



# News Letter

Vol. XX, No. 4, September-October 2010

## Language flows and time flies

by Marina Morbiducci

We are just a few weeks away from our convention, on November 19 and 20.

It is the preparation for a whole year, for many of us organizers who thus get the sense of a well-rounded circularity. But we wish the sequence of appointments, year after year (we have indeed arrived at the 35th edition of the TESOL-Italy's conference) could give all TESOL Italy members, the same feeling of continuity and progression in time, through the shared thread of teacher development and language empowerment. Last year, with "Multiplying Voices", we aimed at giving voice to, and encouraging diverse ideas in language communication; this year, our hope is that the reflections on the fluidity and flux of language can renew our enthusiasm for change, flexibility, and adaptability to the impelling pedagogical demands mostly due to the introduction of new technological resources. The convention includes more than sixty sessions, divided into different kinds of presentations: talks, workshops, demonstrations, plenary sessions, poster sessions; there will also be a panel, at the end of the second day, where David Crystal, Roberta Facchinetti, Steven Thorne (all plenary speakers) will discuss the topic of redesigning ELT through global issues and e-technology. As usual, there will be a large exhibiting area devoted to the publishers who will display their latest textbooks and publications on English language teaching and methodology.

The moments for recreation include a Renaissance dance workshop, an unprecedented harp concert, with a young solo artist and her special instrument (you will read why "special" in the programme); a wine tasting social event with wines kindly provided by wine producer Boccadigabbia, accompanied by

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## Food for thought From TESOL publications



## Ideas from the net and the theatre

by Franca Ricci Stephenson

TESOL Italy's next national convention on Nov. 19-20, 2010, has the title "Language Flows" and four subtitles:

- Enhancing new media literacy
- Fostering learner progression
- Promoting intercultural communication
- Implementing effective language policies

All of them are important aspects of English Language Teaching (ELT) which will be fully addressed by the many presenters, who will offer a very promising two days' training to their audience. My contribution to our Newsletter readers as they might be planning to attend the convention, consists of a few thoughts stimulated by a couple of articles in "Essential Teacher" (issue 3-4 Oct. 2009)<sup>1</sup>, which touch more than one of the above aspects.

In the article "Improv Meets English Language Learning" Jon Wilkerson (2 enthusiastically promotes using a particular form of theatre (*Improv theatre*, where nothing is scripted or rehearsed) in the classroom, to create motivation and confidence, and to facilitate fluency in speaking. He starts his article asking the question: "What do a language learner and an improvisational actor have in common?" As I have always thought that teaching and learning a foreign language have contact

points with acting, I was intrigued by the title of the article, and interested in reading the perspective of the author.

Being both a language learner and an improvisational actor, he maintains that they have a lot in common and indicates the benefits of *improv* training, listing them from his own experience:

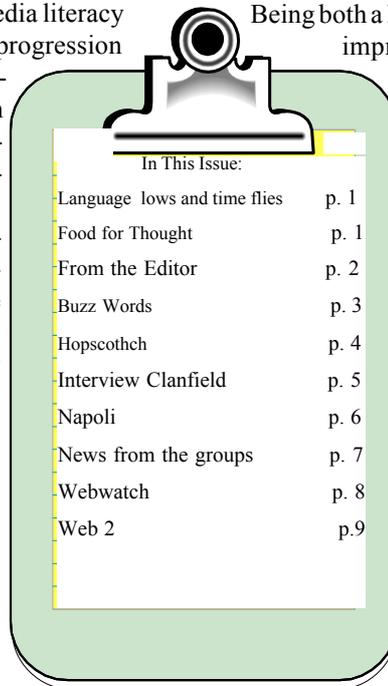
- Motivation: students become enthusiastic and involved,
- Fluency: "the use of language in so many different emotional and narrative contexts helps students acquire language in a deep and brain-friendly way,
- Social competency: students who would never approach native

speakers, seem to acquire the tools to walk up and "just start" The author mentions as well some of the principles he stresses when training language learners: commitment, listening, acceptance, support, spontaneity, fun. He also reminds teachers that it is helpful to keep in mind a few other principles before teaching *improv* to language learners, such as:

- offer unconditional positive regard,
- be the first into the breach,
- take small steps,
- explain and demonstrate.

Obviously most teachers are not professional *improv* actors, who could thoroughly add improvisation to their lessons, but all teachers, and especially

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TESOL Italy Newsletter è un bollettino informativo a circolazione interna dell'associazione TESOL-Italy. Non è in vendita, ma viene distribuito gratuitamente ai membri dell'associazione.

Supplemento a *Perspectives*, Fall 2008

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*TESOL-Italy membership dues for the year 2010: ordinary members: • 25,00; students under 30 and SSIS students: • 15,00; supportes, schools, universities, agencies: • 60,00 (including subscription to EnglishTeaching Forum).*

Subscription to English Teaching Forum (4 yearly issues): • 15,00.

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DTP Claudio Giacinti

TESOL-Italy's mission is to develop the expertise of those involved in teaching English to speakers of other languages, and to foster professional growth and active participation in language teaching. Its mission includes promoting community understanding of the role of language in a progressively changing environment while respecting individuals' language rights.

To achieve this TESOL-Italy

- encourages access to and standards for English language instruction, professional preparation, continuing education and student programs;

- links groups to enhance communication among language specialists;
- produces high quality programs, services and products
- promotes advocacy to further the profession.

### TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) Italy

TESOL-Italy, an affiliate of TESOL International, founded by Mary Finocchiaro, is a non-profit organization of teachers of English in Italy. Its purposes are to stimulate professional development, to disseminate information about research, books and other materials related to English, and strengthen instruction and research.

TESOL-Italy organizes a national convention every year .

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### From the editor

#### Our own devices

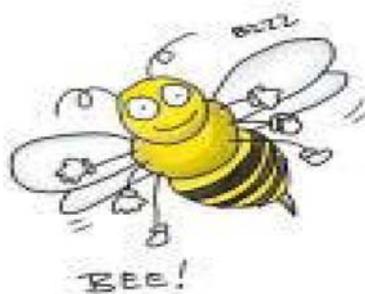
"...mostly we are left to our own devices": I can't help repeating to myself the Chorus's words in Eliot's "Murder in the Cathedral" when I think of the unanswered needs of adequate training opportunities for teachers ( just think of the more than 60% cut in the number of hours in class in the course of EFL for primary teachers which are not compensated for by an increase in on-line contacts ).

My identification with the Chorus comes to a halt when they say " and we are content if we are left alone". We teachers don't want to be left alone: we like sharing ideas and experiences and testing them out with colleagues. So we try to adopt "our own devices" and to investigate them in view of a shared professional growth.

It is in this spirit, also in order "to perceive the enjoyment, not just the constraints, of our profession"- as Morbiducci writes - that we can read the articles in this newsletter. They cover a variety of topics, but they all openly refer to, or imply, common dimensions of the teaching-learning process, i.e. the importance of a holistic view of the learner and the need to share knowledge and experience.

As regards intercultural communication, Lopriore mentions in her "Buzz word" the "awareness of one's social identity and the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts". We all know that such awareness relies, among other things, on self-awareness and self-confidence. And to create confidence, motivation and social competency while facilitating fluency in speaking, Stephenson in her "Food for thought" suggests enhancing the improvisational dimension of language by resorting to acting techniques. On a similar wavelength, Ritana Leo in "Hopscotch" describes an interesting relaxation and guided imagery technique meant to help children "to navigate real life through the limitless world of their imagination". All these are useful tips when, as Letizia Corbucci says in her "Webwatch" article, we have to rethink the management of our classes. Also Vettorel's interview to Clanfield, though more centred on the features of ELF (English as Lingua Franca), mentions the idea of "sharing and discovering new things" with our students. To finish, if we want a fun and useful way of sharing ideas, let's just read Dodge's "Web2".

Further food for thought and action are also to be found in the groups reports and more will be given by the many presenters at the TESOL Italy Convention in November in the hope that "our own devices" may become a common patrimony.



## Buzz-words

Lucilla Lopriore

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Buzz-word: *'a word or phrase that people in a particular group start to use a lot because they think it is important'*

### Buzz-word of the day:

#### **Intercultural communication**

The term 'intercultural communication' has been a buzzword for quite a long time now and in many different fields: education, business professional development, health, pedagogy etc., but language education is certainly the area where this notion has predominantly circulated.

But where does intercultural communication derive from? In order to define 'intercultural communication', the concepts of 'culture' and that of 'communication' should be briefly discussed.

If 'culture' is, according to Hofstede (1994), "the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another", Bowers (1992) defines it as an 'inherited wealth' in which we share memories, metaphors, maxims and myths. Alptekin (1993) believes that culture is not just civilization, that "our socially acquired knowledge is organized in culture-specific ways which normally frame our perception of reality such that we largely define the world through the filter of our world view". Alptekin's view is partly shared by Kramsch's (1998) idea of culture, i.e. a common system of standards for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting.

In the last twenty years 'culture' has been more and more associated with the idea of communication and it has been framed through the prefix 'inter' to highlight the bridging function of cultural communication within and across human beings and cultures. Why?

Well, let's not forget that the concept of communicative competence as developed by the sociolinguist Dell Hymes (1972) was specifically referred to the idea of sociocultural competence. In Europe though, a specific phenomenon has triggered a change in perspective introducing the notion of 'intercultural communication': the flow of migrant workers within largely monolingual and monocultural countries transformed in a very short period into multicultural contexts. In this respect, the Council of Europe (1996, 2001) highlighted the need for a shift in education in order to take into account

the integration of learners with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds as well as the development of new types of communicative competences. The Council recognized the importance of socio-cultural competence as well as the significance of general competences which include knowledge of the world, cross-cultural language awareness, but also intercultural skills. Teachers have thus become more aware of the possibilities of going beyond just giving information to learners about a country where the language in question is spoken. They have gone beyond the teaching of civilization while enhancing cross-cultural understanding. As a consequence, special attention has been devoted by language teachers to teaching language and culture in integrated ways by developing learners' 'intercultural communicative competence'.

'Intercultural communication' refers to interactions between people with significantly different cultural backgrounds, it can nowadays be considered an independent, multi- and inter-disciplinary academic field. Beneke (2000) believes that "intercultural communication in the wider sense of the word involves the use of significantly different linguistic codes and contact between people holding significantly different sets of values and models of the world."

'Intercultural competence' is to a large extent the ability to cope with one's own cultural background in interaction with others. Byram and Fleming (1998) believe that someone who has intercultural competence "has knowledge of one, or, preferably, more cultures and social identities and has the capacity to discover and relate to new people from other contexts for which they have not been prepared directly". According to Byram (1997), 'intercultural communicative competence' requires certain attitudes, knowledge and skills in addition to linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. The attitudes include curiosity and openness as well as readiness to see other cultures and the speaker's own without being judgmental.

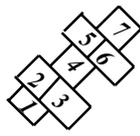
According to Fantini (2005), 'intercultural communicative competence' is "the complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself." Fantini further explores this idea when he adds that "whereas 'effective' usually reflects one's own view of one's performance in the second language culture (i.e., an 'etic' or outsider's view of the host culture); 'appropriate' relates to how one's performance is perceived by one's hosts (i.e., an 'emic' or insider's view)".

Complex, but engaging, the notion of intercultural communication challenges all subject teachers to develop as well as assess their learners' competence.

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## HOPSCOTCH

### Resources for teachers

This section addresses issues that are of interest for teaching English to young learners

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### *Traumreisen, a German experience.*

by Ritana Leo

Maneuvering through today's busy world can be a stressful experience for adults and even more so for children. Children succeed in finding safety nets for their minds thanks to their creative psyche. Their magical thinking protects them and offers alternative paths to navigate real life through the limitless world of their "imagination." But many children, particularly those who are hyperactive, impulsive or identified as ADD/ADHD, (*Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder/Attention Deficit Disorder*), are often in a state of stress at school.

When their natural anti-pressure mechanisms fail them, teachers can help using relaxation techniques and guided imagery; in this way they can gain the most from learning techniques that relax their minds and bodies, help recognize feelings, and release inner tension. These strategies have been studied all over the world for years and particularly in Germany, where they are known as "Traumreisen." Guided imagery therapy is a cognitive-behavioral technique in which a child or adult is guided through imagining a relaxing scene or pleasant experience<sub>1</sub>. It can empower children with a feeling of peace and self-control, through deep breathing and progressive relaxation. Numerous clinical observations suggest that an individual visualizing an imagined scene reacts as though it were actually occurring; therefore, "induced" images can have a profound effect on behavior<sub>2</sub>. The usefulness of guided imagery techniques has been shown to help individuals learn/modify behaviors like:

- relaxing
- changing/controlling negative emotions in response to particular situations, events, or beliefs
- preparing for changes in the future
- eliminating/reducing undesirable behaviors
- managing pain
- coping with difficulties
- learning new/desirable behaviors
- relieving shame/guilt linked to past behaviors.

Teachers won't need special equipment: everyone can meditate anywhere, anytime. Children will come to think of meditation as a special, quiet time to be with themselves and listen to their own feelings. Before any journey, however, it's important to prepare. Tell children what they are going to do. Introduce the image of a trip, a picnic, as if they were watching a wonderful movie in their mind. Create a special place for them with things that remind them of their good feelings and keep distractions like television, stereos or computers to a minimum.

If needed, external sounds can be integrated into the stories you create. CDs with sounds like gentle rainfall, the waves of the ocean, or the forest are also useful depending on the kind of "reise" or imaginary journey you want to create. These sounds help children relax and produce the appropriate pictures in their minds. They can sit in any position, even lay down, or do whatever makes them feel comfortable. Closing their eyes is not necessary but it does make visualizations work better. Let them know you're going to use the word "you" and can speak to each of them personally. Also explain that they can open their eyes if they feel uneasy and close them when they're ready.

Invite children to breath in and out peacefully, and clear their mind of all their thoughts. Ask them to think of a particularly happy time like a birthday party, or last Christmas Eve, and encourage them to concentrate on that one event. Another interesting approach to relaxation is to ask children to choose a color. They can breathe that color in and around the whole body as the teacher guides the child to visualize it flowing through the eyes, down the throat, into the neck and chest, down to the stomach, until s/he is completely filled with all of the soothing warmth of the yellow, for example. It can be extremely powerful using the sun, imagining a warm, luminous ball and pulling it to the belly, until the body is radiant.

After this "grounding phase," invite them to visualize other relaxing pictures - a shell from the beach, a leaf from the forest, or a picture of their family - to start a simple peaceful story, where children actively walk, roll, smell, recalling past enjoyable experiences.

These are a variety of techniques that have demonstrated effective in helping us to slow down and improve awareness. These powerful tools have been shown to help people focus, facilitate healing, lessen anxiety, and enhance the mind/body experience. These are simple but effective ways to foster overall feelings of well being in the classroom.<sub>3</sub>

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# Global users of English

An interview with Lindsay Clandfield <sup>1</sup>

by Paola Vettorel and Sara Corrizzato

University of Verona

Dolo -VE, 22/2/2010

*Q You are the author of numerous ELT materials and articles, and of an innovative textbook. What are the reasons for moving away from a traditional native-speaker centredness and giving attention to different accents and to different 'global' cultures rather than Anglophone countries only?*

L. The point that English is not the domain of the English or Anglo cultures has been made by authors such as Jenkins, but also Thornbury or Widowson – which have influenced me, also in looking critically at values in textbooks, as well as some more critical writers like Said with Culture and Imperialism and Pennycook. Also my experience in international ELT contexts has been very important: living in a country which is not a native English speaking one gives you another perspective – if, as an author, you live for instance in England it's harder for you to get outside of your own culture because you are living in it all the time - when I go to England I feel as an outsider looking in, and that's how all the students feel.

*Q. Textbooks have been often criticized as the representations of culture are heavily focused on Anglophone societies, and centred on a western, white-middle class perspective. You believe that diverse, often non-conventional perspectives and cultural representations, up-to-date and challenging topics and 'real-world' issues may well be(come) part of learners/users in ELF interactions.*

L. Probably my own background, as someone who enjoys to travel and come into contact with other cultures, plays a part. The general view is that there are things that could never be discussed in coursebooks: talking about death for example can in some ways be a very sensitive issue, and therefore you have to be quite sensible. However, on topics as homelessness, if you simply ask "What do you think of homelessness?" everyone is going to say the same thing: "Oh, isn't it terrible". But if you choose a specific story, designed to raise awareness of homelessness around the world,

then that's something that people can talk about. But it has to be something real, with sources that can be traced.

I believe that writers are shaped by the times they're living in, and I'm living in a time of financial crisis, in a time when there's been wars, when the people are very aware of the environment and critically thinking about what they're doing.

*Q. What about World Englishes and ELF?*

L. In my course for instance, the idea of Kachru's three Circles of English, with questions about language use, language spread and variety opens the door for further reflection and discussion. Then there are issues of language death, of super powerful languages and what that means for weaker languages, of language and identity - you also have a lot of intercultural potential here.

ELF is still a much debated issue, and resistance to ELF may come not from native speakers but from non-native English teachers. For example in our feedback some teachers said: "I don't want my students to hear this English which is not perfect English", so we decided to have the Global Voices as an extra-feature, as an opportunity for teachers and students to look at another part of English that is developing.

Above all, when exposed to this kind of language, students are only to understand what these other people are saying and teachers shouldn't find or correct mistakes. I think it's a first step: we provide a wealth of material on how spoken English develops, and it is an area that teachers can further develop if they wish.

As for the Lingua Franca core, I think some of its features are relevant for EIL. I believe the focus should be more on intonation and on consonant sounds, with less of the traditional "ship or sheep" type of activities. I do think that Jenkins' work is a lot about being more tolerant and going for international intelligibility than teachers telling students what is right or wrong. As for lexicogrammar, we were of course aware of the noticeable work the VOICE group is car-

rying out; however, I don't think teachers around the world are ready for that: the problem is that many really 'draw the line' on some of the VOICE features,.

*Q. Multimedia resources also represent a significant element, with optional resources to be shared by teachers in a "glocalized" frame of mind.*

L. For instance one of the Global website's purposes is to provide extra-activities, but you can also use it as a forum where readers can communicate with the author, where we can get an insight onto teaching in other countries, where teachers can connect on the global level with other teachers. As for the blogs, I would like them to evolve as little communities of their own - there is a lot of language going on there, with people interacting and being interested in what is happening.

*Q How can we move forward?*

L.: We must break with a lot of the superficial celebrity type of content and provide more cultured literary type of content, taking more of a global than just a British canvas. What I would like as a teacher is to think that after a lesson there will be something that students can go back and say: "I have learned something today". I think that teachers have a great feeling when they think "I have taught you something today" or "We have learned something together today, something new, or we've discussed something that's suddenly more serious, or more cultural", and not just new words, new phrases, new expressions or grammar. I think that part of the educator's job is not just finding out what the students like and talk about that. It is showing them other interesting beautiful things in the world. That's why we have become educators, teachers: to share and discover new things, not to tell you what you already know but to tell you things you don't know.

1) Lindsay Clandfield is an English teacher and a teacher educator. He has taught in Mexico and Spain and has been a teacher trainer in more than 20 countries. He is the author of numerous ELT materials and articles. His latest production is Global, 2009, MacMillan.

## *Nuove prospettive per le lingue e le letterature*

by Emilia Di Martino

It is well-known that September is probably the best month to be in Naples: temperatures are at their most pleasant, streets are no longer as crowded as in the Summer months, and the sea and the sun are still enjoyable, probably even more so than in July or August.

Yet, that did not prevent about 50 students and teachers from attending the seminar *Nuove prospettive per le lingue e le letterature* on the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September. The event was hosted by the Suor Orsola Benincasa University of Naples which is in the Santa Caterina da Siena building located in the heart of old Naples where one may happen to find students at work at the restoration of the exquisite wall frescoes.

“Suor Orsola” is an institution with a long tradition of teacher education, and given its mission, it’s an ideal site for initiatives involving pre- and in-service training. It is precisely to revive this tradition that Bruna Di Sabato, full professor of Didattica delle Lingue Moderne and Emilia Di Martino, researcher of Lingua e Traduzione Inglese, organized the seminar. Daniela Cuccurullo (teacher of English, University contract professor in Naples, teacher trainer, and TESOL-Italy’s group coordinator in Naples), Liliana Longobardi (an enthusiastic teacher of Italian and Latin) with Emilia Di Martino, and Paola Paumgardhen (researcher of German literature at UNISOB) were the speakers, with two 2½-hour presentations/workshops each day.

In this productive atmosphere where students who are preparing to be teachers and in-service teachers mingled spontaneously, Bruna Di Sabato opened the seminar, and welcomed the participants on behalf of the Suor Orsola Rector, prof. Francesco De Sanctis, of the Head of Faculty, prof. Emma Giammattei and of the Head of the Degree Course in *Lingue*, Giovannella Calabrò.

Paola Paumgardhen gave a fascinating talk on “Leggere la letteratura”/“Reading literature”, where she mentioned, amongst other things, how Franz Kafka’s experience of reading was characterized, throughout his life, by the feeling he lacked the skills necessary to fully understand what he read. Probably traumatized by too rigorous a teacher, he used to confess this in his letters and it was not until later in life that he found out how close his view of reading was to the ancient Talmudist’s. Texts become understood through progressive reading; this also means they self-re-generate. Actually, this also implies that reading is an activity we can never really complete and finish. Paola Paumgardhen also tried to address the question of “What to read”, once again by making reference to Kafka’s experience as a reader. Kafka read stories, the adventures of Sherlock Holmes, travel books, and later Goethe, Thomas Mann, Herman Hesse, Dickens, Flaubert, Kierkegaard, Dostoevskij, his choice being for books which “shook” him “like the worst of accidents, like the death of beloved people”. Lastly, Paumgardhen touched on the theme of cultural icons, third-hand de-contextualized fragments of the classics which pop up in the most unexpected domains and environments and in the most unprecedented ways, *Il grande fratello* being but the most famous example.

Next, Liliana Longobardi and Emilia Di Martino spoke on the fundamental steps which have characterized the birth and the development of CLIL methodology in Europe from the 90s up until the present day. The speakers defined the aspects and factors which brought the Italian Minister of Education and her staff to identify CLIL as a useful approach to language teaching and actually as one of the most important aspects of the present school reform. On the 21<sup>st</sup> September, they gave a practical follow-up to this talk which was designed as an inductive reflection workshop based on their own previous experiences and *final products* (which were displayed and commented on for participants to draw ideas). This offered food for thought for either the creation of future teaching paths or the adaptation of materials to use in a CLIL lesson.

The seminar was closed by the talk “New Multimedia Horizons in the English Classroom”, held by Daniela Cuccurullo - on behalf of the TESOL-Italy Naples group - which explored the didactic potential of technology-based teaching and learning for ESL teachers and students. New ways of using ICT in the classroom (e.g. blogs, the wiki, social tagging, mind mapping, podcasting, Second Life and Moodle) were analyzed to offer useful hints on how the Web 2.0 digital tools, social networks and e-learning experiences can enhance and facilitate creativity, collaboration and sharing between users. They certainly represent the starting point for a new methodology.

After that talk, Bruna Di Sabato pulled the threads together, also inviting the participants to join in, which they did very willingly. The seminar was supposed to finish at 16.30, but at 17.00 the discussion was still going on and all the participants agreed that this should only be the first of similar future initiatives at Suor Orsola.

## NEWS FROM THE GROUPS

### Local Groups Activities

Here is a list of the activities planned by different groups which have been presented to the MIUR for the quadrimestre September-December 2010.

Iniziative di formazione organizzate dai soggetti accreditati e riconosciuti come qualificati DM177/00 Direttiva 90/03

#### • Gruppo Veneto

*a) Nuove Tecnologie per la Didattica*  
dal 02-al 07/09/2010.

Incontri in collaborazione a IC Gramsci (Campalto VE). Sono previsti 4 incontri di formazione da 2 ore e 30 min. ciascuno sulle nuove tecnologie per la didattica. Argomenti: l'ambiente di apprendimento Moodle, alcuni programmi-autore (es. Hot Potatoes), applicazioni di Google e costruzione di Web Quest. Formatore: Davide Menga. INuove Tecnologie per la Didattica Nuove Tecnologie per la Didattica IC Gramsci IC Gramsci

*b) English as a Lingua Franca*

21/09/10 I.C. Gramsci Campalto (VE); 27/09/10 Scuola Media U. Foscolo Sedico (BL)

Un incontro sugli sviluppi della ricerca nell'ambito dell'English as a Lingua Franca e delle possibili ripercussioni nell'insegnamento. Relatore: dott.ssa Paola Vettorel, Università di Verona, coordinatrice TESOL-Italy Local Group Venice.

*c) Certificazioni per insegnanti – CLIL*

05/11/10

Un incontro sulle certificazioni per insegnanti in ambito CLIL; relatore: Geraldine Ludbrook, Università di Venezia. Presso IC Gramsci, Campalto (VE)

#### • Gruppo di Palermo

*a) The Potential of the Web in teaching/learning English*

24-09-10

Enrico Grazzi, ricercatore presso l'Università Roma Tre, terrà un seminario sull'utilizzo del Web nell'insegnamento della lingua inglese in cui si metteranno in evidenza le potenzialità pedagogiche dell'interattività on-line. Palermo, London School, International House.

*b) Poeti traducono poeti*

21-22/09/10

L'evento si terrà presso la Facoltà di Lettere dell'Università di Palermo e vedrà la partecipazione di poeti britannici che rivolgono la loro attenzione alla traduzione di testi di altri poeti inglesi contemporanei (a cura della Prof.ssa Eleonora Chiavetta).

*c) Cultural Stereotypes in English Language Teaching*

10/12/10

La prof.ssa Eleonora Chiavetta, professore associato di Lingua e Traduzione Inglese presso la facoltà di Lettere dell'Università di Palermo, terrà un seminario sul ruolo degli stereotipi culturali nell'insegnamento della lingua e della cultura inglese. Palermo, Istituto Magistrale 'G.A. De Cosmi'

#### • Gruppo di L'Aquila

*Corso introduttivo teorico e pratico finalizzato all'utilizzo della LIM*

20-30/10/10

Il corso sarà mirato all'acquisizione delle tecniche necessarie all'utilizzo della lavagna interattiva con momenti di applicazione pratica di quanto presentato a livello teorico. Il corso sarà organizzato in 5 incontri di 2 ore ciascuno presso CRT L'Aquila



## Web Watch

by Letizia Corbucci

### *BACK TO SCHOOL, THE SAME OLD CHALLENGE*

The school year has just begun and all we teachers have to re-think the management of our classes. The group of students before us is made up by a variety of individuals, each different from the other, who carry with them their own experiences, behaviours, beliefs and values. Therefore, all our students need to be approached with a new tailor-made intervention. Yet, the teacher in class is, as usual, just one and has to face many different professional situations and to adjust to all the circumstances like a chameleon.

The classes that have just been formed have the same old features: a very large number of students, different levels and mixed abilities, the presence of disadvantaged students and a high percentage of foreigners. For these reasons, the most difficult challenge for a teacher at the beginning of the school year is to outline a syllabus which is both individualized, and, at the same time, suitable for the entire group of students. When the teacher is in the classroom, though, part of the challenge lies in dealing with practical problems such as: discipline, getting and keeping students' attention, encouraging independent learning and avoid teachers' burn-out.

⇒ Surf the net!

<http://www.theteachersguide.com/ClassManagement.htm> .The Teacher's Guide Classroom Management Page. Ideas, strategies and tools for better behaviour management in your classroom.

<http://www.adprima.com/managing.ht> A practical guide and set of principles for classroom management and management of student conduct.

One of the most interesting challenges in our classes is how to deal with discipline on one hand and mixed abilities classes on the other. By 'mixed abilities' we do not mean only students unable to perform as a consequence of physical or mental unfitness, but a much wider range of students, who show disadvantage and diversity. One of the most difficult, and therefore challenging, part of our job is to identify the difficulties of our students and change them into a positive resource for both students and teachers.

⇒ Surf the net!

<http://www.ajpe.org/legacy/pdfs/aj6003287.pdf> Identifying and Solving Common Problems of Classroom Teaching. Case studies.

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id472\\_managing\\_classroom\\_difficulties.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/York/documents/resources/resourcedatabase/id472_managing_classroom_difficulties.pdf). An article about managing classroom difficulties.

Observation and planning are at the core of any educational project and are, therefore, the first prerequisite for any teaching. Teachers often spend time worrying about "what to do" in class rather than analyzing the students and understanding what they would be stimulated by. It is most important to remember that differences in the class always produce a positive learning environment, because teaching in this situation is more creative and flexible and provides advantages to both teachers and learners. This is the reason why there should be more balance between 'theory' and 'what happens inside the classroom' in terms of possibilities and potential, in order to facilitate the development of the "project for life" of all our students.

As for this new school year, let's have a completely fresh start! Let's start planning not only by 'copying and pasting' what we have already devised for our past students. Let's try to observe what our new students are stimulated by and define what the difficulties in our classrooms are in order to remove as many learning obstacles as possible. If we have different level students, then let's create different tasks, not different lessons..

⇒ Surf the net!

<http://www.classroomtoolkit.com/> Classroom planning toolkits and resources that produce paybacks in time saved, stress-relief and successful learning outcomes.

<http://www.teachervision.fen.com/classroom-management/resource/5776.html> The toughest challenges become easier when you have the right resources. Find your best classroom management resources, from room set-up advice to behaviour

Let's remember these five basic principles:

- Make the task easy: this doesn't always mean that you have to make it simpler. You can adapt it to your students by asking them to develop it through different steps. All students should be able to complete each task in order to obtain a sense of accomplishment and success.
- Produce high levels of activation: this means focusing attention not only on the aim of the activity but also on the process. This principle helps to keep anxiety and expectation low.
- Use a two way communication: teacher and students should gradually change the way to communicate. Students should be free to interact with teachers, without any form of evaluation and judgment.

## *WEB2- Everyone can participate*

by Valentina Dodge

### **Play with the writing on the wall – online sticky noticeboards**

Our classroom and Facebook aren't the only walls learners can gaze at. There are now plenty of online noticeboards which can be used with learners to post texts or messages, upload photos, and share videos, limitless notes or comments.

Wallwisher, PinDax or Spazee are three of a kind. They are online multimedia noticeboard tools which are being used by educators as an easy, fun and useful way of extending writing and the sharing of ideas. As with all tools, it's important to introduce learners to them in an engaging way that directly relates to the language work already being carried out. If you are practicing question formation, you can start a wall and add a sticky note with a link to a video (say a film trailer) and then post some other notes with questions about the film for learners to think about and answer. Or you can post an answer and prompt learners to write the question. (e.g. No, I didn't!) If your learners need to become familiar with new words and concepts, you can use the wall to provide images, key vocabulary and definitions or sample sentences. The notes on the wall can be dragged about, so it's easy to re-organise a layout or match them up differently, adding a kinesthetic touch to the learning progress. Or walls can be used as a portfolio of learning that can be shared with parents or another class. Immediately accessible, they provide a way of showing ongoing language work and creating something unique in front of our very eyes.

Walls can be fun for short quick contributions from the whole class when brainstorming a subject. They can also be very useful for much wider projects where each learner can have a personal wall, developed over several weeks or months. They facilitate linking to other web resources (youtube videos, songs, quotations) and revising important language items; they motivate learners to engage with words, sounds or images and express their opinions. What more can a teacher ask for when trying to spice up a lesson?

#### **How to get started**

Most of these tools do not require user registration, so simply click on "build a wall", give it a name and share the web address, e.g. your blog, wiki, virtual learning environment or blackboard (yes!) it's simply a question of learners double clicking on any area on the wall, writing their thoughts and reading those of their classmates. This can be done together if computers are available in class (remember to ask learners to refresh the wall once they've added their contribution to what their classmates have written) or asynchronously before or after class from personal computers or laptops. Don't forget to select access, allowing everyone to view, otherwise only you will be able to see the wall!

Here are some ideas that teachers can try out with learners:

**Gathering feedback** - Walls are a particularly useful way of collecting opinions from learners and getting them to add their comments after reading, listening, watching or attending an event. These virtual tools can be used for fast question and answers sessions or for reviewing the characters in a play or book you are reading together. Why not start with a "What do you think of a ..."-type activity and see how learners respond. It's interesting to learn their opinions on the language classes or the teachers themselves. Especially if the latter start using sticky notes to provide feedback on written work and error-analysis exercises. Use a wall to praise too!

#### **Expanding themes**

Are you working on a particular topic? Use the wall to develop it further. For lower levels, this could be around a simple heading e.g. food or clothes. For the more advanced, it could be a fun way to share cross-cultural or environmental issues.

Our face to face classrooms are the only place where discussions can develop. Online noticeboards are great for extending classroom chatter productively. They offer quieter learners room to express themselves even at beginner level (for example with a "like/don't like" theme).

**Sharing and more sharing** - there's no limit to what can be shared on these walls. Teachers can post links that learners can use for project works or access for extra independent study. Learners can post wishlists, to-do lists, course orientation and syllabus items, city reviews or essay plans. This sharing activity can be very fruitful!

#### **Listen to this**

Online noticeboards and walls are now fully compatible with multimedia files so you or learners can add voice, upload or link to videos and images to make the writing on the wall come alive and further support language learning. You can start by posting an image and getting learners to describe it in words or ask learners to share their suggestions. Some other interesting ways of using walls:

- for class profiles - get each learner to upload a photo of themselves with a brief description and one unusual thing about their life so far.

(continued on p.11)

## Language flows

by Marina Morbiducci

(continued from p.5)

film clips- it'll be, in fact, La Dolce Vite (where "Vite" is not a typo), an exhibition of watercolours inspired by hawthorn and other natural elements in Yorkshire, and instances of an innovative methodology for self-concentration and relaxation. We like the idea of fusing the academic programme with other moments of enjoyment through the arts; last year Janet Zadina transmitted to us the unforgettable message that we are the ones to search and conquer the inner space of our students' minds; , a terrific (terrible? tremendous? responsibility; we believe we can better achieve that goal through a holistic and personal fulfilment pathway. We think that conceiving language as a flux, we should immerse our pedagogical action into a sort of fluidity ??frame (if the contrast is allowed), through which we can perceive the enjoyment, not just the constraints, of our profession. Our path is always uphill, but we want to collect the nerve for climbing it with new wings; language flows, and language flies!

### To contributors

Please send your contributions in Times new Roman 12 to

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The deadline for submitting articles for the 2010 November-December issue is November 30th



## Food for thought

by Franca Ricci Stephenson

(continued from p.1)

language teachers, are actors to a certain extent; I'm suggesting to consider Jon Wilkerson's perspective about English language teaching as a help to bring to the surface the somewhat hidden dimension of learning and teaching a foreign language: its improvisational dimension. In Wikipedia we read that "*Improvisation is the practice of acting, singing, talking and reacting, of making and creating, in the moment and in response to the stimulus of one's immediate environment and inner feelings. This can result in the invention of new thought patterns, new practices, new structures or symbols, and/or new ways to act.*" As for the possible stimuli for improvisation, I dare say that EFL teachers have long since been examples of creativity; they have used stories from literature and life in different ways, to add variety to their lessons, so I would only suggest here to find new and definitely unprecedented ideas from a site called "*Today's Front Pages*":

[www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages](http://www.newseum.org/todaysfrontpages). The site is mentioned in another short article I found in the same issue of "Essential Teacher", in the Section "*References & Resources*", by Vander Viana<sup>3</sup> and Luciana do Amaral Teixeira<sup>4</sup>. It provides daily access to the front pages of newspapers from all over the globe, in all languages, with their pictures and colors and graphic choices, which make them quite real and stimulating. They can be saved and printed and used in many different ways, and can represent excellent sources for improvisation in the classroom. By the way, if a teacher plans to use certain front pages in future lessons, s/he should save them in the computer, as older publications are not available on the site. Give it a try, I am sure you will enjoy it at least as much as I have. Let's all meet at our national convention in November, to get further ideas and enjoy them together.

- 1) This is the final issue of "Essential Teacher", one of TESOL publications.
- 2) Adjunct professor at Colorado Heights University, in Denver, Colorado, and director of International Funny Business
- 3) Postgraduate student at the Queen's University Belfast, in Northern Ireland.
- 4) Assistant professor at Universidade Estácio de Sa, in Brazil.

## Buzz-words

by Lucilla Lopriore

(continued from p.3)

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## HOPSCOTCH

by Ritana Leo

(continued from p.4)

1) Enciclopedia of mental disorders, Advameg 2007-2009

2) Mullin, Rian E., PhD. *The New Handbook of Cognitive Therapy Techniques*. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2000

3) Birgit Widmann, Rebay von Ehrenwiesen, NLP-Lehrtrainerin, Weßling Daniel Wilk, Ein Käfer schaukelt auf einem Blatt Entspannungs- und Wohlfühlgeschichten für Kinder jeden Alters, Carl-Auer, Heidelberg 2006  
Cornelia Renner, Stark fürs Leben – geistiges Karate für Kinder, Klett-Cotta, 2005

Agnes Kaiser Rekkas, Wie von Zauberhand ...-CD, Carl Auer, Heidelberg

Agnes Kaiser Rekkas, Klinische Hypnose und Hypnotherapie Praxisbezogenes Lehrbuch für die Ausbildung, Carl-Auer, Heidelberg 2005

## WEB2

by Valentina Dodge

(continued from p.9)

- for collaborative scrapbooks – prior to a school trip or in relation to a wider interest they have, ask learners to research their hobby and share snippets they find

- for grammar - start a sentence and see how learners finish it. Get them to vote on the best finale!

- for exam practice – get learners to find, share and describe signs or picture descriptions for oral tests

- with colleagues – you can post virtual birthday greetings, summer holiday news, staffroom suggestions, farewells or conference information or questions prior or as a follow-up to presentations.

They may not be hand-written, but these electronic sticky notices, web noticeboards and digital note-keeping tools - now only a click away and freely available - brighten up common homework tasks and allow new and old forms of communication to thrive.

### Resources

Wallwisher:

<http://www.wallwisher.com>

Pindax: <http://www.pindax.com/>

Spazee: <http://www.spaaaze.com/>

Online articles on using electronic noticeboards:

Chris7:

<http://infinityandbeyondblog.blogspot.com/2010/04/pindaxonlinenoticeboardalternative.html>

Nik Peachey:

<http://nikpeachey.blogspot.com/2009/04/using-online-sticky-noticeboards.html>

Sean Banville

<http://seanbanville.com/tag/wallwisher/>

## WebWatch

by Letizia Corbucci

(continued from p.8)

- Alternate exercise and rest to hold attention and avoid short attention span.

- Be flexible: avoid long, monothematic, rigid framed activities. Vary methods and contents.

Here is a ready to go tip for teachers. Musical timekeeping: “the next time you set a quiet activity (a grammar exercise or a short writing activity) that requires a time limit, tell the students they should complete the activity before a song finishes. If the students know the song, they will automatically hear when it is coming to an end and will be finishing off. You can choose different songs with different rhythms depending on the activity. This will help late finishers to follow the other students in the classroom and it will engage early finishers in another task, listening to music instead of start talking disturbing the others!” (Prodromou) Good luck!!!

⇒ Surf the net!

<http://www.teachersfirst.com/tenpoints.shtml> Ten tips to help student teachers become successful in the classroom. . Written by a veteran teacher and student teacher mentor.  
[http://www.educationoasis.com/resources/Articles/time\\_saving\\_tips.htm](http://www.educationoasis.com/resources/Articles/time_saving_tips.htm) Time Saving Tips for Teachers.

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## LANGUAGE FLOWS

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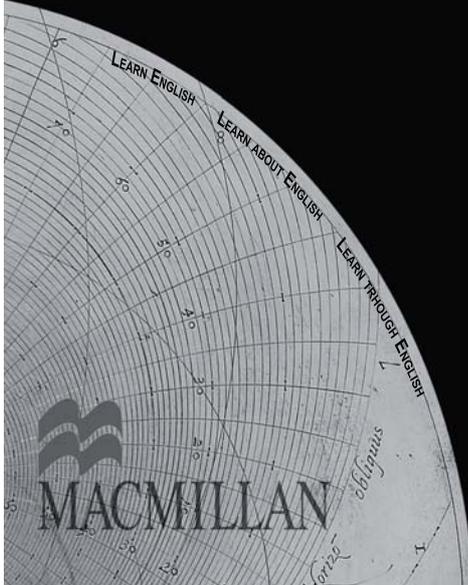
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# global

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Don't miss Jonathan Coxall's talk on Global, "Teaching Generation Y" at TESOL, Rome on 19/20th November.



## Global eWorkbook

The Global eWorkbook represents an evolution in self-study materials for students. Within a rich multimedia environment it provides a wealth of resources for the learner, enabling them to continue their studies and their own pace, and in their own time.



## Tesol Italy Groups

Si raccomanda a tutti i colleghi impegnati o che intendono impegnarsi nella costituzione di un gruppo provinciale TESOL di inviare all'Executive Committee la seguente documentazione:

1. Elenco nominativo degli iscritti (minimo cinque), con allegata fotocopia della ricevuta del relativo versamento sul c/c postale n. 15774003 intestato ad Associazione TESOL-Italy, Via Boncompagni 2, 00187 ROMA.

2. Verbale dell'assemblea costitutiva del gruppo da cui risultino l'elezione e il nome di un Coordinatore.

3. Programma delle attività che il gruppo intende svolgere nel corso dell'anno.

4. L'Executive Committee, preso atto della documentazione prodotta dal gruppo, si riunisce per deliberarne il riconoscimento ed invia successivamente il testo della delibera al Coordinatore.

Il Coordinatore del gruppo TESOL-Italy rappresenta a tutti gli effetti l'Associazione nell'ambito della provincia in cui il gruppo svolge la sua attività ed è tenuto a presentare una relazione annuale in sede di National Committee. I membri del Consiglio di Presidenza e la Segreteria di TESOL-Italy sono a disposizione per qualsiasi eventuale richiesta di ulteriori informazioni.

Le colleghe incaricate dall'Executive Committee del coordinamento nazionale dei gruppi sono Maria Luisa Cerbone e-mail: [marialuisacerbone@katamail.com](mailto:marialuisacerbone@katamail.com) e Simonetta Romano [simonetta\\_romano@infinito.it](mailto:simonetta_romano@infinito.it)

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