



CyELT Journal

ISSN 1986-0773
Year 1, Issue 1
September, 2008

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CyELT Journal is
published by the
Pancyprian Association
of Teachers of English
O.E.L.M.E.K

Cover:
Painting by Katerina
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C7 2006-07
First prize in Comenius
Lifelong Learning
European Art Competition

Editorial

Dear colleagues,

The long running battle over the publication of this bulletin has been one of many of our goals this year. As we prepare this special first issue we know that stories and plans will be roundly criticised but we hope criticism will be in good faith, as this is our first effort in achieving such a feat we expect your comments.

Written for teachers by teachers, it brims with the stuff of everyday teachers' life, the thoughts and worries and dreams and insecurities and fantasies and hopes, not of someone looking back, but of someone looking forward. This is a collection of articles, ideas and suggestions that is different because it is written from the trenches of the bench of a classroom!

Since it is written completely by teachers, you will find experiences represented in such a way so as to be helpful to use them. In these pages you will find selected pieces to use from many colleagues sent to us with their love.

As teachers, editors, and now magazine publishers we have been fortunate to have this unique insight into the lives of so many extraordinary teachers. It is with great joy that we share these works so that everyone can appreciate all that our colleagues have to offer.

You deserve our greatest respect and gratitude.

Monica Grimaldi –Constantinou
Chair of the Pancyprian Association of English Teachers
(O.E.L.M.E.K.)

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Have YOU any good ideas for the next issue?Please send them to:

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Addresses

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this first issue of CyELT Journal, a magazine which is to be published by the Association of English Teachers. Such activities illustrate the interest that educators show in their field. I am positive that this issue as well as the others that will follow, will constitute the springboard from which the voice of EFL teachers will be heard. Concerns, suggestions, accounts of seminars in Cyprus and abroad as well as new practices will be voiced through this issue of which task is to disseminate the above to all teachers across Cyprus. I, therefore, congratulate all the contributors, for without their willingness to sacrifice their free time, such an achievement would not be feasible.

Dr Zena Poulli

Director of Secondary Education
Ministry of Education and Culture

I consider this address a privileged opportunity, since this effort to bring out a professional journal will, I am sure, prove conducive to the upgrading of the trade which is close to my heart.

Such a journal will provide the floor and forum for the development of a much needed dialogue within the realm of FL teaching as well as in education, in general. Furthermore, the dialectical exchange which will ensue will bring about transparency and instigate a fermentation process which will eventually bear its fruits for the benefit of the profession.

This is a serious and arduous undertaking requiring stamina, patience and persistence. These qualities are I am sure present within the committed professionals involved. I congratulate and urge them to proceed and assure them that they will have my uncovering support. Moreover, I would like to add that apart from my personal commitment to such enterprises the institutional encouragement and appreciation is and will always be there.

Finally, I would like to reiterate my praise and my unrenowned support.

Stella Conti - Theocharous

Inspectress of English
Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture

Με ιδιαίτερη χαρά καλωσωρίζω την πρώτη έκδοση του περιοδικού των καθηγητών της Αγγλικής γλώσσας στη Μέση Εκπαίδευση. Το θεωρώ σαν μια θαυμάσια ευκαιρία για να τονιστεί το ενδιαφέρον και οι δραστηριότητες καθώς και οι ποικίλες εκδηλώσεις και προσπάθειες του κλάδου.

Συμπεράσματα σεμιναρίων, εισηγήσεις, διδακτικές προσεγγίσεις θα βρουν σ' αυτό το τεύχος καθώς και στα επόμενα το κατάλληλο όργανο να ακουστούν, να διαβαστούν και να συζητηθούν από τον ευρύτερο εκπαιδευτικό κόσμο και ιδιαίτερα από το τον κλάδο των Αγγλιστών.

Η έκδοση ενός εκπαιδευτικού περιοδικού δεν είναι εύκολη υπόθεση. Χρειάζεται πολύ μεράκι και κόπος και δεν αμφιβάλω ότι αυτοί που ξεκίνησαν την ωραία αυτή προσπάθεια τα διαθέτουν. Σαν συγχαίρω για την προσπάθεια σας αυτή και να είστε βέβαιοι ότι η ΟΕΛΜΕΚ θα σας παρακολουθεί με ενδιαφέρον και θα συμπαρίσταται μέσα στο πλαίσιο των δυνατοτήτων της.

Ελένη Σεμελίδου

Πρόεδρος ΟΕΛΜΕΚ

Intercultural Dialogue

Stella Conti - Theocharous
Inspectress of English



Throughout the centuries Cyprus has been a crossroad of different cultures and has developed some of the characteristics of a multicultural society, a society which consists of all the officially recognised communities: the Greek Cypriots mostly, the Turkish Cypriots, the Maronites, the Armenians,

the Latins and all other foreign residents, European and non European. However, the English culture can easily be noticed on the island since Cyprus was once an English colony (and two British military bases are still on the island). Moreover, the Arabs are very close to the island and by giving shelter to the refugees from Lebanon the opportunity was given to get to know some aspects of their culture, as well as of the immigrants from Eastern European and Asian countries, who come here for a better life. Cypriots are used to living with people of other cultures not only because a lot of tourists come to the island but also because a lot of Cypriots used to go abroad to make their living in the past. And finally, the accession of the country to the European Union four years ago defined the greatest challenge for the people of Cyprus regarding the Intercultural Dialogue.

The educational community, that is to say, the administration of the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, the teachers and the pupils of all levels of education must be sensitised about the importance of multicultural coexistence and of the value of the Intercultural Dialogue. This is imperative since the situation in schools is changing rapidly nowadays. In recent years pupils from other countries or of diverse ethnic origin attend in greater numbers schools in Cyprus. For this reason the Intercultural Dialogue was set to be one of the educational aims in focus for the school year 2007 - 2008, while the spirit of intercultural dimension is embedded in all school curricula.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue offers a unique opportunity for people to build bridges both within our own countries and across the whole of the European Union and thus assemble a cultural jigsaw, learning from each others' cultures, and presenting a dynamic, multifaceted image to the rest of the world, while showing that we care about getting our multiethnic and multicultural societies into shape. Dialogue and cooperation break down barriers and nurture trust and understanding.

Learning to know different cultures is a step in learning how to accept and love others. This increasingly diverse mix of people, races and faiths has triggered a new political, cultural and economic dynamism across continents.

The overall aims of the year are to promote intercultural dialogue as a means by which Europeans can improve their ability to deal with a more open, but also more complex, cultural environment, to highlight intercultural dialogue as an opportunity to contribute to, and benefit from, a diverse and dynamic society both in Europe and the wider world, and to raise the awareness of Europeans - in particular young people - of the importance of developing an active European identity, which is open to the world, respects cultural diversity and is based on common values in the European Union.

In October 2005, the Commission presented a proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council to declare 2008 the "European Year of Intercultural Dialogue" expecting to promote intercultural dialogue as an instrument to assist European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, in acquiring the knowledge and aptitudes to enable them to deal with a more open and more complex environment, and to raise the awareness of European citizens, and all those living in the European Union, of the importance of developing active European citizenship which is open to the world, respectful of cultural diversity and based on common values.

The European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008, was established by Decision No 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council on 18th December 2006. On 4th December 2007, the European Commission launched the communication campaign for the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008 with the slogan "Together in Diversity", encouraging the mobility at European, national and local level. Culture, education, youth, sport and citizenship are the main implementation fields. The initiative concentrates on areas where intercultural dialogue is more likely to contribute to "better living" among people in the European Union.

The logo of the Year 2008, entitled "People reaching out for each other", signals the need for Europeans to explore "the other", and to benefit from increasingly diverse societies. The logo portrays people joining hands in an open circle, which underlines the importance of fostering an active European citizenship open to the world.

The European Year aims at contributing to mutual understanding and better living together. It explores the benefits of cultural diversity, active civic participation in European affairs and seeks to foster a sense of European belonging. The message conveyed to all people is “get together in diversity”. Differences in culture and tradition do not divide people; on the contrary, diversity unites. The Intercultural Dialogue does not aim at abolishing the diversity of the different cultures; on the contrary, it aims at improving these cultures in such a way that they could contribute positively to the tolerance and mutual understanding among people with different culture and tradition.

The overall objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue are to promote Intercultural Dialogue as a process in which all those living in the European Union can improve their ability to deal with a more open, but also more complex, cultural environment, where, in different Member States as well as within each Member state, different cultural identities and beliefs coexist; highlight intercultural dialogue as an opportunity to contribute to and benefit from a diverse and dynamic society, not only in Europe but also in the world; raise the awareness of all those living in the European Union, in particular young people, of the importance of developing an active European citizenship which is open to the world, respects cultural diversity and is based on common values in the European Union; highlight the contribution of different cultures and expressions of cultural diversity to the heritage and ways of life of the Member States.



The specific objectives of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue are to seek to raise the awareness of all those living in the European Union, in particular young people, of the importance of engaging in intercultural dialogue in their life; work to identify, share and give a visible European recognition to best practices in promoting intercultural dialogue throughout the European Union, especially among young people and children; foster the role of education as an important medium for teaching about diversity, increase the understanding of other cultures and developing skills and best social practices, and highlight the central role of the media in promoting the principle of equality and mutual understanding; raise the profile, increase the coherence of and promote all Community programmes and actions contributing to intercultural

dialogue and ensure their continuity; contribute to exploring new approaches to intercultural dialogue involving cooperation between a wide range of stakeholders from different sectors.

What does the term Intercultural Dialogue mean? Intercultural Dialogue means talking and listening - to each others' perspectives, experiences, needs - and responding to them. It means cooperating. It often requires addressing inequalities, healing traumas and tensions, changing institutional structures that may be inherently discriminatory. The principal idea is to strengthen a dialogue within the civil society, especially between young people in the European Union and beyond, to foster better understanding and communication between the diverse crowd that makes up European citizens. Civil society and individual members by promoting tolerance, respect for the inherent dignity of all human beings and respect for human rights are helping encourage dialogue between cultures. We need to speak less and listen more. Intercultural Dialogue should not be monopolised by the majority. However, some minorities do not have access to dialogue. Such groups need a platform to express their concerns. We must stress the importance of the concept of European citizenship and identity and of common belonging, no matter what our origins are. We need to move from intercultural dialogue to intercultural cooperation based on equality of people and citizenship.

The idea of “Intercultural Dialogue” takes as its starting point the recognition of difference and multiplicity of the world in which we live. These differences of opinion, viewpoint, and values exist not only within each individual culture but also between cultures. The “Dialogue” seeks to approach these multiple viewpoints with the desire to understand and learn from those that do not see the world in the same way as we do. Therefore, an effective “dialogue” is an enriching and opening interaction which encourages the respectful sharing of ideas and an exploration of the different thought process through which the world is perceived and understood. This interaction emphasises opportunities for broadened and deepened self knowledge and worldview. As a process, intercultural dialogue encourages an identification of the boundaries that define individuals, and then asks them to relate across those boundaries and even to call them into question.

In the Education sector, the Intercultural Dialogue aims to equip individuals with the knowledge and skills - the so called “intercultural competences” - to participate in increasingly diverse societies. The knowledge of democratic values, democratic citizenship and civil rights are essential elements of dialogue. The knowledge about other cultures, as well as languages, can also contribute to mutual respect and understanding. It is also important to develop our capacity to be able to stand back from our own specific cultural and social background in

order to listen actively to what people from other backgrounds can bring to us. These aspects are the key in life long learning, both in formal and informal education, not only for personal development and democratic citizenship but also increasingly for employability. Therefore, the role of education is very important not only for teaching but also for developing skills about diversity as well as increasing the understanding of other cultures.

Language skills are increasingly important in an enlarged European Union. They are also key enablers for Intercultural Dialogue. Learning a new language is always an opportunity to better

understand the corresponding culture and a fundamental step in opening minds to the richness of cultural diversity. The European Union has defined the goal of “mother tongue + two (2)” as a major objective for a multilingual European Union. A great effort is required across the European Union to ensure that intercultural issues are integrated into education at all stages, that patterns of migration and the challenges it poses are better understood, and that citizens are given all the tools they need, for example language proficiency. Thus individual cultural identities are strengthened and mutual respect is fostered.

Differentiability and Human Rights

Dr Panayiotis Mavros BA, MA, PhD

Inspector of English

The ministry of Education and Culture invests very hard efforts into the task of promoting human rights education in the school system through the cross-curriculum and extra-curriculum dimensions as well as a variety of programmes and events, which help in achieving our ultimate goal being the construction of a universal culture of human rights. However, we feel inclined to confess that despite the great strides made in the area of human rights education in our schools there is much room for improvement. An area we need to focus our attention on concerns the individual differences observed in a class as well as the approach followed to strike and balance concerning the just treatment of students within the walls of a mixed ability class especially now that all refugee children as well as asylum seekers' children flood in Cyprus and have access to our schools.

Every individual has a unique personality and he needs to be treated differently both within the social and educational contexts which, needless to say, are interrelated and influence or affect the way an individual learns. It is an accepted educational principle that the teacher should work with what the child can offer; however, the educational bureaucracy imposes terms which conspicuously contradict the above principle and curtail attempts on behalf of the teachers to practise without these terms. The emphasis is mistakenly laid on stressful competitiveness which has transformed schools into exam factories ignoring and neglecting the differentiability which exists in a class as well as the power relationships formed within and without the walls of the school which penetrate the communication and evaluation of knowledge. After all, we should firmly bear in mind that in no way can education lend itself to a concrete definition – the existing ones cannot be completely disregarded – because it is constantly changing adjusting itself to new circumstances and bears a different meaning in different countries and surroundings in which the prevailing conditions differ considerably. Therefore,

it is, I believe, the responsibility of the state to formulate a policy to provide equal opportunities for every student not only in theory but in practice thus eliminating the superficiality which governs the aims and goals of our education. Equality of opportunity can only be achieved if every student is made to feel he is a valued member of his group and can also contribute, within the limits of his power, to the level of academic attainment his group is expected to meet. An efficient educational system acknowledges and makes provisions for diversity but also recognises the value of individual differences equally being flexible in organisation to accommodate students whose rate of development is different.



To be fully realised, our schools are mixed ability schools and certainly avail classes of mixed ability students with a wide range of levels. Theoretically, all students are equal and teachers are expected to treat them equally, do everything in their power to provide for their needs and help them develop their potentialities. Circulars of the Ministry of Education flood in schools to encourage teachers to follow the above practice and inspectors of the Ministry of Education try to ensure that this practice is piously applied. However, in practical terms the class cannot function satisfactorily and it is strikingly proven that “all students are equal but some are more equal than others”.

This paradoxical situation can be interpreted in terms of a “vicious circle” which involves the Educational Authorities, teachers and students. The

bulk of the subject matter taught prescribed by the Ministry of Education demands a great deal of the teachers who embark on it and cannot be accommodated in a crowded mixed ability class throughout a school year. Consequently, communication of knowledge suffers greatly due to the teacher's hastiness to tackle the aforementioned onerous task, which, to make matters worse, students view solely in terms of tests and exams rather than in terms of pleasurable work in the process of learning. Needless to say, the wide range of levels and abilities within the mixed ability class makes it impossible for the teacher to help all his students to progress. Confronted with this formidable task which the teacher has to cope with in a mixed ability class under the aforementioned difficult conditions, he inevitably has to "cheat" either the weak students, the fair students or the good students because he cannot teach all levels at the same time. If he tailors his method and approach to the fair students, he will "lose" both the good students who will not be challenged to strive hard and the weak students who will be physically present but mentally absent. Therefore, the teacher being bound by a tight syllabus chooses to provide for the educational needs of the good students and, to a lesser extent, to the fair students who, he believes, could weigh up to his expectations to get through the various types of exams which are regarded as a criterion to evaluate his own performance. Consequently, we should not labour under the delusion that the education received by every student is appropriate to his ability and aptitude, which is considered to be an essential aim of the school. We certainly cannot afford to ignore the efforts invested by the Educational Authorities into the task of offering education appropriate to all levels and abilities; however, the accomplishments of this task is apparently beyond reach. We cannot hope to achieve equality of opportunity until we leave the way open to change by reorganising our educational system and making it flexible and adjustable so that it could enable us to develop new teaching methods, devise a more effective and humane system of evaluation, design a more flexible curriculum and free teachers from a tight syllabus which would allow them to function in a mixed ability class and give intensive consideration to the educational needs of all students irrespective of ability and level.

There can be little doubt that our school does less than justice to students whose educational, social and intellectual background impedes their development thus handicapping them as they are unable to perform "academic tasks". These students are labelled as failures, looked down upon and regarded as hopeless cases. They are excluded from the learning process of the mixed ability class and their presence is ignored due to the deficiencies

of the educational system. Yet, there are, I believe, ways which can include these unfortunate children in the mixed ability class if they are helped to develop their potentialities in non-academic tasks which they could perform well and academic tasks within their capabilities. In a mixed ability class every student should be provided with the opportunity to contribute to the achievement of the goals set by the group within his potentialities. Weak, fair and good students should all work collectively and individually under the supervision and guidance of the teacher and be made to value each other's contribution no matter how great or little this contribution is. The most important element in a mixed ability class is challenge which should be based on task accessibility. Each student should be assigned an achievable task which could stimulate and challenge him to strive harder to accomplish his goal.

In a given situation a weak, for example, English student could decide for himself to produce a simple sentence, a fair student a paragraph and a good student a composition. The general pace of the syllabus in a mixed ability class is the same but the rate of progress varies from student to student which, albeit the different levels and abilities, does not prevent them from exploiting their potentialities to the best possible level.

It is, I am sure, worth trying to accept the nature of weak students and try to meet their needs through informal, creative, imaginative and pleasurable work in a mixed ability class where students of various levels and abilities are allowed time and flexibility to think, work collectively and individually, assess their progress and feel that real learning does occur in a richly differentiated environment free from the great pressure imposed on them by the tight syllabus, rigid curriculum and excessive emphasis placed on the traditional tests and exams. Only then can we claim that the application of the principle of equality of opportunity does apply in our educational system.

It is therefore, our obligation as educators to tailor our educational system to the needs of students who develop at different rates and try to maximise the profit to be derived from the positive characteristic of the students; if we fail to do so we had better not talk about the consequences...

After all, education should chiefly aim at the cultivation of the soul and the creation of human beings in a civilised society and not at the mass production of robotized creatures whose sole interest lies in the mere memorisation of a task in order to pass a stiff exam. We hope that the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture based on the reform suggested by the seven university professors, which is in the process of materialisation, will provide the answer to the value of individual differences.

All kids have talents. If you try to show some appreciation, it'll make them feel special.

Schools for the 21st Century

*Koula Papadopoulou,
Inspector of Secondary Education*

Introduction

Education lies at the centre of efforts to improve the Union's competitiveness and social cohesion. Some of the most important questions and challenges which have the greatest significance for the well-being of individuals and the good of society relate to the quality of initial education and training.

It is against this background that the European Commission has decided to launch a Public Consultation "Schools for the 21st Century" in order to identify those aspects of school education on which joint action at European Union level could be effective in supporting Member States in the modernization of their systems.

The present document is an attempt to provide answers to some of the issues raised by the European Commission, by identifying some of the actions that could be taken to ensure that schools deliver the quality of education needed for the 21st century.

How can schools be organized in such a way as to provide all students with the full range of key competences?

There are already a number of underlying trends towards the modernisation of school systems in order to provide all students with a full range of competences, help each one of them reach their potential and prepare them for the future. Some of these trends include:

- A continuation of the shift towards learner-centredness rather than the traditional teacher – dominated provision. The 21st curriculum should be interdisciplinary, project-based and research driven. It should incorporate higher order thinking skills, multiple intelligences, technology and multimedia.
- An increasing realization that the processes of learning are more important than the content of the syllabuses. In other words that there is more to education than the teaching of facts. The 21st century will require knowledge generation, not just information delivery and schools will need to create a culture of inquiry.
- An appreciation of the importance of competences which relate to life as a whole, including interpersonal skills, leadership skills, creative thinking and problem-solving skills. Students will need to develop competences for managing information, for assessing, evaluating and differentiating information, learn how to analyze this information, synthesize and apply it.

- Growing awareness of the advantages of learning by working in groups and of the dangers of the isolation which accompany individualized learning. School premises should provide working space for large groups, small groups and for independent work. There should be space to display student work and space for meetings with parents, university representatives, employers, members of the community and people from other parts of the world.
- An increasing realization of the artificiality of traditional assessment methods as vehicles for measuring the competences intended to develop through education and training. In fact, the inevitability of traditional forms of assessment is a key factor in preventing learners from participating in learning.
- A continuation of the introduction and use of computer-aided systems and high technology equipment in education. Schools should provide learners with stimulating multi-media learning resources and familiarize them with sophisticated media.
- The 21st century school will expect teachers to make fuller use of educational technology support devices in order to increase the effectiveness of their lessons
- Within the school premises there should be full access to technology resources. Schools should provide laptops for all students and teachers. Furthermore, school buildings will need to be wired in such a way that students can access the internet from anywhere in the school. Labs and learning/resource centres will need to be set around the school.

How can schools equip young people with the competences and motivation to make learning a lifelong activity?

The school of the 21st century will need to take more account of how people learn, whether in large groups, small groups or as individuals. There has already been a rapid growth in the range and diversity of techniques, resources and approaches which educators are required to employ. Faced with an array of learning resources and learning environments, students themselves will need to be helped to develop their approach to learning.

Therefore, schools must:

- instill curiosity, which is fundamental to lifelong learning.

- maintain student interest by helping students see how what they are learning prepares them for life in the real world
- excite students to become even more resourceful so that they will continue to learn outside the formal school day.
- Students learn skills and content through their research and application in their projects. Text-books are just one of many resources. Knowledge is constructed through research and application and connected to previous knowledge and personal experience. It is not memorization of facts and numbers.

How can school systems contribute to supporting long-term sustainable economic growth in Europe?

21st Century education addresses a rapidly changing world filled with new problems as well as exciting possibilities. Therefore it should be flexible, creative, challenging and complex. A new way of designing and delivering the curriculum is required. The new curriculum for life should be project-based aimed at engaging students in addressing real-world problems, issues important to humanity and questions that matter.

It is an overall objective of the Union to support the efforts of the Member States to promote creativity, through lifelong learning, as a driver for innovation and as a key factor for the development of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial and social competences and the well-being of individuals in society. Therefore schools should provide an environment which is favourable to innovation, flexibility and adaptability and all forms of innovation, including social and entrepreneurial innovation, should be taken into account.

A blend of teaching methods will be required to foster the development of decision-making skills and creative thinking skills. Exercises that involve small-group methods are possibly the most appropriate. The student will have to be able to operate effectively as a team member and leader in order to achieve goals and objectives in collaboration with colleagues in the workplace. Situations should be devised to enable the students to identify where the use of team work would be of advantage. Situations should also be devised in which students can develop oral communication skills, such as presenting and defending arguments and making meaningful contributions to discussions.

How can school systems best respond to the need to promote equity, to respond to cultural diversity and to reduce early school leaving?

Every school system should provide all students with competent and qualified teachers organized for success. Teacher turnover and attrition is no threat for the school system in Cyprus. However, teacher turnover can be a serious problem in low-income communities and rural areas where inexperienced

teachers are concentrated in schools where teaching quality and student achievement suffer. It is important to improve student achievement in these beleaguered schools, and prepare novice teachers for the challenges of teaching.

It is well known that a lack of learner-centredness and formal examinations in the past have been responsible for many people escaping from formal education at an early stage and staying away from it for the rest of their careers. Already there is evidence that some school leavers are returning to learner-centred programmes such as those offered by Open University. The 21st century school should establish more programmes that allow students who do not benefit from formal teaching-learning situations to manage their learning in their own way. In other words, the students should be allowed to choose between parallel learning provision, provided that either pathway leads to assessments that the learners will face in due course.

If schools are to respond to each pupil's individual learning needs, what can be done as regards curricula, school organization and the roles of teachers?

The curriculum and instruction must be designed to challenge all students and provide for differentiation. Students should be trained to understand how to learn, taking account of their preferred learning styles and understand the need to manage their own learning throughout life. Student-centred strategies should be designed to provide the student with a highly flexible system of learning geared to individual learning styles. In such strategies, the teacher and the institution play supportive, rather than central roles. Furthermore, a number of approaches should be developed and used to individualize learning within the existing educational environment by extensive use of resource-based learning.

How can school communities help to prepare young people to be responsible citizens, in line with fundamental values such as peace and tolerance of diversity?

Students should be prepared to live in an increasingly diverse, globalized and complex society. Therefore, schools will need to establish and support programmes that prevent violence in and around schools, programmes that will involve students, teachers, parents and communities.

Students should be trained to understand, respect and value cultural and community diversity in both national and global contexts. Aiming to this, schools should train students to acquire competences of relating to people. They should be taught how to operate in teams and understand their own capacities for filling different team roles, and show an ability to manage stress and conflict.

How can school staff be trained and supported to meet the challenges they face?

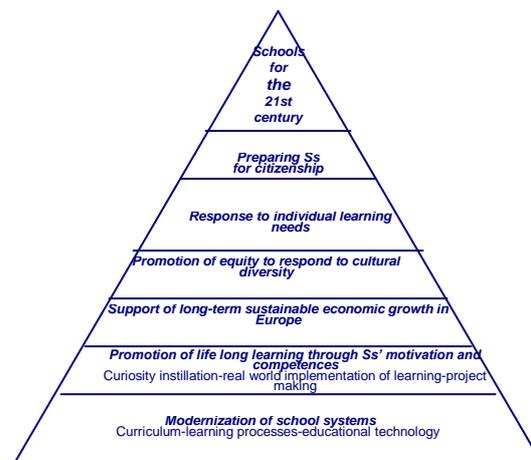
Research confirms what is known from experience: at the heart of every high-performing school, there is high-quality teaching. Good teachers are one of the most important factors in the quality of a learner's education and every learner is entitled to a qualified educator.

The teachers, as mediators between the evolving world and the students, must be offered the knowledge, the understanding and the tools to actually take their schools and students into the 21st century.

The teacher's primary role is not one of a dispenser of information but one of an orchestrator of learning and helping learners turn information into knowledge, and knowledge into wisdom. There has already been a rapid growth in the range and diversity of techniques, resources and approaches which teachers are required to employ. This has wide-ranging implications for staff development requirements of teachers. Staff development will be needed to ensure that teachers are able to put the advances of educational technology into use in their work. It needs to focus on the design of learning resource materials and on the processes whereby successful learning occurs.

However, despite the fact that both students and teachers welcome a student-centred approach, it seems that teachers have difficulty with their new role of facilitator and lack confidence in assessing competences.

Novice teachers, who enter teaching full of idealism, should be given the critical help they need during their early years in order to support their efforts, otherwise they will be overwhelmed.



Conclusion

The foregoing is by no means an exhaustive list of the challenges facing schools and school systems; however it serves to highlight the significant pressures under which they operate. It seems logical to conclude that the institution of the school cannot remain static if it is to serve as a foundation for lifelong learning and to contribute fully to Member States' social and economic prosperity.

The Philosophy behind a project on Intercultural Dialogue - An Armenian Wedding

*Monica Grimaldi-Constantinou
Pedagogical Institute - Nicosia
Ayios Georgios Lyceum - Lakatamia*

These celebrations are chosen as the main focus of this activity because they are expressions of the culture within which we are born. Their very survival indicates that their significance and power

Working in multi-national groups or with students of different ethnic origin students have to **research** rituals and **discover historical** and **cultural values** in them specific to the country or ethnic group which these came from.

Each working group (4 or 5 students which is the usual number that works in each class) presents their findings in a language class, or history lesson, or it can be presented in any class that is involved, demonstrating the values embodied in the rituals and the cultural diversity of Europe.

Care should be taken to ensure that groups are formed in such a way that students are mixed with students from other countries/cultures/backgrounds.

Students have to research their own cultural backgrounds and each other's. Students that belong to different ethnic backgrounds present their own rites and provide information.

It is a fact that these students do not actually know themselves why certain things happen in their culture and it is a good opportunity to find out. This could be done with research or by interviewing their parents and grandparents.

The "locals" provide information about their own rites and share them with these students in the same way.

Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages and it is up to the teacher to decide how the procedure would take its form and be elaborated.

At the end of the exchange, participants will be able to produce an illustrated sample of their work to be

published on the schools' magazine or website. Some of the students suggested they produce a power point presentation.

The groups' writings and art work or illustrations can be used by other classes in the same school.

Use them at school by putting them on the schools' entrance notice boards so that every visitor can see or be used as the basis of organising a Day Conference at school with the topic "Intercultural Dialogue 2008: Meeting our EU Partners and beyond" !! in schools and language clubs as a way of stimulating discussion.

But the purpose of the exchange of views and material is not in concrete end-products. What matters is the process of youths meeting, exchanging views and experiences, learning to appreciate others' values and attitudes, benefiting from the diversity in the class and making friends. In this way, they could have a unique opportunity to gain intercultural understanding.

What to take into consideration:

- Historical values
- Cultural values
- Place on the map influences rituals?
- Have the ways rituals are conducted changed nowadays? How?
- Have human relationships changed? If Yes in what ways?
- Provide suggestions to keep the historical and cultural element alive.
- A cross – curricular lesson. History, Geography, Religious Studies, Sociology

We should not forget the element of language though, because it is interrelated with the entire project. The students of different ethnic origin are presenting their rites both in their own language and in the English language and if presented in other classes, in Greek.

The following is a sample of what my students have produced.

ARMENIAN WEDDING by VASKEN



The day starts at the groom's parents' house, where everyone is well fed with sweets. Next the groom, his friend and relatives with the baskets of the gifts and the bride's dress visit bride's house...



The party then sets off for the bride's parents' house.



Both bride's and groom's relatives change presents with each other, mainly Armenian <GATA> cake, which gives bride's mother...

There are lots of sweets, fruit and drink while the women help the bride to get dressed. That time Godmother gives candies to the teenagers...

During the bride's dressing somebody of the bride's relatives takes the bride's shoes and hides them and doesn't give them back until the Godmother pays her...



When the bride and groom are going to get out of the bride's house her brother would not let them pass unless Godfather pays him...



At Armenian weddings the bride and groom are crowned as king and queen of their household. Then the couple's hands are tied together with a gold cord to signify unity. The rings are exchanged.

Then they open the champagne and are led to church.

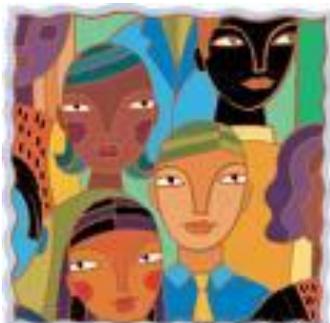


After the church ceremony the groom and bride lit candles and come out of the church...



Create new bonds through intercultural dialogues and exchange

Eleni Rossidou
Pancyprian Gymnasium



Two students from different parts of the world who never met before and know nothing or very little about each other's lives can now establish contact, exchange thoughts and become partnered team.

I, myself, have registered in the **Mondialogo School Contest**, a program that helps to promote mutual respect and appreciation of cultural diversity.. My high school students are now involved in an intercultural learning. Intercultural learning has become a priority in education and has to become an integral part of the learning process and the

school curricula. It should not be thought of as an out of school activity.

My students were paired with students from Rwanda, a country in central Africa. Our teams made contact and agreed to work jointly on a common project in a process of mutual exchange. The topic we agreed on is peace. We have been exchanging ideas and views on various features of our topic for the last four months.

We are expected to complete and send our project result by the end of May. My students and I feel that we gain lots of useful experience from this program but above all we understand the real meaning of intercultural communication and dialogue.

I would like to urge other teachers to do the same and they will gain a new perspective on life.

Intercultural Dialogue through video conferencing

Katerina Konstantinides-Vladimirou
Agios Neophytos Lyceum

The videoconference held on 26th March in Agios Neophytos Lyceum in Paphos aimed at promoting the goal of the school year 2007-08 'Intercultural Dialogue'. The VC had the form of a lesson between a class of third graders in Agios Neophytos Lyceum and a class of students of the same age in Walter Payton College in Chicago in USA.

The topic of the videoconference was 'The school as a learning community – The dream and the reality'. The objectives of the VC were:

- to present the school as a learning community.
- to compare the reality of a learning community with the reality of our schools.
- to suggest how our schools can become learning communities.

The VC started with videos of the two cities and schools in order for the students to develop a sense of place following informal conversation between the students.

In the first part of the VC, the teacher of the two classes Katerina Konstantinides presented 'The school as a learning community – the dream' in the form of a lecture-presentation and the students expressed their views based on the newly gained knowledge of learning communities.

In the second part, the students presented 'the reality' of their schools and they showed to what extent their schools are learning communities through presentations and discussion. The topics presented and discussed were:



The students in Agios Neophytos Lyceum and in Walter Payton College attending the telelesson.

- Student – Teacher collaboration
- Students and decision making
- Students and discipline
- Networks with other schools

The students talked about the advantages of learning communities. They exchanged ideas and made suggestions about how to develop our schools as learning communities.

The videoconference engaged students of different countries, nationalities, background and interests into discussion and interaction, and through talk valuing this diversity, we promoted 'intercultural dialogue'.

Language Rooms in Senior High Schools

Christos Christou
St. George Lyceum, Larnaca

The establishment of language rooms in senior high schools (lyceums), school year 2000-2001, and the expansion of this institution in junior high schools (gymnasiums) and technical schools later on was one brilliant way of improving the language teaching/learning processes. This was directly linked with the new era we were entering where multi-cultural and multi-linguist characteristics, along with the need to communicate in as many languages as possible, were making their presence very demanding.

Language-rooms, under a positive and logical function, exclude the old-fashion class facing method and consequently all the negative effects that derive from this. Within the novel frame, there is firstly co-operation between staff and students and secondly unbiased, autonomous and active learning.

Language-rooms provide a friendly environment that facilitates the circulation of knowledge due to the multitude of usage, the dialectic presence of recourses and the interaction of these with the students' needs and the development of their receptive and productive skills. Through this playful and highly productive approach the students familiarize themselves with civilization, society, and the cultural and lingual difference with the "others" who are so near to us and so far away at the same time. This leads in developing an intercultural consciousness which enables students to understand and accept the presence of other people, their languages and cultures, thus enriching their own. All these lead to unprejudiced tolerance and communication.

Language rooms facilitate organized student team work; enhance cooperation, knowledge discovering and sharing, feedback, and the continuous flow of cultural and other pieces of information. That is why the number of students per class in senior high schools (lyceums) should be reconsidered. Through audio and visual processes, the use of the World Wide Web, and through reading authentic material, elaboration of all the above and the consequent reaching to conclusions, the sharing of conclusions and discussion about them and the production of written material that shows understanding of what preceded are more than beneficial -colleagues that have the experience of this process can not but agree. Furthermore language rooms lead to the

personification of language learning, the understanding and adoption of the concept of life-long learning, the joy of learning and the constructing of the active European citizen who knows his/her rights and limitations, strengths and weaknesses.

One could consider language rooms to be more than beneficial as expansion of knowledge is one of the outcomes. Continuing, one could support that these rooms are the remedy, to a great extent, to the phenomenon and necessity of the mixed ability classes, in that students are encouraged to learn by following their personal rhythms in a friendly and flexible learning environment, satisfying their needs as they appear, through cooperation, by choosing from a variety of means and materials, through their own initiatives and thus being able to adopt and benefit from self assessment.

No matter how useful these rooms are, there is a negative side that reduces the unrivaled gains of this experience. The existence of only one or two in every senior high school (lyceum) is a drawback of major importance, as this does not allow the whole of the student population to participate and enjoy the experience. This is especially obvious in very big schools, where the timetable limitations allow the use of language rooms only by an apparent student minority. The preferable therapy for this disease should have been the adoption of the slogan: "Each room a language room", with each school department having its own cluster of rooms equipped and functioning like the existing language rooms. In any case, the analogy of language rooms should equal the number of teachers teaching in class at any given teaching hour. Students' life, performance and outcomes would greatly increase and teachers' productivity would increase as well. Within the frame of the alleged reform in the educational system this should be a priority.

The other equally serious drawback is the equipment itself, as this needs constant updating to use a term familiar to those involved in ITC. The need for interactive boards is paramount, but this does not solve the problem. Interactive boards should be interwoven with personal computers, a television set, a dvd recorder/player, the audio units, the headphones the mixers, copiers, laminating and binding machines and everything else that is used in

the language room that facilitates the process. Access to the internet should not be problematic as it is now in a big number of cases. Finally, what would greatly help the smooth function of schools on this issue would be the provision by the Ministry of education of a server that would provide the services needed to all schools. Last but not least is the need

for further teacher education and self education with INSET programmes that would first drive the fear of using technological means off a number of colleagues and would primarily show beyond any doubt that technology and the language room make life easier for everybody and provide better results.

The Use Of Technology In Developing a Project In The English Class A New Dimension In The Process Of Teaching-Learning Languages

N. Christodoulidou
Makarios Lyceum, Larnaca

The constant changes that occur around us-political, cultural, geographical, financial etc.,-seem to define the educational realities and priorities as the need of offering an integral education is becoming more urgent in order for us to create free thinking, independent future citizens that will be able to survive in a new multicultural-multilingual world. In order for us teachers to be updated with these needs and reach our academic goals, emphasis must be given to differentiated teaching instruction, approaches and materials that cater for the diverse needs of our students. The development of critical skills and the retrieval of information instead of the mere accumulation of knowledge are of ultimate importance. In the field of languages this is even more imperative as learners are called upon to respond to multilingual surroundings. This seems to be one of the greatest challenges that a language teacher is required to face as learners have different learning styles, and therefore learn, understand and perform in different ways. Being able to provide for the different levels, interests, and learning styles of our students involves 'inventing' a variety of methods and techniques that will keep students interested and enable them to consolidate what is being taught and reflect knowledge.

A reformed educational system should include the effort to provide a modern and human-centred General Education. A new humanistic approach to education should be introduced which will combine the scientific and technological knowledge with the cultivation of critical thinking and basic humanistic values. The introduction of computer studies and new technologies along with other interesting subjects which reflect the needs of a modern society should be an integral part of the teaching-learning process. Also, alternative methods that no longer focus on teacher-centered lessons should be considered so as for students to have the opportunities to flourish as independent, individual learners. All this will contribute to the reformation of the students' attitude towards the organisation of their learning process.

Many attempts have been made for the renovation and modernisation of teaching methodologies. Teachers try to change and adapt their teaching methods and techniques in order to keep the learners' interest high. Emphasis is no longer given to the accumulation of facts by passive

learners, but active learners are encouraged to develop the incentive to learn and develop free, critical thinking. The power of technology in the teaching-learning procedure seems to be great as we live in a time when learners are 'technology natives'. Methodologies and techniques that suggest the use of technological means are becoming a 'must' for a teacher who wants to achieve the best results for learners. Technology can be seen as a practical tool in teachers' hands that will enable them to enhance learning. Teaching languages in special language rooms with special equipment can be an example of how useful and effective technology can be in the teaching-learning procedure of foreign languages.

It is widely accepted that the use of technology can contribute significantly both to the learning process and the transformation of the traditional classroom to a pleasant, hands-on workshop where students appreciate and enjoy learning. The role of teachers is redefined as they are no longer mere transmitters of knowledge but they become counsellors, supporters, facilitators and guides. Having in mind that someone can learn more easily what they really like, we teachers, need to offer our students the incentives to develop their skills and initiative in the classroom. We need to motivate our students to work for themselves and find out what they can really do as students. This can be achieved through carefully prepared lessons in the language room and specifically through the development of projects. The project has a dual role to play. It can be approached both as a written piece of work and as a presentation with the assistance of technological means as both parts demand the use of technology. Written instructions and tips regarding the structure, the format and development of the assignment are given to the students beforehand. This will make the students feel secure and more able to tackle the task. Students are also given explicit instructions on how they should move to do a very good project and at the same time how to present it in front of an audience using a means of their choice. Specifically, they are given a handout with full, written instructions as to how to select their topic, go for the appropriate material, elaborate it

and finally produce a comprehensive piece of work on the topic selected. Also, there are instructions on how to acknowledge sources and bibliography. This information will help students understand what is expected from them and work towards this direction to produce a thorough research on a topic of their interest. The idea of presenting their work in front of an audience is always challenging for both teachers and students. It enables students to develop skills and gives the teaching-learning process a different dimension. Also, students are given the criteria on which their work will be assessed. Developing a project and presenting it in front of an audience may intimidate learners at the initial stages and they may feel rather hesitant but in the process they come to appreciate it and perform very well. It is very important for students to give originality to their work. It is impressive how authentic and creative young students can be in selecting and expanding on a subject. Technology is really important in this process as students use it according to their own needs, skills and knowledge. They may be urged to make use of technological means like the *Over Head Projector, Video Projector, Computer, TV, Flash Cards/Slides and Handouts with an outline of their work for the audience.*

Practice has shown that students feel enthusiastic about presenting their work and even more about using technology. More specifically technology has been used in different ways and according to students' computer competence. According to their level of difficulty and knowledge, students may use **Word Processing, Picture Editing and transparencies through the computer and they can use the Internet to search and retrieve information. For their presentation they may use a computer and a video projector (via MS Power Point Software). For the creation of a video clip they can use special software.** The whole procedure of presentations can also be filmed and students can produce a final CD including all the presentations. This will enhance interaction between students and will contribute to the development of team work spirit and cooperation.

Technology can definitely improve the quality of the teaching-learning procedure, but we can also see in practice that technology motivates students to use their imagination and creativity.

From my point of view, the most important aspect is that all this happens without students realising that the whole assignment is actually a part of an English language lesson!

Interactive Electronic Boards (IEB) alter the traditional teaching and learning environment

Aggela Charalmbous

Teacher Trainer

Seconded at the Pre-service Training Course

University of Cyprus



"Interactive electronic boards! Oh God another gimmick!!", a usual remark by a technophobic and technosceptical teacher. It is true that during the last decades EFL teachers are confronted with a myriad of challenging issues arising from the hastily expansion of information and communication technology (ICT): technological, administrative, practical, organisational and, most importantly, pedagogical issues. Although the technical facilities are available, transferring old pedagogy into the new

ICT-enhanced educational settings is not going to get teachers very far (Warschauer 1999). Indeed, it could be argued that a successful transition from a four-wall, teacher-centred classroom into an open, collaborative network-based learning environment involves a profound rethinking of teachers' rationale and role. S/he is no longer the only authority in possessing information and knowledge and the person who helps the students by guiding them to participate in the learning process actively and critically. S/he is a technician, a facilitator, a guide, and of course partner and a learner.

The interactive board is a powerful tool that facilitates teaching and learning. Nowadays an increasing number of teachers are using interactive whiteboards as part of their daily practice and research shows statistically significant improvement in student attitudes towards learning English and higher degree of satisfaction from EFL teachers. It is then a real need for teachers to have an input as to how this influential tool is used.

But what is actually an interactive board?

An interactive electronic board is a touch-sensitive board which is connected to a digital projector and a personal computer or a laptop. The projector displays the image from the computer screen on the board. Everything that can be displayed on a computer can be projected onto the interactive board as well, and, if the computer is linked to speakers and a DVD or video player, multimedia resources can be incorporated too. If the board is connected to the Internet, the teacher can have immediate access to appropriate websites. The variety of materials enables a greater selection of teaching strategies and activities to be used and for a wider range of learning skills to be addressed. When working at the interactive board is possible to make notes with a special pen, add comments, circle, and underline or highlight anything that is on the board. Changes made to information projected onto the board are transferred to the computer and can be saved and retrieved in future lessons.

Teleconferencing

Interactive boards offer the possibility of video conferencing during lessons. Links can be established with people outside the classroom and live video can be displayed on the board. Video conferencing enables the teacher to invite experts into the classrooms to contribute to lessons or collaborate with classrooms in other countries for the development of projects on certain topics. The video link can be recorded and replayed later in the lesson to recall what was said during the interview or the meeting.

Interactive boards have the potential to improve teaching and learning in many ways. Research says Interactive boards ...

- enable students to be more creative in presentations to their classmates, increasing self-confidence (*Levy 2002*)
- increase teaching time by allowing teachers to present web-based and other resources more efficiently (*Walker 2003*)
- offer more opportunities for interaction and discussion in the classroom, especially compared to other ICT (*Gerard et al 1999*)
- increase enjoyment of lessons for both students and teachers through more varied and dynamic use of resources, with associated gains in motivation (*Levy 2002*).
- encourage spontaneity and flexibility, allowing teachers to draw on and annotate a wide range of web-based resources (*Kennewell 2001*)
- inspire teachers to change their pedagogy and use more ICT, encouraging professional development (*Smith 1999*).
- increase enjoyment and motivation, greater opportunities for participation and collaboration, developing students' personal and social skills (*Levy 2002*)

- different learning styles can be accommodated as teachers can call on a variety of resources to suit particular needs (*Bell 2002*)
- improve planning because the board software allows them to structure their lessons before they teach them. The fact that lessons can be saved, complete with notes, and then easily altered, allows for improvement and refinement before the topic is taught again. Teachers can also create libraries of resources which build up as they use the whiteboard. (*Gerard et al 1999*)

Disadvantages

- Interactive boards are more expensive than any other ICT devices.
- Their surface can become damaged, necessitating expensive replacement.

How can we maximize the impact of interactive boards?

Using an interactive board to its full potential requires good planning and this will take time. However, lessons created for the board can be used again and again, with or without adaptations, which actually saves time in the long run. We need to invest time in training and experimentation to become confident users. We also need to explore the full range of capabilities of interactive boards and collaborate and share resources with other teachers. Autonomous learning presupposes not only the students working together but also us, teachers, being willing to exchange ideas with each other. Sharing should always provide the basis for progress. 'One for all and all for one' perfectly applies in our context and we should always be taken into/under consideration.

As schools in Cyprus are being fitted with interactive whiteboards there is a real need for teachers to play an active role in specifying the ways in which this extremely powerful tool is used. It is important to realise that using an interactive board on its own will not provide any magic solutions to our teaching problems. Nor should we feel forced to use it in every part of a lesson, or indeed in every lesson. Sometimes the board might only be used for a warming up stage, a plenary or group work. As with any resource, its use will have more impact when it is exploited appropriately to enhance teaching and learning. It is well known that no technology is ever going to replace the teacher, and we should never lose sight of the fact that all these things are merely useful tools that enhance teaching and learning. Teachers need to become learners to explore the potential of the new technologies with an open mind. They need to demonstrate the willingness to adapt their practices and change their norms in order to meet the current students' needs.

A good example of using the EIB is included herewith. The lesson was conducted at Lanitio A Lyceum on 17th April by two trainee teachers, Xenia Tsolaki Metaxa and Maria Kinni Soteriadou, during their Pre-service Training Course. The

implementation of the lesson constituted an innovative process and a rewarding experience for all participants, students and teachers (see lesson plan and comments below).

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What the trainee teachers said:

"Wow!!!! What an exciting journey – Yes! It was a journey, not a lesson, in the sense that a journey has the element of discovery that every lesson should have. Energy, discovery, excitement, enthusiasm, fun, absorption, emotions are just some of the words that can characterize the two hours we spent with the students in the language lab.

I cannot believe how much I have changed during the last 6 months when it comes to my relationship with technology in general. It seems like a lie that a few months ago I didn't even know how to turn on the computer. Now I realize that I had technophobia (whatever that is). I simply felt that technology is an enemy and that a good teacher should only depend on his whiteboard, pen and mind and that the computer, the internet and generally these interactive boards etc. were merely devices for the "lazy" teacher who lacked creativity and imagination.

Well, now I realize that I couldn't have been more mistaken. When I enrolled in an MA TESOL program and I took my first lesson in CALL (computer assisted language learning) and when I did my Pre-service with the University of Cyprus, a new wide window opened up for me; a window which showed me that if I familiarized myself with technology, my pre-existing imagination and creativity and resourcefulness would become unlimitedand then my students' chances to enjoy learning and to have 'journeys' like the one we had today would be made possible.

My simple advice is: "just begin experimenting with technology.....the rest will come.....and your life and teaching career will just fly up into the sky and reach new dimensions you have never experienced before.

Xenia Tsolaki Metaxa., Pre-service Training, University of Cyprus, Spring 2008.

"I have always loved taking risks, so I was not afraid of getting in touch with new technology. I know that this can be quite

dangerous at times, but my ultimate goal as an EFL teacher is to inspire, motivate my students and ensure them a unique learning experience. The Interactive Whiteboard lesson meant for me using more resources to inspire my students. Similarly, the students were absorbed by the high level of information and were really enhanced. The students praised its accessibility. They were especially appreciative of the fact that the Interactive Board made most of the new concept comprehensible. They had real fun manipulating the Interactive Board themselves. The tasks were authentic, ones that students perceive and will use outside of class. It provided students for different language levels, interests and learning styles. It also provided a variety of opportunities for students to interact. Education, language are evolving just like our world. As EFL teachers we shouldn't be left outside of this evolution. However, we should put learning goals ahead of technology!"

Maria Kijmi Soteriadou, Pre-service Training Course, University of Cyprus, Spring, 2008.

What Students said:

"Thank you so much for such a different lesson. I actually never felt I could write a diary based on another person's problems. Knowing that the poem, letter, songs were authentic, written by real teenagers who faced real problems, made me think and identify with their problems. But, what made the whole lesson unique as well, was the fact that the use of technology made the whole thing so interesting and so much closer to our world. The interactive board was WOW and the fact that we got to type the diary entry and present it on the interactive board was a great experience. Now I feel that when I go to the university I will feel at ease with the new classroom technological devices and who knows I may soon consider starting my own diary. It seemed to be interesting... and be sure that I will e-mail you and tell you about it.

Athena Ioannou, Class B (Lanatio Lyceum), Limassol.

"I am usually terribly bored when I have a 'double hour', regardless of the lesson. What impressed me is the fact that we didn't even realize that we had to go on a break because we were so involved in the tasks, so touched emotionally by the problems of those teenagers and so excited with the use of the interactive board and technology in general that we just did not look at the clock. I also enjoyed the 3 minute energizing game at the beginning and the songs... thanks. The diary sounds interesting, so I may try it out; not daily, but whenever I have a great joy or a great sadness."

George Pantelis, Class B (Lanatio Lyceum)



Creative Corner

How many times

How many times

Have I entered a classroom
Waiting for students to appear?

How many times

During teaching
With students deep in their dreams
Did I try to be cool
Keeping my temper under control?

How many times

In my attempt to teach
Grammar or vocabulary
Some students shouted or argued for nothing
Just for the sake of messing the lesson?

How many times

When correcting tests
Or assessing students' performance
And under the influence of coffees to be alert
Did I try to be as fair as possible?

How many times

After grades were given to students
Have I been made to feel guilty of my judgement?

'As many times as you count
You won't be able to figure out the number'
I admitted to myself
"cause you have been born
With so much patience
As to endure everything...
No matter if sometimes
You want to scream **'I WILL SURVIVE'**

Anna Michael
Idalion Lyceum

Despair

Always there
Trying to fight it back
Thinking of other things
- in vain-
It's always right behind and in front
Like a sharp cut through to the heart
No blood comes out, but the pain is there,
You feel the cut. It stings,
It hurts so much that you think you are dying,
You can't stand it anymore,
And death seems to be the best solution at times,
You wish for it cause it's going to relieve you,
- in vain again-

It seems that God wants to punish you more,
Wants to hit you harder,

But why?

You shouldn't think of things like that,
You should be more tolerant,

But how?

You know happiness is there,
You reach out and almost touch it,
You feel it at the tips of your fingers,
You stretch out a little more...
Now I'm gonna get it, you think,
Then a blow
-who or where from? You never know. Sends you back to the start,
And you wonder why
What have I done THAT wrong?
Why do I have to suffer so much?
Why me?
Why not you, unknown man?
But,
Why someone else?
Because...
He, from high up there thought you were strong enough
He knew you could stand your suffering
He knows you better than you know yourself.
So, stand up again on your own two feet.
Go on and live what has been given to you,
Life, call it
And it is.

Andri Kasapi
Deputy Head
Makarios Lyceum

Young people are as deserving of respect as adults. Listen to what they have to say and they'll know that their point of view is valued.

News in Brief

Summer School on “Using ICT Creatively in the Classroom” held at the Pedagogical Institute in Nicosia by Gavin Dudeney (17- 20 June, 2008).

In June (17-20) the Association committee organised a 4-day summer course entitled “Integrating ICT creatively in the EFL classroom”. The course was conducted by Gavin Dudeney, a British EFL expert and consultant and included innovative ICT applications such as wiki, blogs (& RSS), email exchange, online projects, webquests and podcasts. The course offered a hands-on and practical training; the 35 participants extended their ICT competence and knowledge and learned how to set up and apply these tools in their own teaching context. The second part of the seminar (follow up) will be conducted in May 2009. A detailed description of the course as well as some of the material and ways on how to set up and use in the classroom freely available Internet-based tools will be provided in our next issue (December 2008).

Aggela Charalampous



It has been repeatedly found that careful planning is a prerequisite for the effective implementation of technology in education. Technology is rapidly emerging as an important component of teaching and learning and reform in our schools. The demands of the 21st century and Cyprus being a member state of the European Union are again prerequisites of good practice and the entire adjustment in our methodology as well as the application of new teaching tools targeting the innovation and quality in our teaching.

In other words we are called upon today to apply such an education, affluent and flexible according to the demands and challenges of modern society and which will be focused on the creation of capable people who can adjust to this society of the future and not just reproduce knowledge but to pay special attention to how this knowledge is presented. Consequently, promoting a new perspective, presentation and analysis of

newly introduced information is a must. A new perspective that seeks pleasure through knowledge satisfies the student's curiosity and develops creativity.

This was our goal with this seminar which I believe it offered us all, the tools to achieve the above.

These four days gave us the opportunity to deal with an important area in our teaching methods with interaction among a number of colleagues and Gavin Dudeney. We have experienced many ways in which Technology can be used among which the fact that Technology can be used as an integral part of the curriculum to meet the needs of diverse learners. For example, it can introduce into the classroom exciting curricula based on real-world problems; provide scaffolds and tools to enhance learning; give students and teachers more opportunities for feedback, reflection, and revision; and build local and global communities where people gather and share information. Technology can help students recognize, organize, and represent knowledge.

Many thanks to the members of the committee for their work and organization beforehand, to Gavin Dudeney, who has put time and trouble to work for so many hours with us all and especially to our colleagues who spent four whole days working very hard and without any complaints.

We promise that we will continue our efforts and will do our best for the English teaching and for education in general.

Monica Grimaldi – Constantinou

Moments and Comments...



I really enjoyed it! Not much theory which was a good thing. Too many hints and ideas of how to make our lessons more interesting for our students with the use of ICT.



Thanks to this great seminar I have understood that I cannot go ahead without implementing technology in class. I have also learnt that I should not follow it blindly.

One of the best courses I have ever attended. Extremely valuable sources provided, though a little fast pace in places (for those who are immigrants to technology). I shall be recommending the course to my colleagues at my previous school!



A fantastic course! It has opened my horizons and we travelled to the unknown world that will take us a long time to explore in the future!

I have found this seminar very interesting as it has provided me with information about new approaches and techniques in teaching English. I feel that by applying what I have learnt in my classes students will be more interested and engaged in work continuously. Although it was an intensive seminar, it wasn't tiring for me because I learned new things.



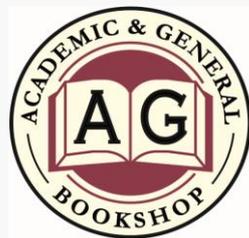
Many thanks for this very enlightening seminar and please arrange for a follow up



I found the 4-day seminar really amazing, not just because of the useful information, interesting sites and all the new things we've learnt but basically because I consider the seminar to have opened new horizons to my teaching (and personal!) perspectives



A very well organized course; too many tools in such a little time! Amazing! Hope to be able to participate in a second part and carry on this very useful work with more high-tech tools



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