



Newsletter

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From the President

Maria Grazia Maglione

Dear TESOLers,

The new year opens with a new challenge and new opportunity for our members.

TESOL Italy is pleased to inform you that we have been selected for the PRELIM2 (Partnered Remote Language Improvement) project, a joint initiative from British Council, IATEFL and English UK. We will be working in partnership with Lewis School of English in the UK to raise teachers' confidence in the English language classroom.

The project is addressed above all to teachers with lower language level who want to improve their communications skills and feel more at ease / more comfortable when speaking English in the classroom with their students. It is a great opportunity of professional development for those teachers who feel rusty and out of practice and would like to refresh their English language skills.

In order to meet the 23 participants' different educational needs and expectations, together with Lewis School of English we have worked to design a tailored course focused predominantly on language development. The course includes eight modules, each one focusing on a different language area and is delivered in both asynchronous individual tasks and live and collaborative sessions. In this way the participants have the opportunity to learn useful classroom language they can use straight away with their students, and throughout the course they can also enjoy a cultural exchange

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Neuroscience and Foreign Language Teaching

by Sonia Balsamo

Neuroscience is by far the most exciting branch of science because the brain is the most fascinating object in the universe. Every human brain is different - the brain makes each human unique and defines who he or she is.

(Stanley Ben Prusiner)

What part of the brain is involved in language learning? How does the brain learn a language? Understanding how the human brain works still represents a vast universe that can lead the most experienced traveler to get lost in its intricate labyrinths. In recent years, studies on the connection between neuroscience and foreign language teaching and learning have been spreading more and more. Neuroscience refers to the biological study of the nervous system. In particular, the term is linked to the analysis of the human central nervous system, which is made up of the brain and spinal cord, and the peripheral nervous system, which includes all the nerves and ganglia existing outside of those

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two structures, and their connections to human health and behavior. Different areas of neuroscience examine components of the development, anatomy, biology, pharmacology, functions and processes of the nervous system. Some branches of this multidisciplinary field are: 1) Behavioral neuroscience studies the interconnection between neural systems and processes and behavior. 2) Clinical neuroscience analyzes the nervous system, including neurology, neurosurgery, psychiatry, psychology, audiology and speech pathology. 3) Cognitive neuroscience investigates the mechanisms related to mental processes. 4) Computational neuroscience involves both the study of information processing within the nervous system and the application of

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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 .

Members receive TESOL Italy Newsletter and Perspectives, the academic journal of the association.

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From the editor

“Make a way for the teens”

The present issue of the newsletter mainly aims at giving a voice to teens as protagonists of a new rebirth, after the forced closure because of the COVID-19 emergency. Five students from Liceo linguistico Teresa Gullace, Rome, focus their attention on the 10th Sustainable Development Goal of the Agenda 2030, giving a multi-perspective contribution to the topic. A creative way to carry out a best practice to promote citizenship competences in the English classroom.

On the other hand, also adults, as TESOL members, become the target beneficiaries of a new and valuable initiative, jointly offered by IATEFL, British Council and English UK, that reinforces TESOL Italy's mission 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.

Last, but not least, the other 'NL'S contributors' that open up to new ideas with a focus on Coding as a practical way to solve complex problems or on the relationship between Neuroscience and FLT to highlight how language works in our brain.

Enjoy your reading!

*TESOL Italy is a grass roots association that takes great pride in publishing contributions from teachers and professional from all sectors of the ELT community who would like to share their ideas and experiences of best practice. The contributions in this newsletter are published on an “as is” basis and TESOL Italy is not responsible for errors or omissions.

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

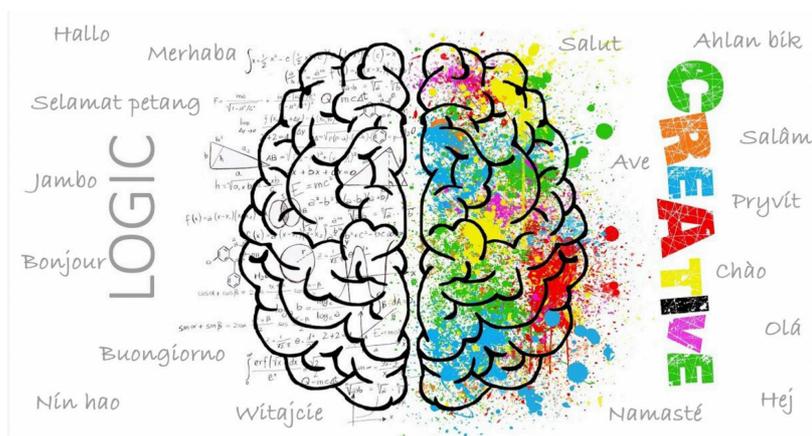
- encourages access to and standards for English language instruction, professional preparation, continuing education and student programs;
- links groups to enhance communication among language specialists;
- produces high quality programs, services and products
- promotes advocacy to further the profession.

continues from p. 1 Neuroscience and Foreign Language Teaching

computer-generated models and systems to examine the nervous system. 5) Neural engineering is the use of engineering techniques to repair or enhance parts of the nervous system.

In the language field, neuroscience discoveries are useful in order to understand how language works in our brain. Cognitive scientists employ a variety of research methods to study languages acquisition, including EEG, PET, and fMRI, a technique which measures blood flow in various parts of the brain. These procedures analyze the acquisition and learning of language in specific regions and circuits of the brain and to create computer models of these processes for further study. For many years, it was believed that the left hemisphere of the brain was the only responsible for language learning. In recent years, the important role played by the right hemisphere has also been studied. The right hemisphere is stimulated when we identify the principal sounds or phonological elements connected with a language, which is fundamental, especially in the early stages of language learning. Important areas of the left hemisphere involve the Broca's area, in the left frontal lobe, and Wernicke's area in the left temporal lobe. Broca's area manages the production and articulation of speech; Wernicke's area is linked to language development and comprehension. Grammar and comprehension take place in the left temporal lobe, while auditory processing and vocabulary occur in the temporoparietal lobe. The hippocampus and occipital lobes also help memory and vision in the context of language learning. Bringing neuroscience to a didactic perspective, interesting studies have underlined how this scientific field can contribute to simplify the teaching and learning of a foreign language. The investigations linking neuroscience to education are very recent and some authors used the term 'neuroeducation' to classify this field of study. According to some researchers, the less developed are the brain structures, the easier is for an individual to acquire a second or foreign language. Teachers should consider the age of learners before planning activities. Equally essential, it is to analyze their personality. It is also important to teach the foreign language in a practical way. For instance, an idea could be to apply role play activities or to use exercises, in which students can get in touch with the phonological aspects of the language, interact with the spoken language, such as listening activities. Other studies have emphasized that cognition, perception and emotion are closely connected in the learning process. In stressful situations, the levels of dopamine decrease, making the functioning of neurotransmitter systems difficult. Neuroscience studies have indicated that emotions influence the learning process in a very important way.

In conclusion neuroscience can support teaching methodologies in order to improve foreign language learning. However, it is crucial to add that neuroscience has many different limitations on the educational field. There is a lot of confusion about neuroscience discoveries and more research on this area of study is needed. In applying neuroscience to methodologies in the classroom it is important to be cautious and analyze the results of the learning process, based on the students' skills in the use of L2.





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From the President

with the Lewis School tutors in the UK!

With many teachers recently being required to transition to online teaching as a result of the pandemic, a secondary aim of the course is to introduce the course participants to strategies and online tools that would help them to do this more confidently. In terms of the chosen platforms for delivery, Google Classrooms is being used for the asynchronous tasks, Zoom for the live sessions and WhatsApp for more informal communication.

The PRELIM 2 project has been an effective and successful experience for both the participants and the organizers' partnership as we can infer by the comments of Abby Croucher, Academic Manager & Teacher Trainer at Lewis School of English.

This year, we were delighted to be partnered with TESOL Italy for PRELIM 2! The last few months have seen us collaborate on designing a course which we hope will help the participants really develop their confidence in using English in the classroom. We are well aware of how busy teachers' lives are, and so the combination of asynchronous tasks and weekly live sessions online will help us to deliver content that can fit around the participants' schedules.

On Friday 4 February, the project was launched with a live induction session, and this was a great opportunity for myself and the Lewis School teachers to meet the participants for the first time. It marks that exciting moment when all of those ideas, meetings and brainstorming sessions come to fruition, and it was lovely to see that the participants were as enthusiastic about getting started as we were!

We are looking forward to following the participants' progress over the coming months, and hope that this is just the beginning of an ongoing partnership and friendship with TESOL Italy!



Stay tuned on TESOL Italy Youtube channel!
shorturl.at/emnR5

Teen Voices

We are pleased to publish some articles written by students of Liceo Scientifico "Teresa Gullace", Rome about Agenda 2030 SDG 10. They explored different aspects of the topic and reflected on how challenging a task reducing social and cultural inequalities in the world can be.

Diving into the Afghan black hole

by Chiara Gulia

It was when the director of National Geographic magazine, back in 1984, enthusiastically announced that her face was going to be his next cover, that Sharbat Hula suddenly acquired global notoriety. "The Afghan Girl", as she was later baptized by the international press, is well known for her penetrating gaze, which reflects all the fear for the war which was completely demolishing her country, Afghanistan. At that time the orphan was searching for a second opportunity in Pakistan, today she has been given a new home in Italy, while a new war is setting fire to her country, once again.

Last August upsetting scenes populated news of half the world: the American frantic and chaotic withdrawal, coupled with the bombs exploded on civilians desperately trying to leave their country, opened a wound in the occidental world. Journalists define it as the greatest defeat of democracy in the last decade, and the data confirm the climate of resignation and discontent that hovers in countries that were actively committed to a brighter future for Afghanistan. President Biden's approval rate is in free fall, while Afghanistan has turned into a giant, obscure black hole, where everything can enter, but nothing can escape.

Meanwhile the new Taliban government calls upon pacification to persuade people to remain in the country. The head of Afghanistan's peace council called the withdrawal of NATO allies an "exceptional opportunity for peace". But beyond Taliban smiling faces in press conferences, horrors of a country which is split in two continuously reach the occident.

Hidden behind the general amnesty formally granted to all the collaborators of the American

mission, there are stories of journalists physically beaten or verbally threatened, imprisoned and sometimes even killed. Stories of female judges forced to leave their country after years of serving the law, because now they are prey of those very same men they once incarcerated. As those women look back at the city where they have been born and raised, they cannot say if they will see it again.

When the last musical note left the houses of Kabul, people knew they had no other choice but to obey. Even if the new set of rules issued by the Taliban has not confirmed the ban on playing music in effect from 1996 to 2001, episodes of violence are already the stigma of Afghanistan. This is the case of a gunman attacking a wedding to stop music being played, killing two people and injuring 10 others. Meantime, musicians and artists are leaving Afghanistan en masse, hoping to restart from zero in a new country.

Years of achievements were wasted in less than a



month. It is emblematic that at the time of the Taliban advance, Kabul was already preparing to plunge down again into the darkness of extremism: advertisement boards showing images of women were covered in a hurry, while males started growing their beards.

Today, women are imprisoned at home, unsure about their future. Female actresses have been banned from TV dramas and female journalists are obliged to wear headscarves on screen.

Women don't know if someone will knock on the door the following day and take them away from their families. Girls don't know if they will be able to have an education anymore. Taliban claim that restrictions on working and studying for that 50% of Afghan population that has to lose more due to Sharia law, are only temporary and aim to ensure that all workplaces and schools are "safe" for them, but the fear is that the Taliban rule will soon be more and more similar to the regime of 1990s.

But what do we say to girls who never lived under the Taliban's control? That they will never come to work again? That all the freedom they have come to know is lost until another American president decides it is time to restore peace in Afghanistan? That the monster in the closet their parents used to talk about is now back to hunt them? That they will no longer be footballers, actresses, journalists, activists, but only a dull blue burqa walking through the streets of a perished city?

Afghanistan is on the brink of collapse. The World Food Programme says more than half of Afghanistan's population - about 23 million people - is facing acute food shortage, as international donors blocked grants aimed at the country, which financed three quarters of its public spending. Moreover, US-led sanctions are worsening the humanitarian catastrophe, so that even hospitals are unable to afford essential medical supplies. To reduce the impact of this economic crisis, the government has banned foreign currency on Afghan soil, taking refuge in an isolationist economy. But that is not enough to address the issue. The United Nations are constantly reminding wealthy countries of the urgency of funds, but no one is truly answering the call.

People are starving in Afghanistan. And desperate situations lead to desperate actions. Parwana Malik, a 9-year-old child, is about to be sold to a 55-year-old man with white eyebrows and white beard, because her parents have no other choice if they want to survive the winter. What will happen to her? Will she be beaten or forced to work? Will she become just an ornament for her owner's house?

The only powerless words a father can say watching her girl being taken away from him are: "This is your bride. Please take care of her. You are responsible for her now, please don't beat her." And this was the last sentence of Parwana's childhood.

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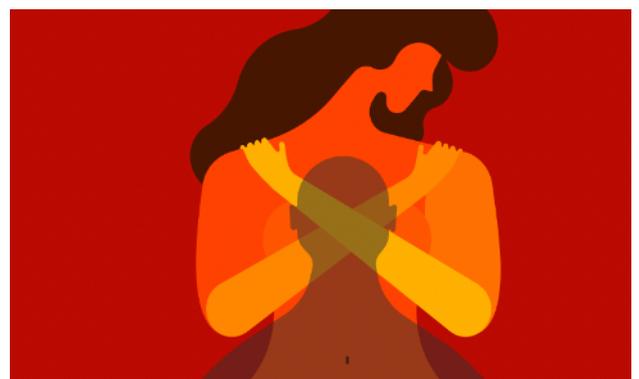
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Promoting gender equality to prevent violence against women

by Martina Iacometti

Gender inequality is undoubtedly one of the biggest issues that our society faces.

It's the different roles and behaviours of women and men, which are shaped and reinforced by gender norms within society, that most often create inequalities – thus, one gender becomes empowered to the disadvantage of the other.



However, it's important to acknowledge that where gender inequality exists, it is generally [women](#) who are excluded or disadvantaged in relation to decision-making and access to economic and social resources.

Gender-based violence is a phenomenon deeply rooted in gender inequality, as well as one of the most notable *human rights violations*: the promotion of gender equality is an essential part of violence prevention.



Globally, [the UN has estimated](#) that almost one in three women have been victims of physical or sexual violence – mostly by an intimate partner. ([more about forms of violence against women...](#))

This violence is also the main obstacle to the achievement of equality: unequal power relations are most often upheld through gender-based violence.

The *United Nations General Assembly*, in its [1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women](#), noted that this type of violence is a manifestation of historically unequal power relations between men and women; therefore, the vital elements to consider are the gender norms and beliefs created by power hierarchies that grant men greater status and associate women and femininity with weakness.

Conversely, gender-based violence against men often builds on different norms. For instance, men who are subject to GBV can be punished for not being ‘real’ men, not complying with social expectations on manhood and masculinity norms.



GBV prevention strategies are intrinsically linked to efforts to increase gender equality more generally.

Hence, rather than disconnecting and treating GBV as a separate and isolated problem, it has to be situated in the context of gender inequalities.

It's also crucial to acknowledge *diversity*: implementation of gender equality policies should include consideration of [other sources](#) and intersections of disadvantage, such as class and race, which may compound gender disadvantage. Women vary in many ways, in skin color, ethnicity, sexual orientation, trans status, age, cultural beliefs, and/or socioeconomic status.

Moreover, their intersecting identity markings make some women more vulnerable than others. All these variations demand that all their voices be heard, acknowledged, and reckoned with.

Wheelchairs are Welcome

by Arianna Pozzi

Imagine being a minister and having to attend an important meeting but having an impediment and not being able to access it, not because you have better things to do but because you are denied access. You cannot enter because you are in a wheelchair, almost as if it were your fault.

Do you think this is a fake story? Unfortunately, it's not because this is what happened last November 1st at COP26, the ONU meeting about climate change.

Karine Elharrar is an Israeli politician suffering from muscular dystrophy who uses a wheelchair and for this reason, she had to wait two hours to access the meeting because there was no wheelchair ramp.



Isn't that unthinkable? Isn't it even more shocking that it happened at an event promoted by the UN that established equality in the SDGs to be achieved by 2030?

The main problem is that this is not an isolated case, and if it happened at the UN we have to wonder how many times it happens during everyday events.



Eleaine, a sixty-year-old woman who is wheelchair-bound due to multiple sclerosis, has not only had to accept this new challenge but overcome the daily obstacles of life. Her wheelchair did not allow her to return to life as she knew it before and it was often difficult to withstand the reactions of strangers. All these difficulties, however, were combined with those of the infrastructures that she had to access, for

example, she could no longer go freely to her bank because it was not equipped with an access ramp for wheelchairs.

This is just one of many examples, let's think about how many offices, schools, beaches, attractions and museums are not accessible for people in wheelchairs. If we want to achieve equality in all fields by 2030, we must therefore also commit ourselves to helping disabled people in wheelchairs, who, like all of us, have the right to carry out the same actions and access all services.

Let's create a more inclusive world that welcomes wheelchair users too!

SOURCES:

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-59128618>

How can abuse lead you to quit the thing you love doing most?

by Elisa Esposito

Today we're talking about abuse in specific cases: the USA gymnasts ones.

The most recent cases concern the entire gymnastics Rio 2016 Olympic team.

After the Olympic games, they testified in court to accuse Larry Nassar, the American team's (ex) physiotherapist, of abusing them.

In July 2017, he pleaded guilty to federal child pornography charges and as time went on, he pleaded guilty for more and more abuse and he received a sentence of 60 to 175 years in prison.

In 2018, US gymnast Simone Biles posted a tweet where she revealed that she was one of the victims, she wrote "Lately...I've felt a bit broken and the more I try to shut off the voice in my head the louder it screams. I am not afraid to tell my story anymore. I too am one of the many survivors that was sexually abused by Larry Nassar...".

At first she did not speak, and why? Probably because she felt ashamed. She felt ashamed of something that absolutely did not depend on her and which is not normal to suffer for.



Feelings...
#MeToo

Most of you know me as a happy, giggly, and energetic girl. But lately...I've felt a bit broken and the more I try to shut off the voice in my head the louder it screams. I am not afraid to tell my story anymore.

I too am one of the many survivors that was sexually abused by Larry Nassar. Please believe me when I say it was a lot harder to first speak those words out loud than it is now to put them on paper. There are many reasons that I have been reluctant to share my story, but I know now it is not my fault.

It is not normal to receive any type of treatment from a trusted team physician and refer to it horrifyingly as the "special" treatment. This behavior is completely unacceptable, disgusting, and abusive, especially coming from someone whom I was TOLD to trust.

For too long I've asked myself, "Was I too naive? Was it my fault?" I now know the answer to those questions. No. No, it was not my fault. No, I will not and should not carry the guilt that belongs to Larry Nassar, USAG, and others.

It is impossibly difficult to relive these experiences, and it breaks my heart even more to think that as I work towards my dream of competing in Tokyo-2020, I will have to continually return to the same training facility where I was abused.

After hearing the brave stories of my friends and other survivors, I know that this horrific experience does not define me. I am much more than this. I am unique, smart, talented, motivated, and passionate. I have promised myself that my story will be much greater than this and I promise all of you that I will never give up. I will compete with all of my heart and soul every time I step into the gym. I love this sport too much and I have never been a quitter. I won't let one man, and the others that enabled him, to steal my love and joy.

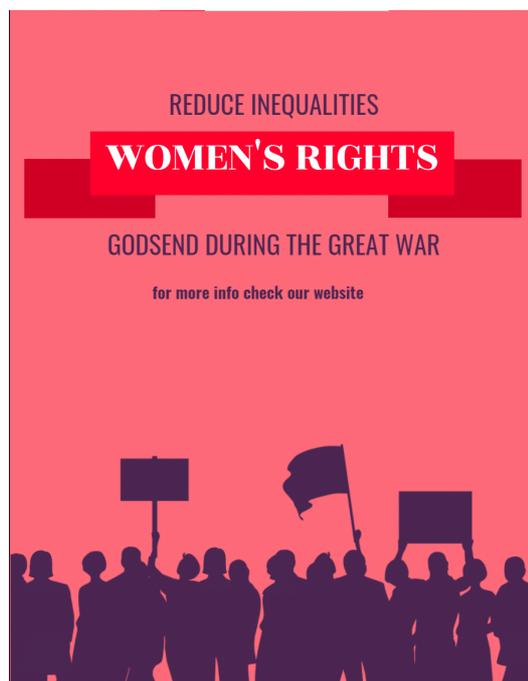
We need to know why this was able to take place for so long and to so many of us. We need to make sure something like this never happens again.

As I continue to work through the pain, I kindly ask everyone

GODSEND DURING THE GREAT WAR - Have women always done only the laundry?

by Marika Pescosolido

Women have always been treated in a different way from men, the inequalities between them were more evident in the 18th-19th century, but it's still a current topic. Nowadays not everybody knows the story of the women's fight, so I want to remind all the young ladies that are reading my words to whom we have to say thank you for our rights. This is the reason why I've chosen to speak about women's courage.



A lot of people after that tweet showed her their support, confirming that these kinds of things have never been normal, and they aren't normal, especially in our days, because women should be finally seen as professionals by their teammates and not just things to use when you want to.

What amazes me the most is that they have had to keep working, even if these experiences created huge walls to defeat in their minds.

But the story is even more complicated because we found out that the FBI covered his abuses and also let him continue them.

Retired American gymnast and two-time Olympian Aly Raisman said, "The last few years have been such a whirlwind and I haven't elaborated what happened, and I don't know if I will ever do it".

The abuse left them with doubts and traumas about the thing they loved the most, gymnastics, and isn't it terrifying to think that they still can't find peace?

I think that it absolutely is, and abuse can have even worse consequences, no one deserves it.



Source: La Repubblica, BBC news, Simone Biles' twitter account

We are used to thinking women have always been surrounded by the walls of their homes, swiping the floor, doing the laundry, dusting and so on.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



But, brace yourselves, men decided to cede part of their rights to them only when they found it convenient, and despite this, women had to fight for their right to vote until 1946 in Italy and 1918 in England thanks to the “Suffragette” movement and the “Women’s social and political union” founded by Emmeline Pankhurst. In fact, when all the countries were on their knees during the Great War, out of the blue, men asked for help from women. They immediately began to work as volunteers and nurses for the soldiers, the so-called “Red Cross nurses”. Also, women, due to their homeland’s difficult situation, gave their wedding rings to the authorities, which were used to cover the costs of the war, and replaced them with iron ones that they wore proudly: this event is known as “the gift of the gold wedding rings”. Anyway, they became workers in weapons factories and in the offices, they were a real godsend. However, when the Great War finished, Italian women were dismissed and they continued to have their “domestic” role, but we can’t deny that this event was really significant and a step forward to the acquisition of women’s rights. So, finally, at the end of the Second World War, the inequalities between Italian men and women “disappeared” and all the citizens from the age of 18 could vote and have the “same” social importance (theoretically).

I hope you enjoyed this reading.

Check our previous articles on our website to read more about it!

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WEBWATCH

By Esterina La Torre

Coding, or computational thinking, is a methodological tool that allows us to solve complex problems, breaking them down into simple problems. In a few words, we build an algorithm that allows us to arrive at a conclusion that is certain and repeatable to solve a problem. In Italy, with the National Digital School Plan (PNSD, 10/2015), the teaching of computational thinking has become part of school programs and in particular of primary school, within the “ACTION # 17, “Bringing logical-computational thinking to the whole primary school”.



It is evident how important it is to start from a very young age, for at least two reasons: first, to anticipate the understanding of the Net and of technologies because the approach to technologies starts very early, in the family environment, nowadays it is normal to see very young toddlers playing with tablets or mobile phones; second, to prepare our students for the development of skills that are increasingly important now, and will be central for their lives and careers. Computational thinking helps to develop logical skills and to solve problems in a creative and efficient way, qualities that are important for all future citizens. It is useful for any profession you do or want to do because it develops conceptual skills that are effective in dealing with complex problems, moreover it increases creativity. For some, the code represents the universal grammar that controls almost every aspect of our life, some others consider it as a new language, in fact, some authors define it the English of the future; of course it is already used in automated systems and applied in several fields of work and research. Coding represents the simplest and most enjoyable way to develop computational thinking through programming (coding) in a game context. The goal is not to make everyone become computer programmers, but to spread basic scientific knowledge for the understanding of modern society. If you wonder why teaching coding is so important the answer can be seen in the 10 reasons expressed by Brian Aspinall a college instructor, three-time TEDx speaker, best-selling author and winner of the Canadian Prime Minister's award for teaching excellence. The same reasons are given by De Agostini publishing with the poster showing the ten reasons into Italian.

<p>https://twitter.com/mraspinall/status/1108334303350571009/photo/1 https://blog.matematica.deascuola.it/articoli/10-ragioni-per-insegnare-il-coding</p>	<p>Brian Aspinall poster “Ten reasons to teach Coding” Dea Scuola blog with the ten reasons in Italian</p>
<p>https://code.org/; https://scratch.mit.edu/; https://blockly.games/; https://www.codemonkey.com/</p>	<p>Useful sites to start playing with coding</p>
<p>https://www.codecademy.com/; https://www.codemotionkids.com/</p>	<p>Courses for students Courses for kids</p>
<p>https://csfirst.withgoogle.com/s/it/home https://www.sololearn.com/home</p>	<p>Courses for teachers/students</p>



TESOL Italy groups

REQUISITI PER IL RICONOSCIMENTO



Si raccomanda a tutti i colleghi impegnati o che intendono impegnarsi nella costituzione di un gruppo provinciale TESOL Italy 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.

La collega incaricata dall'Executive Committee del coordinamento nazionale dei gruppi è Maria Antonietta Ortenzi (e-mail: maortenzi@gmail.com).

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