

IATEFL Slovenia Magazine
Summer issue 2018, no. 73



im

Team building: inside
and outside the classroom

Critical thinking at a glance

Poročila o tekmovanjih

Critical thinking at a glance (1)

What critical thinkers do and what they do not?

Nada Đukić

1.

Critical thinkers can disagree with someone and still understand their viewpoint.

2.

Critical thinkers attain control over their life and not over other people.

3.

Critical thinkers choose relevant and significant details and not nitpicking.

We will be publishing a series of short contributions by Nada Đukić in every issue, so here is the first one:

4.

Critical thinkers deploy logic and imagination.

5.

Critical thinkers can see the opposing side of their own viewpoint.

Poletje pod Palmo

JE HUDO ISKANO



družinske počitnice



all-inclusive počitnice



aktivni oddih



poletna potovanja



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Dear readers,

the beginning of summer holidays is here - finally :)

We wish you all a very long and semi-hot summer. Enjoy the holidays and be sure to make some wonderful memories :)

Thank you all for being a part of our professional family.



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Team Building: Inside and Outside the Classroom

by Danny Singh



Danny Singh, born and raised in London, but now based in Rome, gives creative English language lessons and teacher training courses all over Italy and abroad. He also offers stimulating monthly presentations on language related issues at Rome's biggest international bookshop and is visible on web TV www.inmagicartwebtv.eu with a series of interactive English video lessons. He is author of two books, "I was a happy man...then one day I came across Laughter Yoga" and "Learning English through the mind and the body" and is currently working on his third book, "Life is full of surprises". He regularly attends Pilgrims TT summer courses as a Guest Speaker.

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Team Building

Team Building is the now fashionable term given to what once was called, group dynamics or indeed, classroom management. It's the idea of getting a group of people to bond, through a range of exercises, which improves relations between them, creates a feeling of harmony, but most importantly, enables them to work better together. Progressive humanistic teachers have been promoting group dynamics for years as



an essential process in getting a class to work together and be more productive. Teachers who look at the problems of classroom management and dealing with difficult students often refer to the essentials of activities designed to enhance relations within the group.

Most traditional teacher training courses give scarce attention to team building activities. The result is that teachers find themselves having to deal with students who have all kinds of reasons for not wanting to work with some of their colleagues. These include; his level is inferior to mine, so I'm wasting my time, her level is too high for me, so I can't understand her, she looks down on me, he doesn't like the way I dress, I don't like the way she dresses etc.

Team Building: Inside the Classroom

The first thing we need in the group is respect for each and every member. I usually start with a name game, which I got from Mark Almond, a Pilgrims drama trainer based in Canterbury, Kent. which is designed to enable you to record everyone's names. I've tried it countless times and it works for any group which has up to 30 participants. Any more than that and it may become slightly more difficult to say the least! Each participant says their name, loudly and clearly. Each person then comes up with an adjective beginning with the same letter as that of their name. If it's difficult for them, then other members are encouraged to help. Once each person has chosen their adjective, they then need to mime it. This part of the exercise is the most important. If the mime is clear, the others can identify it, associate it with the adjective and hence arrive eventually at the name, which is

how our memory works. Those who give a drab performance at miming, create immense difficulties for the other students, as they cannot relate the mime to the adjective, hence the name becomes a distant memory. Each student in turn, goes through every name and adjective as well as performing the mime. Some students will not mime, but insist on pointing at each participant, as they say their name, and these are the students who have difficulty remembering the other names.

As a large amount of work in the classroom involves pair work and groupwork, the first thing is to get these groups sorted out. Many teachers allow their students to stay in the same pairs or groups for most of the lesson, due to the difficulty of moving around the classroom, or simply laziness. There are several ways that pairs and groups can be changed during the lesson and although it demands more effort from teachers, the extra effort is worth it in the end. Finding things in common, birthday dates, moving them around then asking them to freeze, colours of clothes, are just a few examples of ways in which groups can be changed. But even when it seems that you have tried everything and run out of ideas, you can still find ways to change the groups. As a last resort, I get them to sit down in a semi-circle, then ask one of them to choose one of the others to swap seats with. I decide who I want to move, but they decide who to exchange seats with, so it is not too dictatorial. Once a few of them have moved around and I am happier with the new formation of the groups, I can then move on to the next group activity.

Another simple activity which is great for bonding is to have all the students in a circle. The teacher makes any

statement which is true, I love chocolate is a good example and moves to the centre of the circle. Students who agree with the statement move to the centre of the circle to join the teacher. Everyone then goes back to their original position; the teacher makes another statement such as, I have been to London and so on. This exercise enables participants to discover many things that they have in common with lots of people, but also with just a few people and in some cases, although it's usually me, things that you have in common with no-one. This activity is not only good for bonding, but can be used to focus on specific structures, such as, I can. or I have been to. etc.

I have a wide range of team building activities, which I use from time to time and vary according to the group I have and the length of time that I have them for. However, the two main team building activities that I use are laughter yoga and gibberish. I have written at least four articles on the subject of laughter yoga, which can be found on my website: www.laughnlearn.net, so I will not go into too much detail here, however, what I can say is that laughing with people, even people with whom you have strained relations, makes it very difficult to come into violent conflict with them, verbally or physically. Laughter yoga involves a lot of eye contact, gentle touching to start with, which gradually increases to overcome those barriers of touching that adults especially seem to suffer from.

Gibberish meanwhile, is the language of non-sense. When a baby is small and cannot yet formulate words, it makes some strange sounds to communicate. The baby's mother does not look at the baby and ask it to speak clearly. The mother looks at the baby, smiles and replies, using pretty much the same style of language. These two humans con-



Ondrej Koščik / Koscik.photos

tinue communicating with each other, using a language which doesn't even exist, gibberish! There are hundreds of gibberish exercises which we can use. An Israeli expert regularly visits Europe, giving two-day workshops and charging a lot of money for them, but they are always well attended and having spoken to many people who have attended them, they are highly recommendable.

To feel comfortable with gibberish and to be able to use it well, you need to think as little as possible, use the right side of the brain and be as spontaneous as possible. It took me almost six years, until I woke up in the middle of the night and suddenly realized how beneficial it could be. It demonstrates to many of our left-side brain dominated students that communication can be effective, even without the use of words. It encourages students to work on their intonation. These are advantages in addition to that of team building.

To warm up, I get people to practise speaking gibberish in pairs, that way they feel less embarrassed about the situation. After this, we can continue to have conversations in pairs, but taking the last word of our partner to use as the first word of our reply. That encourages listening! The most powerful exercise that I use however, is where I might tell a story in gibberish and a courageous volunteer translates it into a language that everyone in the group can understand, English if it's an English lesson. This is great, as even the storyteller may have to adapt his story to accompany the translator. Another powerful gibberish exercise is to get people to talk about one of their problems for about one minute, in gibberish. In this way, no-one knows the personal details, even if they get the gist of it, but the speaker gets a lot off his chest and will feel much better afterwards.

Team Building: Outside the Classroom

The expression "outside the classroom" can and indeed does, have two interpretations. One is team building in an English lesson which is held outside the classroom and the other is outside the classroom meaning in a non-teaching or educational context. Which one am I referring to? Both in fact, so let's deal with them one by one!

Most of my teaching is done outside the classroom. "The worst place to learn a language is inside the classroom". I discovered this back in 2007, when I found myself without a classroom, but with a substantial amount of people who wanted to do lessons with me. We had had a location, but despite the large number of attendees, the owner decided that he didn't want an English course where people laughed, hence I made the decision to leave! Every crisis is an opportunity and so it was to prove. Since then I haven't looked back.

Team building outside the classroom differs slightly from inside the classroom. Some of the activities I do are the same. We'll certainly practice some laughter yoga and gibberish in the middle of the street, however, when you are working in public places, there are some limits as to what you can do, although on the other hand, there are innumerable opportunities. I'll get my students to do trust games, for example in pairs, one student with eyes closed or blindfolded is led by another. There is no better example of a team building activity than one in which your entire safety is dependent on another person. I also do treasure hunts, where in groups of three or four I'll get them to find things which I have decided upon beforehand.

As well as team building in English lessons, I have been invited to do team building to stressed managers and staff

in various companies in Italy. Team building has become popular in business, as it has been proved that colleagues who work well together will produce more and productivity and profits are the name of the game! Most companies invite me to do the interactive games which I have demonstrated here. Some of them then offer me the chance to discuss real problems of conflict and collaboration among the staff. Companies unlike schools and educational institutions, have money and pay well. Hence, if you are a good team building trainer, you can go to any institution, it doesn't have to be a multinational financial company, it can be a local sports club, a small local bank or a small supermarket, many of these organisations understand the need and importance of team building and will gladly accept the opportunity to do something. However much or little they are prepared to pay you, I can guarantee it will be more than you'll get from teaching, so it's worth pursuing, if you have this chance.

Conclusion

Team building is often confused with warmers and is considered by many teachers as something to be used at the beginning of the lesson, before getting on to the serious stuff. In the case of teachers who might have a rigid programme to follow, this could be the case, however, it must not be underestimated as a technique to get students to collaborate together. In my case, the vast majority of team building exercises that I use, serve not only to build rapport in the group, but also have some kind of valid linguistic

teaching point, hence even students themselves are usually unaware of the group dynamics which are taking place, focusing almost entirely on the language elements of the exercises.

Team building exercises come in many forms, I have given some of my own examples, but teachers should follow exercises that they feel comfortable with. It doesn't necessarily have to involve students being stranded on an island with no food and water and forced to collaborate in order to survive! While some teachers may think that they can happily teach without the need to bother about team building activities, experience has proved to me that it is a fundamental part of teaching, as there is nothing worse than a group who are totally unwilling to collaborate with each other for the good of the group. Indeed, I would go further and say that team building should be used in almost every walk of life.



Ondrej Koščík / Koscik.photos

The following interviews were written by Biljana Makuljević at the IATEFL Slovenia conference in March 2018

INTERVIEW 1

(student helper Sara Bezjak)

Q: This is our very first interview. So, to begin with, we're going to start with a student helper Sara, who is also covering the social media updates of the conference. Hi, Sara. How are you today?

Sara: Hello. I'm doing fine, thank you for asking.

Q: Tell me, Sara, what do you expect of this conference?

Sara: Well, I expect to be very tired by the end of it. But I'm very excited to be here. I think we're going to listen to a lot of very great speakers. I'm looking forward to hearing David Crystal, and Penny Ur ... and just hanging out with all the "peeps".

INTERVIEW 3

(speaker Lynda Steyne)

Q: Hi, Lynda!
Lynda: Hi!

Q: It's been two days. What are your impressions so far?

Lynda: I always love this conference. It's my second year, and every year it's incredibly friendly. This one is much more joyous and celebratory. All the sessions I've seen have been very good. It's wonderful to be with old friends, new friends. These are my impressions thus far.

Q: Great!

Lynda: And the volunteers are, of course, absolutely amazing.

Q: Thank you, thank you! Now, the theme of the conference is "Imagine..." So you and I, let's imagine. You're sitting in a bar, or a pub or a café, and there's one person, a well-known person, you would like to sit and have a chat with. Who would that person be and why?

Lynda: Anybody anywhere?

Q: Anybody anywhere, alive or dead, a singer, actor, writer, whoever inspired you in life.

Lynda: OK. So, she's no longer alive, but I would love to talk to my university professor, Sue Pauly who inspired me as a teacher. Because it was never my intention to teach, and I would love to be able to sit down with Sue and tell her about the last thirty years and also tell her or find out more from her – there's so many questions that I never asked, so much that she knew that I would now ask her about. Yes, that would be awesome.

Q: She sounded like a very good teacher.

Lynda: She was. She was amazing. She was the best teacher I ever had.

Q: Thank you. Enjoy the rest of the conference.

Lynda: You're welcome. Thank you very much, you too!

INTERVIEW 2

(participant Nina Jerončič):

Q: Hello! It's lovely seeing you again, Nina!

Nina: Hi! It's lovely to be here for the first time not as a student helper, but as a real participant.

Q: I just wanted to ask you that. So, what does it feel like coming to the conference this year?

Nina: I'm very excited!

Q: This year, it's the 25th conference. What are your expectations?

Nina: I know that I'll have a lot of fun, I know that I'll hear lots of interesting workshops. I'm looking forward to meeting old friends, making some new ones. And I know we'll have fun. Looking forward to the evenings, because I know that they'll be amazing. So yeah, very excited to be here!

Q: You just started teaching full-time, and you've been coming to the conference for some time now.

Nina: Yes, the 20th was my first one.

Q: So tell me, what have you taken from the conferences and have you used any of it in your classroom?

Nina: Yeah, definitely. There's always something you can try out immediately afterwards. But I think the most important thing is to meet other teachers that are equally motivated, equally passionate... Because, you know, in the regular day today, work is not always as, you know, inspiring, it's full of daily drudgery, and it just makes it kind of easier knowing that you're not the only one who is really in this with their whole heart. That's the most important thing for me, personally.

Q: Thank you, Nina, and enjoy the conference!

Nina: Thank you!

INTERVIEW 4

(David and Hillary Crystal)

Q: Hello David!

David: Hello!

Q: How has it been so far? It has been two days, what are your impressions?

David: Well, this is a typical IATEFL conference, which means it feels like a family, it feels like you're coming home to a group of friends you have always known. A lot of the people here of course have known each other for a long time. But us, coming in from outside, you feel immediately at home in an IATEFL setting. It's very different from some other types of conferences around the world which are very formal, and it takes ages to get into them.

Q: And Mrs. Crystal? Hillary?

Hillary: Exactly the same. We're always made to feel so welcome, everyone is very friendly and welcome and it's always a delight to come to an IATEFL conference.

Q: Well, thank you! We're very happy to hear that. Now people will be coming in and I don't want to hold you up for too long, so this is my last question. The theme this year is "Imagine..." So, let's imagine for a second that you're in a pub or a café. Who would you have there with you, who was the one that inspired you the most? Many teachers here inspire us, especially us volunteers who are still students. Who were those people who inspired you to do what you do and come as far as you have?

David: In my subject generally, you mean?

Q: Yes, or in life.

David: Oh, well, life is too big. But as far as linguistics and language is concerned, I had one really inspiring teacher, and his name was Randolph Quirk. He was the person who started the survey of English usage back in the 1950s, and gave me my first job, and was the first person I wrote a book with and so on. He was the person, really, who persuaded me that English language was worth doing. And I haven't regretted that for one moment.

Q: Excellent! Thank you! And Hillary?

Hillary: Well, I don't have anyone famous like Randolph Quirk, but I had teachers at school. I became a speech and language therapist because, one day, a speech and language therapist came to the school to talk to us about that what she did. And that was it. That was what I wanted to do.

David: And since then I have been her main inspiration.

Q: Yes, of course, that's too obvious, so she didn't say it out loud, of course.

David: Yeah, she's too humble, yeah. But of course, she is my main inspiration now, so it is a very equal relationship.

laughter

Q: Excellent! Thank you both so very much and enjoy the rest of the conference.

Hillary: Thank you, and you too!

David: Pleasure. Thank you!

INTERVIEW 5

(Dragana Stegić, organizer)

Q: I'm with lovely Dragana, one of the organizers of this conference. Hello, Dragana!

Dragana: Hello!

Q: We're halfway through Friday, or at least it feels like that. What are your impressions so far?

Dragana: It's quite obvious that we had a record number of people registered, so it's nice to see them around. You can see the buzz in the hall right now, it's amazing. And I think there's a special kind of energy for the 25th conference, you can feel it in the air, and people's expectations of what is yet to come.

Q: So far, has the conference met your expectations?

Dragana: I think so, yeah. I mean, you know, plenary speakers have been wonderful. As I said, there's more to see and listen to. But definitely, it's nice to see the fruits of our labour pay off.

Q: Can you name one memorable moment from a plenary, talk or a workshop that has stayed with you so far?

Dragana: So far? Well, I've been to Fiona Mauchline's talk yesterday, and it was interesting with showing different faces and professions. What stayed with me is how easily we put people in boxes just based on their appearances when it's not as clear-cut as it is in real life, so that was really interesting.

Q: Thank you very much, Dragana. I'll see you around.

Dragana: Thank you! And enjoy the rest of the conference.

INTERVIEW 6

(Lisa-Ana Mislej, participant)

Q: I'm with lovely Ana Lisa, who has just started teaching. Hello, Lisa!

Lisa-Ana: Hello!

Q: Have you ever been a volunteer at this conference before?

Lisa-Ana: Yes, I've been a student helper for two years at this conference.

Q: And now that you are a teacher, are you using or have you been using any of the materials from the previous conferences in your classes?

Lisa-Ana: Of course! Not every lesson, but very, very often I use these materials from the conference because they help me develop my own materials and I get more ideas, since I'm still new in the profession. I still don't have my own style or a preference for some exercises, so this really, really helps me get new ideas, fresh ideas to create interesting and cool lessons for the children to learn.

Q: Tell me... You are a teacher now. Who was the teacher or a person – it doesn't have to be a teacher – that inspired you to become who you are today and work with people the way you work today?

Lisa-Ana: Oh, that's a difficult question. I know I had many bad teachers and they inspired me to be such a better teacher. I think that was more of a motivation for me than the good teachers. I did have a few good teachers, especially where I work now because I work at Pionirski dom and I've been going to Pionirski dom since I was little. The best teachers were there, and not at school. I think I'm continuing, actually I hope I'm continuing this tradition of good teachers in Pionirski dom.

Q: Thank you, Lisa. And enjoy the conference!

Lisa-Ana: Thank you, you too!

INTERVIEW 7

(Irena and Suzana, participants)

Q: Hello, Irena and Suzana! So, it's day two. Did you arrive today or yesterday?

Irena: This morning.

Q: So you haven't seen a lot. So far, how does it feel to be at the conference this year?

Irena: Well, we've only listened to two lectures by now, but it looks fine. They were two plenary sessions, those are always very interesting, just like last year, and the year before that.

Suzana: We feel privileged because I heard many teachers aren't able to come. I mean, it's not very cheap.

Q: Well, we are very happy that you are here! Which are the plenaries or speakers that you are looking forward to the most?

Irena: Personally, I'm looking forward to David Crystal because I read his book. It seems like a privilege to listen to somebody that you only read about, and then you also see him here in person.

Q: Which book have you read?

Irena: Language. The "Bible".

laughter

Q: Have you been at our conference before?

Irena: Yes, five or six times, I think.

Suzana: Yes.

Q: It's the jubilee, the 25th year of the conference. Does it feel different this year from the conferences you've been to before?

Irena: Maybe there are even more lessons, more sessions. I'm not sure, but it seems like it's very packed. There are lessons all the time, so we were just thinking: "When do we take the time off?"

Suzana: Yes, the schedule is very tight.

Q: Unfortunately, but also in a good way. You get to hear a lot of people. We are talking about inspiration. Who were the people that inspired you to become teachers?

Irena: For me it was the students. It was by chance that I entered the classroom, and then I was really happy with the feedback that I got and only then I started thinking that maybe that's what I should do.

Suzana: I always wanted to be a translator, but I didn't finish my studies. I only did two years of pedagogical studies. This is how I finished school. But it was the right choice.

Q: You are happy where you are, that's the most important thing. Well, thank you both, and have a lovely time!

Irena and Suzana: Thank you very much!

INTERVIEW 8

(Peter Dyer, speaker)

Q: Hello, Peter.

Peter: Hello.

Q: Thank you very much for a very nice and interesting presentation.

Peter: Thank you very much. It was great.

Q: Yes, it was. I hope we were a nice audience.

Peter: You were wonderful! I regret that I didn't have more time for the group to have done a little bit more extended pair work. But it's the pressure of time to get the work done, so that's always a problem.

Q: You were telling us about stresses – how emphasize things, how to convey message by stressing words. Would you say that maybe some people are afraid to stress some words because they are afraid to insult someone else by doing so, or are afraid they would misunderstand each other?

Peter: Well, that does occur. But that kind of thing is another category itself, it is stressing words for what I call "subtext". That's not the same as what we were doing today. You know that the first text we had was an informative text, and there we were simply stressing words for their value, and not just the "important words" as somebody said, which is understandable, but in fact it's stressing all the nouns or adjectives if they are there, verbs or adverbs if they are there, numbers, names or places, people, things. What you're talking about is actually stressing words where we can actually change the subtext of a sentence, changing the meaning of a sentence. And that is another area which is also incredibly valuable, but it's an area I couldn't include in this one session today. Which is a great pity, but you know, it's very important. You can change a sentence in thousand different ways. A sentence I often use is "He didn't say he'd give you a hundred thousand pounds." That is a sentence, you can actually say that in probably about thirteen different ways, with thirteen different meanings.

Q: Yes, I see. Sometimes, especially with the rise of political correctness, the word itself is different, not just the pitch and the tone. So it sometimes feels that even messages that you hear on the radio can just come out flat. Nowadays, with the rise of, for example, "Time's up" movement, when feminism is being reintroduced into the world ...

Peter: ...Finally...

Q: ... Yes of course, finally. But people are still struggling with that, and reporters as well, and maybe the words become just an academic way of thinking, instead of engaging people to come together. It's just a thought that I had. What do you think?

Peter: Well, you're quite right. But we also have to look there at the job of a reporter. If you've got a television interviewer or a reporter who writes or the editorial, where they express their own opinions about things, well good. If you've got an interviewer who will tend to express their own opinions or give opinions of the person they're interviewing, that's different. When you have a reporter working for a newspaper, generally speaking their job is to get facts. Their job is not to colour, necessarily. Some of them do, but it's not really their job to do that.

Q: Just one more question. You said that people are sometimes taking the life out of conversation. Why do you think is this happening?

Peter: Well it's happening even more – and it has been happening now for generations, really – we're not reading enough, we're not curious enough, we're not in love with our language, whatever the language is we're not in love with it, but we should be. We should embrace the language because it's our means of communication, apart from body and other things. The other difficulty is more and more people are just looking at their iPhones and iPads and computers. And I think it's rather sad when you see a family together sitting in a restaurant, and it's not only the children, they aren't the only ones at fault, they are all sitting there, Mum and Dad too, and nobody's communicating. I think this is a disaster.

Q: It's like "being alone together".

Peter: Absolutely, and it's really tragic. It's almost funny. And I think we're losing the skill of good communication – nothing can beat it. The most tragic thing is when you hear people talking without saying anything, and that's really sad. We need in schools to encourage our students to talk to each other, to communicate.

Q: Thank you very much, Peter! Enjoy the rest of the conference.

Peter: I shall! I'm loving it, and it's only the first day.

INTERVIEW 9

(Mojca Belak, speaker)

Q: Hello Miss Belak!

Mojca: Hello!

Q: It's lovely to see you here again.

Mojca: Thank you!

Q: You are the patron of every IATEFL Slovenia conference, and an avid promoter of the "big" IATEFL conferences. Tell me, it's the end of day two... How is this conference different, so far, from the previous IATEFL Slovenia conferences?

Mojca: It's bigger, but it's as vibrant as the previous ones so I can't say that in this respect it's any different. The quality of presentations is roughly the same, which means high-level presentations. Maybe the big difference is that now we have the IATEFL patron here, David Crystal, so that probably drew more people to the conference. And also the fact that it's the 25th. But, so far, I haven't seen many special events to commemorate the 25th anniversary, or anything to do with the 25th.

Q: Maybe they're still on their way. They're coming. Now, we all come to these events to be inspired, to grow as teachers and as people, as well. I ask everyone this question: "Who was that person who inspired you to come so far, to be the person and teacher you are today?"

Mojca: Oh, that's a difficult one. I have a lot of colleagues to thank for, and a lot of students as well. It was because of them that I went into areas that I maybe would not otherwise, because I started exploring things that sort of worked or attracted the attention of certain people, and so on. But if you want names: I've been an IATEFL member, and by this I mean the "big" IATEFL, since I graduated, and it was Jonathan Marks, who is a wonderful teacher and teacher trainer, who told me about IATEFL. Then, I became a member and I've stayed a member ever since. My first conference was two years later, or one and a half years later, and after visiting the first conference I became like a convert, I just stayed with it.

Q: You've already been to many talks. What's the thing that stayed with you the most, so far?

Mojca: Every talk that I've been to, contributed to something, to some learning, and sometimes it was like "Yeah, I used to do that, and I forgot, and it's nice that I've remembered it again." I must say that I'm, I can't say "selective" when I choose, but in a way my criteria very often are my former students. This is the time when I can hang out with them, and catch up with what's new about their professional and personal lives, and also I attend their presentations because I'm interested in how far they got and what they have to say and so on. I've been to two talks today, and I'm a very proud mother hen for both!

Q: Thank you, and enjoy the rest of the conference!

Mojca: Thank you!

INTERVIEW 10

(Thom Jones, speaker)

Q: I'm talking to the amazing Thom Jones. Hello Thom!

Thom: Hello, I'm here with the lovely Biljana. Thank you for asking me to talk about things (he says in a nervous voice).

Q: Thank you for agreeing to talk to me! To begin with, tell us a bit about what you're going to present later today.

Thom: Luckily, I'm not going to present very much today, because I came here and realised that often in conferences like this, there are people like myself, teacher trainers often from the UK or the US, and we kind of parachute into countries where we have little or no experience of the local culture, the local language, or any part of the education or structure, and we are asked to talk about teaching in that context, which I often feel we cannot do. And many of us are worried about that. So this time, I've asked some local experts to join me in talking about using the imagination in the classroom, and using a kind of lack of structure, if you will, to spark ideas that lead to real language learning. Because I think language learning is something that needs all the elements in terms of actually sitting down, practicing things repeatedly, and that's really important, that's great. But it also needs that kind of reflex where you're upon a situation and you're suddenly able to deal with that situation which we often don't learn in language classes. You go to the shop and say: "Hello, how are you?" and the person in the shop says: "I'm fine, how are you?" Whereas in reality, you go to the shop and say: "Hello, how are you?" and the person says: "Where did you get your haircut?" because that's what happens in conversation.

Q: So you'll been talking about imagination. I have a few questions, you can give yes or no answers, or longer ones, as you wish. Is imagination life?

Thom: Yes! Definitely. It's all about imagination because that's what we do and that's what we live in. Most of the time, when you're engaged with reality, you're imagining stuff. Most of the time, when I'm sitting at a meeting, looking at spreadsheets, and somebody is talking about the job, actually in my head I'm imagining I'm piloting a star-fighter through an asteroid belt to save the universe. And I think that's true of everybody, isn't it? My wife often says to me: "What was I saying?", and I always say "I don't know, I wasn't listening". Even when I was listening, I say that to her, because in reality, most of the time, like most men, I'm quite limited, so most of my resources, mentally, are about imagining myself piloting a star-fighter through an asteroid belt to save the universe. Or being Han Solo.

Q: The position is free now. So maybe ...?

Thom: It's interesting, because I keep hankering after the role of Han Solo, and people keep pointing me in the direction of Chewbacca.

Q: Well, the actor that plays Chewbacca is also very old,

so maybe there's a chance there ...?

Thom: Maybe I can swoop in and do Obi-Wan in his later years.

Q: OK, so let's imagine. Imagine yourself in a pub, a café, and there's one person you'd like to have a cuppa with, or a pint. Anyone, alive or dead. Who would that person be?

Thom: It's difficult, isn't it? Obviously, initially, I'd think Ludwig Wittgenstein, because he was really clever and really impressive ... but, also, after researching and reading about him and reading some of his stuff, I think he was probably a twat. So I would've wanted to have a cuppa with him, but I would've also wanted to slap him after a short time. Whereas, I think about somebody like Jane Garden, who is a writer I love and really, really admire and I think that I'd enjoy having a cup of tea with her. I'd get a lot out of that. Also, historically, you have various figures that are viewed in different lights, and it would be nice to sit down with one of them and ask them: "Um, so, what actually happened?". Well, before they died, of course. No fun in that, no one likes a cup of tea with the dead.

Q: Who was the person or who were the people, students, maybe someone in your early years or later, that inspired you to become what you are today?

Thom: Good Lord. You said "students" as a part of that and as a student myself at school, I was totally useless at everything and proved that frequently by failing all of my exams. I was lucky enough to have a couple of teachers who were excellent in terms of saying "look, whatever your exam results say, you're not stupid, so don't worry about that" and they really believed in me, so that was very important. I was also lucky enough to go to school with other students, friends of mine, who were really bright and really clever and very much treated me as if I was clever too. My best friend at school was a guy called Matthew, who, for a variety of reasons is always known as "Ilya", and I'm always known as "Leon" – unless you've seen The Man from U.N.C.L.E. that makes very little sense – anyway, he was the kind of "great white hope" of our school, if I can use that antiquated, mildly racist phrase, because he was the only kid who to go from our very, very basic comprehensive state school to Oxford University, in the whole history of our school. He was incredibly bright, incredibly intelligent and he's my best friend and he never, ever let me believe that I was stupid; which was easy to believe because I proved it a lot. And he was great, because whenever I'd get my school reports or read my exam results I'd think "Christ, I am an idiot" and he would never let me believe that. He would always ask me for words of wisdom, which ... I had none ... so I was lucky there. I also think that students that I've taught over the years who were just incredible in terms of their intelligence and their ability and you have people like a student of mine many years ago in Greece who was just ridiculously clever, and you go along to a class like that where you've got

people like that in it, and you think "Christ, I really got to up my game, I really got to make an effort to make a class worthy of that student". But also, students, who I won't name, who were stupid, and I don't mean that in a mean way, I mean, some people are good at stuff, some people are not, some people are good at academic things, some are not, and there were students who were, in the context of what we were trying to learn, stupid. And I don't mean that as an insult, it's just, they weren't into what we were doing, they weren't able to do what we were doing, so I really find it inspiring, in a sense to try and get them involved and try and get them to get something out of my classes, which often weren't about learning language, or whatever we were supposed to be teaching them, but were about other things and skills in life. I remember a lad, who used to come to my class in Greece as well, who was one of the students of whom all the teachers said that he was really stupid, and he was kind of aggressively stupid, in the sense that he would try to fail a lot. He could barely speak Greek and he lived in a remote area, his family were shepherds, so I asked him to teach me how to milk goats and be a shepherd. He got really into it, he took me up on the mountain every weekend with his Dad. I don't think I ever taught him any English at all, really, but he taught me a lot of Greek, and he taught me a lot about looking after animals and walking in the mountains, he was just ace. I like to feel that he made me realize that I had discounted him in saying that he was stupid. And actually, this lad, who is twelve, knows much more than I will ever know about his life. I can still milk a good goat! Anyone, any idiot can milk a cow, but goats are tough, they don't like it, they resist, they're little, but they're quite strong, they're thin, but they're wiry. And when you're done they kick your bucket over. I'm still slightly scared of goats.

Q: When we come into the classroom, we have children who are more able, less able – that's a fact. So teachers are a kind of mad architect who has to put the pieces together for the building to hold. Would you agree?

Thom: Definitely. We lay a foundation, but whatever they build on that foundation is kind of up to them. So we sometimes go in and say "Right, you've got to build this!" or "You've got to build this little, little shed in which you can hide your ignorance", and they're like "No, fuck it, I want to build a colosseum!", and you're kind of going "Um, but you can't build a colosseum, because you don't know what a brick is!" and why not just say "On you go! If you want to build a colosseum, go for it!" That's imagination, isn't it, and that's saying "if you reckon you can do that, on you go, good for you". And that's the thing about classes, when you talk about an "advanced" class or a "basic" class – you can actually think "God, they're all ace at whatever level they are".

Q: And marks aren't everything.

Thom: No, God no, definitely not. Absolutely true.

INTERVIEW 11

(Nataša Meh, organizer and speaker)

Q: I'm here with Nataša Meh. Hi, Nataša!
Nataša: Hello everybody!

Q: Thank you for agreeing to talk to me. On Thursday, you had a very interesting talk, where you actually drew the material from your own life experiences. You teach children with disabilities, with some learning difficulties?

Nataša: Within the mainstream education, yes.

Q: It sounded really hard to do your job.

Nataša: Well, actually it's not. I think that everybody is faced with this type of student nowadays, mostly in primary schools and also in vocational and secondary schools. It has become a practice that students with disabilities are included into the mainstream education, and we just have to deal with it. I'm lucky enough to have a very good team of special education teachers, whom I work very closely with. They help me with their insight, their advice. If it hadn't been for them it would've been really, really hard to deal with all the difficulties.

Q: You were saying that, maybe, the government or the Ministry of Education could do something. From your first-hand experiences, what would you encourage them to change or add to perhaps the curriculum, since this is occurring more often than it used to in the past? What are your ideas?

Nataša: I would say that they could include a course or two at the Faculty of Arts, the Department of English. Maybe they could also offer young teachers to apply for different jobs. Even the Employment Agency could give a model or two, not in the Didactics and Mathematics that they have when they are trying to teach young learners, but maybe on how to deal with Dyslectics, ADHD students, and so on. Part of the "strokovni izpit" could also be made out of a module or course for young teachers, because I think that there's been a gap between what we had in school and what is going on now, and we're not equipped to deal with all that. Sometimes I'm scared because I don't want to be unfair to children with special needs, but I also don't want to be unfair to those who don't have a condition but make same mistakes for which they are being punished for while the special needs children are not. It's also important for all the students to understand why somebody has been cut some slack, so to speak, because of their disability.

Q: What about the materials? In your talk you said that you have to make some materials all by yourself. Would you say the materials for the classroom could be upgraded?

Nataša: I think that the publishers here have really come to meet us. They send pdf formats of course books, so teachers just have to enlarge it and print out, sometimes on different coloured paper sheets. But every special needs student is a case by itself, so that could be an excuse for the officials or the government to say that they can't cover every need. They could try, at least, with the most common ones, like dyslexia, maybe even give us some tips with autism – I must say I have most difficulties with students with autism.

Q: Nataša, you're also one of the organizers of this conference. Today is the third day. What are your impressions?

Nataša: I really love it! I've been here since the first day. The plenaries, talks, workshops by all the presenters have been excellent, and I'm still looking forward to this afternoon and the closing plenary tomorrow. For those who are reading this, and haven't decided yet on coming: please come to the next one, join us, and I'm sure you won't regret it!

Q: Who inspired you the most so far on this conference?

Nataša: I'd have to say Hugh Dellar. He told us what we already knew or what we're sometimes afraid of: that you don't need to be creative or do creative things every day just for the sake of it. Sometimes, it's enough to just use the materials, the student books that you're provided with and work with those, you don't need to reinvent already invented things and be special and creative just for the sake of it. Just be a teacher and teach, and make sure that the students learn what you're teaching and you'll do your job as it is. So, for me, among all the other presenters he was the one who made me think "Ok, yes, I'm doing the right job."

Q: Thank you very much, Nataša. Enjoy the rest of the conference!

INTERVIEW 12

(Sandra Faketija, speaker)

Q: I'm here with the wonderful, amazing, inspiring Sandra Faketija. Hello, Sandra!
Sandra: Hello Biljana, nice to see you again!

Q: You had a very inspiring workshop yesterday. You were talking about music, how everyone can use it in the classroom. What purposes can we do this for?

Sandra: Well, we all know that we should use the mnemonic quality of music, because the words and phrases are so much more memorable if they're combined with rhythm and melody. Unfortunately, I didn't have much time in my workshop to talk about many other benefits that music brings to the classroom. I mentioned some of them, I also presented some of them to you, like when you entered the classroom there was music playing. Music was also playing while leaving the classroom. Instead of saying: "Begin, and I'll stop you with a clap," you can set up a time limit with using music. What is important is not to use music with lyrics, because that could distract the student from the actual task. You can teach grammar structures, words, repetitive patterns. For example, in a U2 song "Haven't found what I'm looking for" there is so much of present perfect going on, or "Standing in the hall of fame" by The Script, there is a lot of modality going on.

Q: How often do you use music in the classroom?

Sandra: Very, very often. I used to have this class that I was teaching two years ago, there were twenty-five of them in the classroom and they were one of those who couldn't care less about music. There was maybe one or two who went to a music school, and maybe one or two who actually listened to music at home, but the rest were totally not interested. So I didn't force them with music, because I noticed that they felt rather uncomfortable whenever something musical was going on. With all others this year, however, I'm fortunate enough to have this opportunity to actually make use of music a lot. And they love it.

Q: You're also a part of the very famous acapella group Perpetuum Jazzile. Are your students aware of this?
Sandra: They are. We live in the era of technology. Your students google you before they enter the classroom.

Q: How often do they ask you to sing with them and do the things you do with Perpetuum Jazzile?
Sandra: Well, they are really shy about it. But then they start to punch each other and say "Ask her, ask her!" to one another. I see that and when they ask me to do it, of course we do the Thunderstorm song together, and they ask me to sing something from the official videos that they've seen. Now this may not be nice of me, but I use this as sort of a discipline method; I'd say to them that if they're good and we do everything that we've agreed to do I'll sing a song for them at the end of the lesson, and it really works.

Q: The whole idea behind these conferences is to inspire and be inspired by others. Who was that person in your life who inspired you to become the person you are today, to become a teacher?

Sandra: Definitely the teachers. My brain was set on acting when I was in primary school, then somebody told me "Come on, you should do something else. You're an outgoing person, you should be a teacher or a salesperson." And I started thinking about it, and it mainly depended on the teachers of English that I had throughout my life. In primary school, I had a brilliant teacher. Her name is Mojca Kolenc. In high school, my second mother and my English teacher Saša Komadina, that's another one. The third one is Mojca Belak, and I can't say enough about her. She helped me through a really tough time in my life, she showed understanding that I never would've expected from a teacher to give, she was supportive and she's actually the reason I'm here today. I did a presentation in 2005 called "And all that jazz", and Mojca encouraged me to do that, even though I never thought it possible. How could I have anything to say to a wide audience of teachers?! And the same happened this year. I told her I want to come to the IATEFL conference and she said "Yes, but not as a listener." When I asked her what could I possibly talk about, she said "Music. We need this." I trusted her, because I wasn't sure that the audience of the English teachers needed. And she proved to be right; when I had the workshop, I was really surprised by the number of people that showed up, and thankful. It was a success and she is the reason why.

Q: Thank you, enjoy the rest of the conference and we hope to see you next year again!
Sandra: Thank you! I think I'm going to attend it every year from now on.

(Uwe Pohl and Anna Szegedy-Maszák, speakers)

Q: This is our last interview from the 25th IATEFL Slovenia conference. I'm talking to Uwe and Anna, who had the last presentation this year that was a relaxing, get-to-meet-and-greet people presentation. Where did you get the idea to do this?

Anna: Actually, I think our group mentor came up with it. I think we were throwing around ideas on what to do with the IATEFL Mentor SIG in Hungary and we were thinking of what to do at the next conference, and that's when this whole Café idea came up.

Uwe: That's right. For this conference, the original idea goes back to a change of thinking at IATEFL Hungary, about ten years ago. Some people felt that it would be great to end conferences differently, and to find a way of doing this where people actually have a chance to revisit, a chance to process it, because they are such rich experiences. It's amidst that strange feeling of emptiness when you end, while at the same time your head's just spinning. We were experimenting with different format for several years, and this is one of them that we used. Anna and I like it because we've seen it work and because you can tweak it, you can use it in different content, the key is the methodology – you make people talk, you focus the talk and you give them a sense of community, that's the other thing. So it always ends in a sense "This was useful, and we enjoyed being together."

Q: Yes, definitely! Even the people I was sitting with at our "café table" said what a new and innovative way it was to hang out just before the end. It was just like you said, we don't just end it, we shared the ending together, we all actually participated in the end of the conference. So thank you for that, the experience was very nice. Uwe, you've been coming to Slovenia for...

Uwe: ... This is my third time, third time in a row.

Q: What did you take from previous conferences? What made you come back and what really stayed with you?

Uwe: Well, there are some very specific things, just like this time. I always enjoyed the workshops, perhaps the workshops I've enjoyed the most. It's a doable format, so I get to see a lot of sessions, but I can also relax and leave out a few. On a good morning, I see maybe three, four sessions max. I've taken very specific things – I remember last year, some grammar activities – it's always something

concrete that I thought was nice and wanted to try out. And what I've taken away was actually what has made me come back; this is actually a very unique venue. More importantly, you, IATEFL Slovenia, managed to create a very unique atmosphere. I think it's got to do with a very professional way of organizing it. Nobody sees the work directly that's involved, from setting it up, to the student helpers. It's like it runs and rolls, and even if there's a little "glitch" somewhere, quickly there's someone there. So it's got a very smooth feel to it, and of course, this is a wonderful scenery. And now for me, coming back and seeing people again who I've met before, especially because I've been here three times, it's a bit of a homecoming actually.

Q: And we're always happy to have you back.

Uwe: Oh and I don't usually get to dance, I can't find the right kind of place, it's difficult to find a 80s music place. Here in Topolšica, because I love dancing so much, I always know that at the end of the evening or a part of it, there will be a long dancing session, and that is very important for me. So thanks for that, keep that up!

Q: Great, we sure will! Anna, this is your first time in Slovenia?

Anna: Yes.

Q: What are your impressions?

Anna: I loved it!

Q: Are you coming back next year?

Anna: Yes, definitely, that's what I'm planning on doing.

Q: Are you planning to do a talk together with Uwe again?

Anna: Well, that I don't know, but I am planning on coming back.

Uwe: I think Anna has a lot of things to share that she could do on her own. This was a little bit of coming together because we have a shared history through work that we've done before. We also wrote an article about the technique, so I thought this would actually be a fitting thing to do together. She's the real teacher, I'm just a teacher trainer, I think she's got a lot to pass on straight from the job phase.

Anna: I think me being here proves what a wonderful teacher trainer Uwe is. I did his mentor course, so he taught me there. It was an incredible IATEFL mentor course in Hungary. What is amazing, he doesn't just do the course and then forget about the people, but he actually keeps the community going. Me

being here this time and doing this workshop with him is part of his work; he continues to mentor teachers, even after having done the course. He's a wonderful teacher trainer.

Q: Very nice words on both sides, I must say. We always ask about the most memorable thing you're going to take with you. Is there something that you would like changed, different? At your workshop, you told us to give feedback for the next year. Is there something that you would like to see improved, maybe?

Uwe: Having seen so many good Slovene professionals, I missed a Slovene plenary speaker. I think that would be very nice. I've been to some excellent sessions, and people who know their stuff are very good presenters, and I think it would be nice to showcase that, and give them a chance to show Slovene teachers as well that you're also good plenary speakers. We have the same problem in Hungary as well, but maybe you could find someone and encourage that. Having seen the professionalism on the workshops, some of these people could give a plenary or do a version of what you do on a plenary level. That's the only thing that I could think of.

Q: Anna, would you like to add something?

Anna: I think it was brilliant. I've been to many workshops held by Slovene teachers, and they were all excellent, so I agree with what Uwe said.

Q: We will think about this for the next year. And now the last question. We attend these conferences to get some inspiration, to be inspired. And usually, we're inspired by you, the speakers. Student helpers, we're very much inspired by plenary speakers, workshop talks, and so on. But who were the people that inspired you guys, to do what you're doing today in your professional life?

Uwe: Well, in terms of what Anna was referring to, I'm a very community-minded person, and as I'm getting older, I'm getting more interested in people. I've been interested in theory for a good part of my life, but I am no longer. I'm interested in theorizing, so people thinking through, reflective, and very often together, I find is incredibly helpful, not just inspiring. Also thinking with people in groups in different formations. That goes back to what, for me, was very informative. I did my MA in the UK, and the two tutors we had, who were the key tutors on our course, completely threw me with their approach to training and teaching which you could call "participant oriented". It means you always start off where your students are, or you start off where the teachers are, or where your conference participants are. You have some ideas, but you try to take seriously

the fact that you want their input as much as your own input. So I prepare for a class, but I'm interested to leave space for my students when I teach English or anything else. What they have to say becomes a part of the learning materials. It's the same thing for me in training: I come prepared, but I always make sure there's space for thinking together, talking together. And I think that creates community – be it a school class, a trainee course, or in fact with colleagues. So these two people in that particular course have very much changed my outlook on the profession.

Q: Thank you. And Anna?

Anna: Actually, I think I didn't want to become a teacher when I was at university. When I did the teacher training, I enjoyed it so much that that's when I realised "This is it, this is going to be my life, I love it, this is so much fun." So there's that experience. However, I'm going to go back to the mentor course again. That was just a life-changing experience. I think I have become a very different teacher because of that, and I'm very grateful for that.

Uwe: I would just like to add, I think it was a powerful group experience, too. In some ways, it was a classic example of what you can do and how strong the bonds become, if people do something meaningful. And we're talking Friday afternoons here, everybody's tired, teachers come from school. I just finished another cohort this year, and they called it "The Friday Mood", because after an hour or so the atmosphere changes, the people shake off their tiredness as they focus on each other, and we talk, and they eat together. You can feel the energy level being raised, people are happy up to a point, and then it goes down again at the end because of the exhaustion. So for you, Anna, and everybody in the group, this was so powerful, and so useful to allow groups to work that way. And I'm glad that stayed with you. The coaches, we just set the parameters for this to happen, but you took it in and ran off with it.

Anna: What Uwe has mentioned about being attuned to where the students are at and beginning from there. That was present from the very first minute that the mentor course started. I felt that my input was appreciated, and my experience as a teacher was valued. That was the most important element for me in the course, and I try to be that sort of teacher now – to have a more collaborative experience during the lesson, I think that's very important.

Q: Thank you both for this interview. This concludes our interviews on the 25th IATEFL Slovenia conference. Thank you!

(Hugh Dellar, speaker)

Q: I'm here with Hugh Dellar. Hello, Hugh!
Hugh: Hello!

Q: Thank you very much for agreeing to do this interview with me.

Hugh: You're welcome. I had no choice.
laughter

Q: Yesterday, you had a very inspiring plenary talk, it actually came as a fresh breeze. I had a chat with some of the attendees. When I asked them what the most memorable talk for them was, many mentioned you. When you finished, the very first reaction I heard from people was "Yeah! Why didn't I know that before?!" Many teachers who have been teaching for five, ten years have forgotten what their role as a teacher in a classroom actually is. Why, do you think, we haven't come up with this by ourselves? Why do we take creativity in the classroom so seriously?

Hugh: It's a really difficult question, the "why", and I didn't think about it much before. I suspect, partly, it's just because culturally it's a very seductive idea of being creative, and we sort of admire and worship creative people, and possibly there's a desire to see yourself as a creative person. I think a lot of teachers are from the Arts and Humanities backgrounds and they've probably done literature and this high proportion of writers, musicians, and poets, who also have become teachers, so there's that kind of appeal. I think it's also because a lot of the time, and I'm guessing it must be similar here in Slovenia, training itself emphasizes that kind of creativity, and it places a focus on "It's important to be creative as a teacher!" and we don't necessarily discuss what we mean by being creative as a teacher. Often when you come out as a young teacher, I think particularly on a CELTA course, like the model I took, the reason we were encouraged to do that kind of stuff is because CELTA courses are Mickey Mouse courses for native speakers to pretend we are language teachers after a month, and basically we still don't know what we're doing after a month – we don't have much language awareness, we've never learned English ourselves apart from by accident, we don't have much ability to deal with and explain and give good examples of language, but what we do have is this bag of mad, creative tricks. And a lot of people who do CELTA courses historically are young, so they can do that kind of performing monkey-stuff in the classroom. It's exciting, playful, and it's creative, and students say "Ah, you're so dynamic," which sort of feels like a validation of you as a teacher. It took me a long time

to realise that actually "you're dynamic" just basically meant "you run around and act like a bit of an idiot, quite a lot".

Q: It feels more like you're an actor than a teacher.

Hugh: Exactly! And now, the most common thing my students would say about the classes is "This is very useful." And I will take this sentence every day of the week over "You're very dynamic." Because, in the end, it's like you said, you lose track of why you're there for. You're there to teach language. Fine, you did a wonderful performing monkey ten minutes, it was very entertaining, everyone laughed... What was the teaching purpose of that activity and why do you think that was useful for those students? What did they learn from it that they can go out in the world and use? I think that just remembering that that's the basics of why we're there is really important, and easy to lose sight of, like you said. I mean, I lost sight of it myself for a long time.

Q: I would like to follow up on what you said about young teachers. What advice would you give to "newbies", young teachers?

Hugh: Get the hell out while you can.
laughter

Q: OK, what about those who are really stubborn?

laughter

Hugh: I think learn to do simple things well first. I wish on my initial training we would spend more time actually looking at course books, I wish we'd started to discuss how course books work, why they work the way they work, what different exercises are doing, making us a bit more literate about materials. It was almost like we were told "You can make your own lessons," but we had no idea what we were doing. I understood the fundamental principles of how these things are designed, and how you break this information up and present it to students. So I think my main message would be: "Don't feel that you have to reinvent the wheel. Don't feel that you have to always make a new material." It's not actually the new material you create that's going to really bring your classroom alive – what's going to bring your classroom alive is what you do with the language you're teaching, whatever it is, whether it's something you've written yourself, downloaded it off the web, whether it comes from a course book – it's how you explain that language, it's the questions you ask about the language, it's the space you create for the students to interact with that language that really makes the teaching worthwhile and rewarding. And

don't feel that you have to keep adding new tricks to what you're doing in order to feel like a good language teacher. I would say that the longer I teach now, I would basically teach one page pretty much the same way every time, but it's different because what happens in the classroom is different. You're asking the same questions every time. If you ask ten classes any other reasons why someone gets sacked, ten different things will happen, and it will go off in these little areas. Sometimes, it will be really entertaining, sometimes it won't. Another question might be really entertaining with one class and it didn't work with the other class that came up with the entertaining example for "get sacked". So I think it's just getting better at doing that stuff, and not feeling that you're a bad teacher if you're just doing basic stuff well.

Q: You also have a webpage, called LexicaLab. Can you tell us something more about that?

Hugh: Andrew, my co-author, and I, we basically run a company called LexicaLab. It's a website and a materials development company and a training company. We run summer courses in London, one or two-week summer courses, which we advertise on the site, mainly for teachers, particularly non-native speaker teachers, because we got fed up with running CELTAs and having non-natives who were way better than natives on courses that really they shouldn't be doing. We wanted to come up with courses that were really recognizing the fact that these teachers were already coming with skill sets. We do some language development courses as well in the summer, so we do an absolute basic English course without using classroom material – just taught face-to-face, talking to students. On the actual website itself we do "Word of the day": we look at phrases, and expressions, and we look at little stories showing how those words work. Sometimes, we explore some cultural stuff about that, we explore the other words connected to that. I just put on one yesterday about "cowboy", and about "cowboy builders" and "cowboy language schools", and looking at some new stories about cowboy organizations and how you use that kind of stuff. Those are aimed more at advanced proficiency level students or teachers or just curious people. We also blog about teaching and about language learning on there, so we got this kind of "opinion section" where every now and then we have a rant about something we've been thinking about a lot. And also all the information about our course books is up there as well, outcomes and innovations.

Q: Thank you very much, Hugh.

Hugh: Thank you.

How it was...
conference 2018



Ondrej Koščik / Koscik.photos

Poročilo o tekmovanju v znanju angleščine za učence 7. razreda osnovne šole v šolskem letu 2017/18

Letos je sedmič zapored potekalo tekmovanje v znanju angleškega jezika za 7. razrede. Tekmovanje je bilo organizirano na dveh ravneh, šolski in državni. Šolsko tekmovanje je potekalo 31. januarja 2018, državno pa 28. februarja 2018. Vsaka šola je lahko na državno tekmovanje prijavila največ tri skupine. Tudi letos smo vsa priznanja (bronasta, srebrna in zlata) podelili na državni ravni. Tekmovanje je v šolskem letu 2017-2018 potekalo pod taktirko nove koordinatorice, Metke Lovrin, z DOŠ I Lendava.

Letošnje tekmovanje smo naslovili **MASTER CHEF RELAUNCHED**. Učenci so si predstavljali, da so člani »komisije oddaje Master Chef«, ki predstavljajo in komentirajo britanske jedi in določajo zmagovalno jed v duhu omenjenega resničnostnega šova. Pri tem smo želeli slišati ne le o tradicionalnih britanskih jedeh (kot npr. o britanskem zajtrku), temveč tudi o sodobnih in "podomačenih" jedeh, ki so jih Britanci posvojili iz bivših kolonij. Zanimanje učiteljev in učencev je bilo veliko in prejeli smo tudi pozitivne povratne informacije za domiselnost teme, ki je bila sodelujočim všeč. V prispevkih smo videli, da je kar nekaj učencev preizkusilo vlogo »master chefa« in kuharja, zaradi česar so lahko učenci razvijali številne kompetence (ne le jezikovne, temveč tudi kooperativne in izkustvene). Ponokod so učenci izgubljali točke zaradi neupoštevanja kriterija opisa (zlasti britanskih) jedi in očitnega branja. Slednje bomo v naslednjem šolskem letu poskušali omejiti ali celo odpraviti s spremembami v formatu. Spodbudno pa je, da so letošnji zmagovalci tekmovanja sodelovali prvič, kar nam je dalo vedeti, da je tekmovanje dostopno in primerno tudi za začetnike.

Na državno tekmovanje smo prejeli preko sto izdelkov, ki jih je oblikovalo 371 tekmovalcev iz vse Slovenije. Tudi letos so bile skupine sestavljene iz dveh do petih članov, mentorji pa so izdelke objavili na spletnem od-

ložišču. Prispela izdelke je tekmovalna komisija ocenjevala glede na naslednje kriterije: vsebino oz. sporočilno vrednost, slovnično oz. jezikovno pravilnost, bogastvo besedišča in pravopis, pravilno izgovorjavo in gladkost, strukturo izdelka, ustreznost njegove dolžine ter splošni vtis.

Za bronasto priznanje je bilo treba osvojiti 70 % točk, za srebrno 80 % točk ter za zlato 90 % točk. Bronasto priznanje je tako letos osvojilo 88 tekmovalcev, srebrno 55 tekmovalcev, zlato priznanje pa 18 tekmovalcev. Prvih pet učencev in učenek je prejelo škatlo presenečenj, ki je vsebovala angleške knjige, majice, rokavice za pametne telefone, pisala in zvezke, platnene torbe in razne druge malenkosti, ki jim pridejo prav pri uri angleščine in v prostem času. Nagrajenci so: Tjaša Tepić, Živa Zorko, Špela Potočnik, Lan Stokavnik in Lukas Gaberšek z OŠ Griže (pod mentorstvom Polone Jelen).

STATISTIKA NA KRATKO:

- Število sodelujočih šol: 59
- Število izdelkov, ki smo jih prejeli za državno tekmovanje: 103
- Število vseh tekmovalcev: 458
- Število bronastih priznanj: 24 skupin (88 tekmovalcev)
- Število srebrnih priznanj: 15 skupin (55 tekmovalcev)
- Število zlatih priznanj: 5 skupin (18 tekmovalcev)
- Število mentorjev: 62

Vse izdelke si lahko ogledate na povezavi, ki je objavljena na spletni strani društva IATEFL Slovenia (www.iatefl.si – zavihek Tekmovanja – Arhivi).

V imenu tekmovalne komisije in sponzorja Palma vsem tekmovalcem iskreno čestitamo za njihove dosežke, mentorjem pa se najlepše zahvalujemo za njihovo sodelovanje in povratne informacije. Vabimo vas, da se nam ponovno pridružite prihodnje leto.

Metka Lovrin,
koordinatorka tekmovanja

Dolores Malić,
predsednica društva

Sponzor tekmovanja:



Poročilo o tekmovanju v znanju angleščine za učence 8. razreda osnovne šole v šolskem letu 2017/18

V šolskem letu 2017/18 je Slovensko društvo učiteljev angleškega jezika Iatefl Slovenia organiziralo deveto tekmovanje v znanju angleščine za učence 8. razreda. Pravilnik in razpis tekmovanja v tekočem šolskem letu sta bila objavljena na spletni strani društva. Tekmovanje je bilo sistemsko podprto in izvedeno preko strežnika DMFA.

Tekmovanje iz znanja angleščine za učence 8. razreda je dvostopenjsko, na šolski ravni tekmujejo učenci za bronasta priznanja, na državni ravni pa za zlata in srebrna priznanja.

Tema letošnjega šolskega tekmovanja je bila Sports and Slovenes – proud holders of the highest number of Olympic medals per inhabitant. 16. 10. 2017 so se učenci pomerili med seboj na šolah. Udeležilo se ga je 3744 učencev, ki so tekmovali v bralni spretnosti, uporabi jezika v sobesedilu in kreativnem pisanju. Bronasto priznanje je osvojilo 518 učencev.

Tema državnega tekmovanja je bila Faster, higher, stronger. Na državno tekmovanje se je na podlagi rezultatov šolskega tekmovanja uvrstilo 450 učencev. Organizirano in izvedeno je bilo 20. 11. 2017 na 5 lokacijah.

lokacija	gostitelj	organizator
Celje	OŠ bratov Letonja Šmartno ob Paki	Lea Stiplovšek
Koper	OŠ Milojke Štrukelj Nova Gorica	mag. Nataša Štrancar
Ljubljana jug	OŠ Bršljin	Tina Godina
Ljubljana sever	OŠ Jožeta Moškriča, Ljubljana	Tadeja Helena Andoljšek
Maribor	OŠ Hajdina	Anja Medved

Učenci so se pomerili v poznavanju in rabi besedišča, poznavanju kulture in kreativnem pisanju.

Zlato priznanje je osvojilo 48 učencev, srebrno priznanje pa 91 učencev.

Poleg priznanj smo učencem podelili tudi nagrade. Najboljši 3 tekmovalci so prejeli tridnevni izlet v London.

Jan Košir	OŠ prof. dr. Josipa Plemlja, Bled
Martin Mutec	I.OŠ Žalec
Zoja Bogovič	OŠ Koprivnica

Turistična agencija STA je dobitnikom zlatih priznanj omogočila brezplačno pridobitev ISIC izkaznice, s katero tekmovalci lahko uveljavljajo številne ugodnosti in popuste.

Iskreno čestitamo vsem tekmovalcem, ki so prejeli priznanja in njihovim mentorjem. Zahvaljujemo se vsem učiteljem angleščine za prispevek k našemu skupnemu tekmovanju, ki širi zanimanje za učenje angleščine in večja znanje angleščine. Hvala popravljavcem državnega tekmovanja, organizatorjem državnega tekmovanja, organizatorjem šolskega tekmovanja in vsem mentorjem, ki so sodelovali pri izvedbi in vrednotenju.

Želimo vam uspešen in miren zaključek šolskega leta in vas vabimo, da se nam ponovno pridružite v naslednjem šolskem letu.

mag. Helena Žnidaršič Seme
koordinatorka tekmovanja

Dolores Malić,
predsednica društva

Glavni sponzor tekmovanja:
Twin turistična agencija



Poročilo o tekmovanju v znanju angleščine za 2. letnike v šolskem letu 2017/18

Slovensko društvo učiteljev angleškega jezika IATEFL Slovenia je v šolskem letu 2017/2018 že deveto šolsko leto zapored uspešno izvedlo tekmovanje za dijake 2. letnikov srednjih šol. Razpis, pravilnik tekmovanja, navodila za tekmovanje in kriteriji za ocenjevanje so bili objavljeni konec julija na spletni strani www.iatefl.si, prav tako pa so bili vsi dokumenti poslani članom IATEFL Slovenia po elektronski pošti, prav tako pa tudi mentorjem in mentoricam dijakov, ki so sodelovali na dosedanjih tekmovanjih.

Tekmovanje je potekalo na dveh ravneh, in sicer je bilo na posameznih šolah najprej izvedeno šolsko tekmovanje (27. 11. 2017), nato pa so izmed prijavljenih izdelkov šole poslane najboljše na državno tekmovanje (11. 12. 2017).

Letošnja tematika tekmovanja je bila »FAKE«, saj smo želeli dijake spodbuditi h kritičnemu razmisleku ter oblikovanju in izražanju lastnega mnenja o tematiki predvsem v svetu medijev in socialnih omrežij, ki jih vsakodnevno obkrožajo. Izbiro žanra smo tokrat prepustili dijakom samim, kar jim je dalo precej možnosti za uporabo lastne domišljije. Predpisanih je bilo tudi po 10 besed v posamezni kategoriji, ki so jih morali dijaki smiselno uporabiti v posnetem prispevku. Besede so bile naslednje:

KATEGORIJA A / C:

PRIMACY (N), COMFORT (N), GLIMPSE (N), DICTATE (V), REVIVE (V), SPECULATE (V), PREPOSTEROUS (ADJ), SCARCE (ADJ), STRENUOUSLY (ADV), MONUMENTALLY (ADV)

KATEGORIJA B / D:

RISK (N), QUOTE (N), IDEAL (N), DICTATE (V), SPLURGE (V), OVERCOME (V), SAFE (ADJ), OUTRAGEOUS (ADJ), MONUMENTALLY (ADV), BLINDLY (ADV)

Kriteriji pri izbiri najboljše skupine (tako na šolski kot na državni ravni) so bili naslednji: pravilnost uporabe podanih besed, ustvarjalnost/domiselnost pri uporabi podanih besed, jezik, izgovorjava, informativnost prispevka, splošni vtis in tehnična izvedba.

Državnega tekmovanja se je udeležilo 15 šol, in sicer je v kar 36 skupinah tekmovalo skupno več kot 150 dijakov. Zaradi neupoštevanja pravilnika in kriterijev so bile diskvalificirane tri skupine.

Dijake in dijakinje je potrebno - kot vsako leto - znova pohvaliti za izvirnost in ustvarjalnost pri pripravi filmov, kot tudi za veliko truda, vloženega v pripravo in snemanje prispevkov. Zmagovalci v posameznih kategorijah so se še posebej izkazali, za kar jim še enkrat iskreno čestitam.

Število priznanj po kategorijah

Priznanje	A	B	D	skupaj
zlato	2	1	/	6
srebrno	4	3	/	8
bronasto	6	4	1	11
skupaj	12	8	1	25

Najbolje so se odrezale naslednje šole oz. skupine dijakov (zlata priznanja v posamezni kategoriji):

KATEGORIJA A:

Gimnazija Ptuj

s posnetkom *Glimpse*

(Urška Kiselak, Liza Likar, Karin Ozmec, Aleksander Štumberger, Katarina Vaupotič)
mentorica: **Romana Zelenjak**

Gimnazija Nova Gorica

s posnetkom *Escape*

(Mojca Božič, Lia Čotar, Žana Kokot, Iza Kranjc, Neža Ledinek Lozej)
mentor: **Maks Pavlica**

KATEGORIJA B:

Srednja poklicna in strokovna šola Bežigrad

s posnetkom *To Be or Not to Be Fake*

(Urška Jarc, Jaka Grm, Anja Vidmar, Sara Cerkovnik)
mentorici: **Tanja Kovačič, Lucija Šljuka Novak**

Še enkrat iskreno čestitam vsem sodelujočim, vsem mentorjem pa se najlepše zahvaljujemo za pomoč pri izpeljavi tekmovanja.

Nasvidenje do prihodnjega leta!

Jasna Šebez
koordinatorka tekmovanja

Dolores Malić
predsednica društva

Poročilo o tekmovanju v znanju angleščine za 3. letnike v šolskem letu 2017/18

Slovensko društvo učiteljev angleškega jezika IATEFL Slovenia je tudi letos izvedlo tekmovanje za dijake 3. letnikov na dveh ravneh – regijski in državni. Regijsko tekmovanje je potekalo 5. 2. 2018 na sedmih regijskih šolah (Gimnazija Nova Gorica, Gimnazija Škofja Loka, Gimnazija Murska Sobota, II. gimnazija Maribor, Gimnazija Šentvid, I. gimnazija v Celju in Grm Novo Mesto – Center biotehnike in turizma). Državno tekmovanje je potekalo 19. 3. 2018 na Gimnaziji Šentvid v Ljubljani. Razpis tekmovanja smo na naši spletni strani objavili konec julija 2017. Razpis je vseboval podatke o strukturi tekmovanja in tipu nalog.

Na regijsko tekmovanje se je prijavilo 715 dijakov. Tudi letos je tekmovanje potekalo v 4 kategorijah – **A1** (splošne gimnazije), **A2** (mednarodni oddelki in dijaki, ki so več kot eno leto bivali na angleško govorečem področju), **B** (strokovne šole) in **C** (angleščina kot drugi tuji jezik). Na državno tekmovanje se je skupaj uvrstilo 131 dijakov.

Naloga s področja kulture je bila letos v kategorijah **A1** in **A2** na temo dela Margaret Atwood *The Handmaid's Tale*. V kategorijah **B** in **C** pa na temo filma *Looking for Alibrandi*. Na državnem tekmovanju so se najbolje uvrstili naslednji dijaki (navajamo najboljše dijake v posamezni kategoriji).

Kat.	1. mesto	2. mesto	3. mesto
A1	BENJAMIN VIRANT Gimnazija Jožeta Plečnika Ljubljana Mentorica: Barbara Klemenčič	JURE MIHELČIČ ŠC Postojna, Srednja šol Mentorica: Dora Tomaduz	LIZA HABJAN Gimnazija Škofja Loka Mentorica: mag. Nataša Zaplotnik
A2	MAJA POPOVIČ Gimnazija Bežigrad Mentorica: Maja Petričič Štrifof	TANJA HOLC II. gimnazija Maribor Mentor: Emil Pečnik	KATJA ŠTRAKL Gimnazija Bežigrad Mentorica: Maja Petričič Štrifof
B	SRĐAN VELJANČIČ Elektrotehniško-računalniška strok.šola in gimn. Ljubljana Mentorica: Lea Sobočan	KLEMEN KEKEC Srednja šola za oblikovanje Maribor Mentorica: Mojca Božnik	MARTIN GREŠAK ŠC Celje, Sr. šola za strojništvo, mehatroniko in medije Mentorica: mag. Simona Brečko
C	PETER FILIPIČ Gimnazija Franca Miklošiča Ljutomer Mentor: mag. Saša Pergar	TADEJ ROŠKARIČ III. gimnazija Maribor Mentorica: Mojca Muhič	GREGA RUBIN Gimnazija Ormož Mentorica: Nina Cerkuvenik

Ostali rezultati so objavljeni na naši spletni strani. Skupaj smo podelili 23 zlatih priznanj. Spodnjo mejo točk za srebrno priznanje je določila Državna tekmovalna komisija. Skupaj smo podelili 43 srebrnih priznanj. Preostalih 65 tekmovalcev prejme bronasto priznanje.

Vsem dijakom, ki so se udeležili letošnjega tekmovanja čestitam za sodelovanje na tekmovanju. Zahvaljujemo se tudi mentorjem, regijskim organizatorjem za pomoč pri izvedbi regijskega tekmovanja in ga. Poloni Cimerman za izvedbo državnega tekmovanja na Gimnaziji Šentvid v Ljubljani.

Nataša Meh
koordinatorka tekmovanja

Dolores Malić
predsednica društva



TWin odlični izleti!

Turistična agencija TWIN se s kulturno-izobraževalnimi potovanji ukvarja že 20. leto. Ker v Veliko Britanijo potujemo pogosteje kot večina ostalih slovenskih organizatorjev potovanj, ponujamo odlično in preverjeno izvedbo. Naše cene tudi že vključujejo javni prevoz in obvezne vstopnine. Cene so odvisne predvsem od termina odhoda in vaše fleksibilnosti pri odhodu.

1995 - 2015



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040 187 830
e-pošta: info@twintur.com
www.twintur.com

Zakaj s Twin-om v London:

- 1 Pogosti in redni, zagotovljeni odhodi v London.** Twin organizira šolska potovanja v London že 20 let, v povprečju imamo na mesec vsaj 3 zagotovljene odhode v London.
- 2 Odlično vodstvo.** Pri Twinu se zavedamo, da je odlično poznavanje običajev in turističnih znamenitosti Londončanov le prvi korak k odlični izvedbi. Naši vodniki imajo dolgoletne izkušnje pri vodenju šolske mladine, zato odlično poznajo vse sestavine programa, saj jih sami pripravljajo. Tudi zato je vodenje/izvedba toliko bolj fleksibilna glede na želje skupine. Naj še omenimo, da boste v Sloveniji težko našli vodnike, ki v London vodijo tako pogosto kot Twinovi vodniki.
- 3 Nastanitev, ki presega običajno turistično kategorijo.** Pri Twinu se zavedamo, da je dober spanec pomembna sestavina izleta. Vsi naši hoteli so hoteli s 3* in pri večini udeležencev presežejo njihova pričakovanja. Kot specialist za London lahko zagotovimo vsaj en bogat angleški zajtrk (običajnih zajtrki v Londonu so skromni kontinentalni).
- 4 Nikoli naknadno ne spreminjamo pogojev.** Naša cena je vedno znana že ob prijavi in se nikoli ne spremeni zaradi spremembe cen dobaviteljev, goriva oz letalskega prevoznika.
- 5 Vedno ponudimo kakšno dodatno storitev – brezplačno.** S program zagotavljamo minimalni obseg storitev oz. ogledov, vendar nikoli ne izvedemo samo minimalnega obsega – vedno, pri vsaki skupini dodamo nekaj posebnega, kar ni zapisano v programu. Prav tako v naših programih nikoli ne zapišemo "če bo čas dopuščal", kajti vse naše programe vedno v celoti izvedemo. In ker si London zelo pogosto ogledujemo, poznamo tudi optimalno zaporedje ogledov brez nepotrebnega hitenja.
- 6 Vsaj 183 osnovnih in srednjih šol je že potovalo z nami. Z nami zelo malo šol potuje samo enkrat.** Če želite neobvezujoče vzpostaviti stik z organizatorjem na eni od šol, ki je že potovala z nami, vam bomo z veseljem posredovali kontakt.
- 7 Ponujamo 3-dnevni program, kjer za izvedbo ni potrebno delovnika.**

Več informacij na www.twintur.com ali na 040 187 830 ali v poslovalnici na Zemljemerski ulici 12 v Ljubljani.

Osmisliti učenje je osnovna naloga vsakega učitelja in ni boljšega načina, kako priljubiti angleščino, od tega, da učence popelješ po svetu. V današnjih časih to ni enostavno. Šole in učitelji se bojijo odgovornosti, mnogi starši pa ne zmorejo ali znajo otrok odpeljati sami. Ni bilo lahko pred 15 leti prvič sestiti na avtobus in se podati z agencijo, o kateri nismo vedeli ničesar, na večdnevno potovanje v Veliko Britanijo. Bilo nas je strah pred odhodom, a takoj ko smo se podali na pot, smo vedeli, da je bila odločitev prava.

Po tistem, ko smo prvič potovali s TWinom, smo vedeli, da nas ne bo več strah. Lani smo že deseti odkrivali Evropo in vsakič smo se vrnili ne samo zadovoljni, ampak tudi hvaležni za TWinovo strokovnost, prijaznost, ustrežljivost ... Hvaležni smo celotni ekipi in nikoli ne bi izbrala druge agencije, saj sem prepričana, da niti cenovno niti strokovno potovanja ne bi mogla biti ugodnejše in bolj izpeljana.

Ta ekskurzija je postala stalna praksa naše šole in učenci komaj čakajo, da bodo dovolj stari, da se je bodo lahko udeležili. Nam, spremljevalcem, pa je v neizmerno veselje, ko jih opazujemo, kako polni vtisov in lepih doživetij še dolgo pripovedujejo o potovanju.

Ksenija Tripkovič, OŠ Selnica ob Dravi