

CyELT Journal

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O.E.L.M.E.K

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Bringing teachers of English together



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Giorgos Georgiou

Tel.99676028
99431939

Editorial consultant:
D.Taliadoros

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Drawings by students at
Rizokarpaso High School

Editorial

Educators enjoy students and the classroom environment. Learning is important, especially if the material will help the student enhance their economic and social well-being. Educators believe intelligence is normally distributed. This was the philosophy of the Ministry of Education and Culture for the school year 2008-09. The target set was Innovation and Creativity which promoted creativity, imagination, analytical, synthetical and critical thinking and decision making. Furthermore, it enhanced qualities and mechanisms such as acquisition of tolerance, respect for others and their culture qualitative improvement and coping with problems. This issue of our magazine is devoted to this goal with pieces of work created by colleagues.

Cultivate the culture of peaceful living together and the reciprocal respect and collaboration among Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots was the other target of the Ministry which is presented in our magazine with pictures and references of one of the trips the children of the Rizokarpaso Gymnasium have made.

Myself and our team of colleagues who have worked on this issue wish you a prosperous and full of stamina new school year.

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

CONTENTS

	Page
1.Karpasia Peninsula, Rizokarpaso High School: Maria Pavlides.....	2
2. Rizokarpaso High School, The Trips to London: Daniella Daniel	3
3.Rizokarpaso High School, A musical Event in Rizokarpaso:	
<i>Daniella Daniel</i>	5
4.Important Distinctions of Archangelos Gymnasium, Lakatamia in the	
<i>eTwinning programme-EU online magazine: Georgia Josif</i>	7
5. European Language Label 2009, The Joy of Learning Through	
<i>Creating: Christina Michala.....</i>	8
6.Thorns and Roses: Ioanna Pontiki, Niki Christodoulides.....	10
7.Implementing ICT Creativity in the English Classroom:	
<i>Chystanthi Nicodemou</i>	12
8.Stress Management-Workshop: Maria Zarpetea	14
9. My induction into the national educational system: Zoe Peponides.....	20

Karpasia Peninsula-Rizokarpaso High School

Maria Paulides

ArchBishop Makarios III Lyceum-Nicosia

The Karpasia Peninsula is one of the most prominent geographical features of Cyprus. Its farthest extent is Cape Apostolos Andreas, and its major community is that of Rizokarpaso. It lies about 67 klm northeast of the town of Ammochostos. The 1960 population of this community consisted of 3151 Greeks and two Turks.



The two Primary Schools that operated here before the Turkish Invasion of 1974 had during the 1973-74 school year 277 students. It is said that the Rizokarpaso is probably the first village to have its own Gymnasium. The Rizokarpaso Gymnasium first operated in 1917 and is well known for its classic architectural design with its Physics and Chemistry laboratories, thanks to the financial support by the then rich monastery of Apostolos Andreas.

After the Turkish invasion and occupation of 1974 1174 Greeks continued to live here under very difficult conditions and the illegal rule of the so called the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Today only a very small number of people continue to be enclaved here. The occupation forces and the illegal occupation authority prohibit the return of the rest of the Greek population of the community to their properties. The illegal Turkish occupation regime adopted a policy of oppression in an effort to drive these people out of their homes and properties.

The agreement on 2 August 1975 in Vienna, known as the Vienna III agreement, stipulated that the Greek Cypriots and Maronites, who had remained in the occupied part of Cyprus, would be free to stay, be reunited with the families and given every help to lead a normal life, including facilities for education.

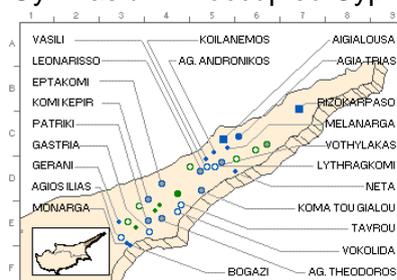
On 24 June 2003, the Parliamentary

Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) adopted a resolution condemning Turkey and the Turkish Cypriot occupation regime for violations of the rights and freedoms of the enclaved. The Assembly further demands that the

occupation regime and Turkey end the dispossessions affecting members of these communities, and among others ensure freedom of education.

After 29 years, on 13 September 2004, the school bell rang for the first time at the Rizokarpaso Gymnasium in the occupied areas of the Republic of Cyprus. The Government's deliberations on the reopening of the Rizokarpaso Gymnasium, which lasted many months, finally produced results.

On 4 August 2004, the United Nations informed the Government that the occupation regime had accepted its proposals regarding the reopening of the Gymnasium, under the same conditions as the Rizokarpaso elementary school. This development signaled the reopening of the first Turkish occupied Greek Cypriot Gymnasium in occupied Cyprus.



The map shows the location and the names of the villages alongside the

peninsula towards Cape Apostolos Andreas.

Adapted from:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karpass_Peninsula

The PIO site on: THE CASE OF THE "ENCLAVED" GREEK CYPRIOTS

From Kyprosnet (Kypros.org)

Rizokarpaso High School -The Trip to London

Daniella Daniel

English Teacher-Rizokarpaso

Working in Rizokarpaso High School is a rather heartwarming experience. Spending time with the twenty-five students there last year (twenty-three this year) is immensely rewarding and fulfilling. However, simply teaching them is just not enough. An educator's role there is multiple. A teacher in Rizokarpaso should spend quality time with the students, share thoughts with them, show them love and affection and of course make it absolutely clear to them that s/he is there to support them academically but most of all emotionally.

Rizokarpaso students are exceptionally amiable teenagers who show their feelings without any reservation. They will approach you and talk to you right away and start a conversation with you without any inhibitions. Frankness and openness above all! After having spent some time with them, you realise that they deserve a lot. They, of course, live a totally different life to the teenagers in the free areas of Cyprus. Life in their village is rather slow, quiet, without the hassle of afternoon private lessons or the benefits of entertainment such as the cinema, the theatre, parties and other activities that keep our teenagers over here perpetually busy and alert. The effects of all these are obvious. Rizokarpaso children are almost the way students used to be thirty years ago. Highly respectful and innocent; an absolute pleasure to work with! Nevertheless, times are changing. Therefore, these children definitely need to be exposed to as many positive influences outside their world as possible.

Subsequently, it was not very difficult for me to come up with the idea of organising a trip to England for them. Being an English teacher, I thought that the English Department could set up a project that would give the students the chance to come into contact with other ways of life and get to know the British culture through visits to museums, historical places, parks and more. With the permission of the acting

director at the time, Christos Valerkos, and the precious help of my colleague (English teacher) Eleni Papayianni, we set to work.

First and foremost, we needed money to cover all the trip's expenses. Thankfully, funding was very kindly, promptly and generously offered by private contributors. Without these donations the trip would not have materialised, thus the teachers and students of Rizokarpaso High School are grateful to them. Announcing the fact that we had finally managed to secure money for our venture delighted the students. This was a dream for them!

The trip programme included visits to places such as Madame Tussauds, the London



Zoo, the Natural History Museum, the London

Dungeons, the London Eye, the British Museum, Regent's park, Legoland, Windsor castle and so on; always having in mind that learning should be combined with entertainment.

The excursion was from the seventh until the twelfth of July 2008 and the group consisted of twenty-three students and three accompanying teachers.



Thankfully everything worked out extremely well and the students truly enjoyed it. They

marvelled at everything new and different.

They tried to take in anything unusual and appreciated this great opportunity to experience such a special and different culture.

However, the greatest pleasure was ours, the teachers'. The spontaneous question "Where are we going next year, Miss?" was totally gratifying. Seeing these children getting excited and admitting that this trip was a lifetime experience for them was unbelievably touching. It was all well worth it, despite the hard work, the worries and the tiredness. After all, they deserved it...

Students' views:

"When we went to London we liked sharing hotel rooms because all of us got together and had fun. We played cards, other games even football! We had the opportunity to do all the silly things we wanted to do together which we would not have done had we been in Rizokarpaso. It was an unforgettable experience."

(Panos Prodromou & Dimitris Kotsiekas, Class A Lyceum)

"When I found out that we were going to London I was joyful and astounded. I have always wanted to visit London so now I knew this experience would be out of this world! My expectations came true. We visited new places such as Madame Tussauds, the British museum, the zoo and so

on. However, what I enjoyed the most was the London Dungeons because they were full of action. There was a court case, murders, London on fire and so on. Everything was fantastic and all the students wanted to go there again. All in all, it was an extraordinary trip which we will never forget."

(George Prodromou, C Lyceum)

"We had a terrific time in London and we definitely owe it all to our sponsors to whom we are thankful"

(Andreas Sinainou, Class C Lyceum)

Last summer I went to London with the rest of my school. It was a really wonderful experience. We went around London but what I liked best was the London Dungeons. It was the first time I

saw such a thing! It was scary and ghastly. You could see how people were tortured in the past which was really horrid. Another place I liked was the London Eye. From there I saw the whole of London and it was brilliant! I will never forget this trip! I wish I could travel there again!"

(Katerina Sottou, Class C Lyceum)

"When I heard that we might go to London I felt delighted! It would be the first time I would go to England and I might not be given this opportunity to go there again. As soon as I was told we would finally go to England I was ecstatic! However, at the end of the trip I was depressed because I didn't want to leave. During our stay in

England I had an amazing time. We saw magnificent sights and unbelievable places. I will never forget this extraordinary visit."

(Michaella Sinainou, Class B Lyceum)

"We went to a lot places and we learned a lot from this trip. All the places were interesting and fascinating. What stands out most in my mind though was when we had dinner at the Cypriot Community Centre hosted by the Association of Rizokarpaso. We felt extremely welcome there. We danced and sang with our compatriots and we generally had a very pleasant and enjoyable evening. We should also mention however our guide, George, who was particularly informative and helpful."

(Maria Harpa, Class C Lyceum)

For more information you can go to the school's site: <http://www.schools.ac.cy/gym-rizokarpaso-fam/> and click on "Trip to London- Andreas Sinainou".



Rizokarpaso High School-A Musical Event In

*Daniella Daniel
English Teacher-Rizokarpaso*

Rizokarpaso High School organised a musical event on Monday 4th May 2009 which proved to be a huge success. The event was within the framework of this academic year's target to promote peaceful living amongst Greek and Turkish Cypriots. It was, thus, dedicated to "Cyprus, the land for all Cypriots".

The room where the event took place was filled with people: Greek Cypriots from Rizokarpaso and Ayia Triada, Turkish Cypriots, as well as many Greek Cypriots from Nicosia and other parts of the island, who had travelled all the way there despite the distance and the fact that the event was held on a working day.



The evening started off with a speech by the acting headmistress of the school who wished for peace once again on this island. Then, Mr. Tornaritis' (Chairman of the Committee on Educational Affairs) address, contained a strong message of support and encouragement:

"Music strengthens hope and this is accomplished through this musical event which is held within the framework for the promotion of peaceful coexistence between Greek and Turkish Cypriots. You do know, my dear friends, how to hold this hope close to your hearts because you know very well that a divided homeland cannot exist. You know full well what tolerance and respect mean in diversity and multiculturalism. You know what it means to be active European citizens!"

Next, the students of Rizokarpaso High school read out Cypriot poems written by both Greek and Turkish Cypriot poets and sang traditional Cypriot songs.



These children's message to all of us was for reconciliation and peace so that all Cypriots can live together again just like they used to. The apogee was Andreas Sinainou's poem (a third year Lyceum student) which related to swallows flying over Cyprus:

"....they fly just as beautifully both in the North and the South! I wonder if they know anything about borders and state entities."



And,

"Perhaps next time we will be more prudent, more mature, more worthy, and wiser....."

Three Turkish Cypriot entertainers also participated in the event by singing old Cypriot songs and Tsiatista (short Cypriot rhymes) in perfect Greek Cypriot!

Feride Kulucan began her first poem by urging everyone:

“Come on all of us...Let’s make up”.

The Nicosia Music School astounded everybody with its performance. The quality of their show was absolutely outstanding and the audience was really amazed by the Cypriot songs in both languages.

The evening ended with traditional Cypriot songs and dances performed by Greek Cypriot singers and the “Vasilitzia” group.



It was an evening of reminiscence, fond memories, warm feelings and above all of messages for reconciliation, love and rapprochement.

After the end of the event, people gathered outside in the school yard to talk about what they had seen. They were genuinely delighted. A refreshing breeze of hope blew over the beautiful village of Rizokarpaso. Maybe these young students of Rizokarpaso had a very significant message to convey: *Cyprus is a place for all of us*. There is room for us all, under the gorgeous sky of this magnificent yet troubled place.

George Georgiou (a Cypriot artist, 1901-1972) was right:

“Art will bring all of us together one day. It will be a mysterious union, which will not consider who we are, our political affiliations, religion, convictions and beliefs.”

Let’s just all hope so!



Pahiammos,
Apostolos Andreas



Important Distinctions of Archangelos Gymnasium, Lakatamia, in the eTwinning Programme- “EU online magazine

Georgia Iosel

We are pleased to inform you that Archangelos Gymnasium, Lakatamia, under my co-ordination, has secured two important distinctions: the “eTwinning Quality Labels” which are granted to teachers with excellent eTwinning projects indicating that the project has reached a certain national and European standard. For this reason, there are two labels: the National Quality Label and the European Quality Label. We will be very glad if you include our success in the CyELT Journal.

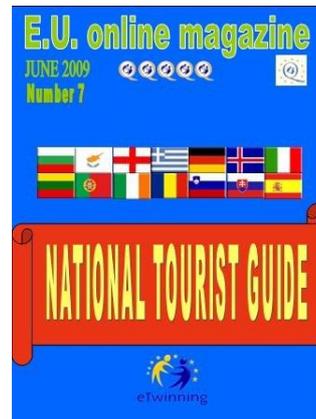


Specifically:

◆ Following evaluation, our school received the ‘National Quality Label’ from the Cyprus National Support Service (NSS), which is a concrete recognition to teachers and schools of the high level for their eTwinning activities. For pupils, this offers a boost to their work efforts and for the school in general, a public affirmation of their commitment to quality and openness in European collaborative work. The National Support Service (NSS) in each country evaluates applications from schools for the National Quality Label. The following criteria are necessary because a project has to broadly achieve excellence in these areas: (1) Sustainability, (2) Use

of ICT (Information Communications Technology) within the project, (3) Results and benefits, (4) Curricular integration, (5) European dimension, (6) Innovation/creativity, and (7) Overall quality.

◆ More importantly, as a result of this development, our school has achieved the next (second) level of success, the acquisition of the ‘European Quality Label’. It is awarded automatically by the Central Support Service (CSS) which is based in Brussels, to schools in a project where at least two partners have already received a National Quality Label by their respective NSS. This second distinction appears on the eTwinning Portal and the project on the web site “www.etwinning.net”. The certificate can also be published in the web site of our School. This unique label denotes that the work of teachers, students and schools has been recognised at the highest European level.



◆ It is noted that only four countries – Portugal, Slovenia, United Kingdom and Cyprus (namely our school) - of the 18 which are participating in the project, have received the certificate which enabled them to take part in the competition for the ‘European Quality Label’.

Archangelos Gymnasium, Lakatamia has been taking part in the eTwinning

programme “EU Online Magazine”, since 7/11/08. This is published on a monthly basis in English and Greek and tackles various specific subjects.



Eighteen countries are taking part in the project. The coordinator is Mr Antonio Monteiro Silva from Portugal and the aim of the project is for the children to gain a new perspective on Europe and a new sense of the need and importance of the English language in the present day. That is why the studies are written in English and in the local language of each participating country.

Our school is taking part only with 3rd class

students (aged 15-16) and the general age group covered by the project is 9 – 18 years.



The subjects published so far and to be published until next June are the following:

- ◆ “How we celebrate Christmas”,
- ◆ “My School”,
- ◆ “My Town”,
- ◆ “Our National Symbols”,
- ◆ “Easter Time”,
- ◆ “Our Past and Present Heroes: history, sports, music, arts, literature”,
- ◆ “National Tourist Guide: some of the most interesting places to spend holidays”.

European Language Label 2009

The joy of learning through creating

Christina Michala
Athienou Gymnasium

Undoubtedly, our utmost goal as educators is to challenge our students into the realms of creativeness and thus lead them to their inner need to develop and improve themselves. This can simultaneously take the form of learning, a joyous learning that shapes through personalities.

We, the teachers of Athienou Gymnasium, thought that the European Language Label 2009 Competition would give our students the chance to express their thoughts and feelings through creating. We named our project “We are young and green, but keen ecologists indeed”. Our aim was to encourage them to become more sensitive towards nature; we wanted to kindle their need to be close to nature, to feel that they

belong there, to take care of it and run to it in times of difficulties and weaknesses.

The final outcome was a beautiful box made with recycled paper and decorated with dried wild flowers. The box contained an original book made again with recycled paper. The book included different and impressive projects full of imagination and



sensitivity. The students also expressed themselves in poetry praising the beauty of nature and showing concern towards the destruction and pollution of our planet. Moreover, they talked about “Trash Art” and showed their works of art created with materials that would otherwise end up in rubbish bins. This experience helped them to become even keener ecologists and they also proved to themselves that they can be great artists.



The box also contained a wonderful calendar. The students painted relevant pictures for every month and these were accompanied by poems in three different languages,

Greek, English and French. In addition our students showed their imagination by writing an interesting fairy tale in Greek. This was then translated into English and French by other students.

The three stories were written in three tiny and cute books made of recycled paper and were illustrated by different students.

Our students' creativeness didn't stop here. They took photographs of different scenes of nature and accompanied them with positive and wise thoughts about nature and its soothing effect on man.

We started this project sometime in November. The more we worked on it the more ideas came to our mind. The whole



procedure was a school-like experience to both teachers and students. We had our highs and lows. Quite often they surprised us pleasantly with their original ideas and remarkable achievements. However, there were times when they almost disappointed us when they were late to hand in some work or when it was not what we expected. They tried hard and they did their best. The students' excitement soared to the sky as they sang the song they composed by themselves with the title “Toute sa vie” which was in Greek, English and French. This is on a DVD which also contains dramatized poems and a play entitled “The kidnapping”. This was acted out in the open air just outside the village of Athienou on the archaeological site of Malloura. The students felt like professional actors and actresses. Our students are young and “green” but they proved themselves keen ecologists indeed. They put in many hours of hard work and they used their mind, heart and spirit.

The whole experience was worth every effort. We hope that those who come across the project will draw as much joy and satisfaction from it as we felt while creating it.



Thorns and Roses

*Ioanna Pontiki Deputy Head A
Niki Christodoulides
Makarios III Luceum, Larnaca*

**“Some people are always grumbling because roses have thorns,
I’m grateful that thorns have roses!”**

Thorns and Roses have been our stimulus in order to present the different aspects of teenage life. Students were attracted by the idea of working together as an extension of their English lessons.

Actually, the whole idea derived from the students’ inner need to express some feelings and thoughts they experience during this period of their life. They had the chance to interact with other students, exchange ideas and opinions and at the same time realise what other problems students have to deal with during this specific period.

Furthermore, through the project procedures the students were able to develop their individual skills such as singing, painting, writing lyrics and poetry, composing music, writing articles, computer skills, etc. Enriching their knowledge and sharing their work with their peers in a creative and innovative way was our goal. We knew they would gain tremendously by using the

English Language either in its written or oral form while preparing their material. As a result, they developed their skills, grew as personalities and broadened their horizons. In addition, the various skills they would acquire in creating the material, organizing it and presenting it, were of the utmost importance.

This was a constructive experience for both students and teachers alike as we had the role of facilitators and mentors in the accomplishment of this project. Students



were excited when they realized that education can definitely go beyond the classroom and be an enjoyable experience.

We have also created our own blog where we have uploaded our project. You are more than welcome to visit our blog and express your feelings and opinions too....
<http://thorns-and-roses-of-youth.blogspot.com>

What made you decide to get involved in this project?

I decided to participate in this project after consideration because of my busy schedule. The whole idea of presenting this subject in an exhibition on the theme of Creativity and Innovation fascinated me because the theme “Thorns and Roses of Youth” is part of our world. It is always interesting for the teenagers themselves to express their ideas on the joys and worries of their age.

Angelina Paraskeva

I decided to get involved in this project because I believe that it is a good way to be creative on a specific aspect. Honestly, I am always complaining because our educational system lacks creativity, but this project comes to change my view. In addition, this project is a chance to co-operate with other students and our teachers, Ms Ioanna Pontiki and Ms Niki Christodoulidou. I am sure that this will be a perfect experience for me.



Vasiliki Panteli

I decided to get involved because this project is creative. Through thought and creativity people can achieve a great deal.

Demetris Economou

I decided to get involved in the project because I wanted to feel the sense of belonging to a group of people of my age who are trying to establish their ideas and feelings and, of course, because I love singing.

Eftihia Michael

I decided to get involved in this project because I really like the English language and I enjoy using it in many ways. I also wanted to co-operate with other students at my age in order to develop together this project which will be seen by other people. I am really looking forward to our presentation.

Ioanna Pavlou



My first thought was that it would be a great experience and something different from all the other English lessons. Also, it would be a new experience since our joint effort and the end product would be presented in a Pancyprian exhibition on the theme of "Creativity and Innovation".

Marina Ioannou



Our writers.....

Teenage can be seen as a rosebush from which thorns and roses grow. The teenage years can be an emotional process for all concerned such as the teenager in relation to family, friends and society in general. Adolescence is a period of storm and stress. It is dominated by rebellion and conflict. It is a time of rapid physical development and deep emotional changes. It is the first step to the development of our personality. However, the thorns of adolescence are closely intertwined with the roses. The pleasures of being a teenager are many and

various. They make dreams and look ahead with fresh eyes, determined to make their dreams come true.

Aristi Volou

Most people say that teenagers lead the best period of their lives, that they are happy without worries and problems just because they are free from responsibilities and serious family commitments. But indeed teenagers have many problems and temptations, too. The life of a teenager is, certainly, no bed of roses. Teenagers have their own difficulties and worries some of which are very serious. They try to overcome them, but sometimes they use wrong means and they make serious mistakes and regret it later. Once teenagers come to the end of this path which is strewn with "thorns", having managed to cope with the problems of this period of their life, they will be better equipped to deal with the life's problems.

Marianna Chrysostomou

Be Healthy: *As a teenager you will experience many changes in your body. Boys will develop more muscles, grow taller, etc. During this growth spurt, it will do you well to learn to take care of your body. Keep yourself clean and well groomed, eat the right diet and remain physically active. What you do now will lay the foundation for your state of health in the future.*

Be Wise: *Maintain close contact with your parents and older people. This is the time when you actually need the guidance and support of your parents and older people.*

Choose Your Friends: *The Company you keep will have a great effect in your teenage life. Choosing the right circle of friends will save you a lot of troubles, heartaches and possibly a life of deep regret.*



Our artists.....

*I was in the class just waiting to become older,
You were eighteen, just before becoming a soldier,
Inside my dream was the first time I saw your face
And when the dream came true,
my heart was gonna break
Yes, It's love, it's a teenage
love!
I was wondering if I'd see
him again
And his figure was filling my
brain
I was hopeful that something
would begin
But this hope at the end,
cheated on me
Yes, it's love, it's a teenage love
I was whispering 'love you' in the dark
But you passed me quickly and you broke my heart
I was standing there holding that dream
Which finally became the sweetest memory
Yes, it was love, a teenage love!*



Youth

There once was a boy who lived by the rules
He did as was told and had nothing to lose
Troubled enough, he chose now to choose.
As he had known he had nothing to lose
The first thing he did, he cut off a rose
He removed all the thorns and gave it to Rosa.
The first thing she did, she gave him a kiss
His life was now perfect, became full of bliss

* * *

Youth is like a summer morn
Like a summer day
Like a nice, cool breeze
On a very hot day

Youth

"Daydream, I fell asleep amid the flowers,
for a couple of hours, on a beautiful day.
Daydream, I dream of you amid the flowers,
for a couple of hours, such a beautiful day."
Free of my worries, I hear your voice;
I follow the sound that led to my rejoice.
Your name is youth, and so is your form,
familiar to me but still so unknown.
Open your eyes or give me a sign,
yours truly, I say, forever be mine

Demetris Economou

Implementing ICT creativity in the English classroom

*Chrysanthi Nicodemou
Aradippou Lyceum, Larnaca*

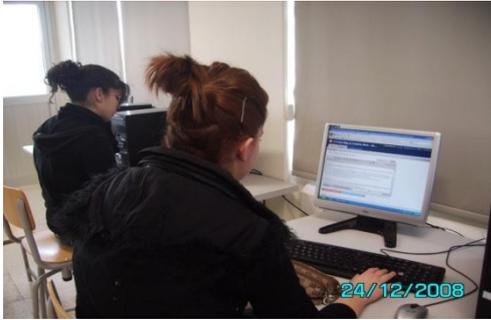
It has taken me a four day training seminar in June 2008 to realize the full potential and usefulness of ICT in the English classroom. I was intrigued by the web2.0

Is such as twitter, blogs, wikis, podcasts, webquests and I made a promise to myself that I would implement more technology in my classroom than just students sending me emails, attachments, doing power-point presentations and watching videos. Undoubtedly, my computer skills came to be very handy, especially when I extended them by taking the summer computer lessons (ΤΠΕ) organized by the Pedagogical Institute. It was a computer based summer for me but

I have no regrets as my further attainment of skills in programs such as Access and Excel have helped me immensely in my work at school.



Specifically, I used Excel to prepare the spreadsheet for the questionnaire and the analysis of it required for the Comenius Project I am involved in. In Access, I have made individual student forms with all the usernames and passwords of my students' accounts; students very easily forget such details.



I made an action plan at the beginning of the school year that I could implement in my two A'classes in Aradippou Lyceum. To start with, I made sure all my students had an email account; in fact, a few didn't have one and I encouraged my students to email me their news and also send me their work. I requested access to the computer lab since there was no internet connection in the language room. I was very lucky to fit my two classes for one period of the week in the computer lab. Going to the computer lab started in November. Without the support of the school headmistress and the two computer teachers, I wouldn't have been able to implement e-learning to my classes. The next step was to introduce **twitter** to them. Thanks to twitter, I kept up with my students' news and Gavin Dudeney's, the EFL summer course trainer. Also, there are some useful tips how to make better use of twitter. By following Gavin's links, I was automatically introduced to new information and tools which have helped me in making my class wiki, and later, the class blogs more interesting. My learning about ICT in the classroom didn't stop at the end of the summer course but it continued due to my continuous use of technology via the Internet. I set up a wiki in November and created accounts for my students. The first task was a chain story. I added more folders and pages and uploaded students' files on

the wiki. I struggled to embed some extra tools in my wiki and I was thrilled when I managed to do that in January 2009. Students have the advantage to produce work in the wiki from school and home, edit their work and others' work, leave comments etc.

Meanwhile, I involved some of my students in email exchange with foreign students so that they could work on their writing plus have a real pen-friend and learn about other cultures. It's not much of a challenge to just send letters to your teacher. It was a great load of work for me to find classes from abroad and create, in a safe site, new email addresses for my students. I matched my students according to their requests of male or female pen-friend. So far, they have exchanged emails on their profiles, a typical day in their life, how the environment affects their life and details about their culture. I set it as a mini project. My students have been very enthusiastic about their email exchange



so that makes it rewarding for them and me. Of course, while those students were dealing with email exchange in the lab, the other students were occupied with work on the wiki. I feel that joining another community, as my students and I did, is one of the greatest techno uses in a foreign language class. Students have not only learned about culture but also the geography of places, variations of styles of writing and interesting words; my students were curious to learn about Texas and the nearby states. Of course, once they finish the project, they will publish their work in their wiki and/or blog so that they can share their experiences with other students and people in their school, country and the whole world.

I strongly feel a teacher must have a blog before creating one for the class and assisting students to use it. My involvement with a Comenius project was the perfect excuse for me to create a blog to keep a record of my trip to Spain in November and



the events which took place. It's great feedback for me, other teachers and students involved in the project.

Prior to creating my project blog, I created a blog during the ICT summer course which only had a name. I just couldn't leave it blank. I took the opportunity to work on it and post the questions for my students' assignments and I enriched it with a clustrmap and some other useful tools. Students know that their assignment questions are in the blog, not just on paper. Then, it was natural for me to take the next step, the creation of a class blog for my classes to post their assignments.

Apparently, I created two blogs, one for each class. It took me and my students a lot of time and effort to create google accounts and activate them on time; some invitations I sent my students expired so I had to send invitations again plus show my students how to use the blog. They had no idea about blogs and wikis. It wasn't easy but it was very rewarding having the pleasure of accomplishment.

I feel a big relief that I managed to set the wiki and blogs and have accounts for the students. Once the instruction on how to use them is out of the way, students can work autonomously and creatively at their own pace and time. There were times the students were frustrated with technical problems or mistakes they made in using technology but it is all part of the learning experience. I have made mistakes too but I learned from them. It was worth to dare use web2.0 tools.

I haven't counted the hours I spent on my PC but it has been a rewarding learning experience for me and my students. We have used the web tools along with our school work and the lessons have become more fun and motivating for the students. The greatest satisfaction for me has been the pleasure of having varied my teaching methodology so as to make a greater contribution to my students' English language learning.

Stress Management-Workshops

Maria Zarpetea-Ioannou

The workshops were conducted by Ms. Maria Zarpetea Ioannou, English Language teacher at Paliometochi Lyceum, in collaboration with the Pancyprian Association of Teachers of English and they were held in Larnaca (4th February), Limassol (25th February), Nicosia (4th and 18th March) and Paphos (27th March 2009).

They were based on a Comenius in-service training course she attended at Cap d'Ail, France, from 2nd to 10th November 2008. The course was on Stress Management at School and focused on ways in which

educators can identify and deal with both their own and their students' stress.

The aim of the two-hour workshops was to engage participants in activities that would help create a positive classroom environment, with increased awareness of emotions and perspectives, as well as cultivate reflection and communication skills. Theory and guidelines were drawn from hands-on experience and there was continuous active participation through pair, group and plenary work.

The workshops started with a brief presentation including visual material of the course content and the types of activities engaged in. This was followed by first-hand experience of some representative activities, which always ended in feedback and discussion. The participants were asked, among others, to play games, act and use their imagination.

The principle on which the workshops were based was that teachers need to be positive role models for their students in the domain of stress management, so they should be able to manage their own stress in order to be in a position to help their students deal with their stress too.



The first activities aimed at getting to know each other so that everyone would feel comfortable and stress levels would be reduced. Such activities should be chosen carefully so that they fit into individual educational settings and satisfy three important criteria:

- 1) There should be no competition in them.
- 2) They should not be humiliating.
- 3) They should be fun.

1. Getting to know each other

a) **Favourite Relaxation Position:** chairs in a circle /everybody/starting with the teacher/s/he says his/her name and assumes his/her own favourite relaxation position.

b) **Parents – teacher groups:** groups of five/one teacher – the others parents/each one talks about:

1. the view from their childhood window
2. their favourite childhood toy
3. their first schoolbag
4. their favourite teacher

5. how the teacher in the group can help the children of the other group members

2. Team Spirit Activities

A team spirit activity was then used as a challenge to bring team members closer and engage them in action that releases tension. It was a problem solving exercise that involved communication and brainstorming to achieve a collective result.

Company: groups of five: you have a company that produces condoms. A batch has come out defective. Brainstorm in your group and write down as many ideas as possible on how to use them so as to avoid waste. You have 5 minutes.

3. Stress awareness activity

A stress awareness activity enabled participants to identify where in their body they usually feel stress and where happiness, as it is important to be aware of and name both positive and negative emotions and sensations.

T walks on the floor making the shape of an imaginary human body (alternatively a model of a body may be drawn on the floor or made with paper).

Where in your body do you feel stress?
Where in your body do you feel happiness?

Stand on the part where you have the feeling.

T asks some Ss to explain.

4. Safety exercises

Next, safety exercises allowed participants to trust each other and to function together, completing each other, thus increasing group safety and decreasing stress.

a) **Heat walking:** in pairs/one blindfolded/the other keeps his/her hands over his/her partner's until they feel the heat (not touching)/the person who can see slowly leads the other, without speaking, with the heat of his/her palms/change roles

How did it feel to be blind?

How did it feel to be the leader?

b) **In the hands of the group:** 5-6 persons in a circle with one in the middle/the person in the middle closes his/her eyes and crosses his/her arms over his/her chest/some of the others gently push this person forward, backward, sideways and the rest catch him/her/take turns to go into the middle



5) Beginner's mind

"Beginner's mind" was a surprisingly revealing activity based on the principle that with the mind of a beginner you look at life again with the freedom of a different perspective. Critical thinking is developed, as accepted approaches to common everyday experiences are questioned and new ones are discovered. Thus each moment is lived to the full as a wholistic experience.

Sitting in a circle with eyes closed and a hand open, imagine an alien has come from outer space and brought an object you have never experienced before.

T puts a raisin in each person's hand.

Take it between your fingers and feel it – feel its weight, shape, texture.

Take it near your ear and gently squeeze it – what sound does it make?

Smell it.

Put it in your mouth and feel it with your tongue – bite into it and taste it.

What is it?

When did you realize it?

How was the experience of rediscovering such a common object from a new perspective?

6. Conflict resolution / problem solving / emotional intelligence

Following this, participants were given the opportunity to engage in two emotional intelligence activities, a game with dice and a creative expression activity with pantomime and drama. Recognition, awareness and expression of emotions, one's own and others' (emotional sensitivity), constitute the first step towards handling these emotions. Feelings are thus managed so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly towards their common goals. Interpersonal concern and empathy,

taking the perspective of others and looking at feelings as separate from behaviour enable people to handle difficult situations in a calm and sympathetic way.

a) **Dice game with feelings:** groups of 4-5.

Take turns to throw the dice. Each number corresponds to a feeling as follows:

1. Love
2. hate
3. Surprise
4. Fear
5. Pleasure
6. Sadness

When you throw a number, you tell the others in your group about the last time you had the corresponding feeling.

When and where was it?

What happened?

Why did you feel like that? etc

b) **Expressing feelings through pantomime and drama:** groups of five

Each group draws five pieces of paper with feelings written on them from a bag (there are both positive and negative feelings). They have to prepare a short performance to express the five feelings they have drawn through pantomime and drama. The audience guess which feelings are expressed.

7. Communication styles

The activity that followed was a walking exercise in which participants had to use particular communication styles (aggressive, passive, aware). Through observation of their own feelings and behaviour as well as the behaviour of others and its effect on themselves they were able to realize that each style is different and that in each individual situation they need to adopt an appropriate style. In communication the two parts involved are Me and the Other. In aggressive communication there is only Me. In the passive mode the Other runs you over and you experience defeat. However, in the balanced communication style you respect the Other's communication style and feel your being and their being together. It is important to do the right thing on the right spot. When you have a fixed mind, you always do the same thing, but when you have an open mind, you change in accordance to the circumstances of your life.

walking exercise (backwards from the outer part of a circle to the centre, with eyes closed)

- 1) Every time you bump into someone, you feel guilty.
- 2) Every time you bump into someone, you feel like a bulldozer (I was here first)

3) Every time you bump into someone, you are just aware.

4) Participants numbered 1, 2, 3. In turns they take on a different role each

(all those with the same number have the same role) – 3 times so that each one experiences all 3 roles in a mixed group.

8. Being capable of saying “No”

A part of effective communication is being capable of saying “no”. Participants engaged in a question / answer activity, where they had to reflect on their feelings concerning each answer. If we always have to give the same answer, we need to have a look at our attitude and feelings, because sometimes saying “no” to somebody else is saying “yes” to ourselves. People feel guilty when they take time for themselves. Some people are always ready to serve others, wanting to be good persons, to please, so that everybody will love them. These attitudes result in not being able to say “no”. However, when you take care of yourself first, then your presence is radiating. After all, you always put on your own oxygen mask on the aeroplane if necessary before helping others. Also, there is always the option of not giving an answer but asking for some time to think about it.

Communication exercise

1. Can you lend me some change as I have to make a call?
2. Can I come by tomorrow for lunch?
3. Can you open the door for me?
4. Will you tell me what your second name is?
5. Can you bring me a glass of water?
6. May I borrow this book?
7. Can you tell me who your doctor is?
8. Can you please move closer so that I can hear you?
9. Can you lend me 50 cent so that I have sufficient money for parking?
10. May I borrow this CD from you?
11. Can I borrow your coat during the meeting? I’m so cold.
12. Can we go together to the cinema this weekend?
13. Can you make a copy for me?
14. Can you tell me where you go shopping?
15. May I borrow a pen?

16. Will you tell me where you have your hair cut?

17. May I have your address?

18. May I ring you tonight?

19. Can we shop together next week?

20. May I come along with you tomorrow?

in pairs /take turns to ask and answer/
questions 1 – 5 the answer is “No”

questions 6 – 10 the answer is “No,
because...”

questions 11 – 15 the answer is “No, but...”

questions 16 – 20 the answer is “Yes”

How did you feel about each answer?

9. Guided visualization

Guided visualization is an activity for relaxation and entering the being mode. There are two possible reactions to stress: doing and being. In the first one you engage in a variety of activities (planning, organizing, executing) and thus you run the risk of creating more stress. In the second you take a step back and are just aware of the situation. You acknowledge what is happening but look at it from a distance and do not allow it to overwhelm you. Diaphragmatic breathing, body scanning (concentrating on one part of the body at a time), reflection and visualization all strengthen the calmness of the being mode. There are two wolves inside us, the angry one and the calm one. It is the one we feed that will survive.

Sit in a circle. Sit comfortably, with your hands on your knees and close your eyes. Low lights, Soft music. Start with diaphragmatic breathing (belly breathing).

Imagine your favourite colour, the colour that relaxes you, around you. Feel it and enjoy it. Let it fill your soul and relax.

Imagine you are walking on a path. It’s a beautiful place. Try to see what’s around you, whether it’s in a valley or a forest or by the sea or anywhere else you like. Imagine yourself walking slowly and enjoy what you see, hear, smell, feel.

Now you come to some steps going down. Take a step at a time and go down slowly. Continue on your way.

Now there is a bend in the road. You follow it and gradually you come to your own secret special place, a place that is ideal for you, a beautiful place where you can relax and be happy. It may be a house, a cottage, a hut, a

cave or anything else. Try to see it with your mind's eyes in all its detail.

Enter your special place and find your special spot in it, whether it's a window with your favourite view or a comfortable sofa or a warm place near the fire or whatever else pleases you.

There you find a special message left for you by somebody you love. It may be a letter or a flower with a note or any other message showing their love, appreciation, care and other positive feelings for you. Read it, enjoy it, feel it in your heart.

Now put your thumb and your index finger together and press them lightly to anchor this moment and feeling.

Then go back, slowly, gradually, out of your special place, up the steps, along the path. The place is shrinking, becoming smaller and smaller. You can breathe it into your heart. Take a deep breath and put it there for ever.

Whenever you need it in the future, press your thumb and index finger together again.

Breathe in 1, 2, 3.

Breathe out 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.

Slowly open your eyes.

The participants were then given a handout with instructions for a mission / values / roles exercise called "The Funeral". This is an activity that requires a long time of self-concentration, reflection and group discussion, so participants did not engage in it at the workshops but were given food for serious thought, as it was one of the most eye-opening exercises of the course.

The activity requires participants to imagine a funeral in all its detail and at the moment when they are told to imagine approaching the coffin, it is revealed to them that it is themselves in that coffin, a year from now. So they have to plan their own funeral, choose three speakers, one from their family, one from their social circle and friends, and one from their work environment.

They have to imagine what each person will say about them and whether these words will reflect their real priorities. They have to ask themselves:

Have I fulfilled my mission in life, have I been true to my values, have I assumed the roles I have chosen with success, have I kept my priorities right? Or have I allowed myself to drown in stress, everyday routine, have I become part of a vicious circle and left aside what is really important?

This is a sad and even shocking activity, but it forces us to realize that what is important is managing our priorities, not our time.

10. Positive feedback exercise

The last activity of the workshops was a positive feedback exercise which ended the sessions on a hopeful note. Its aim was to show appreciation and respect to each other and to improve one's own self-image, as well as create a positive message to fall back on at moments of stress, negative feelings and self-doubt.

a sheet of paper stuck on each person's back/ each person chooses a coloured marker

You have to go round and write something positive on each person's sheet of paper. Take your sheet of paper, look at it, keep it for difficult moments as a reminder of your



positive self.

Overall, the workshop participants had a chance to relax, enjoy themselves, communicate with each other, laugh together, be resourceful and creative, get ideas for classroom use and, above all, reflect on their own life philosophy and practices.

Special thanks from the presenter to the organizers, the Pancyprian Association of Teachers of English O.E.L.M.E.K., especially the chairperson, Ms. Monica Grimaldi – Constantinou, the host schools, the Lyceums of Saint George, Larnaca, Polemidia, Limassol, Dasoupolis, Nicosia, and Archbishop Makarios III, Paphos and all the enthusiastic and active participants for a fulfilling and heart-warming experience!

Congratulations on winning the long running battle over the publication of the first issue of the journal. *Well done and thank you!* This magazine will certainly help unite all teachers of English in Cyprus – and hopefully, in the future, it can include contributions from the rest of Europe too.

Popping my head momentarily out of the classroom trenches, I feel it is worthwhile sending a few words about my induction into the national education system this year after over twenty years in the private sector.

Pre-September 2008

Silence – pause... *'Are you sure you want to leave a school like the American Academy?'*

'It's a jungle – think very carefully before you commit yourself.'

'You'll be spending your afternoons sleeping off the stress.'

'The kids are uncontrollable...'

'Nobody cares.'

Depressed?

I was...confused, skeptical, nervous..., however, I managed to remain open-minded and completed the Pedagogical course in 2005 under the expert guidance of Monica and Katia. Nevertheless, it took me three years to say goodbye to the Academy!

September 2008 Bulls Eye – the point of no-return

Welcome to my world Drosia Gymnasium, Larnaca! Classes A2, A5, A7, C2 and C5 – thank you for welcoming me into yours!

My first month has just finished. What can I say?

I am overwhelmed!

What do I mean? First of all, if Drosia Gymnasium is a jungle, then I have decided that I like jungles – especially those lively smiling creatures hopping and frothing everywhere!

For the cynics, I am sorry to inform you that I have found these students to be quite normal, hearty children – all of them extremely welcoming, so ready to help and cooperate – even noticeably punctual after the bell has rung (...early days yet? I suppose so...)

Andreas in the third year always has a pen or tissue at hand for me or his fellow students. Vasilis discreetly approached me at the end of a lesson to ask if he could explain my lessons to his neighbour who apparently knows little English. Elena wants to write an article in English on behalf of the school, Daphne is helping Rumanian classmates settle in, Georgia has brought materials to decorate the notice-board - the list is endless....

Colleagues – woo hoo hoo!

Yep – you will find this species in the dreaded jungle. First impressions: once again I am enthused by the excellent teamwork on all levels – the headmaster, the assistants the office and domestic staff! Like the students, all colleagues are ready to smile, share experiences and a cup of coffee. Everyone is approachable and seems to take the work seriously. In the first two weeks, I had two Greek teachers pleading for an extra period so that they could complete the introduction lessons they had planned. Now that sounds like *someone cares!!!*

Aims for 2008-9

What better way to start the school year than being reminded of the words: *creativity and innovation; multi-cultural awareness and wider understanding - of humanity – of our neighbours! Mutual respect!*

On the first day, the message from the Ministry of Education was received with a large open spirit I found it awe-inspiring, a colourful cajolement - enticing me forward into 'the system'. The aims are meaningful, relevant, out-reaching towards the splendour and vibrancy of life within 'the jungle' and beyond....

Opportunities galore!

I am amazed by the plethora of opportunities for individual and inter-cultural development. Almost every day there is an exciting new opportunity on the bulletin board.

So far, I have joined the YRE – Young Reporters for the Environment which is an international competition encouraging young people to research and write about environmental concerns, including taking innovative photographs. I'm learning how to use Photoshop in the evenings which will help to collate students' projects.

I have attended a Thoc drama workshop as well as a conference promoting the European Lifelong Learning Programme and its aim to increase language awareness through innovative projects like the European Language Label, Comenius and E-twinnings. There is even an International Children's Film Festival during which students have the chance to produce their own film....and much much more...

Phew!

The initial intention was to record the year's experiences in the form of monthly diary extracts. However, at this rate, I believe there will be so much to observe, so much to do... far too much to say in a single entry for the CyELT journal....so.... at this point, I think I'll pause - and wish all my new and not so new colleagues a playful working life, fueled by creativity, innovation and soulful interaction with the world around us.

All the best,

Zoe Piponidou
English teacher
Drosia Gymnasium, October 2008
Email: zoepip@cytanet.com.cy



