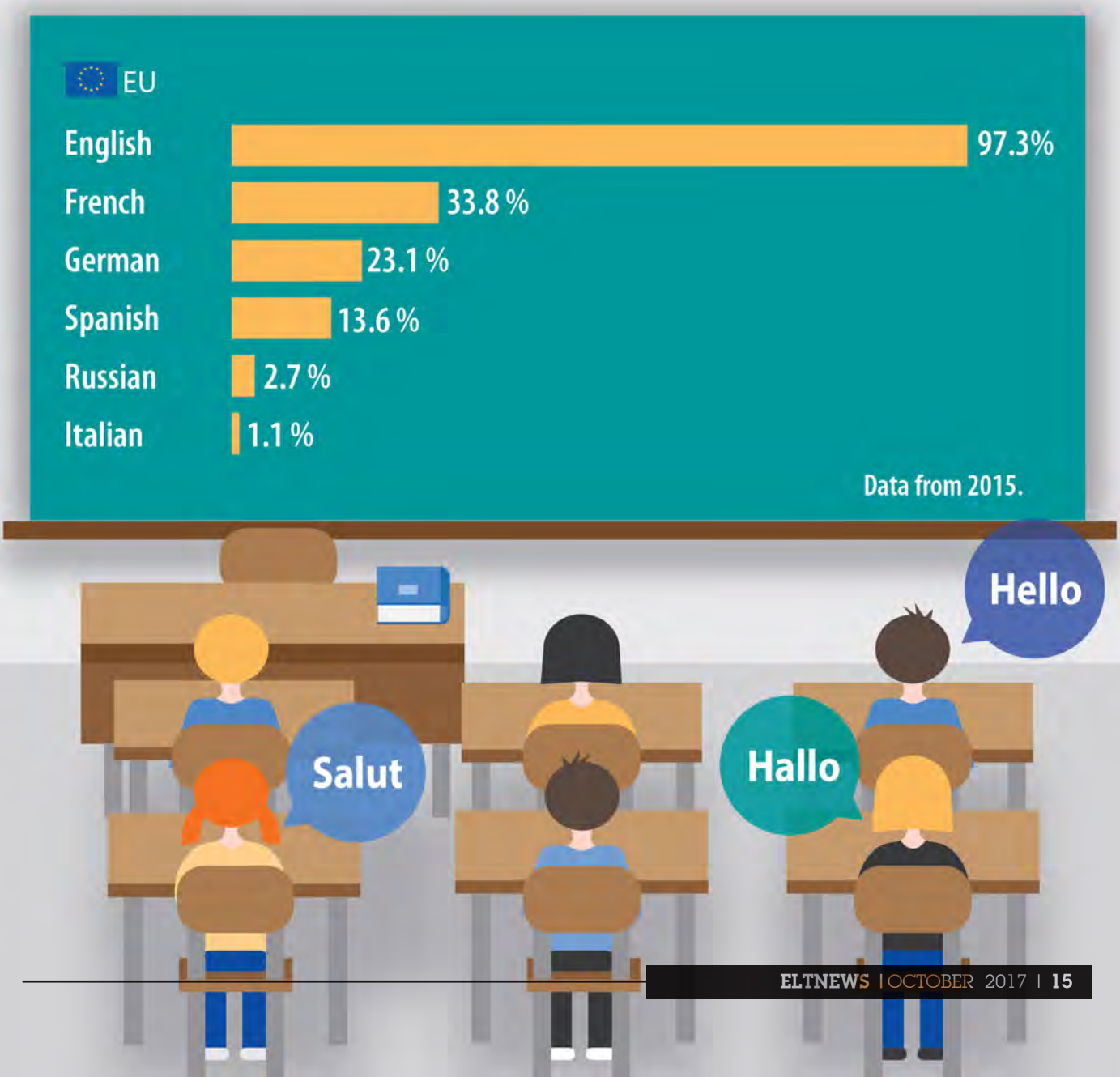
Between 2009 and 2014, the proportion of students in the EU-28 studying English was stable (down 0.1 percentage

points), while the proportions studying French and German fell 3.0 and 4.2 percentage points respectively.

Just over half (51.2 %) of upper secondary general education in the EU-28 studied two or more languages in 2014, down from 51.4 % in 2009. Luxembourg stood out as the EU Member State with the highest proportion (100 %) of upper secondary general education students learning two or more languages, although shares of 98.6 % or higher were recorded in Finland, Romania, Slovakia and France. By far the lowest shares of secondary education students learning two or more languages, all below 10 %, were recorded in Portugal, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Greece.

Between 2009 and 2014, France observed a large increase in the proportion of upper secondary general education students learning two or more languages, up from 90.6 % to 98.6 %. Only five other EU Member States reported an increase between 2009 and 2014. The largest decreases during the same period were reported for Denmark, Malta (2010–14) and Sweden, down by more than 10 percentage points. Norway reported an even larger fall, down to 35.1 % in 2014 from 100.0 % in 2009. •

Which are the most studied foreign languages?
(% of pupils at lower secondary level)



Population Decline in Greece

by Anastasia Spyropoulou - anastasia@eltnews.gr

The school year has started in Greece and classrooms in schools across the country were supposed to be full of children. Far from the truth. It is reported that many primary schools, especially in rural areas and in the outskirts of small provincial towns closed down in September due to lack of students. The population decline in Greece, which is reflected in its state primary schools, is due to 1) migration and 2) low birth rates.

Migration/ The brain drain

Faced with dwindling incomes and/or unemployment, many Greeks have been forced to look for work elsewhere. In the last five years, Greece's population has declined, falling by about 400,000.

With unemployment of over 50% for 15 to 24 year olds, real GDP decline of 25% and GDP per capita decline of 17% since 2007, it is not surprising that thousands of Greeks are leaving their homeland in order to find work and better living conditions abroad. The most common destinations are the UK, Germany, US and Australia (in particular, the city of Melbourne. There are already an estimated 300,000 Greeks living in Melbourne, making it the third-largest Greek city behind Athens and Thessaloniki. Since the middle of 2013, more than 20,000 Greek nationals have fled to Australia. The majority of these people have either dual nationality or family ties to Australia).

An increase of migration from Greece has also been recorded in Middle Eastern countries.

The United Kingdom's Department for work and pensions reports that between September 2012 and 2013, immigration from Greece has increased by 31 percent. In Germany, the migration rate from Greece has increased by 5.1 percent while the Federation of Greek Communities in Belgium reports that Greek immigrants are looking for positions in the banking and research sectors.

Most of the Geek immigrants are eventually employed in the administrative, legal, marketing, financial and tourist sectors. A recent European University Institute survey found that of those who emigrated, nine in 10 hold a university degree; more than 60% of those have a master's degree, while 11% hold a PhD.

According to a study by Kappa Research (among university students), seven out of ten university graduates in Greece are trying to migrate in search of better job opportunities abroad. The study also showed that at least one in ten Greeks is already abroad trying to find a job or to continue his or her studies. 44.7 percent of those who want to migrate are seeking a better job, 66.4 percent would like a better standard of living, while 32.6 percent are after fairer job prospects. About 61 percent of those polled, stated that they would prefer a job, which would lead to a career outside Greece rather than a position in either the public or private sector in Greece. These results point to a high degree of disappointment and dissatisfaction with the Greek government and the current situation in the country.

Low birth rate

The demographic reality says that around one-fifth of the Greek population is aged over 65 (up from 11 percent in 1971). At the same time, the number of future workers and taxpayers (those aged under 15) have declined from 25.4 percent to 14.4 percent in the period 1971-2011.

As couples grapple with a longer-than-expected stretch of low growth, high unemployment, precarious jobs and financial strain, they decide to have just one child -or none. Approximately a fifth of women born in the 1970s are likely to remain childless.

According to Eurostat to keep a population steady a birth rate of 2.1 is needed. In Greece the current birth rate is 1.3 -a demographic disaster. Without significant improvement, Greece is trending toward some of the lowest birthrates in the world, which will accelerate stress on pension and welfare systems and crimp growth. Lower birthrates will mean weaker growth and productivity, and more fiscal problems.

Struggling to manage a recovery after nearly eight years of recession, the government cannot make the fertility drop a top priority. Subsidies for large families were weakened under Greece's austerity-linked international financial bailouts. Greece now has the lowest budget in the European Union for family and child benefits.

Some analysts 'cynically' admit that the shifting demographic trends are a blessing in disguise for Greece. 'As long as Greece has high unemployment, it may be good luck that there's not a baby boom' they say. 'If there was,' 'we might have more problems right now.'

However the problem of the low birth rate is in front of us and if we don't fix it, in 20 years we'll be a country of old people –a real nightmare for the future of our country.

PTE General

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5 Things You Should Do To Become A Better EFL Teacher

STEVE VASSILAKOPOULOS*

1 **Don't set homework you have not covered in class.**

This is very common, quite often in an attempt to cover all the material set in a course book. For example, a reading passage may be set as homework which involves reading the text and doing the comprehension questions and vocabulary exercises that follow. Similarly, grammar homework may be given that asks students to read the information covering the use, function and structure and then doing the subsequent exercises. However, by setting reading comprehension homework in this way, valuable pre-reading exercises are missed as well as strategies for reading not to mention that there is no checking done to ensure that the instructions have been understood correctly and there is no opportunity to answer queries students might have. Likewise, taking short cuts with grammar and not making sure all students have comprehended the construction, use and function of a grammatical structure and not having done controlled exercises employing the structure in class, will very often lead to gaps which severely limit a student's ability to progress and use more advantaged language later on. It should always be kept in mind, homework should mostly be used to check what students have already been taught and not so as to keep pace with the syllabus.

2 **Don't spend most of the lesson taking up homework.**

One of the consequences of giving homework on material that hasn't been covered in class previously -and especially if was a lot- is that it takes up a lot of class time to check . It becomes worse when the exercise has not been understood well and it becomes necessary to do remedial work. Even when the material has been presented in class and has been well comprehended, make sure that taking up the homework does not take more than 20 to 25 minutes in a two hour lesson. Have most of the time available in a lesson for new learning to take place and for students to practice their English.

Don't always set writing as homework.

It is very common to set writing exercises and especially essays and compositions as homework because doing it in class is considered a waste of class time. It truly can be a waste if the teacher does nothing except let the students write their compositions and collect them later, however, if the writing is guided and monitored as the students write, students can be taught how to structure longer pieces of writing effectively. Doing this periodically can especially help students who chronically have problems putting together a coherent piece of writing.

Don't speak Greek most of the time.

Some teachers believe a teacher should speak the students' native language so that they can fully understand all explanations and then use English to practice the structures which have been taught. Many students also prefer this too because they feel comfortable when everything is easily understood. However, much is lost doing this especially concerning picking up acquired language as opposed to language which is taught. The truth is most of what our students learn is acquired as opposed to what we have taught them in class and a great way to increase language acquisition is to speak and communicate naturally and authentically in English with them in class. Greek, I believe, should be used minimally. The lesson should *in* English and not solely *about* English.

Don't be a one man show.

Some teachers feel they are doing a good job teaching when they deliver a powerful, dynamic lesson where their students are listening with rapt attention. Of course, there is nothing wrong with this and students do gain from it, but it should not be done all the time. If your students are spending almost all their time listening to you taking, they are not exercising or practicing their other skills, especially their productive skills. It's important when you're teaching to keep in mind what your students are actually *doing* in any given exercise and how engaged they are in doing it and how this will benefit them. Ultimately, students gain more and find it more rewarding when they are actively involved in classroom activities rather than being entertained. In other words, don't fall in love with the sound of your own voice.

Steve Vassilakopoulos is an EFL teacher, teacher trainer, writer and examiner for various exam boards. He has been involved in the teaching of English since 1985 and is holder of an R.S.A Dip. from Cambridge University and Masters Degree from McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada.

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FEATURE SECTION
DEVELOPING LANGUAGE SKILLS

Study Skills: Importance & Application

GEORGE KNORING

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Is there a possibility of linking the teaching of study skills with teaching English in such a way so that the two can be combined and successfully support each other?

It has already been acknowledged that study skills have an important cross-curricular value and should therefore be part of the curriculum design and implementation with a view to our learners' formative development, which undoubtedly must be our primary consideration both as EFL teachers as well as educators. Strong study skills lead to effective learning, learners become inspired and motivated, thus they move towards becoming independent and autonomous.

Through our experience as teachers, we have come across a number of learners of all ages and levels lacking basic skills and not being able to effectively deal with even basic tasks such as organising their notebooks, studying a course book unit, using a dictionary, taking and using notes, using a calendar planner and daily to-do list so as to plan ahead and manage their time effectively, setting goals, monitoring their progress and self-assessing the effectiveness of their learning. Most teachers consider such skills as 'innate', 'natural' and 'automatic' and learners are naively expected to develop and use them, but we should concern ourselves with actually teaching them.

Study skills should not be simply seen as a collection of techniques that will help learners cope with problem areas such as 'writing good essays' or 'passing exams' but rather taking a much broader look at our learners' study methods and help them identify their individual learning potential. We must, however, keep in mind that there are no general strategies that would apply to all of them, since it lies in

each individual learner's process of growing and learning to find their own suitable study method.

The teaching and learning process of study skills depends on a series of factors that we have to consider to better understand each and every student's personality traits that may influence the way they go about teaching them:

- **cognitive factors**: (language aptitude, learning strategies) These factors involve cognitive functions like attention, memory, and reasoning. We have to consider what mental operations are required for a specific learning task (synthesis and transfer; recognition and discrimination; classification and organisation, etc.) and provide appropriate strategies so that learners fulfill the task successfully.

- **metacognitive factors:** (individual awareness and management of the learning processes) For each particular task we must select and propose the most useful strategies for planning, monitoring, regulation and evaluation of our learners' learning. Learners should be able to plan their learning, monitor their learning during task completion, and evaluate their learning after they have accomplished the task.

- **affective factors** (attitudes, motivation, anxiety) Each task assigned requires different kinds of attitudes. So, we also have to take into account our learners' motivation, emotional state and interest in each of the tasks we assign them.

- **socio-cultural factors**: (group interaction, personal efficacy, role-play) Group interaction provides learners with opportunities for their language learning because while interacting with the other learners in class, they have the tendency to produce more spoken and written language than when dealing with a task on their own. Collaboration produces a productive learning environment and their personal efficacy (courage to speak up in class) greatly improves. Role-play among learners also serves a crucial role in language learning. Role-playing improves their English language because they are given the opportunity to express emotions such as relief or pleasure. Role-playing provides an emotional support that bolsters psychological distancing and self-control for learners to express their frustration of language learning.

What study skills are though the most useful and purposeful for our learners? The answer to that question lies in how we are to determine our learners' actual study needs and some of the criteria to take into consideration to appropriately choose the skills they need to develop should be the following:

- what the learning situation and its demands may be
- the techniques we provide them to deal with the situation and
- whether learners are able to make effective use of those techniques

For example, in the case where learners come across an unknown word in a text and we ask them to use a dictionary to do find its meaning, will they know how to make the best of this learning aid? Do they know how to do without it? Have they learned how to deduce the meaning of an unknown word from its contextual use, or be able to understand word formation and the use of prefixes and suffices, etc.?

Some learners' study needs to draw our attention to and expect our learners be able to deal with are:

- assess the study method they use
- know how to use their course book
- be able to store and retrieve information (note taking/mind mapping)
- make tables and graphs
- know how and when to make use of their dictionaries
- be able to self-evaluate their work
- know how to review information
- complete their homework on time
- study successfully for tests
- know how to handle stress
- cope with writer's block
- avoid distractions
- develop remedial techniques
- apply their study skills to other classes, etc.

The above are only some broad study needs and the list is by no means exhaustive, there are numerous other ones we could add as well.

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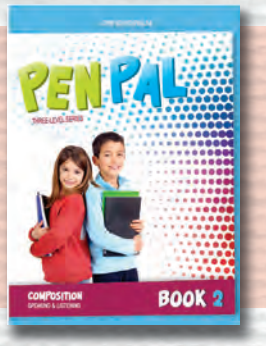

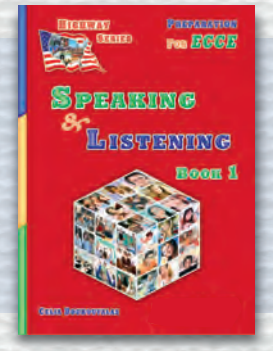

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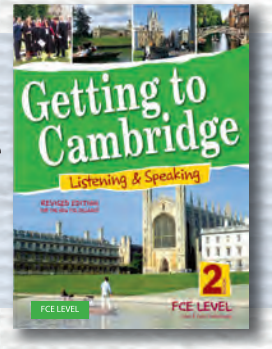

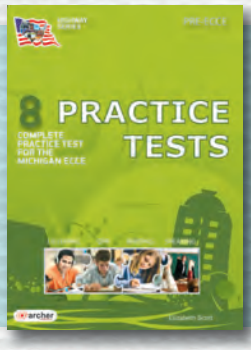

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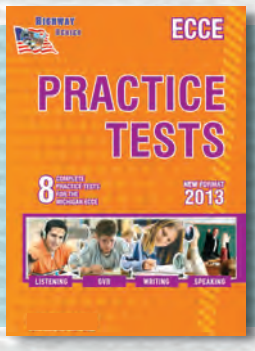

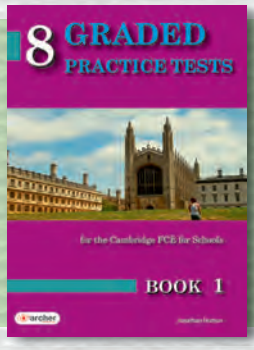

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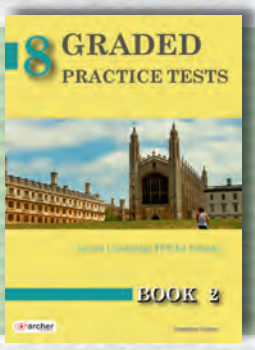

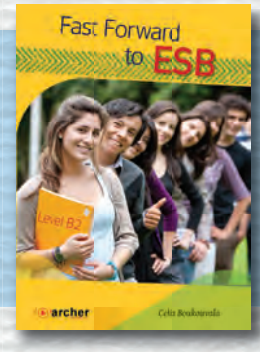

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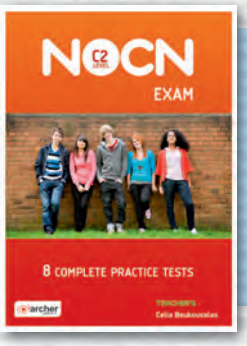

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should be applying the following four principles which are an essential feature of teaching study skills:

- **Awareness-raising activities**: Learners should be informed at the outset of the problem areas they may experience, so that they become fully aware of their strengths and limitations. We could do so with class or group surveys and/or discussions. This 'socialisation' of awareness will hopefully motivate learners to further inquire into the problem.
- **Training in specific methods of learning:** Learners through activities in class acquire knowledge and new skills. However, they should realise that there is no single strategy that will guarantee their success. How each and every learner learns best depends on many different factors, and learners must find their own ways by choosing from a number of alternative techniques.
- **Transferring new knowledge to own experience:** Learners should be invited to try out one or more of the strategies taught in class to tackle a problem area on themselves and select the one that they think suits their personality and learning style.
- **Evaluating new level of performance:** Through self-assessment activities (individual or group) learners should evaluate their performance and assess how successful the selected strategies have been for themselves and what still needs to be done in order to meet the demands of learning tasks as effectively as possible.

Any teacher may justifiably raise the issue of the limited time available to cover the language syllabus, let alone develop or adopt a study skills programme. However, once we wish to take the responsibility of not just teaching a foreign language, but also facilitating the development of student's individual and autonomous learning strategies, the following tips may put their minds at ease:

- Select a course that expresses a high degree of positivity in regard to cross-curricular learning and teaching and focus on study skills development.
- In each and every lesson try to activate any of the four principles of teaching study skills (awareness/ training/transfer/evaluation).
- Use techniques of the communicative methodology, such as surveys, questionnaires, games, problem-solving tasks and interviews.

Transforming ourselves into learning facilitators rather than just EFL teachers, we will manage to not only have learners with a higher quality of learning strategies but also of better language competence.

I would like to encourage you to share your thoughts on this topic and/or to provide examples of study/learning skills that you teach. Please feel free to e-mail me (gknoring@gmail.com).

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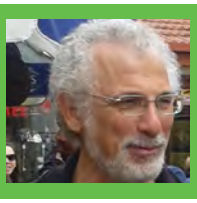

LUKE PRODROMOU

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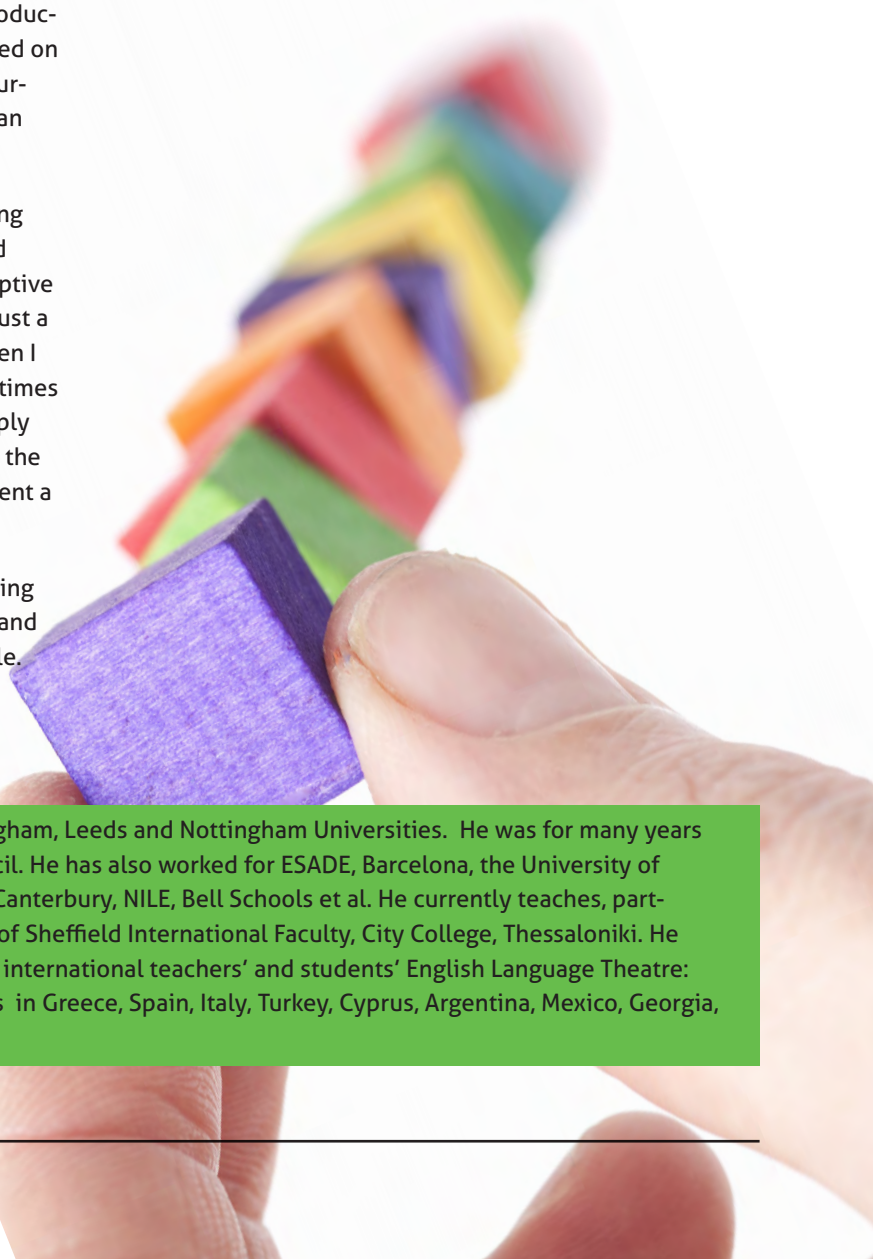
Traditionally, we refer to the four language skills: reading and listening (receptive) and speaking and writing (productive). The communicative approach to teaching focussed on *developing* rather than *testing* the skills and also encouraged strategies for *integrating* the four skills rather than testing them separately.

The ideal activity in class for developing and integrating language skills requires a minimum of preparation and provides a maximum payoff in language practice, receptive and productive. The techniques that follow illustrate just a few of my favourite activities for developing skills when I have had little time to prepare the class – one is sometimes called in to teach someone else's class or one has simply been too busy to produce a complete lesson based on the textbook. These activities can stand alone or supplement a textbook and are ideal for emergencies.

The first example demonstrates strategies for integrating the traditional four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing in the context of a pseudo-psychological puzzle.



Dr. Luke Prodromou graduated from Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds and Nottingham Universities. He was for many years a teacher and teacher-trainer with the British Council. He has also worked for ESADE, Barcelona, the University of Edinburgh, the University of Thessaloniki, Pilgrims Canterbury, NILE, Bell Schools et al. He currently teaches, part-time, ELT Methodology on the *MA TESOL* University of Sheffield International Faculty, City College, Thessaloniki. He gives talks on English literature and he also runs an international teachers' and students' English Language Theatre: Luke'n'Friends, which has performed at conferences in Greece, Spain, Italy, Turkey, Cyprus, Argentina, Mexico, Georgia, and the UK.

Procedure
Listening and Writing

Tell students that you want them to imagine that they're walking down a path, any path, anywhere. Ask them to describe their path (in writing); they should use these questions to guide them:

-Is the path straight or winding?
-Is it narrow or wide?
-Is it rocky, sandy, grassy, well trodden?
-Is it in a forest? mountain? beach? city?
-What's the weather like?
-Is it day or night?
-Are there any animals birds or people?

Next, tell the students that, as they are walking along the path, they find a stick. Ask them to describe the stick: the size; age; the colour; weight

Ask students to write down what they do with the stick:

-do they pick it up?
-kick it?
-throw it away?
-use it to help them walk?
-take it home and carve something on it?

Next, the students come across a fallen tree – ask students to describe the tree.

-the size; the age; the colour
-do you jump over the tree?
-do you go round the tree?
-do you kick the tree?
-do you play on the tree?
-do you jump up and down on it?
-do you sit on it?

Next, the students see a bear on the path – describe the bear.

-What do you do when you see the bear?

-After this, the students come to a river: describe the river and what you do.

Finally, you come to a wall. The wall is too high to climb, too long to walk around and you cannot dig under it.

-What do you do?

Process Writing

Ask students to go over their text and proof-read it, correcting and improving the language: grammar, vocabulary, punctuation.

Homework: They can take their notes home and write them up as a continuous narrative, using the simple past.

Dream Game

Level	Elementary +
Aims	To provide practise in listening, speaking, reading and writing
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper
Preparation	None
Language	Narrative tenses; adjectives: describing objects.

Reading

In class: Next lesson, students swap their texts with each other, read what their partner has written and 'analyse' it according to the following key:

KEY

- The path represents your interpretation of life in general
- The stick represents life's small problems and how you deal with them.
- The tree represents life's big problems and how you deal with them.
- The bear represents the opposite sex.
- The river represents marriage
- The wall represents death.

Speaking

They turn to their partner and, tongue-in-cheek and with lots of humour, they tell each other the true meaning of what they have written.

The next example, which I owe to my mentor, Mario Rinvolucri, also integrates the skills•

I remember ...

Level	Elementary/Intermediate
Aims	Develop listening, writing and speaking.
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Pen and paper
Preparation	None
Language	Remember + ing.

Procedure

Ask students to copy the following chart from the board:

Ages

2-5	6-10	11-12	13-16	17-19	20-25	26-30 etc

Tell them you're going to dictate things that happen to us at various ages for example growing and losing teeth. .

Listening and writing

Ask them to write the information, as they hear it, under the appropriate column, depending on how old they were when they remember having this experience.

Example experiences:

losing teeth falling in love riding my bike feeling cold taking exams leaving home feeling angry feeling sad needing money feeling anxious thinking about my hair worrying about my appearance

You say:

I remember losing a tooth ... I remember falling in love ...

The class write the information in the appropriate box. For example, I remember losing a tooth between the ages of 6-10. I remember falling in love between the ages of 13-16 and so on.

Speaking

When the dictation is over, pupils turn to their partner and use the completed chart to talk to each other about their memories. They say things like:

> 'I remember feeling anxious when I was sixteen years old; I had to take an important exam...'

When they've finished chatting with one person, they should turn to another pupil.

Follow-up

Writing

Students write a brief report on what they have learnt about their fellow students.

Students are often tongue-tied: they do badly at speaking tests because they have nothing to say on the topics they are asked to discuss. The next exercise aims to loosen students' tongues by getting them to write the questions they would like to answer, in an interview, in the real world, social media or even in an examination with an oral component. Students are often left 'speechless' by questions which others ask them and which do not engage their interest or draw on their experience and background knowledge. The following technique is learner-centred and because the students choose their own questions the possibility that they will have something to say is increased. •

Tongue-tied

Level	All
Aims	To practice speaking and writing skillsg.
Duration	30 minutes
Materials	Noner
Preparation	None
Language	Varied

Procedure

Writing

Ask the class to jot down on a slip of paper the topics they would ideally like to talk about in class or if they were being interviewed on TV. For example, they might write about:

1 The ideal partner: who do you think would be your ideal partner? What kind of person would you like to live with? Marry? 2 The best way to deal with economic crisis: what would you do to get Greece out of the financial crisis? 3 My ideal house: can you describe where you live now? Can you tell us what your ideal home looks like? 4 My ideal/my worst holiday...can you describe a holiday that went badly wrong?

Collect in the slips of paper.

Tell the class they're going to prepare a talk on the one of the following topics (read out a selection of the topics they have contributed to the pool).

-Who do you think would be your ideal partner?
-What kind of person would you like to live with?
Etc

They should choose one topic.

Speaking and writing

Give students time to work in pairs or groups to brainstorm ideas on the topic they have chosen.

Divide the class into large groups, A and B (eg draw an invisible line right down the middle of the class).

Speaking

Nominate a student (at random) from one half of the class, group A, to start to talk about the topic.

After half a minute or so, stop the student and then call out another name at random from the other half of the class, group B. That student then continues exactly from where the previous student stopped off.

After half a minute, call out the name of a student from group A, who continues exactly from where the previous student left off.

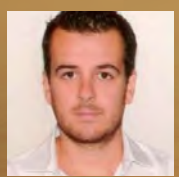
Continue till one of the groups becomes tongue-tied.

Repeat the process with another topic chosen from the student-generated list.

WHY DO we neglect speaking?

Language is a tool for communication. We communicate with others, to express our ideas, and to know others' ideas as well. Communication takes place mostly where there is speech.

The importance of speaking skills is enormous for the learners of any language. Without speech, a language is reduced to a mere script. Any gap in communication results in misunderstandings and problems. Apart from that, humans are designed to communicate orally. Writing and Reading are two skills that were developed much later. No wonder a child



DIMITRIS SPYROPOULOS

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first learns to listen, speak and much later in life to read and write. Actually when a toddler can produce proper spoken language from the age of 3, it can take an entire life to learn how to write (if ever) properly.

Which of the four basic skills make someone a more efficient user of a language? Listening, speaking, writing or reading? One will answer that it depends on the context that the user will be engaged to. A room full of English language teachers will often debate about the relative importance of each domain and offer differing opinions as to which domain is the most important to learn.

Despite its importance, teaching speaking has been undervalued and English language teachers have continued to teach speaking just as a repetition of drills or memorization of dialogues. However, today's world requires that the goal of teaching speaking should improve students' communicative skills, because, only in that way, students can express themselves and learn how to follow the social and cultural rules appropriate in each communicative circumstance.

In-order to become a well rounded communicator one needs to be proficient in each of the four language skills aka., listening , speaking, reading and writing, but the ability to speak skilfully, provides the speaker with several distinct advantages. Take for example Konstantinos Simitis, George Papandreou and Alexis Tsipras. Regardless of the fact the Papandreou was born and raised in an English speaking environment, he was the one that you enjoyed listening to. Simitis' speaking skills where actually good but his distinctively harsh Greek accent made him sound rather awkward. Our current prime minister resembles a 9-year-old sitting for a B2 oral examination.

Which is the most used skill in real world?

Undoubtedly listening gets the lion's share when it comes to frequency of use. Studies have shown that many of us spend 70 to 80 percent of our waking hours in some form of communication. Of that time, we spend about 9 percent writing, 16 percent reading, 30 percent speaking, and 45 percent listening.

Studies have also shown that a student with fluent conversational skills will often learn to read and write more quickly than a student who is less fluent, whereas a student who is an avid reader may learn conversational skills at a rapid rate because they have increased levels of vocabulary.

In the context of foreign language learning, however there is a problem which teachers have been aware of for a long time. It is the problem of the student who is structurally competent but who cannot communicate appropriately.

During my university years abroad I had the opportunity to experience firsthand the language skills that many of my Greek friends had acquired during their frontistirio years. Most, if not all of them, where able to read and understand complex academic texts, write multiple pages in open type questions during exam period in May, but could not form two sentences in proper English. Those of you who are oral examiners in any of the language certificates can relate.

Regardless of the fact we are forced to teach to the test, we can all agree that speaking does not get its fair share of classroom time. It is often squeezed and is limited to interview type questions or basic role-play that often ends after a couple of sentences and a big awkward pause.

Opportunities for speaking are limited

One of the problems that Greek students face is that when they "finish" their English lessons (usually somewhere around 16), they lose much of the language. Although we are exposed to reading (from the Net) or listening (mainly movies and TV series), speaking English in daily life is absent or at best limited to a few words.

The sad truth however is that although everyone (students, parents and teachers) is happy because an A4 piece of paper that certifies some can do statements, sits in a drawer at home, a student will not be requested to produce language for many years (3 at best if s/he goes to a university in the UK). During this time one's vocabulary has been reduced to a handful of words along with his ability to hold a simple conversation.

Should we be fluent speakers or proficient language learners?

If the latter includes the former then language proficiency in all skills is optimal. Reality however is much different. Language proficiency is not always feasible whether this language is one's native or a second one. Not all Greeks are proficient in Greek and not all British can pass a C2 exam with flying colours. Regardless of one's ability to read or write, one's ability to listen and more importantly speak a language determines how well s/he will be able to perform in many aspects of his/her life.

Using Authentic Listening Material

A report published in the Daily Mail a couple of decades ago gave reason for a light-hearted investigation. According to the report most foreign students who visited Britain or went there to study failed to understand English in conversations with English people! It was an outrageous claim and I was curious to see whether there was any truth in it. The investigation involved a sample of 100 students studying in two different language schools in Lamia at Elementary and Pre-Intermediate levels. They were asked to listen to two conversations identical in context. The first conversation came from the cassette accompanying a coursebook, popular at the time, while the second one was read by an American and an English teacher and was recorded in a radio station. The subjects were asked to answer 5 m/c questions the first two of which concerned the content of the two conversations as well as the origin of the speakers. The remaining three questions examined the comprehension of the passage. Their answers showed that they easily understood the EFL material. However, the majority of the learners failed to understand the "authentic" conversation with 90 of them stating that it was totally different from the EFL one! Surprisingly enough, unlike the EFL conversation, no one had managed to answer all questions correctly.

It then became apparent that the learners' failure to understand authentic discourse can be safely blamed on the listening material of the coursebooks. The language used, but also the RP pronunciation of most speakers, the speed and the clarity the passages and conversations are delivered in EFL material train learners to rely on a sort of acoustic signals which they will be denied when they are engaged in conversations with native speakers, especially of non academic background. This is only natural, since real life discourse, apart from the different accents and natural speed, it is full of colloquialisms, false starts, self-corrections as well as paralinguistic features, pauses, regressions, hesitations, slips of tongue, etc. However, the idea that

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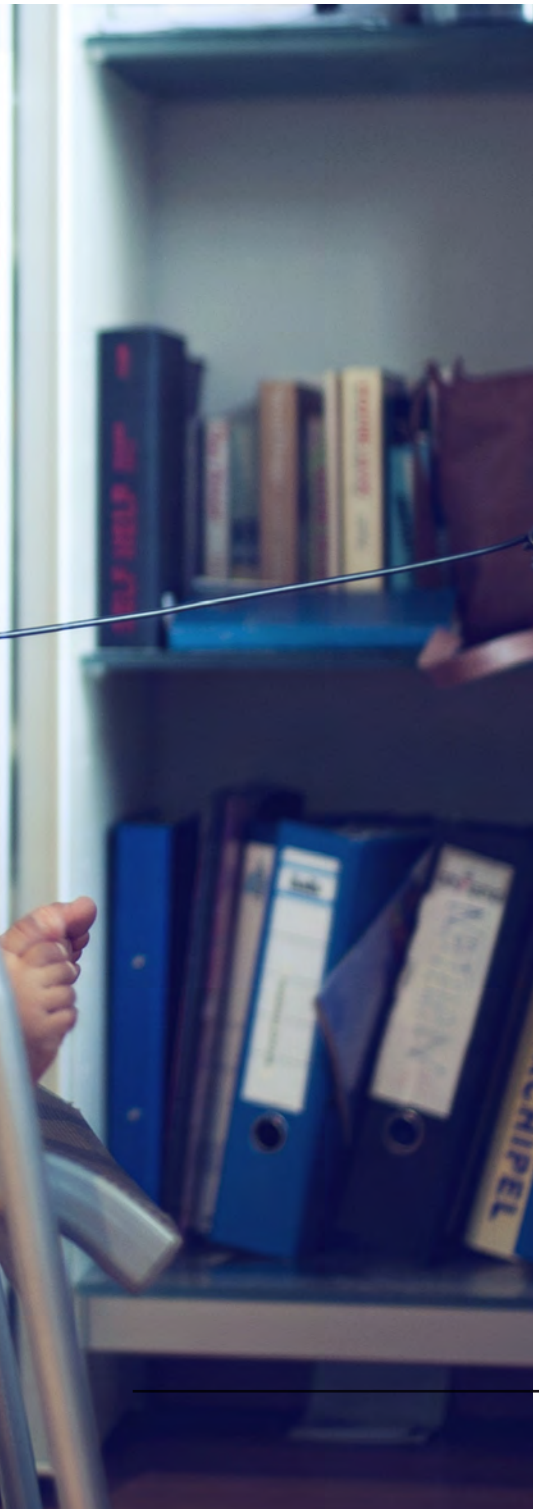
they are learning "real language" and not just an overly simplified 'learner variety, seems appropriate to real communication. Actually, when it comes to listening comprehension, helping learners to understand authentic language should be the target of virtually all language teachers. There is then an obvious need to introduce in the syllabus, alongside with the EFL listening material, authentic discourse. This, however, is by no means an easy task and there are a number of issues teachers and course planners should consider.



What kind of authentic discourse?

The exposure of young learners to authentic listening should start gradually when they have acquired and mastered an adequate structural and lexical background. Otherwise they will not be able to cope with the difficulty of such discourse. The second issue concerns the kind of discourse. The radio and the internet offer an abundance of material which can be downloaded, evaluated, edited and finally stored in a material bank. News reports, broadcasts, debates, interviews with famous people, even commercials cover a wide range of interesting topics and offer the potential of extensive practice of the listening skill, both at intermediate and advanced levels.

Organising authentic listening material

Finding the material is extremely easy nowadays but organizing it can prove a real challenge for the busy language teacher. Actually, many of the texts produced specifically for use in the EFL classroom are made in order to minimize these difficulties. Unfortunately, these 'learner texts,' which accompany many published course materials, often seem strikingly unnatural and overly-graded. In any case, it is important that teachers should have a clear mind about their aims and remember that such material cannot be used as a springboard for the introduction or practice of grammatical structures.

The first step then is to consider the usefulness and suitability of each ungraded passage. Once you have determined its use and exploitability, you can think of ways to cope with cultural and conceptual constraints some of the passages may contain. For instance, passages concerning current affairs will definitely need lead-in activities in order to introduce the topic in question. A five-stage planning procedure might prove useful:

1. The kind of discourse is determined.
2. Lead-in activities familiarize the learners with the topic and pre-teach crucial vocabulary.
3. Learners are exposed to short utterances from the passage in order to infer the speaker(s) goals or the content.
4. We plan suitable activities to check the gist and/or the understanding of Specific information.
5. We plan a number of post-listening speaking and/or writing activities to help students retain the most important information.

Richards (1983) suggests another option for working with authentic listening texts: we can adjust the difficulty of the task itself to focus on the specific listening skill area that learners need to work on. Although many other features of the text itself may go unaddressed, the usefulness of the passage in improving the listening skill is undisputed.

Basically then, the teacher has two 'levers' in listening lesson design: manipulate the input or manipulate the task. Varying our aims and consequently the tasks is actually the way we can use a particular authentic listening passage with learners of more than one level.

Putting together a listening syllabus based on authentic discourse is definitely a time consuming and a difficult project but you can use it for years and certainly the merits outweigh the problems since the use of authentic texts in listening and reading skills instruction may have the added benefit of increasing motivation if students see "the relevance of classroom activity to their long-term communicative goals" (Brown, 2007).

Reading: the taboo language skill

Dimitris Primalis
Teacher, Teacher Trainer, Examiner

Tips and hints for reading skills development

I think I can read your mind as you are reading the title of the article. "Reading? Why taboo? Who is it taboo for?" As social media lovers would describe it, the relationship of reading with all three stakeholders is rather complicated and multi-faceted:

Parents take it for granted that learners should read aloud long texts and translate them word for word in Greek - and derive pleasure from complaining tothe teacher if their kid does not know a couple of words.

Teachers tend to focus on testing reading comprehension rather than helping learners develop word and text attack skills because«there is no time to do that in class». The author of this article pleads guilty as charged for quite a

few such cases when he was a young teacher.

Learners feel familiar with short social media genre texts, accompanied with visuals but feel awe and shock when facing long texts with few or no visuals at all.

What is more, when it comes to reading under time pressure, teachers discover in horror that their students cannot cope because their eye span is not as wide as they assumed. In other words, students reading for pleasure (extensive reading) is not mainstream any more.

Treating it as a taboo issue, most of us will not talk about it. Instead, we will talk incessantly about the challenges of helping learners develop their speaking skills and quite often, we are willing to try a wide variety of speaking activities in class but not many for reading.

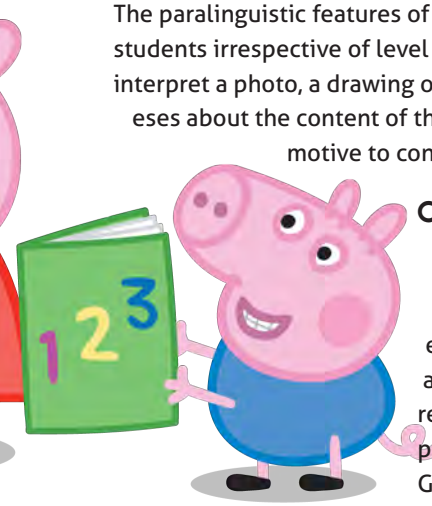
Let's remember together some tips and hints that can help learners develop their reading skills and feel more confident when they open a book or read a long text:

Activate background knowledge

Also known as schematic knowledge or schemata – the Greek word for shape-, it can help students form predictions based on their experiences and relate to parts of the text. If the text is about the environment, you can easily "lead" the learners "in" the text through a discussion on environmental problems in Greece. It can also help learners to brainstorm and the teacher can elicit or pre-teach necessary vocabulary. Once students start reading, they may feel that the text is not as difficult as they thought it would be.

Make the most of visual aids

The paralinguistic features of the visuals appeal to all students irrespective of level and ability. Every student can interpret a photo, a drawing or a map and can form hypotheses about the content of the text. In this way, they have a motive to confirm their predictions.



Check your instructions

Do students know what they have to do with the text? An essay and a travel guide are not approached in the same way. In real life, sometimes we approach texts in different ways. Giving your students guidelines on how to approach it, can make a difference. For example, "What is the main idea of the text? What message does the writer intend to convey to the readers?"

Break the text into manageable parts

A very long text is highly likely to discourage learners. Depending on the class and the learning aims of the lesson, you can divide the text into parts that learners can cope with. Once they feel they have achieved the task and comprehended the first piece, then you can move to the next one. This approach can help learners build confidence and can prevent them from "switching off" before even reading it.

Jigsaw reading

This activity may remind your students of an "escape room". Divide the class in two groups. Group A reads part of the text, Group B reads another part of the text. Then, a student from Group A and a student from Group B work together as a pair, to share information so that they can accomplish the task which requires information from both texts. It boosts communication, collaboration and student engagement.

Pre-teach vocabulary

Some teachers feel that they have no time to do this so they proceed with asking students to read the text. Yet, teaching key words can help learners to understand the text faster and build confidence.

Don't overdo it with grammar and syntax

They are both valuable tools when it comes to comprehension. However, they are not the only way to help your learners understand the text. A combination of approaches may have better results and is less likely to put students off reading.

Discourage translation word for word

This is often what parents demand but it will definitely not help them deal with longer passages at higher levels with complex sentences and new lexis.

Discourage reading aloud in class

I once had the opportunity to observe a reading lesson in

which students had to read a difficult text. The teachers asked the learners to read a part of the story each and when they finished, she desperately tried to elicit the answers to some basic comprehension questions from students who felt that the B1 level text in their book was more like rocket science rather than a fable. Alas, they remained silent. To the observer, it was clear that the learners had focused on pronunciation instead of text comprehension. By the end of the lesson, their confidence in their reading skills had been smashed into several pieces.

Encourage reading for pleasure (extensive reading)

Graded readers at the beginning and authentic material at a later stage will help your students widen their eye span and feel familiar with the world of books and long texts. It goes without saying that there are more benefits to reap apart own views in detail either in writing or orally.

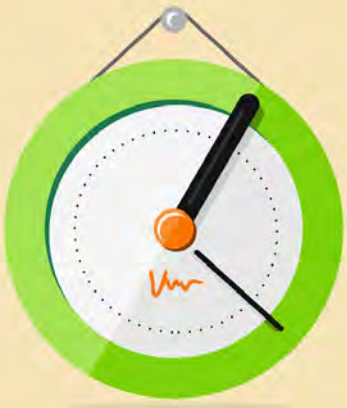
Final thoughts

For the past 10 years I have been using extensively technology in my class and my students – the vast majority, to say the least – are thrilled. Still, at the very beginning of the year, I always make sure that they are given a guided tour at the school library so that they can be acquainted with the magical word of reading – as opposed to compulsory and much hated studying. I also make sure that creative tasks based on reading graded literature are given throughout the year in the form of projects.

Facilitating the development of reading skills can help your students broaden their horizons, stimulate their imagination, build creative and critical thinking skills and equip them to deal effectively with an influx of data in a global, digital environment. •

Classroom Routines

Classroom routines are important for effective classroom management for many reasons. Teachers with well established and clearly defined classroom management strategies can make fantastic positive effects on their student's behaviour.



How do you successfully implement classroom routines? Incorporating effective routines into your classroom will take time, consistency, follow up, and effort.

The alternative of not taking the steps necessary would be escalating stress and frustration. You will be continuously telling the students over and over again what to do.

Teaching habits take time, possibly a couple of weeks on each one routine depending on the class. You will also need to revisit, practice and reinforce them continually. A little two-minute reminder on three or four different routines is all that is required at the start of a lesson but it still, must be done to keep your routines fresh in your students' minds.

So, think of all the transitions and activities that cause you trouble throughout the day, like distributing materials, transition time between activities and tasks, what to do when a student has finished a task, handing in work, etc. Think about how much easier your day would be if you had routines in place for all these stressful situations. How much smoother would the lesson be if students knew exactly what to do in each of these situations?

The key is to make as many classroom routines as needed. Teach them, practice them, make them habitual and post them up on the walls as reminders. One of the benefits of this is that the next time a student isn't doing what he should be you can calmly ask him: "What should you be doing?" and point at the classroom routine board. There will be no excuse that they can give you because when routines in the classroom are in place, they know what they should be doing.

Create, implement and then practice, practice, practice the classroom routines. •

Ιχνογράφημα. Ανιχνεύοντας πίσω από τα σχέδια

Ιωάννης Κοσμόπουλος

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Ιχνογράφημα:
Είναι η αναπαράσταση κάποιου αντικειμένου, πράγματος, τοπίου ή και ανθρώπου με απλές γραμμές μολυβιού. Δεν χρησιμοποιούμε καθόλου χρώματα.

Σχέδιο:
Πολλές φορές μπορούμε να το ταυτίσουμε με το ιχνογράφημα. Η σημασία των λέξεων μπορεί να μοιάζει αλλά οι λέξεις δεν ταυτίζονται απόλυτα. Στο σχέδιο η αναπαράσταση του αντικειμένου είναι ακριβής. Μπορεί να γίνει και με κλίμακα.

Ζωγραφική:
Απεικονίζω τα αντικείμενα, τα πρόσωπα, τα ζώα με τη χρήση γραμμών και χρωμάτων. Η έννοια της λέξης ζωγραφική είναι πλατύτερη από τη σημασία των λέξεων ιχνογράφημα και σχέδιο. Η ζωγραφική υπάρχει στη ιστορία του ανθρώπου από τα πρώτα βήματά του στη γη.

Όταν δώσουμε στο παιδί ένα χαρτί σχεδόν πάντα θα φτιάξει στο κάτι. Συνήθως είναι μια μορφή. Μέσα από τη μορφή αυτή, που είναι αυθόρμητη, το παιδί μπορεί να προβάλλει τον εαυτό του ή αυτό που σκέφτεται. Τα συναισθήματα αλλά και στοιχεία από τον ψυχικό του κόσμο.

Το παιδί θέλοντας να επικοινωνήσει με το περιβάλλον του μπορεί να στέλνει σήματα ή μηνύματα. Αυτά απευθύνονται στο κόσμο που το περιβάλει.

Τι πρέπει να κάνουμε:

- ✓ Να κατανοήσουμε την ανάγκη αυτή του παιδιού.
- ✓ Να μελετήσουμε τα σχέδια που έχει κάνει.
- ✓ Να εντοπίσουμε κάθε γραμμή. Να δούμε πως είναι

Η ELT NEWS διοργανώνει σεμινάριο την Κυριακή, 12 Νοεμβρίου στην Πάτρα με τα εξής θέματα:

1. Παιδικό Ιχνογράφημα
2. Σύνδρομο Asperger
3. Ο εκπαιδευτικός ως σύμβουλος

Εισηγητής: Ιωάννης Κοσμόπουλος

Ηλικία	Αγόρι	Κορίτσι
στα 4 έτη	προσανατολισμένο σχέδιο, κεφάλι, μάτια	κορμός, κεφάλι, μάτια, πόδια και χέρια
στα 5 έτη	μακρύ σώμα, χέρια ενωμένα με το σώμα, μύτη, πόδια, χρωματιστά ρούχα	χέρια ενωμένα με το σώμα, στόμα, μύτη, πόδια, χρωματισμένα ρούχα
στα 6 έτη	χρώματα στο πρόσωπο, στόμα, περιγράμματα με μολύβι, χέρια και πόδια σχεδιασμένα με δύο γραμμές, παντελόνι	μαλλιά, μακρύ σώμα, χέρια και πόδια σχεδιασμένα με δύο γραμμές, παντελόνι, φούστα, παπούτσια
στα 7 έτη	δάχτυλα & παπούτσια	χρώματα στο πρόσωπο, περίγραμμα με μολύβι, δάχτυλα
στα 8 έτη	πόδια και χέρια στις αναλογίες του σώματος	μάτια εξελιγμένα, σώμα σχεδιασμένο, λαιμός, χέρια και πόδια στις σωστές αναλογίες, χέρια στη θέση που πρέπει, λύγισμένα πόδια, μανίκια στο ίδιο χρώμα της μπλούζας
στα 9 έτη	στόμα και μύτη εξελιγμένα, σώμα σχεδιασμένο, ξεχωρίζει το φύλο, χέρια στη θέση που πρέπει	στόμα εξελιγμένο, λαιμός σχεδιασμένος, ξεχωρίζει το φύλο, ζώνη στη μέση
στα 10 έτη	μάτια εξελιγμένα, παλάμη στα χέρια, λυγισμένα πόδια, σωστή θέση και στάση των ποδιών, μανίκια στο ίδιο χρώμα της μπλούζας, ξεχωρίζει η ηλικία	ίδιο μέγεθος στα μάτια, κεφάλι & ώμοι στις σωστές αναλογίες, ξεχωρίζουν η παλάμη από τα πέντε δάχτυλα, ξεχωρίζει η ηλικία
στα 11 έτη	μαλλιά, λαιμός σχεδιασμένος, ώμοι, ζώνη στη μέση	μύτη εξελιγμένη, μαλλιά χτενισμένα, στάση των ποδιών σε φυσική θέση
στα 12 έτη	Ίδιο μέγεθος ματιών, κόρη στο μάτι, χτενισμένα μαλλιά, το κεφάλι στις σωστές αναλογίες	όλες οι λεπτομέρειες των ματιών (ίδιο ύψος, κόρη, φρύδια), κόκκινο χρώμα στο στόμα

φτιαγμένη, ποια θέση έχει στο ιχνογράφημα.

Μέσα από αυτά μπορούμε να φτάσουμε στη ψυχή του μικρού ζωγράφου. Ουσιαστικά πρέπει να αποκρυπτογραφήσουμε όλο το δημιούργημα των παιδιών. Οι ψυχολόγοι και οι θεραπευτές που ασχολούνται με τα παιδιά χρησιμοποιούν πολύ συχνά τη ζωγραφική ως διερευνητικό εργαλείο. Είναι ένας αξιόπιστος τρόπος εντοπισμού του επιπέδου ανάπτυξης των παιδιών. Μπορούμε μέσα από τη διερεύνηση του τρόπου που ζωγραφίζει ένα πρόσωπο ή ένα άλλο αντικείμενο να κατανοήσουμε τη προσωπικότητα του παιδιού. Το παιδί στο ιχνογράφημα μπορεί πιο εύκολα να προβάλλει τις ιδέες του, τα συναισθήματά του. Χωρίς να περιορίζεται, άμεσα, χωρίς αναστολές και ντροπές. Αυτό κάνει το ιχνογράφημα να είναι πιο συγκεκριμένο.

Στην εξέλιξη της ιχνογραφικής οι επιστήμονες δεν έχουν καταφέρει να συμφωνήσουν ποια είναι αυτά τα στάδια. Τα βασικά στάδια μπορούμε να τα ορίσουμε σε δύο:
α. της προσχολικής ηλικίας
β. της σχολικής ηλικίας

Η διάκριση που δέχονται σχεδόν όλοι είναι:

- ✓ η φάση του άμορφου σχεδίου ή η φάση του μουντζουρώματος
- ✓ η φάση που θέλει το παιδί να ζωγραφίσει την πραγματικότητα χωρίς να μπορεί να τα καταφέρει
- ✓ η φάση που ζωγραφίζει αυτά που έχει στο μυαλό του όπως τα έχει και όχι όπως είναι
- ✓ η φάση που ζωγραφίζει αντικείμενα όπως είναι

Τα καλαισθητικά στοιχεία έχουν μια εξελικτική άνοδο μέχρι να φτάσει το τέλειο. Η ασχολία του παιδιού με το ιχνογράφημα γίνεται πιο έντονη μετά τον 9ο χρόνο της ζωής του παιδιού. Κορυφώνεται ανάμεσα στο 10ο και το 12ο χρόνο. Διακόπτεται σχεδόν τελείως γύρω στον 14ο χρόνο (η φαντασία υποχωρεί ή λογική νοητική δεξιότητα ενισχύεται). Η προοπτική την κατακτά περίπου στον 9ο χρόνο

Χρησιμοποιούμε το Ιχνογράφημα:

- ➢ για τον καθορισμό πνευματικών λειτουργιών της αντίληψης, της επινόησης και της δημιουργικής ικανότητας
- ➢ για τον καθορισμό του νοητικού επιπέδου του παιδιού
- ➢ για την εκτίμηση και τη διάγνωση της προσωπικότητας του ατόμου
- ➢ για τον καθορισμό και τη διερεύνηση της πνευματικής αρρώστιας
- ➢ σαν θεραπευτικό εργαλείο

Η ερμηνεία χρειάζεται ιδιαίτερες γνώσεις και ικανότητες όπως:

- ➢ Γνώσεις ψυχολογίας από πολλούς τομείς
- ➢ Καλή γνώση της ιχνογραφικής εξέλιξης
- ➢ Κριτική ικανότητα των σχεδίων
- ➢ Διεισδυτική ικανότητα
- ➢ Ικανότητα συσχετισμών
- ➢ Καλή γνώση ερμηνευτικών δεδομένων από ερευνητές και άλλους επιστήμονες που ασχολήθηκαν με το ιχνογράφημα.
- ➢ Μεγάλη εμπειρία

Β. Η ανθρώπινη Φιγούρα

Η ανθρώπινη φιγούρα είναι από τα πρώτα πράγματα που σχεδιάζει ένα παιδί. Μέσα από την παρατήρηση και την ερμηνεία

της μπορούμε να αντλήσουμε πολλές πληροφορίες.

Η εξέλιξη του ανθρώπινου σχεδίου σε σχέση με την ηλικία του παιδιού όπως την παρουσιάζουν οι Κρόντι και Μάνι (2003)[1]

Γ. Η οικογένεια μέσα από το ιχνογράφημα

Το ιχνογράφημα μπορεί να μας δώσει (αν ερμηνευθεί σωστά) πολλές πληροφορίες για το οικογενειακό περιβάλλον του παιδιού. Μας δίνει τη δυνατότητα να εντοπίσουμε οικογενειακές συγκρούσεις, ζητήματα διαπαιδαγώγησης και δύσκολες σχέσεις μέσα στην οικογένεια. Με βάση τις πληροφορίες μπορούμε ακόμα να ερμηνεύσουμε αιτίες για κάποιες συμπεριφορές του παιδιού στο σχολείο. Είναι ένα σπουδαίο προβολικό τεστ.

Ζητάμε από το παιδί να σχεδιάσει μια οικογένεια γενικά ή αν θέλουμε την οικογένειά του. Σε κάθε περίπτωση η εμπειρία έχει δείξει πως ζωγραφίζει την οικογένειά του. Το αφήνουμε ελεύθερο να εκφραστεί και να ζωγραφίσει χωρίς περιορισμούς και παρεμβάσεις.

Προσέχουμε:

- Τη φορά του σχεδίου σε σχέση με το κυρίαρχο χέρι του παιδιού.
- Τη σειρά που έχει σχεδιάσει τα μέλη της οικογένειας.
- Το πρόσωπο που σχεδιάζει πρώτο.
- Το μέγεθος κάθε προσώπου.
- Αν παραλείπει πρόσωπο ή πρόσωπα.
- Το μέγεθος των σχεδίων. Μικρά ή μεγάλα σχέδια.
- Πόσο χρόνο αφιερώνει για να σχεδιάσει κάθε πρόσωπο.
- Τις αποστάσεις μεταξύ των προσώπων.
- Αν έχει διορθώσεις και σβησίματα.
- Αν προσθέτει άλλα πρόσωπα ή ζώα.
- Αν πιέζει και πόσο το μολύβι.

Δ. ΒΙΒΛΙΟΓΡΑΦΙΑ

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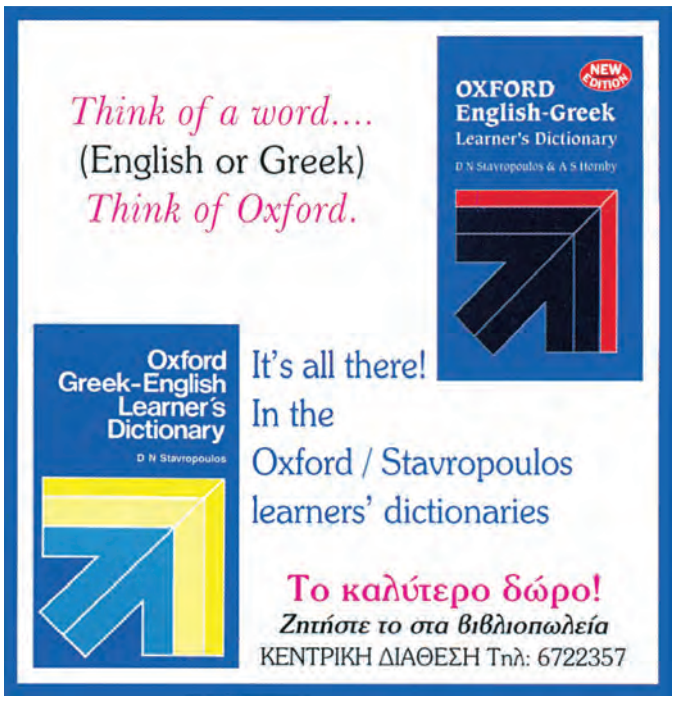
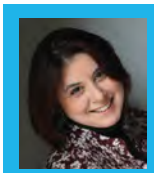


Marketing... Marketing... What on earth is marketing?



MARIA-ARAXI SACHPAZIAN
BA edu
RSA dip/**TEFL**

THE CONSULTANCY CORNER

In the previous article we discussed the issue of quality as a desired but often misused characteristic. Quality, when it is really there, shows that the services offered are worth the money paid for them and it also adds some extra value to the whole exchange. The reason behind the misuse of the term, I dare say, lies in the fact that marketing, this great player in our gigantic game of registration chess, has been abused and misused. All kinds of marketing? Which of the many kinds of marketing? Lately, there are so many terms around us that it has become confusing. This first article aims to analyse two definitions of marketing and relate one of them with the widely-spread practice of low prices.

Defining the stranger

The Charted Institute of Marketing gives the following definition regarding marketing: *The management process of anticipating, identifying and satisfying customer requirements profitably.* This definition on its own broaches a couple of issues that we need to pay attention to. Firstly, marketing entails management in it. Therefore, just applying practices without previous forethought, plan or measurement of success is not real marketing. Secondly, it is easy to notice the absence of the word advertising from the term. If we carried out a survey at any of our many conferences and asked school owners what marketing is, they would say 'advertising'. This term reveals that in fact marketing is not just the flyers but a mechanism which is much more complicated, deeply rooted in the bone marrow of the business we run. Described in this way marketing seems inextricably connected with the ***Research and Development department*** of each company. I am fully aware that most FLS do not have a real R&D department, and if it does exist it is usually in the form of a notebook in the School owner's drawer, but it is essential to have even that small, unofficial 'department'. The reason is that the cheese will be moved at some point. Goalposts will be changed, perhaps in the last minute. Therefore, business people need to *anticipate*, *identify* and *satisfy*.

Are low-prices a good example?

One may argue that low prices in tuition fees did exactly that. Clever school owners saw the financial crisis approach-

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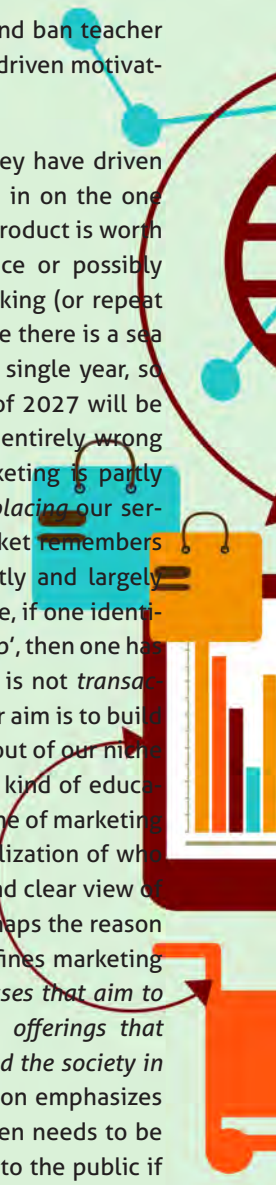
ing...people losing jobs...people not being able to pay taxes and loans and they *identified the need* for lower prices which they immediately *satisfied* and been satisfying for the past seven years with free classes, and tuition fees which seem to be dropping as I am typing these words. Unfortunately, they have not done what the definition says. On the contrary, they have done exactly the opposite because they have ignored the last word of the term: *profitably*. Profitably means a variety of things starting from a healthy cash flow and lack of delayed payments that drag for a period of two years. It also means ***rebooking***; because a school actually makes money when its core clientele is so satisfied that they re-register their children because they trust the school. Low prices have brought exactly the opposite, but for a few shiny exceptions. As they were not planned beforehand with an actual calculator used when devising those prices but only with the competing school in mind whose tuition fees where the guide for our tuition fees, the costs of the school were not met. The bills were not paid and teachers had to be told that since tuition fees went down, hourly compensations had to be axed as well. Some of them went along not asking the crucial question. *Did hourly teacher compensations go up every time tuition fees went up in the good old days?* Some others, those with a strong portfolio and sense of professional identity, left and went to work freelance. Hence, the many private lessons which have started competing with schools to such an extent that even well known chains of FLS have brought out special flyers telling prospects why a FLS is better than a private lesson. But is it still *my marketing* I am paying for when the flyer I have produced debates against my competitors, may those be the school across the street or the faceless, nameless teacher on the streetlamp outside the school?

The outcome of our practice

Low prices were not our way of anticipating, identifying or satisfying customer requirements. They were the panic button and the greatest proof that we did not believe in the quality and the value of our work. It was also a manifestation that we also thought that the results of our work would justify us and our practices. This works in two ways. Firstly, if my school is full of students I must run a good school, an argument we discussed in the previous article. We also tend to consider that good students learn everywhere and their learning is proven by the outcome, therefore if our school has successful certificate holders to plaster on its front door, we are in the clear. Once again, these are not real indicators of success or quality. The truth of the matter is that low prices have created the need for low-priced certificates with low-priced books and uneducated teachers who would probably fail any C2 exam if they retook it. Low prices have created the necessity to equalize teachers and ban teacher education from the FLS, therefore they have driven motivated teachers away.

Low-prices have accomplished one thing: they have driven us to ***transactional marketing*** which zeroes in on the one sale. It does not matter if the service or the product is worth the money. The prospect will purchase once or possibly twice if we can talk the talk and then rebooking (or repeat sale) will be lost to us, but that's fine because there is a sea of clients out there and kids are born every single year, so we can still hope that the proficiency class of 2027 will be a healthy one. Once again, this is based on entirely wrong premises. *Schools are their reputation.* Marketing is partly *the process of building that reputation* and *placing our services and our brand in the market.* That market remembers everything, which is why rebranding is costly and largely ineffective. If one messes up one's good name, if one identifies one's business with the words 'cheap shop', then one has little to hope for. What we are interested in is not *transactional market* but ***relationship marketing***. Our aim is to build long-lasting relationships with *those* clients out of our niche that are like-minded and our looking for the kind of education we are offering. Therefore, the cornerstone of marketing is ***content***. Content comes with a deeper realization of who we are, what we offer, a mission statement and clear view of what our school adds or changes. This is perhaps the reason why the American Marketing Association defines marketing as the *activity, set of instructions and processes that aim to create, communicate, deliver and exchange offerings that have values for customer, clients, partners and the society in general.* I believe it is clear that this definition emphasizes more the process of creating value which then needs to be communicated, as it would remain unknown to the public if it were not.



Closing comment

I will close this article, the first of many on this topic, with a rather sad story. A few days ago I was walking in the centre of Kalamaria, where I live and work, and I happened to catch a snippet of a discussion between mothers. One was a bit older and advising the younger one, who apparently had qualms about registering her child in a certain FLS. The younger one said "Yes, of course it makes sense. The money is ok but are they any good?" The older mother replied with a certainty that defied any kind of doubt: "Of course they are! In those classes (apparently junior) they all sing and play. They are fun. What more do you need? When things get serious you can always start private lessons."

No comments! ●

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MARKETING

Why are there so few NNESTs at the top? - the Magnifier effect

NICK MICHELIOUDAKIS
AdvDipEd – MEd – EdDoctorate

NESTs and NNESTs: The Magnifier

"Why are there so few NNESTs at the top?"

No way!

Look at this table (Gladwell 2008 – p. 27). This is the roster of the 2007 Czechoslovakian National Junior soccer team which actually got to the World Cup finals. Do you notice anything? That's right. Nearly 75% of all players were born in January, February and March! The odds of such a thing happening by chance are astronomically low. Nor was this an isolated incident. What does it mean? Is it that children born in those months are somehow endowed with superior athletic prowess? Is it their star sign that helps? And what could such a phenomenon possibly have to do with NNESTs?!? Read on.

THE MATTHEW EFFECT

No.	Player	Birth Date	Position
1	Marcel Gecov	Jan. 1, 1988	MF
2	Ludek Frydrych	Jan. 3, 1987	GK
3	Petr Janda	Jan. 5, 1987	MF
4	Jakub Dohnalek	Jan. 12, 1988	DF
5	Jakub Mares	Jan. 26, 1987	MF
6	Michal Held	Jan. 27, 1987	DF
7	Marek Strestik	Feb. 1, 1987	FW
8	Jiri Valenta	Feb. 14, 1988	MF
9	Jan Simunek	Feb. 20, 1987	DF
10	Tomas Oklestek	Feb. 21, 1987	MF
11	Lubos Kalouda	Feb. 21, 1987	MF
12	Radek Petr	Feb. 24, 1987	GK
13	Ondrej Mazuch	Mar. 15, 1989	DF
14	Ondrej Kudela	Mar. 26, 1987	MF
15	Marek Suchy	Mar. 29, 1988	DF
16	Martin Fenin	Apr. 16, 1987	FW
17	Tomas Pekhart	May 26, 1989	FW
18	Lukas Kuban	Jun. 22, 1987	DF
19	Tomas Cihlar	Jun. 24, 1987	DF
20	Tomas Frystak	Aug. 18, 1987	GK
21	Tomas Micola	Sep. 26, 1988	MF

From Gladwell 2008 – p. 27

How to succeed as an athlete

How does this happen? It's very simple. In most countries, young players are grouped in cohorts depending on their age. The age bracket is one year. In most cases the cutoff point is January the 1st. When coaches start scouring the country for new talent, they look at the different cohorts separately – and they start looking at them when they are really young. At the age of 8 or 9 a few months can make a real difference in how big, strong, fast and coordinated someone is. So naturally, it is mostly kids who were born at the beginning of each year that get chosen. 'But surely' you might say 'this initial minor difference just disappears after a few years – when all the kids are fully grown'. Yet here is the thing – it doesn't! Look at the table again. You will notice that most players were born in 1987 and 1988 – yet the World Cup took place in 2007; the players were about 20 years old! Why had the initial pattern not changed? According to Gladwell, it is all down to that initial selection. Young kids who are chosen get much better coaching and, crucially, they get to play a lot more than the other kids. Gradually, what starts as an insignificant difference, sure to disappear after a few years, becomes a real difference in ability. In later screenings, the same players get chosen again – and this time they really *are* better. Here is Malcolm Gladwell giving us a similar example from Hockey:

This is the mechanism which I call 'The Magnifier': Some people get selected for 'higher things' on the basis of some small difference (real or imagined). The opportunities that result from this actually do make them better over a period of time. Gladwell also gives figures

about another sport – baseball. The pattern is the same. It is hard to argue with the evidence. [NB: Notice that there is no prejudice or stereotyping in the selection of the athletes; they are chosen purely on merit. When a coach watches kids play s/he cannot tell immediately when they were born. But what about Men and Women? Or NESTs and NNESTs?].

A (slightly) different explanation for the glass ceiling

I would like to argue that the same mechanism can explain a number of differences that we see all around us. Take women for instance. In 2011 women made up less than 4% of CEOs in Fortune 500 companies and held fewer than 17% of seats in Congress (Gneezy & List "The Why Axis" – p. 35) and that despite all the progress that has been made over the years in the field of gender equality. How are we to account for this?

'Naturally' (this is meant to be ironic) people associate top positions with men. Steinpreis, Anders and Ritzke sent CVs for an academic tenure-track job to 100 university psychologists. The CVs were identical except for one difference: half of them were by Dr Brian Miller and the other half by Dr Karen Miller. Results: 75% thought the former was good enough, but just under 50% thought the latter had what it takes (Steinpreis et al. 1999). 1 Unlike what happens in sports, stereotypes are very much present when it comes to men and women – and they are triggered instantly.

And then what happens? If I am a CEO and I think that my male managers are 'higher flying' than my female ones, I tend to invest more in them (Fine 2010 – ch. 5); I send them to more seminars, I involve them in more challenging projects and I follow their progress more closely so they 'grow into' the role I had visualized for them. Unsurprisingly, after a while, some of them do become better than their female colleagues. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy and it works in exactly the same way as teacher expectations did in the famous Rosenthal and Jacobson study.

The point I want to make here is this: we know that women in the workplace start with a slight initial handicap because of traditional gender-role stereotypes. One would expect this difference to gradually disappear as both men and women acquire more qualifications and experience. Yes this is not the case; instead, because of 'The Magnifier', the opposite seems to happen! Here is Malcolm Gladwell again talking about the way the same mechanism manifests itself in kindergartens. Many parents worry about whether their child will be able to keep up with children who are on average a few months older. Yet they reckon this difference will gradually disappear. Only it doesn't! 'The small initial advantage that the child born in the early part of the year has over the child born at the end of the year persists. It locks children into patterns of achievement and underachievement, encouragement and discouragement that stretch on and on for years' (Gladwell 2008 – p. 28).

NESTs and NNESTs in ELT

Are NNESTs underrepresented at the top levels of ELT? Sometimes our view of reality is distorted, so it pays to look for evidence. I have just picked up a random title from my

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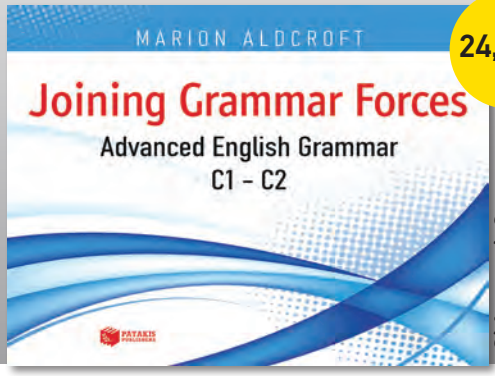

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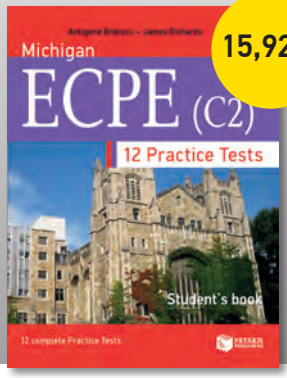

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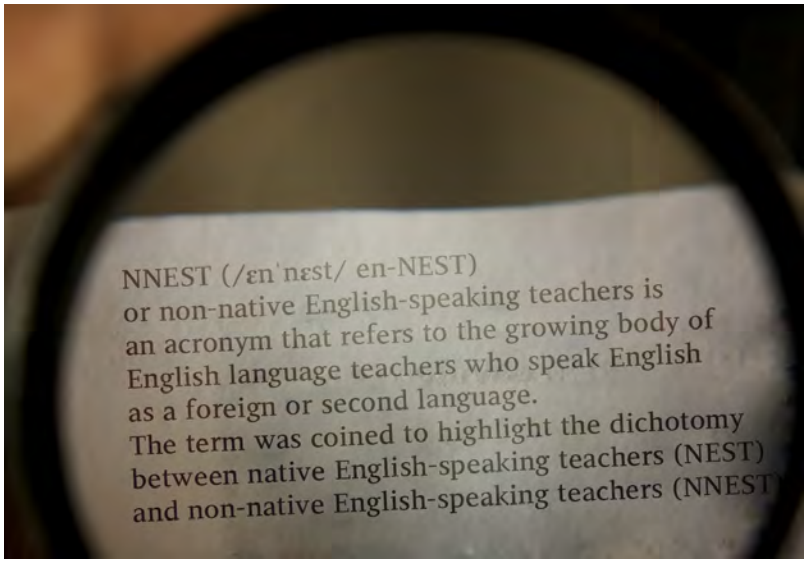
Student's book

bookshelf ('Learning One-to-One' – CUP 2010). As I am typing this, I am looking at the 'Recent Titles in this Series' column. Let us check out the names: 'Eric Taylor' sounds British / American, while 'Anita Szabo' sounds like the writer comes from Poland or Hungary perhaps – you get the idea. Not very scientific admittedly, but it should do... Results: NESTs: 30 – NNESTs: 10. You might say that this particular publisher is based in the UK, so this is only what one might expect. OK, let us turn to Greece. What about Plenary Speakers in recent TESOL Greece Conventions? Here are the results for the past 5 years: NESTs: 15 – NNESTs: 10. 2 But don't take my word for it. You can do this yourselves. I would be very interested to hear what you find...



Now imagine you are a school owner. Your DOS has retired and you have two really good teachers who could take his/her place. Their CV is almost identical, they have the same experience more or less and they are both keen and motivated. One of them is a NEST and the other a NNEST. Who do you choose? Well, this is almost a no-brainer, really. The market prefers NESTs we are told again and again, so choosing the former makes good business sense. But what happens next?

Suddenly, that particular teacher gets all kinds of professional development opportunities: she gets to see how the school works, she gets to evaluate, select and prepare materials and s/he gets involved in syllabus design. She gets to observe and evaluate other colleagues, she exchanges ideas with them during the feedback process and she may even be called upon to run Professional Development workshops herself. In addition, she might get sent to various ELT events where she hears about new developments in the field and that helps her grow as a professional. This will also give her additional opportunities for networking. 3 After a while, chances are that her CV will look a lot different from that of her colleague who was somehow 'left behind'.

The Magnifier and ELT:

Of course, one might find all this unconvincing. Is this how things really happen, or is this simply a 'just so' story? In my opinion there are a number of factors which account for why NNESTs tend not to rise as much as they should: it's partly historical reasons, partly practical considerations, partly the 'Halo Effect'. The Magnifier simply exacerbates the phenomenon. Whatever the causes however, it is the results that matter. Speaking of the Czech team Gladwell says "*The talent of essentially half of the Czech athletic population has been squandered*" 4 . It is the same with ELT.

1 By the way, does anybody have any doubt about what the results would be if this study were to be replicated with fictional CVs by NESTs and NNESTs?

2 Could it be that people expect NEST Speakers in big events? Indeed they do. A couple of years ago, a young girl posted a complaint on the TESOL GR FB page after the programme for the Convention had been released. She said she was disappointed, particularly because there were not so many speakers from the US and the UK. If people are prepared to post complaints in public about something which is so anti-PC, you can imagine how many more feel this way...

3 This slight bias (which however can have huge long-term effects) can be seen everywhere. The editor of a local ELT publication once confided in me: 'I like it when you send me articles as I have no editing work to do' (= no mistakes to correct / no phrases to change). Now, imagine you are a busy editor; the deadline is approaching and you have room for one of two long articles – one by a NEST and another by a NNEST. Of course it should be the content that matters, but still...

4 Gladwell 2008, p. 31 [his italics]

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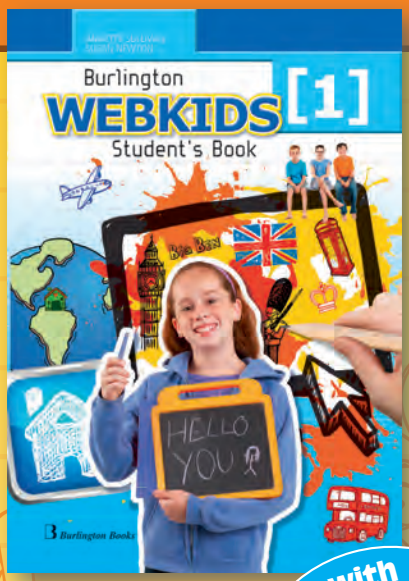

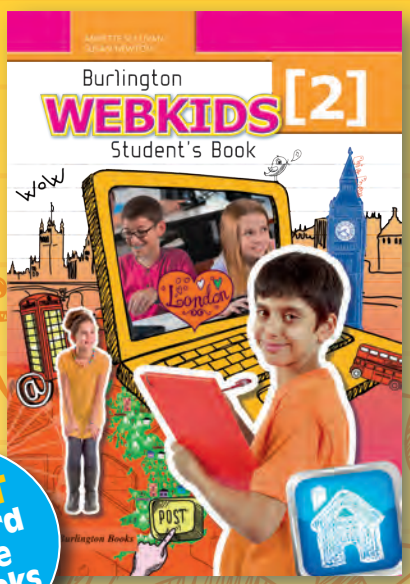

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