

IATEFL Slovenia Magazine
Autumn issue 2017, no. 71



im

25th conference

Inspirational Devon

Ready, aim, succeed!

Body parts in class



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.

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- 7** Ponujamo 3-dnevni program, kjer za izvedbo ni potrebno delovnika.

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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 sesti 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

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Dear readers,

as most of us would probably agree, autumn is the most colourful season. It's a season where some things end but at the same time it's also the season we teachers come alive again ☺. The school starts, our students are full of energy, we have some new ideas that we can't wait to try out ... the excitement of the smell of our new books is there.

The IATEFL Slovenia's team is already thinking about new workshops, about getting you, the members, involved more, about making our community even more useful and active.

If any of you have an idea or wish to become more active, please contact us: info@iatefl.si. We're always happy to greet and meet new forces ☺.

Don't forget to make a reservation for our next conference in March, we're looking forward to welcoming some of the biggest names in the field of English teaching. Check our website for all the information you need.

We wish you a very special autumn, since "Autumn is... the year's last, loveliest smile," as William Cullen Bryant described it.



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INSPIRATIONAL DEVON – A musical, literary and artistic journey for teachers of English (*notes by a participant*)

by Helena Miklavčič-Jakovac

Strangely enough, my journey to Devon began in a hotel in Topolšica, the venue of the Slovenian IATEFL 2017 conference. It was during a social evening when, to my utter amazement, I heard my name read out among the winners in the raffle which, as well as many other prizes, offered generous discounts on SOL courses in Devon (UK), Serbia and Slovakia. Winning such a prize had been a dream of mine for years, and now it had come true! I almost couldn't believe my ears, but when Dragana Stegić (an active member of the Slovenian IATEFL) congratulated me, and a day later sent me an email with more details about the prize, I finally fully grasped the pleasant truth and started taking the necessary steps to actually grab the opportunity that had been offered to me.

Thanks to the very friendly and efficient staff at SOL, my work was easy. I got loads of good tips regarding the sites on which it was most convenient to book flights and other practical matters from the Executive Director of SOL, Grenville Yeo. He was extremely helpful and encouraging when I had my doubts and also later on in Devon, when he had to personally take me to the bus station in the middle of the night due to the early departure of my flight. He gave me the feeling that at SOL every participant matters and is well taken care of.

On my birthday, the flight was booked (a wonderful present to myself!) and there was no way back. I was going to Devon – a place I knew nothing about, apart from the fact that Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* is set there. It was going to be my first time in "real" England, as my previous visits had been to cosmopolitan London, scholar-



My host family's tea-cosy



*Damien Hirst's statue Verity
(ilfracombe)*

ly Cambridge and touristy Brighton. As I tried to locate Barnstaple, the seat of the SOL headquarters, on the map, I felt privileged in being given the opportunity to get a glimpse of an authentic Britain.

Mark Andrews, the tutor and the heart and soul of the inspirational Devon course, got in touch with me and the other participants a week before the course began. His enthusiasm and energy emanated from the email, which (surprisingly) did not include a list of academic articles and books we had to read to be prepared for the course. Instead, he asked us to bring “nice things from our countries to share” and to decide whether we wanted to take surf lessons – two hours of immersion in the Atlantic ocean! “Surf lessons as a part of a teacher-training course?!” I thought to myself: “This is definitely going to be exciting!”. After watching the attached video of last year’s participants, cheerfully screaming and splashing about in the ocean, I knew I was in for something different from your typical teacher-development experience. And I was right!

Our tutor, Mark Andrews, met us at the airport and the course began right away. He was on his “mission” – complete immersion into the language and culture – from the very start. Living proof of the fact that you do not need a classroom or a textbook to teach, he pointed out interesting details about anything English (sports, pronunciation, origins of expressions like “hard shoulder”, climate, Paddington, etc.) on the coach journey from Heathrow to Barnstaple. Rather than telling us things, he challenged us to investigate them and, especially, to observe everything around us, to try to absorb the many bits of English that would be

surrounding us for the next eleven days – from menus, leaflets, signs and newspapers to snippets of conversation. He also inspired us not to be limited to English language only, but to notice anything different that is a part of the culture – from tea-pots, tea-cosies, clotted cream and marmite to English gardens, water taps and so on.

Once the programme of the course was handed out to us on the coach, my suspicions were confirmed: Mark Andrews is indeed an advocate of a hands-on learning experience! The programme was a list of places we were going to visit and explore, public works of art and galleries to admire, live folk music, a festival, an art workshop, local independent businesses, readings and more. And the best thing about it was that we were not going to be lectured about it all. No way! No dull lectures with Mark! Instead we were going to be taken to a variety of towns and villages where we would have the chance (usually a task/mission) to talk to the locals and get first-hand experience of the culture.

The coach journey itself offered magnificent views of thatched houses, brown brick buildings, lush vegetation, open skies, vast fields, cattle and sheep grazing like specks of white, brown and black in more than fifty shades of green. A stop in Salisbury, where we visited the 13th-century Salisbury Cathedral – a breath-taking piece of Gothic architecture and home to the best preserved copy of Magna Carta – and a peek at prehistoric Stonehenge through the coach windows were just another couple of reminders that I was indeed in England. Mark urged us not to forget that for a second and to use everything and everyone around us (especially our host family) as a source to learn from. We were invited to step out of our comfort zone, experiment, do new things



Mark Andrews, our tutor, expalining public art and literature connected to it



My host family's garden, me and one of their dogs

and dare to ask people questions even about “taboo” subjects like Brexit and the recent general election. We were also asked to observe ourselves and our reactions in new situations.

On our arrival in Barnstaple the host families were there to meet us. Together with my two housemates we were taken to a wonderful house surrounded by a beautiful English garden in which statues of birds and elves are hidden among the bushes and flowers and guarded by two friendly dogs. The house itself proved to be a goldmine of information about English culture, proving their love of gardening, tea, knick-knacks, pets (the list could go on and on!). On observing the handiness of having mugs hung on a board to quickly grab when making tea in the morning, it was explained to me that the word cupboard comes from its original simple version: a board for cups. I was also told about tea cosies – knitted garments for a teapot to keep the tea inside hot for a longer time – and even egg cosies. I heard expressions like “take umbrage” and “proud as punch” and took mental notes to research their use and origins. I was already infected by Mark’s philosophy – not waiting for the lesson and the handout to start learning, but using the whole enriching experience as a multi-faceted opportunity to improve my English and get a better insight into the culture. And this was only Day 1 – my lessons had not officially begun yet...

On Day 2, the official opening of the course was set outdoors in a small square. It was 14°C and drizzling, which gave us a taste of the typical climate in the UK! According to Mark, “there is no bad weather, only bad cloth-

ing”, so we proceeded with the planned activity. We were instructed to form a map of Europe by placing ourselves in proper positions according to where we came from – a seemingly easy task, but we still managed to get stuck! Desperate and unable to sort out the problem among ourselves (what babies we were! I can see it so well now!), we turned to our teacher (the source of all truth and knowledge and the solution to all our problems) for further guidance. He was unwilling to offer it, however, and left us to our own devices! He also seemed amused by our increasing frustration levels that led to some participants taking matters into their own hands and bossing others around, while others grudgingly obeyed their orders.

Later on (in the pub!), we were enlightened as to Mark’s hidden agenda behind the “map of Europe” task. Do we ever pay attention to group dynamics? Do we ever observe the roles our students (or we ourselves) usually take in group tasks? Do we let our students sort out their own problems and find their own way to efficiently work together? Mark’s premise is that “if we want to bring up responsible young people, we have to give them an active role in the classroom”. Thus we should “never do anything that we can get our students to do” and should “never give too many instructions when setting up group work”. Only in this way will we give our students the possibility to learn how to learn and learn how to work together. I was delighted by the ease and fluidity with which our tutor managed to sneak important lessons into playful activities. A shift in your approach to teaching is worth so much more than the kind of ready-made lesson plan you sometimes get in workshops.



Victorian school - the setting for one of our workshops



Magnificent view - Poets' Walk

I can assure you that there were many important lessons we were offered (I would hesitate to use the word “taught”) in the next nine days of the course, but they were always disguised as exciting, light-hearted activities. It would be too much to describe them all (as it would monopolise the entire issue of the magazine!), but let me list a few highlights:

- A visit to Pilton Community College – observing art, English and music classes and learning about the importance of a school having a vision, setting high standards, displaying the results of students’ work, maintaining strict discipline and having a system of rewarding students for their accomplishments.
- A talk about NESTS and NON-NESTS and the pros and cons of running an independent publishing house by Susan Holden in an independent bookshop in Bideford.
- A visit to an old Victorian schoolroom, where we donned the attire of Victorian students and teachers and were informed about Victorian England by one of the volunteers in the museum, followed by a fascinating workshop on teaching poetry.
- The folk music evening in a delightful teahouse in Barnstaple.
- Learning about literature and stories connected to the places we were visiting and a talk by renowned local novelist Liz Shakespeare.
- Exploring public art, especially Damien Hirst’s controversial statue *Verity* in Ilfracombe, and trying to find ways to use this kind of art in the classroom.
- Family day on Sunday and a visit to Tintagel, which is inextricably linked to the legend of King Arthur and has you immersed in history, myths and stunning scenery.
- A skilfully executed workshop by the best storyteller and teacher-trainer ever, David Heathfield, who demonstrated the value and importance of telling stories in the classroom and offered practical tips on how to do this effectively.
- Retracing the steps of poets such as Alfred Tennyson, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Makepeace Thackeray on Poets’ Walk while enjoying spectacular views from the top of the cliffs around Clevedon.
- Learning about Rudyard Kipling and his poem *If* in Westward Ho! – the only geographical name in Britain with an exclamation mark in its name.

Back home now, getting ready for the new school year while reliving my Devon experience through writing this article, I am fully aware and deeply grateful to IATEFL, SOL and especially Mark Andrews for taking me on this enriching journey which has contributed not only to my development as a teacher, but also to my personal growth.



Public art romance - Poets' Walk detail



Kipling's poem If as public art in Westward Ho!



King Arthur's statue - Tintagel

Dan jezikov

osnovna šola

1.

Maša Ferenc,
OŠ Rovte

V tvojih laseh
bela roža. Slovo?

V njenih rokah
črn biser. Pesem.

2.

Taja Božičko in Urška Verdenik,
OŠ Anice Černejeve Makole

You know my name, not story.

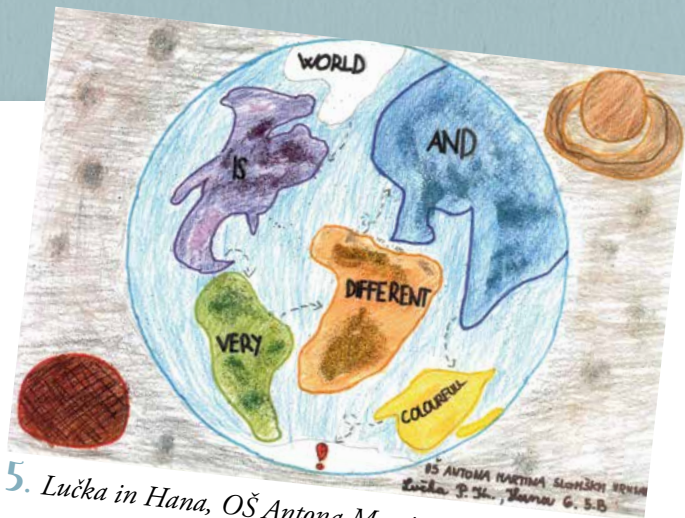
3.

Nika Novak,
OŠ Rovte

Osamljena deklica
postopa po prenatrpanih
veleblagovnicah.



4. Alja Stražišnik, OŠ Muta



5. Lučka in Hana, OŠ Antona Martina Slomška, Vrhnikar

6.

Mark Košir,
OŠ Ledina

Nit življenja
Otroškost - igriva,
Zrelost - Razkriva,
Starost - Minljiva

7.

Tadej Sečnik,
OŠ Horjul

Luna svetla sije,
meni se pije.

8.

Jože Žunkovič,
OŠ Starše

A pencil broke,
the artist didn't

9.

Žan Kešpert,
OŠ Poljčane

I wanted to be happy,
couldn't

10.

Patricija Knez,
OŠ Šmarje pri Jelšah

Sonce me greje,
ti še močnejše

11.

Nastja Brumec,
OŠ Anice Černejeve Makole

You are near, I am far

12.

Meta Rebec,
OŠ Miroslava Vilharja Postojna

U 4 ME, ME 4 U

DO NOT LOSE
YOURSELF IN FEARS



13. Teja Brdnik, OŠ D. Kobala

Srednja šola

1.

Andrej Blenkuš
EGŠŠ Radovljica

ROMANCA

neznanca.
prijateljja.
najboljša prijateljja.
ljubimca.
neznanca.

DANAŠNJA LJUBEZEN

A: Zate čez ocean.
B: Pridi!
A: Dež pada.

2.

Vanesa Ibrahimović
EGŠŠ Radovljica

- The Wind Is Just Trees Whispering.
- To me his eyes are home.
- We were. And then we weren't.
- Born a twin. Graduated only child.
- Painfully, he changed "is" to "was."
- Ice hockey made him special guy.
- Born Alive. Lived alone. Died sad.
- Prišla je in nasmejala čisto vse.

3.

Anamarija Papež
SŠ Josipa Jurčiča
„They dream of peace...with shotguns.“

4.

Patricija Kreševac
Gimnazija N. Gorica:

„Many trees fell. None were heard.“

5.

Avtor neznan

Mein Körper ist nicht ein Friedhof.

EN KULA VAR BILLIGARE ÄN TERAPI
EN KUGLE VAR BILLIGERE END BEHANDLING
EINE KUGEL WAR BILLIGER ALS THERAPIE
ONE BULLET WAS CHEAPER THAN THERAPY

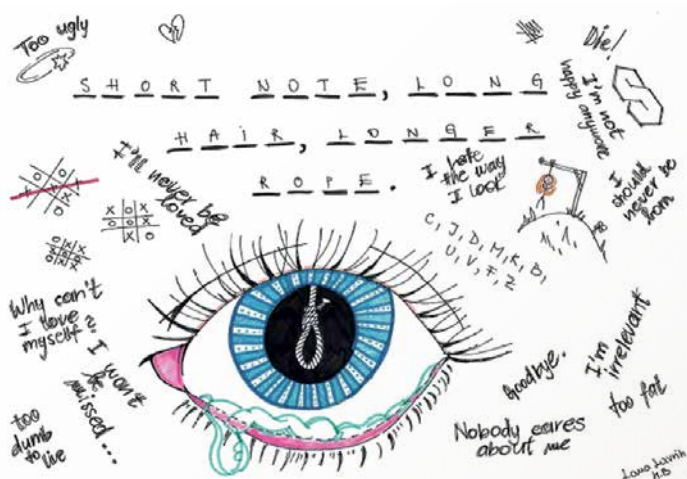


6. Irenej Lah, SŠ za oblikovanje Maribor

7.

Avtor neznan

Mein Körper ist nicht ein Friedhof.



8. Lana Lavrih, SŠ Josipa Jurčiča

9.

Judita Polanc,
EGŠŠ Radovljica

ISKALCI

Kdor se išče, ta se najde.

10.

Tanja Železnik,
EGŠŠ Radovljica

ŽIVLJENJE

»Ni za žvet, ni za umret!«

Ready, Aim, Succeed!

by Claudia Molnár

Just as my physical shape has changed over the past 20 or so years, so has the shape of language teaching and learning. Gone are the days when we used to take up learning a new language as a hobby and enrol in an evening course and laugh at each other (and ourselves) making monkey-like noises as we tried to get our tongues around some alien pronunciation. With increased pressure to learn foreign languages and the growth in assessing and testing, sometimes we lose sight of why we are in the language classroom at all.

I love being a language teacher, I really do! From day one of teacher-training, I realised that this was what I was born to do – Hugh Dellar once described this as “falling into a me shaped hole”, and to me that hits the nail on the head. I sometimes used to wonder why it was that I love my job so much, but then I realised it’s because I learn far more than I actually teach, and although I wasn’t a great fan of school, I have always loved learning, especially languages. I learn so much from my students, my lessons and my peers, but most of all I learn from myself. I like to reflect on things and, as reflection is one of our daily teaching pastimes, I get a lot of opportunities to do so. But do our learners too? How often do they really get the chance to reflect on and assess their own development? Do they know what their strengths and weaknesses are? If so, how do they build on their strengths in order to overcome their weaknesses? And if not, how can we help them to recognise them? We know we are teaching our learners a life skill, something they can build upon once they cut their ties with us; we just need to teach them how they can do this, and this is where developing their learner autonomy comes into play.

One of the things I do with my students is to begin, as part of our needs analysis, by getting them to focus on what they

think they are good at and the skills they think they need to develop. Invariably they will mention vocabulary and grammar in the second category, but in time they realise that there are other, underlying skills that need to be developed before they can progress, common receptive skills for example. We then set targets for development. Initially these are directed by me in order to demonstrate how the students can draw on their strengths in order to develop other areas. Following the first stage of reflection and feedback, learners then help one another to set follow-up targets by commenting on skills they have noticed in one another and/or themselves, and slowly they then move towards “autonomy”, i.e. setting their own targets (which we generally share in open class forums), which usually takes until the first break or mid (short) course. One of the many joys of this is that it actively engages learners in learning outside of the classroom and raises their awareness of where they themselves can linguistically cash in on all the learning opportunities they have around them but may never have noticed.

At this point I can hear the cries of fellow teachers saying “this is so time-consuming and we just don’t have the time!”, but this is in fact time well spent – this is a learner-training investment and once you get the hang of it, you and your students will realise how empowering a tool this is and how it actually accelerates learning, thus saving time rather than eating into it.

Encouraging and developing reflective practice can only be a good thing – it raises awareness, increases the challenge and offers a massive sense of achievement not many test results can match. Invest the time so you and your learners can reap the rewards. Why not make target-setting a new (academic) year’s resolution – much more rewarding than giving up chocolate or cutting down on coffee!



Things to write about

Photocopiable ideas to use in your classroom :-)

1. Boil down your last required reading book to a tweet (140 characters max).

2. Write a message in your yesterday's fortune cookie which was completely wrong.

3. Write messages for your friends as well and distribute them :)

4. Write about your weirdest member of the family as if they were from Mars.

5. Write the title of a magazine article about your class.

6. You live in a perfect world. Write 5 tips how not to get banned from it.

7. Find a photo and write 10 sentences about what is NOT in the picture.

8. Your mother finds something forbidden in your closet. Give 5 explanations how it got there.

9. Write a ghost story about a ghost living in your school.

10. Write one paragraph which has to end with the words, "He would give anything to turn back the clock five minutes."

11. Take a recent event and describe it from the viewpoint of something else - a chair in the room, the walls, or perhaps one of the plates in the cupboard.

12. Pick a topic, any topic, and type it into Google Image Search. Choose your favorite image, and write a story about it. If you select an image of a person, describe that person in detail and create their back story. If you select a landscape image, describe that area.

13. Pick your favourite book, or even take just the most recent book you read. Pull the main character out, and insert yourself. Use your personality, your history, and everything about you to decide how the story might change with you in it instead.



How to revise parts of the body in class

by Janja Uhernik

Teaching English to young learners can be highly challenging. As a teacher, you need a load of ideas to motivate them to learn. And you may have to prepare a lot of the material yourself, because, as I've found from experience, the most engaging ways for children to learn a foreign language are often games and TPR songs (and when I started teaching English, there wasn't a lot of material on the market!). I have been teaching English to children from the first to the third grades for three years now and our school was in the first round of introducing English as a regular subject in the second grade.

In this article I present one of my classes to share my ideas with other teachers. I ran this class in the second grade, but you could use the presented activities in the third grade too. In this particular class we revised the parts of the body.

At the beginning of the lesson we sang a "Hello" song. Then we did a TPR song called The Hokey Pokey (*available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZinb6rV0zc>*). Children really enjoy the song because there is a lot of movement in it, so revising the parts of the body in this way is very motivating for them.

Then I divided my pupils into four groups. Each pupil picked out a card with one of the parts of the body on it and read it out loud – those with the same part of the body were put in the same group.

The first group played Memory with parts of the body. Each group member picked out two picture cards and had to name the parts of the body shown. If somebody had trouble remembering the right word, the other members of the group could help.



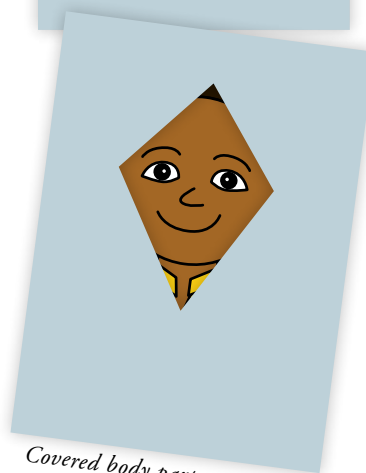
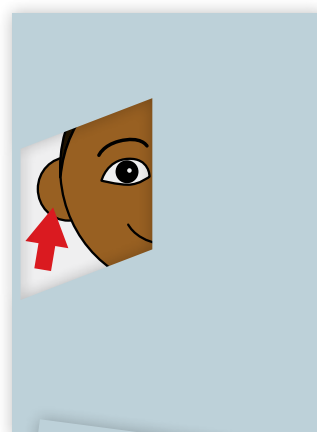
Cards for Memory



One of the cards for describing a monster

The second group had Monsters. They had to colour in the drawings, saying how many of each body part the monster had and naming them. I picked out pictures with very amusing monsters and with different numbers of body parts.

Pupils in the third group worked in pairs. One pupil from each pair got a picture with a partially uncovered part of the body on it and the other had to guess what the picture was of. They were therefore practising phrases such as "Have you got a head/a neck ...?" "Yes, I have." and "No, I haven't." They changed roles once the responder answered correctly.

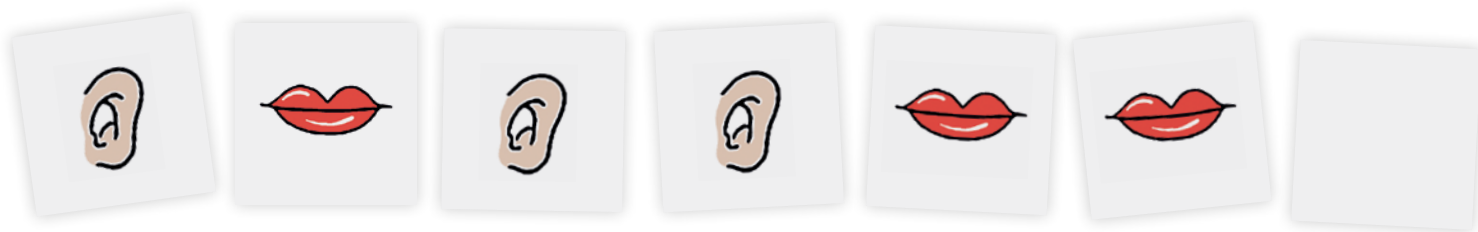


Covered body parts



Uncovered part of the body with answer

Each member of the fourth group got an unfinished sequence. When I came to check, they had to finish it and name all the body parts in the sequence.

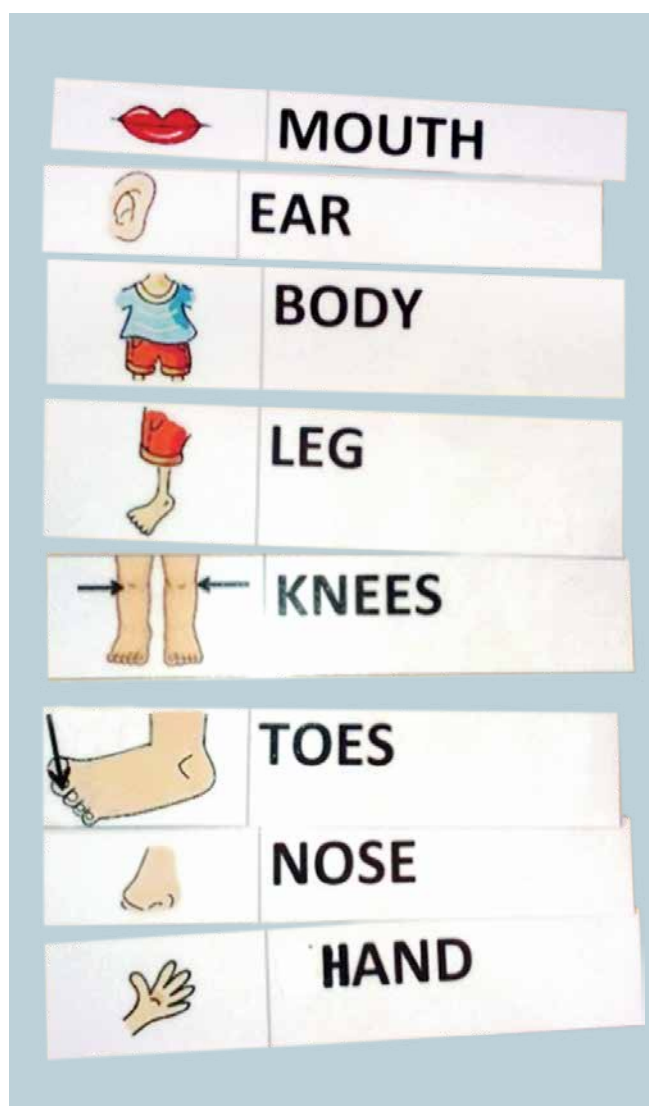


One of the unfinished sequences

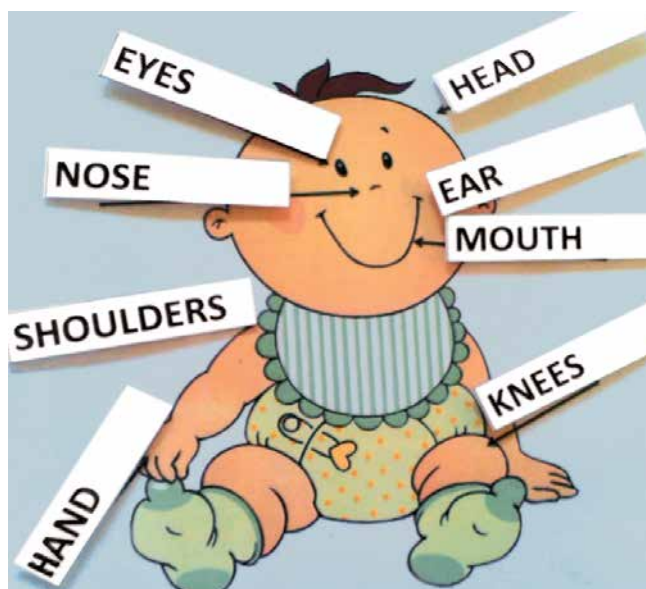
After a while the groups swapped positions, so all the groups ended up doing all the activities. Fast finishers could decide on two additional activities. In one, they had to read the names of parts of the body and put them in the right place in a picture. When I made this game, I used a hook-and-loop fastener, so the children did not have a problem placing the words in the right place or replacing them if they made a mistake. In the second activity, they had to put letters together in a chain so they got the name of the part of the body they'd decided to rewrite. I used letters from a game called Vesela Abeceda, as I'd found that children really enjoy using them to make the word chains. At the end they also read out the names of the parts of the body.



Letters from the game Vesela Abeceda



Cards for rewriting the parts of the body



The pieces that pupils had to put in the right place in the picture

At the end of the class, we played a body match-up game. I called out one of the parts of the body and the children had to physically connect with each other using this particular body part. And to end, we sang the TPR "Goodbye" song (*available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcws7UWWDEs>*).

I hope that this has given you some useful ideas for your classes. I can honestly say that my pupils really enjoyed all the activities, while I as the teacher got to do a lot of running around constantly checking the children's work! They were happy to describe the pictures to me or to read out the words they had written or placed in the right position. As a result, the pupils got plenty of feedback on their work.

Resources:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xcws7UWWDEs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iZinb6rVozc>
- <http://supersimplelearning.com/resource-center/head-shoulders-knees-toes-flashcards/>



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The conference will offer

- native and non-native speakers
- networking opportunities
- inspirational activities
- something for your soul
- a new exclusive educational present
- flower power 70s style party
- 25 years of IATEFL Slovenia walkway
- old-school chat room with a paraffin bath for your hands
- lip-synching competition
- Global issues pre-conference event
- raffle with great prizes
- poetry competition



Understanding learners 2:

Preferences

By Katherine Bilsborough

This series of articles explores twelve professional practices that are important for the development of English language teachers.

Development in these practices moves through a series of key stages, from being aware of the practice to being able to help other teachers to progress. These articles will help you to develop your understanding, skills and confidence in these areas.

Useful vocabulary	
grouping	Grouping is the way we organise individuals into groups.
individual	An individual is a single person.
interaction patterns	Interaction patterns are the different ways that individuals can communicate or work with each other. For example, teacher to the whole group, pair work and group work.
opportunity	An opportunity is a chance to do something.
variety	When there is variety, things are not all the same, there are differences.

No two learners are the same. It is important to get to know our learners as **individuals** as far as possible so that we can understand them better. A better understanding of their preferences helps us to help them. Ask yourself questions like *How do my students like to work? Individually? In small groups? What kinds of activities motivate them? Do they like collaborating on tasks?* When you are thinking about classroom activities it is important to think about **grouping** and **interaction patterns**. Knowing about what your individual students like and don't like will help you to do this effectively.

Some learners prefer working individually while others prefer working in pairs or groups. Make sure you have a **variety** of grouping formations in each lesson so that all of the learners are happy. When you are planning your lessons, think about the grouping of each stage. Don't always put the same students together in pairs or groups. Change pairs and groups when it is practical so that they all get to know each other and interact with different individuals.

It is important to think about interaction patterns as well as grouping – for example, who speaks to who in a speaking lesson. Variety is important here too. We need to make sure every learner has **opportunities** for speaking but no learner should feel uncomfortable. Different types of activities work better with different types of grouping:

Individual presentations

Each learner speaks in turn to the teacher and the rest of the class.

Pair work activities

The learners work with a partner, asking and answering, sharing information or collaborating on a task.

Small group activities

The learners work on a collaborative task, such as project work, in small groups. Each learner has a specific role.

Team games

The learners work together in one group to compete against another group.

The best way of understanding our learners is by asking the right questions. Set up simple classroom discussions or write an informal questionnaire to find out more about your learners. Use this information when you plan your lessons.



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Useful classroom phrases

For the teacher

- *Work on your own.*
- *Work with a partner.*
- *Work in groups.*
- *Take turns.*
- *Choose a name for your team.*

Activity: Your students' learning preferences

Find out more about your students' learning preferences while adding variety to grouping and interaction patterns.

- Write a few questions on the board about learning. You can write your own questions or use some of these:

When is working with a partner useful? Why?

How much homework is ideal?

What's your favourite kind of classroom activity?

- Ask the students to read the questions and think about their own opinions and answers. Ask them to make a few notes.
- Put the students into pairs to discuss and compare their ideas.
- Put the students into groups of four (two pairs) to compare their ideas.
- Ask each group to sum up their main ideas in a few points.
- Appoint a student from each group to tell the rest of the class (and the teacher) the group's main ideas.

Key points to remember

- Get to know your learners as individuals as far as possible.
- Use discussions or questionnaires to find out about your learners.
- Use a variety of grouping formations in the classroom.
- Use a variety of interaction patterns in your classroom activities.
- Help your students develop learning preferences.

Over to you

Talk with a colleague. Discuss these questions.

- What kinds of things do you need to know about your learners?
- How can you find out the information?
- How can you add more variety to your next lesson so that you keep everyone happy?