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Making sense of student progress

EFL needs to start improving outcomes and multisensory methods may help, say *Melanie Butler* and *Ron Ragsdale*

It's time the EFL industry came to its senses. People are paying good money to learn English and the quicker they learn it, the better.

Not that you'd know it. At a recent meeting of British language centre association English UK, we were told that the single most important factor in the continuing success of the local industry lies in ensuring 'a great student experience'. Really?

Why on earth do you think that the demand for exams, even as part of short two week courses, has gone through the roof? Why are European governments refusing to pay for publicly-funded school trips unless the students come back with an exam certificate? Because they are primarily paying for their students to make progress and they don't trust you to monitor it and report it back to them.

Everybody would prefer that students have a good experience. They also want them to be safe. But the success of any education system is measured on its learning outcomes and those outcomes depend, according to research by the OECD, largely on the quality of the teachers.

All too often the EFL industry sees teachers as identical widgets which can be picked up and discarded at will. Take the unnamed Japanese language school which, as we report on page 7, sacked two long-standing teachers when they refused to sign away their legal rights. Who came to their defense? One of their students, a trainee lawyer, whose loyalty lay with his teachers, not with his school.

What students think of your school is largely down to what they think of their teacher. And that may come down to how much the teacher knows about that student. Which, apart from their language level, is often almost nothing.

“What students think of your school is largely down to what they think of their teacher.”

According to the excellent *Cambridge Guide to Learning English as a Second Language*, reviewed on page 21, 30-40 per cent of all students suffer from language learning anxiety. Do you know who they are? Do you even know what that is?

And how about the 5 to 15 per cent of learners who, according to the *Cambridge Guide*, have a Special Educational Need, including dyslexia? You know what dyslexia is. You are probably vaguely aware it may cause students problems. But do you know what to do to help?

As the indefatigable Anne Margaret Smith of ELT Well shows us on page 31, multisensory teaching helps these learners and, indeed, it helps all learners. Don't believe it?

Check out the research news on page 10 that suggests that students learn lexis better when it is presented visually and orally and better still when it is also accompanied with gesture. And no, this is not proof that learning styles exist. The neuroscience shows that the more modalities a student uses, the more connections are created in the brain. The more senses we use, the merrier.

Dual processing, the advantage of using visual and auditory information, is one of the basic strategies of metacognition, as Gill Ragsdale explains on page 19.

Metacognition. Why would language schools be interested in that? Perhaps because a study by the UK's Education Endowment Foundation found that, compared to other students, learners trained in metacognitive strategies make the equivalent of seven months' more progress in a single academic year.

In fact, research suggests that about the only thing that does more to promote progress is to recruit and retain a team of high-quality teachers.

And how many language schools can see the sense in that?

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theteam.

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British government under scrutiny over treatment of students in Toeic test scandal

By Matt Salusbury

The UK Parliament's watchdog, the National Audit Office (NAO), has criticised the UK government for its handling of the cases of thousands of international students caught up in the Toeic English test scandal in 2014. Following the scandal, immigration authorities revoked the visas of 34,000 students, forcibly deporting more than 2,500.

The NAO report found the government had failed to protect "those who did not cheat but who were still caught up in the process."

The Home Office faces more than 300 appeals court challenges from students, most from South Asia, who believe they were wrongly accused of cheating. Until 2017, UK immigration rules meant that affected students had to return home before they could appeal their case. These regulations were overruled by the court, leading to hundreds of students being stranded in the UK for up to five years while they brought their cases to court.

The *Guardian* newspaper reports that a special Home Office team has been set up to deal with the backlog of legal actions.

A 2014 BBC documentary found evidence of some test centres helping students to cheat in the exams. British MPs, however, have expressed "grave concern" that so many candidates who sat the test between 2011 and 2014 were then accused of cheating. American exam board ETS, who created and administered the exams, told the government analysts that its voice recognition software suggested that, over a five-year period, more than 50,000 students had cheated.

However, an appeals Court ruling in 2016, which ETS failed to attend, dismissed this evidence as 'hearsay'.

The government, however, continued to pursue some 36,000 students it believed to have cheated, detaining many and deporting more than 2,500.

Students who found the money to appeal have discovered that the Home Office's grounds for revoking their visas have been "insubstantial." Patrick Lewis, a barrister who has won all but one of the 15 cases

he's fought, said judges had "real concerns about the quality of evidence" produced by the Home Office.

The *Guardian* interviewed student Raja Noman Hussein, who said that while he was in immigration detention, "Every day I met three or four new people who were being detained because of Toeic." Test-takers stripped of their student visas have been represented by the charity Migrant Voice, whose director Nazek Ramadan said that, "many of the students are destitute

and suffering from severe mental health problems."

Stephen Timms MP, who has represented many of the students, called on the Home Office to allow students to sit another English test so they could resume their studies.

MPs have compared the Toeic affair to last year's Windrush scandal, in which at least 83 Afro-Caribbean British citizens were wrongly deported. Compensation for the victims of that affair is estimated at around £200 million.



International students accused by the Home Office of cheating in Toeic English tests demonstrate in Parliament Square in January 2019

MIGRANT VOICE

newsinbrief.

ESTONIA: Estonia's Minister of Education, Mailis Reps, announced in May that state secondary school students with high-level English will be able to take Cambridge English Assessment's CAE exam free of charge from September. Previously, only the state school leaving exam in English, at level B2, was free of charge.

AUSTRALIA: The Australian state of Victoria has capped international enrolments into its state primary and secondary schools at 5,750, following a surge in applications. Some 300 schools across Victoria recruit international students, with parents paying up to \$15,000 a year for a high school place.

INDIA: Rumours surround forthcoming Hindi-language film *English Medium*, featuring superstar Irrfan Khan. A sequel to smash hit *Hindi Medium*, it centres on a couple whose daughter, studying in the US, faces "trouble fitting into a system where English is the primary spoken language", according to the *Times of India*.

TURKEY: A Turkish language school was ordered to pay 73,000 lira (around \$13,000) to Harvard University for unauthorised use of its name. An Istanbul court ruled that 'Harvard Yabancı Dil' had granted franchises which breached trademark law. The school owner argued that the name referred to a geographical region of Massachusetts.

NEW ZEALAND: A college in Auckland, New Zealand was fined \$40,000 after admitting to 52 counts of immigration fraud, in the first case of its kind. The International College of Auckland had given receipts showing students had paid their course fees in full, when they had only paid them in part.

ETHIOPIA: Among the 157 people killed in the Ethiopian Airlines crash at Addis Abbaba Airport in March was Spanish national Pilar Martinez Docampo, who had lived in London for seven years and worked there as a chef. She was on her way to teach English language as a volunteer in Kenya.

Mother and son win battle with school

By Matt Salusbury

Two English language teachers – a mother and son – who resisted unfair contracts at their Japanese *eikaiwa* (English conversation school) have won huge payouts after a two-and-a-half-year legal battle.

The pair were aided by a recently-qualified lawyer fighting his first case, who happened to be one of their students.

Mulele Jarvis, aged 48, had been teaching at the school for seven years, and in Japan for a total of 28 years. His mother Cindy Powers taught at the same school part-time. Jarvis told *Japan Times* he'd previously "signed pretty much whatever I was given."

In August 2016, management informed Jarvis and Powers, both salaried teachers, that the *eikaiwa* had a change of ownership and that they'd be given new contracts.

But these "questionable contracts" listed both teachers as "independent contractors" instead of "workers", with no references to their existing holiday

pay or overtime. Jarvis's duration of service was wrongly given, with the company name misspelled several different ways.

While Jarvis was initially disinclined to make an issue of his contract, he was inspired by his mother, who "absolutely refused to sign." Powers told *Japan Times*, "There's a rumour that goes around the foreign community that we don't have any rights... perpetuated by landlords and employers who need to discourage any protest. It's not true."

The two teachers showed their contracts to newly-qualified lawyer Taiga Sawafuji, a student of Jarvis who took their case on the basis of being paid on settlement. Sawafuji noted that 2013 amendments to the Labour Contracts Act give workers on a series of fixed-term contracts the right to a permanent contract after five years, and that the contracts' wording on "independent contractors" was problematic. Teachers "cannot in normal situations be hired for a specific job without regard to

hours or conditions. Teaching English is not that type of work," he explained.

Jarvis described repeated threats of dismissal, as he and his mother refused to sign. Management made minor concessions to them, but their names disappeared from the teaching rota when they hadn't signed by 1 January 2017. Sawafuji submitted a deposition to the Tokyo District Court soon after. He explained that if the court rules the deposition is justified, "the employer is required to pay living expenses for the employees while the entire legal process unfolds."

Jarvis went unpaid until May 2017, when a judge awarded him living expenses of ¥250,000 a month. Powers received half that as she had another job. Jarvis described the "beautiful moment" when two "executioners" (officers of the court) accompanied him and his mother to collect their back pay from the company safes. Two more years of legal battles followed as the school rejected the judge's offer to settle with



Signs advertising *eikaiwa* schools in Tokyo

one year's salary in severance pay. Both Jarvis and Powers were awarded several years' salary just weeks before a judge would have forced a settlement.

Sawafuji points to organisations such as the Japan Legal Support Centre that offer consultation on a needs-assessed basis and recommends joining a union. "Know your rights and don't give up."

Tall tales to tempt learners

By Matt Salusbury

The Japanese government is getting into the anime business, with the publication of a new book featuring a Japanese schoolgirl, a swordsman and a warrior princess on the front cover.

Though the plotline fits neatly into the *isegai* genre, where a modern-day human is

transported to an alien world, the title, which translates as 'English Fundamentals 2', is rather less romantic.

The tale is the latest printed partwork which accompanies the 'English Fundamentals' radio series, a course for English language learners produced by NHK, Japan's public service broadcaster, which also publishes the books.

The print story, which features a second-year junior high school girl, a dragon and a magic kingdom, is designed to cover the vocabulary and grammar introduced in upcoming episodes, which deal with the function of talking about yourself.

Among the phrases students learn are "A dragon captured Princess Jonquil of Blossom Kingdom" and "Japan? I don't know that Kingdom," which are designed to delight the *otaku*, as mega-Manga fans are called, and lure them into learning English.

Japanese chain slashes one-to-one school sites

By Matt Salusbury

The Coco Juku English language school chain closed 51 of its 72 schools across Japan on 31 March. The chain's owner, the Nichii Gakkan Company, said it planned to transfer teachers to other schools.

The chain employs 560 staff, including teachers, managers and support personnel, according to the *Japan Times*. It is unclear how many jobs will be lost.

Nichii Gakkan added that it plans to offer refunds for lessons paid for up-front, including to around 1,450 adults at its various branches, as well as 4,040 "younger" students taught by its Coco Juku Junior one-to-one operation.

Another fifteen schools in the group are "expected" to close soon, according to the holding company. The decision by Nichii Gakkan to close most of its Coco Juku operation came after they "were deemed unlikely to turn a

profit within a certain period of time," according to *Japan Times*.

The *eikaiwa* ('English conversation school') model, where students buy "points" for lessons up-front, in a system a bit like gym membership, has been in trouble for some time.

Japan's biggest *eikaiwa* chain, Geos, went bankrupt in 2010, while the huge Nova chain went under in 2007.

Coco Juku Junior began in 2012 as an operation to teach children one-to-one, with the Coco Juku chain starting a year later to teach group English lessons to adults. Nichii Gakkan, whose core business is medical services and care homes, also owns Gaba Corp (acquired 2011) a one-to-one English conversation operation for adults, which remains in operation.

In 2018 the Coco Juku one-to-one courses were transferred to Gaba and branded as 'Gaba man-to-man *eikaiwa*.'



Can anime animate Japanese English language learners?

editorial@elgazette.com

IRAN:

The British Council has confirmed that it is “sadly, highly likely” that the unnamed Iranian sentenced to 10 years in an Iranian prison for espionage was Aras Amiri, who was arrested while visiting family in Iran.

She allegedly confessed to “cooperating with Britain’s intelligence agency,” according to official news agency Fars.

Following threats and intimidation of some of its staff based in Iran, the British Council suspended operations in the Islamic Republic in 2009 and its English teaching activities there ceased. British Council chief executive Sir Ciarán Devane said that Amiri worked in London in a junior role, supporting the contemporary Iranian art scene in the UK.

TAIWAN:

A British English teacher who bit a Taiwanese policeman as he was arrested for being drunk and disorderly on the Taipei Metro, already had a record, *Taiwan News* reports.

The teacher, named only as Chandler, was previously arrested for stealing clothes from an H&M store in February last year, and for a drunken altercation with a bus driver in 2017, according to a spokesperson for Taipei police.

The British national claims to be an English teacher at a local cram school although police stated that their investigations showed his visa had in fact expired.

Chandler has been transferred to the Shilin District Prosecutor’s



Staff and commuters on the Taipei Metro.

Office on charges of Assault and Interference with Public Function, according to press reports.

AUSTRALIA:

Australia’s universities are waiving their own published English language requirements in order to recruit more international students, according to broadcaster ABC’s *Four Corners* investigation. ABC found international students using translation apps on their phones, while some Indian and Nepali students were admitted with a “Medium of Instruction” letter stating they’d studied in English, instead of evidence of proficiency.

Following changes to the student visas regime in 2016, applicants can now show evidence of English proficiency to their university, and no longer need to provide evidence to Australia’s Education Department. Universities were allowed to maintain their own English proficiency admission criteria, with discretion to waive these. ABC has seen emails from one university, advertising to an agent that it “will be waiving the English condition”.

UAE:

The United Arab Emirates has launched a major recruitment



SKROYCHOWDHURY

Students show appreciation to Indian teachers

drive in India to find 3,000 English-speaking teachers for Emirati state schools.

As part of this initiative, teachers’ salaries have been raised to 16,000 dhiraams a month (tax free), about ten times what teachers can expect in India.

It sounds too good to be true to many Indian teachers, some of whom have been victims of recruitment scams luring them to Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Recruiters have to explain to potential applicants that no, this is not a scam, but they will need good English.

The recruitment drive follows a curriculum shake-up announced last September which increased the teaching of English and

English-medium science in Emirati state schools.

SOUTH KOREA:

A New Zealander who lost her teaching job at a state school in Ulsan, South Korea, after refusing to take an HIV test is suing for damages after Korea rejected a recommendation on her case by the UN International Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Lisa Griffin tested negative when she took an HIV test, a requirement for foreign teacher visas introduced in 2007, but declined to take another test to renew her contract in 2009, saying it discriminated against foreigners. Her contract was not



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renewed, she left Korea and now teaches in the US.

Griffin is claiming a year's lost wages but the Korean government rejects her claim, saying the HIV test, which is no longer a visa requirement, was "proportionate," and that the statute of limitations on her claim has expired.

UK:

There has been confusion over government policy on university

WIKIMEDIA



UK Education Minister
Damian Hinds

fees for EU nationals after Brexit. News website *Buzzfeed UK* reported at the end of April that UK Education Minister Damian Hinds was planning to charge new EU national students the same rate as currently charged to non-EU students, starting from academic year 2021-2022.

Under current EU treaties, EU nationals in the UK pay the same "home fee" rate as UK residents – currently capped at £9,250 a year for undergraduates. There is no cap on fees for non-EU students, who can pay up to £25,000 a year.

But days after the *Buzzfeed* report, during questioning by MPs in the House of Commons, junior education minister Chris Skidmore clarified that while the government did not rule out a fees hike, a decision had not yet been taken. Hinds promises an announcement "soon".

ISRAEL:

Ninety thousand ultra-orthodox school students in Israel are



WIKIMEDIA

Students in a yeshiva in Israel

now excused from studying the national curriculum for English and other key subjects, according to documents obtained by *The Marker* newspaper.

The number of high school-level yeshiva, or orthodox schools, exempted from the high school matriculation exams doubled in the last decade, despite attempts by the government to increase the number of ultra-orthodox, or Haredi, Israelis entering the

job market. Haredi men prefer to devote their time to studying the scriptures,

Haredi girls, who are expected to work when they leave school, are more likely to get a general education than boys, according to the *Haaretz* newspaper.

New ministry rules approved last year allowed yeshiva to teach Yiddish instead of English, although the latter is required for most highly-skilled jobs.

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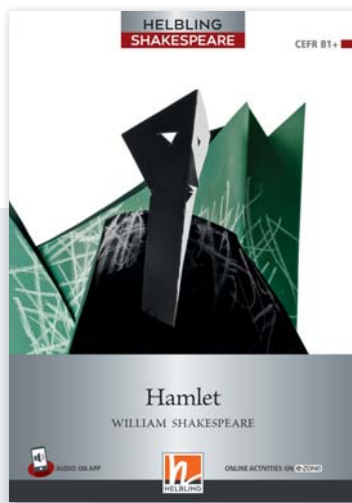
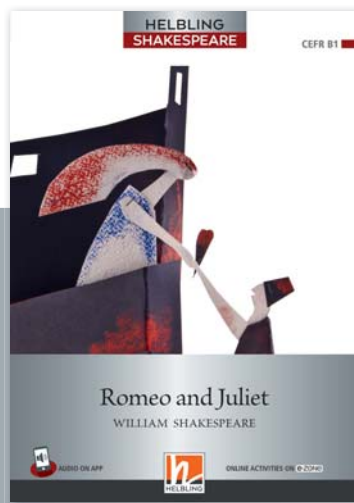
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Gesture gives memory a hand

RUTH HARTNUP



Incorporate gesture to tap into long term memory

By Gillian Ragsdale

Presenting new words with accompanying gestures activates deeper brain processing in the learner, resulting in better retention, report Manuela Macedonia and colleagues at Universities in Austria, Italy and Germany.

When any stimulus, such as a new word, is presented, information from the senses is 'encoded'. This encoding may be shallow and transient (a novel word heard just once is unlikely to be remembered) or the encoding may be deeper and then pass – hopefully – into long-term memory. Repetition deepens the encoding process and thereby increases the likelihood that the new word will pass into long-term storage for later retrieval. This is why learning new vocabulary can be so time consuming and laborious. Vocabulary that does not move from the shallow encoding of the moment to storage cannot later be retrieved.

Previous research has shown that foreign language learners encode new vocabulary more deeply when it is presented in more than one modality. For

example, presenting words audio-visually (as the written word and/or picture, as well as the spoken word) facilitates learning more than either visual or auditory presentation alone.

A third modality is to use gestures. These gestures could come initially from the teacher as they present the new word, and later be used by the learners during practice. The resulting boost to learning is called 'the enactment effect'.

How this comes about, however, is not well understood, and consequently it is not clear how best to make use of these techniques. It could be that the action, especially when performed by the learner, produces a motor memory that strengthens the overall memory. This makes sense, as the more paths there are to a single memory the more securely it is embedded in the memory network.

Alternatively, watching the gestures may increase perception and attention, which are crucial to moving incoming information into storage as memories. In this case it is not really the gestures themselves that are responsible.

Macedonia and colleagues wanted to find out which process best accounted for the effect of gestures on word learning by scanning the brain activity of 31 German native-speaking students while they learned new words presented in different modalities. The students were asked to read, read and listen or read, listen and watch a set of 30 words (while lying in a brain scanner), for which they were offered the princely sum of 10 euros.

To be certain that the 30 words really were new to all the participants, a new language, Vimmi, was generated for the study by randomly computer-generating three-syllable words based on Italian phonotactic rules, but controlling for possible confounding similarities with real English or German words, or words made especially memorable due to being distinctive or bizarre. For example the German word 'blume' for 'flower' was translated as 'giketa', and the German for 'knife', 'messer' was translated as 'ganuma'.

The set of 30 concrete nouns for everyday objects were split into

three sets of 10, to be presented visually (by just reading the word), audio-visually (by reading and listening to the word) or audio-visually with a video of an actress making related gestures.

Recall was tested after 5 minutes – and again after 45 days. Sample size is always a limiting factor when using expensive, high-demand equipment such as an fMRI scanner and this was unfortunately compounded as only 18 came back for the final recall test after 45 days (presumably funds precluded further incentives).

When asked to freely recall the German or Vimmi words presented, recall was significantly greater when students read, listened and also watched gestures of new words being presented than when they just read or read and listened to new words. The influence was not significant after 45 days, which could be due to the missing students in the returning sample.

Brain scans during the learning experience showed activity in areas associated with language learning. As the number of modalities used in presenting new words increased – so did the complexity of the neural networks involved, supporting the idea that using gestures deepens processing of the new word and embeds it more firmly, with more connections, into the memory network.

Macedonia and colleagues were expecting to see brain activity reflecting increased semantic processing when learners viewed gestures, but an increase was actually observed in the motor areas of the brain. This could mean that rather than deepening semantic long-term memory, using gestures taps into procedural long-term memory – the kind of memory stores used when we learn to ride a bike.

REFERENCE

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Give us more global English say teachers

By Gillian Ragsdale

The continued focus on native speaker standards in language testing and materials were identified as the main obstacles to incorporating Global English Teaching (GELT) into the classroom in a study of TESOL trainees by Andrew Cameron (Sunchon National University, Republic of Korea) and Nicola Galloway (The University of Edinburgh, UK).

As Cameron and Galloway point out, English came from England – but we can no longer claim that it now comes from England. Of around 2 billion speakers of English worldwide, less than 500 million come from the inner circle of the UK, USA, Canada, Australia or New Zealand. India and China combined are home to over 25 per cent of global English speakers.

Given the expanding role of English as a global lingua franca it makes increasingly less sense to prioritise standards of native-speaker English. The GELT framework aims to raise awareness of ‘Global Englishes’ and incorporate trends in the real-world use of English into classroom teaching. Previous research has shown that learners do not feel that GELT is making its presence felt but Cameron and Galloway wanted to find out if this was also true at the cutting edge of teacher training.

Their study took place at a Russell Group University with a large MA TESOL programme. Sixty-six TESOL trainees answered an online questionnaire developed from five in-depth interviews. Student teachers were asked about which aspects of GELT could be introduced and what barriers they might face. Only two of the students were native speakers: most of the students were from East Asia.

Two-thirds of respondents were in favour of exposure to more non-native English usage in the classroom. However, one Chinese respondent described the attachment to ‘standard’ English in Chinese TESOL, for example, as ‘unwavering’.

The most commonly cited barrier was testing. Speaking assessments in particular tend to use native speaker English as the benchmark, whereas study respondents agreed with the GELT framework that fluency should be more valued than accuracy, and only one in five thought their accent should affect their grade. According to one student, Hong Kong had stopped using the ‘standard accent’ criteria in English testing, perhaps paving the way for further change.

Lack of supporting materials was another commonly-cited obstacle, and dealing with this may not always



be within the remit of the teacher. For example, materials approved by stakeholders such as government ministries tend to prefer course materials reflecting exclusively standard English. This further disincentivises publishers and other materials providers from developing GELT-oriented materials, and so the cycle continues.

Another finding of Cameron and Galloway's study may also hold the key to breaking this cycle, however. Just as most English speakers are now from non-native speaking countries – most English teachers are themselves not native-speakers. One Japanese respondent reflected a widespread concern in describing their situation as a ‘battlefield’ – always feeling that at any moment they might be replaced by a preferred native-speaker.

Worldwide, the vast majority of people learning, teaching

and otherwise using English, are not native speakers. As the proportion of native speakers shrinks and the very definition of what constitutes a ‘native speaker’ changes, there will likely come a tipping point at which Global English becomes the standard. What is currently lacking for this process to run smoothly are clear parameters defining Global English competence, which would give stakeholders confidence in new assessments and offer guidelines for preparing materials.

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Trial and error fails for phrasal verbs

By Gillian Ragsdale

Study followed by retrieval practice may be a better way to learn new items than the popular trial and error method, so finds a study by Brian Strong and Frank Boer.

One common approach to teaching new items is to present their usage explicitly with examples, then test them (study then test). Another presents the new items and ask students to try to figure out how they are used, before getting feedback (trial and error then feedback).

There are good arguments supporting both methods. Retrieval of taught content strengthens memory, while the trial and error

approach can increase attention and motivation.

Phrasal verbs are both common and relatively challenging for many learners. Strong and Boer found that in 44 EFL textbooks, 61 per cent of exercises introducing new phrasal verbs used the trial and error method, with the ‘feedback’ often in an answer key.

Strong and Boer tested the two methods on 140 Japanese university students randomly assigned to two groups. A third pilot study group were tested on potential sets of phrasal verbs, and a final set of 14 phrasal verbs was selected including ‘hang out’, ‘brush up’ and ‘chicken out’.

The ‘study then test’ group received an example of each phrasal verb: ‘Hey, Yuki, if you’re not busy after work, do you want to hang out?’ Followed by a clarifying response: ‘I’m sorry, Tomoko, but I’m not feeling well today. How about tomorrow?’ These students then wrote the participle for the phrasal verbs: ‘Hey, Yuki, if you’re not busy after work, do you want to hang ...?’

Students in the ‘trial and error’ group had to supply the missing particle first – and were then presented with the complete example as feedback. So, both groups were presented with the same text but in a different order.

All students were tested on the 14 phrasal verbs immediately afterwards and again, without warning, after a week. The ‘study then test’ group scored better on both tests.

Corrective feedback to the trial and error group had more influence on their immediate test scores than in the follow-up test where 25 per cent of students reverted to their original wrong answers. So, although corrective feedback after guessing did result in learning the effect was not as strong.

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Brits behind as book trade booms?

By Melanie Butler

McGraw Hill Education and Cengage Learning are to merge, according to the *Financial Times*. The new company, which will include National Geographic Learning, will have projected cash earnings of US\$3 billion. The strategy behind the merger is to expand the number of students, mostly in Higher Education, who subscribe to Cengage's textbook subscription service, seen as a solution to the 'affordability issue' in Higher Education.

With all the major British ELT publishers' increasingly focused on Higher Ed, English

language publishing has taken a backseat, allowing smaller players to eat into the market. At this year's London Book Fair, for example, the biggest ELT display we found belonged to MM publications, with two other European providers, Express and Global ELT, also having a strong presence.

Europe's largest specialist ELT book distributor, BEBC in Bournemouth, confirmed to the *Gazette* that the big British publishing houses are losing EU market share to publishers who started out publishing for a local ELT market: Greece in the case of MM, Express and Global, Italy in the case of ELI and Black Cat.

"They understand the industry much better, they react faster. Express, for example, are about to publish the first course book for the Occupational English Test," Nick Edwards of BEBC told the *Gazette*.

British publishers have switched away from using ELT-specialist sales people, often using the same reps for both ELT and Higher Ed. One result is that news of industry changes are not filtering back to the editorial teams. With most of the majors now already working on five-year publishing plans, the smaller, swifter players are in a better position to respond to market changes.

In the last ten years, most major British ELT publishers have concentrated almost entirely on general English course books for adults and on localised courses for overseas state school systems. With the exception of Cambridge University Press, they have also cut back on their supplementary titles.

This has allowed the European publishers to fill the gap with their own products: exam books from Global; graded readers from ELI and Black Cat; and methodology from Helbling. They then expanded their lists to include course-book publishing, particularly for younger learners in private language schools, a move which could help them gain a foothold in the UK.

Under-16s now make up half of all students coming to the UK, and the age of the youngest students has now fallen as low as three. However, only Cambridge University Press and National Geographic Learning are actively promoting products for this market, such as short summer school course books. The fast moving Europeans are anxious to fill the gap.

Meanwhile Anglo-American National Geographic Learning, now part of the Cengage McGraw Hill merger, are already the fastest-growing publisher in the BEBC charts.

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Is European ELT facing a continental shift?

Demography is the real danger, says *Melanie Butler*

The mood in European EFL is generally glum. And it's not just Brexit.

I've been getting e-mails from Spain predicting the death of the language school, and tweets from British teachers from Posnan to Padova, complaining they cannot live on their salaries.

Pity the poor foreign *lettori* in Italy who, as we report on page 4, have been fighting for their rights for thirty years, and now the British *lettori* may risk losing everything.

Even the universities are moaning. On page 7 we reveal the Dutch have so many international degree students they have to house them in shipping containers, while on page 4 we find French universities have put their fees up in an effort to attract more students.

Now for the good news. With UK Brexit plans in chaos, the European parliament has rushed to protect European students on Erasmus courses in the UK, as we report on page 5 of this supplement.

Meanwhile, on the same page, we report how the Irish are rubbing their hands at the prospect of cornering the EU market. On page 9, we note that Malta is rolling out the work visas as their long-haul student market grows.

Best news of all, at least for their governments, the language levels of students in Italy and Spain are rising. The main reason seems to be the rise and rise of CLIL and bilingual programmes in the state sector. This may be bad news for local language schools in Milan and Madrid, because parents don't feel the need to top up their child's English with a twice-weekly language lesson. But it doesn't seem to be having much impact on the market for summer schools.

But the choice of summer courses is changing.

Some are looking for hard-CLIL courses with

specialist teachers – easy enough for boarding schools, though the cost of such teachers is putting an extra strain on private sector providers, as we explain on page 11.

Others are demanding proper sports courses with professional coaches (see page 12).

Agents also report a switch from summer courses to year-round provision. The demand for academic, year-round immersion courses in state secondary schools is growing,

especially in Ireland where, as we report on page 13, language schools have led the campaign to regulate the guardianship sector.

Brexit or no Brexit, the move, it is clear, is for EFL to become part of education, rather than just a variation on the junior activity holiday with a bit of English grammar thrown in.

The under-16 market is also growing outside the traditional summer season and the UK has responded to the surge in groups of young learners coming for short courses in the low season by increasing the number of schools which specialise in the sector.

Teaching young learners is a whole different ball game from the adult market, as Kevin McNally of Torquay International School explains on page 16.

Torquay is just one of the towns in Devon which makes that region the young learners centre of the UK. As we explain on page 15, schools have been enrolling under-16s here for many years, and the policies of the local authorities help make it one of the safest places to send children.

The irony, of course, in the growth of the young-learners' language travel market, is that Europe is running out of children. Half the population in the EU is over the age of 46, only 15 per cent is under 15.

This demographic squeeze is about to hit not only the supply of young learners but the supply of teachers. For every 18-year-old in the UK there are two people aged 50. The situation in Ireland, which has the youngest population in the EU, may be better, but don't expect a flood of Irish graduates to fill the post-Brexit shortfall. The graduate unemployment rate in the Republic is just 5 per cent.

Maybe it is not Brexit that poses the biggest threat to the EFL market across the EU, but demographics.

“The irony is, of course... that Europe is running out of children.”



British *lettori* battle on as Brexit looms

By Matt Salusbury

The saga of the *lettori* – foreign language lecturers, unlawfully paid less and engaged on worse contracts than their Italian counterparts – shows no sign of a resolution as the UK prepares to exit the European Union. Some 30-40 per cent of a total of around 250 *lettori* are UK nationals.

The implementation of a new law designed to compel Italy's universities to factor in the costs of properly paying *lettori* has been delayed. A British Member of the European Parliament (MEP) has recently called for a European Commissioner to "act urgently"

to end discrimination against *lettori*.

The *lettori's* case dates all the way back to 1980. EU-national foreign language lecturers on contracts to Italy's universities were downgraded to the lower status of technician. Such discrimination is illegal under EU legislation, as reaffirmed in six European Court of Justice (ECJ) rulings against Italy. The European Commission has so far been ineffective, however, in enforcing "proceedings" against Italy over the *lettori* case.

Shortly after the 2016 UK vote to leave the EU, then-UK Minister for Europe David

Lidington, together with the UK's ambassador to Italy, announced that progress had been made with Italy's then-foreign minister towards resolving the *lettori* issue, as a token of goodwill as part of post-Brexit Anglo-Italian relations. Italy's current Five Star Movement/Liga Nord coalition government, though, has shown no apparent interest in the case.

Those *lettori* who are UK nationals will no longer be able to petition the European Parliament or the European Commission after the UK leaves the EU. Currently the 'transition period' – during which ECJ judgements still apply to UK citizens – ends 31 December 2020, although this period might well be extended.

Jude Kirton-Darling MEP recently called for European Justice Commissioner Vera Jourová to intervene. The European Parliament Petitions Committee has also referred the *lettori* case to the Parliament's Brexit Steering Committee. David T C Davies MP (not to be confused with former UK Brexit secretary David Davis MP), has pledged to ask UK foreign affairs minister Sir Alan Duncan to raise the issue of the British *lettori* with incoming Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.



DAVID PETRIE

David Petrie, President of the Association of Foreign Lecturers in Italy, representing the *lettori* at the European Parliament in 2018

At the repeated insistence of the European Commission, Italy passed a law in November 2017 which requires universities to ensure adequate funding to pay *lettori* in the future on the same contracts as Italian colleagues, with some state-aided co-funding.

This law will not affect the *lettori* still fighting their cases, who were employed on contracts dating back beyond 1995, and in some cases to 1980. The vast majority of these have retired and some have since died, with their cases still being fought by surviving spouses or children. An Italian Senate document makes clear that the 2017 law has been put on hold until October this year at the earliest.



LETTORI

UK *lettori* petition European commissioner Neil Kinnock (first from right) on 5 April 2013

French put fees up to attract more students

By Matt Salusbury

France is investing in improving facilities for its international students, just as a big increase in fees its public-sector universities can charge non-EU students kicks in.

With 300,000 international students in academic year 2018, twelve per cent of the country's total student body, France is the world's fourth-most popular study destination.

Campus France, the state agency promoting France's universities abroad, is putting €10 million into improving the quality

of the "reception" of international students in higher education, as part of an ambitious plan to grow international student numbers to a target of half a million by 2027. Around half the money will go on equipping France's higher education providers with a "welcome desk" for international students.

The remainder of the funding is to strengthen English-medium course provision, for peer support for international students and for courses in French as a foreign language. *Carte de Sejour* (residency permit) formalities

for non-EU nationals, including students, have recently been simplified.

One attraction of France for international students has been the low tuition fees for subsidised higher education. EU nationals pay from just €170 per year for a bachelor of arts degree – rising to €600 for subjects such as engineering and €243 for a master degree.

Current non-EU students pay just €380, far less than in most competitor countries. Non-EU students starting new courses will now pay a "differentiated

tuition" fee of €2,770 a year for a bachelors' course, or €3,770 for a masters. Part of the rationale for the rise is that fees have been so low that they have somehow created a false perception that the courses were of low quality.

Campus France has a symposium in Strasbourg planned for May on the theme of 'the quality of reception facilities' for international students in France. Topics include the place of French and English in France's international education.

EU agrees emergency funds for Erasmus in the UK

By Matt Salusbury

On 25 March, just four days before the UK was originally scheduled to leave the EU, the European Parliament rushed through a regulation protecting the rights of the 21,000 participants currently taking part in an Erasmus+ mobility programme involving the UK.

The UK's leaving date has now been extended until 31 October of this year. The new EU regulation, which is now in force, guarantees funding until 31 January 2020,

when the current round of Erasmus funding ends. The emergency measure makes clear that, with regards to Erasmus, "the United Kingdom shall be treated as a Member State, subject to this Regulation," until that date.

Somewhat surprisingly, the UK Government made no mention of the new regulation when it issued its own update on Erasmus+, on 8 April, almost two weeks after the European Parliament passed the measure.

Regulation (EU) 2019/499, to give it its full name, began life as a European Commission 'contingency proposal', which the EU Parliament asked to be put before it to vote.

The original proposal had the stated aim of protecting "the rights of Erasmus+ participants" in the event the UK left the Union without a negotiated deal, the so-called 'no deal' scenario. The bill is designed to ensure that "in such a scenario, students and trainees

abroad participating in Erasmus+ at the time of the UK's withdrawal can complete their studies and continue to receive the relevant funding or grants."

If the regulation had not passed, the 14,000 Europeans on Erasmus programmes in the UK would not have been able to complete their programmes and might no longer have been eligible for grants. The 7,000 British citizens on programmes abroad were guaranteed funding by the UK government in 2018 but, despite assurances from ministers to the contrary, the guarantee did not cover participants from other countries currently in the UK.

As well as students on exchange programmes at foreign universities, Erasmus+ covers those in vocational education and training, youth learners, and educational staff on teacher training programmes.

The successor programme to Erasmus+, due to launch 2020, is scheduled to see this flagship

project double in size, and EU plans anticipate increasing the number of non-EU partner countries. However the plans published by the EU mentions the UK only once, to note the absence of the country's contribution to the EU budget.

In 2018, the UK confirmed that participation in the Erasmus+ successor scheme would form part of its negotiations with the EU during the transition period expected after the withdrawal agreement had been ratified. With the British parliament having voted down the agreement twice this year, government plans for Erasmus in a no-deal scenario remain unclear.

British Universities were given the impression that, in the event of Britain leaving without a deal, the government would create an alternative scheme. This is looking increasingly unlikely, according to Vivienne Stern of Universities UK, which represent the country's vice chancellors.

"As we understand it, there is no money on the table for an alternative scheme," she told the Guardian newspaper in March, "and no work is under way in the Department for Education to prepare one."

PXHIRE



EU parliament (pictured here) extended Erasmus+ funds until January 2020

Irish eye a Brexit bounce for ELT

By Matt Salusbury

Figures recently released by language schools' association Marketing English in Ireland (MEI), show that the sector's total student enrolments for 2018 was just over 121,000 – slightly down on the previous year's record-breaking total. However, students seem to be staying slightly longer on average – the total number of weeks stayed by students last year was an unprecedented 806,000 – five per cent up on 2018.

Three-quarters of students were from the European

Economic Area, with 75 per cent of European students coming from Italy and Spain. Among those on courses for juniors, some 90 per cent are from within the EEA.

Just under 25,000 students came from non-EU countries that don't need visas for short stays – Brazil being by far the biggest sending country, accounting for three-fifths of non-EU nationals.

After Brazil, the biggest "non-visa" sending countries were Japan and Mexico. Saudi Arabia, Russia and China were prominent among the relatively small proportion of students (8,783) from countries whose nationals require visas.

Marketing English in Ireland's CEO David O'Grady noted that as Brexit nears, it presents "the opportunity for Ireland to become the number one destination in Europe to study English."



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Politics plays a part in Spanish CLIL

By Melanie Butler

Did you stay up all night? We're not talking about the elections to the European parliament. We're referring to the elections for the Corts del País Valencià, the devolved parliament in the Spanish province, which took place on the same day as the recent national elections.

One Valencian newspaper commented that if the left-wing coalition lost control, the entire education system would change. That would have ended the regional plan to send up to 1,000 teachers abroad this summer to study English and CLIL methodology.

The good news, at least from the EFL point of view, is that despite the rise in the vote for right-wing Vox, which insists on Spanish-medium education only, the left alliance retained control, guaranteeing the province's 'plurilingual' education system for the next few years. A constant flow of teachers requiring training now looks likely.

In Spain, the main nationally-funded language travel programmes involve teacher training, as Rafael Rivas of the Spanish agents association Aseproce told the audience at a recent London workshop sponsored by Language Cert.

This is good news for UK trainers who may find themselves locked out of the market for Erasmus-funded training courses in the event of a no deal Brexit, though Ireland and Malta will also benefit.

However, language education and the teacher training that goes with it remains a political hot potato in Spain.

Nationally, the 'bilingual' movement in the Castilian Spanish-speaking regions, for example, is seen as the project of the centre-right Partido Popular, while the plurilingual movement, which promotes regional languages like Catalan and Valencian, are supported by the left-wing nationalists. The extreme right Vox party demands

all education should be Spanish medium only, while left-wing Podemos attacks the bilingual streams in state secondary.

Spanish education, moreover, is a devolved matter, and understanding the market means understanding the complex political argument around language education in each individual province.

In Valencia, the left-wing coalition includes Compromís, a Valencian nationalist group which supports plurilingual education in Valencian, Castilian and English or French. If the Socialists and Podemos refused to support this model the coalition would collapse.

By contrast, the current government of Castille and Leon is centre right. It recently announced that 1700 teachers



The Borgia Palace, Valencia, home of the regional government

would need additional training to meet the new C1 level of English required in bilingual schools.

Good news? Bear in mind that the socialists narrowly won the national election there and, at the time of going to press, the latest set of regional elections had yet to take place.

The high parental support for CLIL programmes, however, should keep trainers busy for several years.



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Foreign students flood into the Netherlands

By Matt Salusbury

The “Anglicisation” of higher education in the Netherlands has caused a “code red crisis.” So begins a petition to the Dutch Parliament, sent in April and signed by 196 prominent academics. The petition goes on to highlight problems created by the “great influx of foreign students” attracted by the growing number of English medium degree courses.

Around 76 per cent of masters’ degree courses nationally are now English-medium, as are 28 per cent of all bachelor degrees. As the number of English medium courses has grown, so has the number of foreign students – there were 22,000 nationwide in 2009, now there are 22,000 from Germany alone, and 122,000 students overall – of which roughly 30,000 are exchange students coming for a single academic year.

The rapid increase in student numbers is putting the infrastructure of some universities under considerable strain, with newly-arrived international students accommodated in temporary ‘tent cities’ at the start of this academic year.

Investigative website *De Correspondent* describes giant marquees set up to house international students at *Rijksuniversiteit Groningen* (the National University of Groningen) in August 2018. According to news website *Sikkom*, emergency international student accommodation in the city also included a disused state school, canal cruise boats and an office complex built from containers.

Newly-arrived ‘internationals’ at universities in Amsterdam and Utrecht have been accommodated in youth hostels and campsites.

Dutch undergraduate students tend to live at home and commute long distances using subsidised student travel cards, so the demand for halls of residence is a recent development. Only the ten campus-based ‘University Colleges’, which offer

undergraduate degrees taught entirely in English, guarantee accommodation for all first-year students.

Classroom space is also a problem. The University of Amsterdam erected a giant marquee on a floating platform on a canal to serve as a lecture hall. *De Correspondent* reports that at the University of Twente in Enschede, freshmen students are sitting in the aisles of crowded lecture halls. There are queues for the University of Utrecht’s library in the run-up to exams.

The way universities are funded is forcing them to compete for foreign students. Dutch and EU students pay €2060 in annual fees, while undergraduates from outside the EU pay up to €20,000. Dutch universities reportedly pay student recruitment agencies around €250 per EU student they recruit, and €800 for a non-EU student.

A large proportion of central government grants to universities – roughly 61 per cent out of a total of €3.9 billion – is spent on financing based on output, in the form of enrolments and graduations.

Overall, there is also less government funding per student

– down from €20,000 in 2000 to €15,000 per student in 2017.

With fewer under 25s in the Dutch population, the only way to ensure continued growth is through foreign recruitment. University of Groningen strategy documents seen by *De Correspondent* identify “cash-cow” courses which are popular with international students, such as international business, European law and psychology.

Many academics question whether the ‘internationalisation’ of higher education has really enriched Dutch students by exposing them to students from other cultures. In the universities of Groningen and Nijmegen, around one in ten students on the English-medium psychology degree course are Dutch. There is widespread concern over whether the quality of English-medium courses can be maintained.

The Anglicisation of Dutch universities extends to their institutional names. What was once *Universiteit Maastricht* is now officially the University of Maastricht. (By 2013, around half its students were international and half its bachelor degree courses were taught in English.) The institution formerly known

as *Katholieke Universiteit Brabant* in Tilburg is now called Tilburg University.

The petition to Parliament is in response to proposed amendments to the Education Act, which it claims doesn’t do enough to protect the status of Dutch. It also claims that Anglicisation breaches the existing Education Act, which states, that “higher education shall be in principle in Dutch,” and that “higher education shall promote the Dutch language proficiency of Dutch students.”

The academics’ petition continues, “the great influx of foreign students” means less time spent on each student, with reduced proficiency in Dutch in the graduate workforce, adding, “the need for good Dutch language skills in in this age of information and communications technology has not been reduced.”

■ *EL Gazette* news editor Matt Salusbury is a Dutch national who studied at the Hogeschool Utrecht/University of Applied Sciences Utrecht. The translations from Dutch language sources used in this article are his own.



Students at Utrecht University (above) have to queue for library seats as the rising number of foreign students put pressure on Dutch Higher Education

Don't dub and improve your English

Countries which use subtitles score higher on tests, according to European researchers

By Gillian Ragsdale

Watching English-language films and TV with subtitles rather than being dubbed may increase TOEFL scores by as much as 17 percent, according to a team of researchers from across Europe.

Although English is the most popular choice of second language around the world, English proficiency by country varies a great deal. Even within the EU, neighbouring countries show significant differences in average TOEFL scores. Portugal's average score of 94, for example, is well ahead of neighbouring Spain's average score of 89.

Some of the major reasons for these differences are well-known, such as government investment in language education and how closely related the first language is to English. Recently, a team of researchers led by Augusto Rupérez Micola, from the Luxembourg School of Finance, wondered if watching English TV and films in their original language, with subtitles rather than dubbing into the local language, could be another factor influencing average TOEFL scores.

Whether or not watching English language films or TV

can improve English proficiency has been debated for some time. When questioned, only 12 per cent of Europeans thought this could be a useful way to learn English. On the one hand, it is a relatively cheap, abundant and easily accessed source material for both language learners and teachers. But on the other hand – it is very passive, running counter to an increasing move toward more active learning.

The history of cinema, it turns out, provides a natural quasi-experiment to test this idea. When sound was first introduced back in the 1930s-40s, Hollywood started dubbing films into European languages for export. But dubbing increases the cost of imported films and is only cost-effective if box office sales are expected to reach a certain level. For countries with 'small languages' (i.e. relatively few speakers of a language not shared with a larger country), studios soon switched to using subtitles in order to reduce the cost of imported films.

Once these processes were established in each country they remained unchanged for both film and TV to this day, and the languages in this study generally

fell firmly into either the 'dubbed' or 'subtitled' category. Outside Europe, Arabic-speaking North African countries generally used dubbing, while the Koreans were an unusual exception, as dubbing is mandatory in North Korea while subtitling is routine in South Korea.

Comparing TOEFL scores for 2008-2015 from 135 countries around the world (67 of which used dubbing and 68 using subtitles) the team, which included academics working in Spain, Italy and the UK, found that countries where English films were subtitled had TOEFL scores on average 17 per cent higher than those of countries where films were dubbed. Breaking those scores down further revealed that all four skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking) were improved in dubbing countries but, unsurprisingly, listening skills were especially improved (up 25 per cent), with speaking skills least so (up 12 per cent).

For example, Portuguese is a 'small language' compared to Spanish, and Portugal uses subtitles rather than dubbing. This may partly explain the difference in average national TOEFL scores. Similarly, the

subtitling Netherlands has higher scores than dubbing Austria, despite being of similar size and investing similar amounts in education: Austria is able to access dubbed film and TV made for its larger neighbour – Germany.

Investment in education and language proximity to English also significantly predicted TOEFL scores, as expected. A 1 per cent increase in investment in education predicted a 1.7 per cent increase in TOEFL scores.

The additional factor of using subtitles instead of dubbing was calculated as equivalent to a 2.4 per cent increase in monetary investment in education, making these findings of interest to cash-strapped educational policy makers looking to raise English language proficiency across the whole population.

Switching to subtitles may be a hard sell to the language-learning public, however. Generally, countries with a history of dubbed films prefer dubbing to subtitles while, interestingly, countries used to subtitles prefer that method (90 per cent of Swedes for example, prefer subtitles compared to less than 20 per cent of Germans).

In 2008, the Polish government proposal to use subtitling for all English language programming on a public broadcasting channel was met with 'strong opposition'. But as the world-wide appetite for English language proficiency increases, subtitled public broadcasting could be an attractive option, with the added benefit of expanding the market for subtitled foreign language film and TV generally. Thus, a policy aimed at improving English language learning may also serve to improve cross-cultural communication and education in all languages.

■ Micola, A. R., Fenoll, A. A., Banal-Estañol, A. and Bris, A. (2019) 'TV or not TV? The impact of subtitling on English skills.' *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization* 158(4): 87–4 99



Subtitling foreign film, rather than dubbing, may improve English language learning skills

New Malta work rights to lure long stay students

An economic boom means Malta has work for international students and for teachers, *Matt Salusbury* reports



The campus of the American University of Malta

Students from outside the EU on longer stays in Malta now have the right to work. There's also a visa scheme to allow recent non-EU graduates to find work. This development is expected to make Malta a more attractive destination for long-stay study.

It's too early to tell whether the scheme, introduced last year, has had any effect on overall international student numbers. The Office of National Statistics (ONS) figures from March showed a miniscule overall decrease in the number of foreign students attending English language courses for 2018. Enrolments shrank imperceptibly on the previous year, to 87,112, with average stays slightly shorter than in 2017.

Six of the top ten sending countries were within the EU, where language travel is overwhelmingly a short-stay market.

The long-stay markets are from long-haul regions: Latin America and East Asia. EFL students from Colombia currently stay the longest in Malta (an average of 11 weeks in 2018). They're followed by South Koreans (7.9 weeks) and Turks (6.4 weeks). Malta's competitive edge could increase if it can induce students to stay longer, attracting them with the prospect of progressing to an English-medium higher education course and the possibility of post-study work.

Malta is moving to increase its appeal. It is now easier to upgrade a tourist visa to a student visa and students on courses of over three months' duration can work 20 hours a week while studying. Students from countries with no Maltese consulate now don't have to apply for a visa in person.

Also, non-EU national students who graduate from one of Malta's higher education institutes now have six months in which to find a job, and can work full-time in the islands on a post-study work visa in a job "related to their area of specialisation".

Office of National Statistics figures for Malta's international graduate numbers in 2015 show that 'internationals' made up 6 per cent of undergraduates, with the UK and Kuwait as the biggest sending countries.

Malta's relatively tiny higher education sector is gradually expanding. The University of Malta has a good reputation, particularly for medicine. According to its website, of the university's 11,500 students, around 1,000 are foreign nationals.

The website of the relatively new private sector American University of Malta (AUM) views the new work rights as a selling point, noting last year that, "with AUM getting ready to open its doors to new students... new visa and employment policies come as a huge breath of fresh air." The university adds that many students, "start their life in Malta as English language students before moving on to higher-level education."

Most Maltese HE institutions are small and new, offering a narrow range of courses. Domain Academy runs computer science courses to degree level. St Martins

Institute (affiliated to the University of London) offers BSc courses in computer sciences, accounting, banking and business.

EEC-ITIS Malta Tourism and Languages Institute – a merger of Malta Tourism Institute (ITIS) and EEC Language Centre – runs BA hospitality and tourism courses. Also, the Institute of Tourism Studies Malta is about to open applications for its new BA courses in culinary arts, gastronomy and hospitality management.

There are also good post-study work opportunities. The country has recently taken off as a financial services hub and is enjoying a property boom. Unemployment has fallen sharply while wages remain relatively low.

The same factors may be making it harder for schools to find teachers. Maltese schoolteachers used to work in the summer, with others recruited from abroad for the season. Recent figures show there were 197 fewer teachers for this summer.

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Academic excellence comes at a cost

Melanie Butler finds great CLIL summer courses, but choose with care

The demand from the CLIL countries is clear: they want summer courses with Content and Language Integrated Learning. And they want them taught by subject specialists, preferably with experience of L2 students.

Stefania Bresquar, of the Italian agents' association IALCA, put it at a recent road show run by Language Cert: "We want physics taught in English by people who know about physics."

This is 'hard' CLIL, an approach where subject specialists, trained to work with L2 children, deliver content in English while supporting language acquisition.

The main place to find such teachers in the UK is in independent boarding schools.

The international study centres, like Bishopstrow College and Sherborne International, which prepare children to join boarding schools, generally use their own staff to run the same hard-CLIL courses in the summer.

Other boarding schools bring in specialist summer teachers. Concord International, for example, employs residential specialist teachers for Maths, Science and Economics in the summer. St Clare's Oxford recruits extra non-residential teachers and visiting experts for its summer courses in Science, Business and Art and Design.

Private sector EFL, at least in the residential sector, simply can't afford this.

UK specialist teachers work a 50-60 hour week, including all duties and preparation time, for which they earn £1,000 a week once the 35 per cent additional holiday pay is factored in.

An EFL summer teacher, by contrast, typically works around 50-55 hours a week, including all duties, but excluding any preparation time. They typically earn just under £500 a working week, including 12 per cent holiday pay, but before the government accommodation offset of £52.82 is deducted. Such rates can easily fall below minimum wage (see box).

“Soft CLIL is a good way to improve academic language skills rather than subject knowledge.”

Yet with student fees around £1,000 a week, surely there's enough money for physics teachers?

Not in the private sector. Of that £1,000 fee, the agent

will typically get 40 per cent. Between 25 and 40 per cent goes to the venue, for board and lodging for students and staff. That leaves £200-£350 a week to cover teaching, activities, day trips, 24-hour pastoral care and more.

Boarding schools don't have a problem. They pay agents a maximum of 20 per cent and, as long as they own the venue, the other 80 per cent goes to them.

Which is not to say private providers don't offer effective academic courses.

Some top providers use specialist subject teachers with EFL qualifications, which is the kind of hard CLIL agents say they want.

ST CLARE'S OXFORD



St Clare's Oxford hires in visiting experts for its summer courses in Science, Business and Art and Design

Others use visiting university post-grads to deliver lectures or lab sessions. This approach is known as 'English as a Medium of Instruction'. It can work well on pre-university programmes with B2 level students, but may be less effective with low-level learners or under-16s.

A few use EFL teachers with a degree in the relevant academic subject, to run hands-on courses or workshops. This approach is known as soft CLIL and is a good way to improve academic language skills rather than subject knowledge.

Non-residential summer schools could easily run hard CLIL courses because venue costs are much lower. But they are very rare.

Emerald Cultural Institute in Ireland has an English and STEM course. Students do 10 hours a week in the language school and ten hours a week studying science at Trinity College Dublin's Trinity Walton Club.

And the cost? About £1,000 a week if you include £180 for the host family.

The true cost of teachers

In the UK, minimum wage is calculated for every hour a worker is required to be on site, awake and on duty. Plus, any work-related travelling time. This covers all the duties listed in any fairly typical summer school job description, including:

- Wake up/bed time duties, meal monitoring and supervisory duties, English tuition, afternoon and evening activities, full day or half day excursions and trips, meet and greet on arrival days, airport check-in assistance on departure day.
- Meetings and travelling time to airports or on excursions are also working time. Preparation time does not count unless it's timetabled.

As a rule of thumb, to be deducted from working time, rest breaks should last at least 20 minutes and staff must be permitted to leave the workplace.

In minimum wage calculations, holiday pay must be deducted, but a maximum of £52.85 a week can be added to offset accommodation.

Minimum pay is currently £8.21 an hour for those aged 25 and over, and £7.83 for those between 21 and 24.

To calculate how many duty hours can legally be expected from a residential worker, take the weekly wage net of holiday pay and before accommodation, say £400, and add £52.85 to give you the total.

Divide the total, £452.85, by the minimum hour rate. That gives you 55 hours and 12 minutes for staff aged 25 or over, but 57 hours 50 minutes for those under 25.

Serious sport, serious learning

Tapping into teenagers' passions can be key, says *Melanie Butler*

If Southern Europe is switching to academic summer courses, students from Northern Europe remain more interested in English with specialist sports provision.

One agent's website shows that English and football is most popular with the Germans, French and Dutch, while watersports fans are from China, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

Sports in English is widely studied at bilingual schools in Hungary and Spain.

For seriously sporty students, the focus is instruction in English by fully qualified sports professionals, rather than an activity programme run by enthusiastic young amateurs.

Multi-sports programmes need to be run by qualified sports teachers or coaches. Mostly these are found in boarding school-run courses like Rossal or Bromsgrove, where the school runs the sport while International House Bristol provides the English teaching.

In the UK, specialist activity centres, such as PGL and Kingswood, which specialise in activity courses for British kids, have also come into the sector.

The trend, however, is towards English with a specific sport, a product which has long been common in Ireland. Specialist

junior courses in English and horse riding, for example, are offered across the republic, from Kilkenny to Donegal.

In Malta, the main offering is watersports, available to juniors at BELS and ESE, among others. Surfing and sailing are also common in Ireland. In the UK though, the big name in all things aquatic is Windermere, the only boarding school with a British Youth Sailing Club recognised by the Royal Yachting Association, and accredited separately for canoeing and kayaking.

Generally, boarding schools dominate the UK's high-level sports programmes. Harrow offers English and tennis, Stonar runs English and horse riding, while Bede's has a range of specialist sports.

But there are also some sports coaches who give the public schools a run for their money. Exportise, for example, which is owned by a sports coach, has been running English programmes with a range of professionally taught sports programmes since 1988.

Exportise also pioneered the football club partnership, running football courses with Arsenal Soccer Schools. More UK clubs have now followed this path, with British Study



Watersports are big for Windermere

WINDERMERE INT'L SUMMER SCHOOL

Centres teaming up with Manchester City, and Oxford International with Tottenham Hotspurs.

The biggest name in sports though, is Millfield school, which has been represented at every Olympics since 1956. This year students at its Bruton campus can personalise their programme. They choose from a menu of English-focussed programmes like performing art or pronunciation. Then they add on an activity option ranging from riding to rock climbing.



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Irish high schools clean up...

Melanie Butler reports on push to regulate high school sector

A new inspection scheme for Ireland's educational guardianship providers was launched in April as part of the quality assurance framework set up by the Association of Guardianship Providers Ireland (AGPI).

In recent years, the numbers of EU teens choosing to study for an academic year at an Irish high school has increased exponentially, but the sector remains largely unregulated.

High school programmes in English-speaking countries have become increasingly popular around the world, with students enrolling in schools in English-speaking destinations from the Philippines to Philadelphia. In Ireland, however, language schools have long been heavily involved in this market, selecting schools and host families, as well as English language support and out-of-school lessons.

Around a third of the members of Irish language schools' association MEI offer these programmes, and half of those either advertise guardianship or offer services of a similar nature.

In fact, it was language schools that led the move to regulate the sector. Founded in 2015 by Declan Millar of High Schools International, Therese Dillon of MLI,

Brian Burns of ISI and Padraig Hourigan of International House Dublin, AGPI worked with children's charities to develop the inspection scheme.

In 2018, they created an inspection company, IGI (Independent Guardianship Inspection CLG). Now an independent body run by a board of educators and child safety experts, IGI is responsible for conducting inspections and adjudicating applications.

Declan Millar, who has specialised in High school programmes for over twenty years, told

them, and did they really know enough about child safeguarding?"

Millar, who also runs programmes in the UK, foresees numbers in Ireland will only increase after Brexit, as EU citizens lose their right to attend British state schools for free, further increasing the potential problem. While non-EU children need visas and can only attend fee-paying schools, there is no record of children who arrive from Europe and enrol in a local school. "We don't know how many there are here right now," he told us.

AGPI's solution is not just to inspect the guardianship associations, but to form links with the schools the children attend. Secondary schools, both in the Republic and in Northern Ireland, can join as Associate Members and agree to work with AGPI member organisations where possible – and where not possible, those guardianship organisations they do work with are encouraged to apply for AGPI membership.

According to the association press release, "The hope is that this quality scheme will bring some discipline to this business in Ireland, and eventually, having reached a critical mass, to attract the support of government."

“Everywhere I looked I saw Spanish or German students enrolled in local schools, even in tiny towns or villages.”

the *Gazette* that the surge in numbers of EU students enrolling in Irish state schools had raised serious concerns. "Everywhere I looked I saw Spanish or German students enrolled in local schools, even in tiny towns or villages. And I began to worry who was looking after

...as boarding schools get bounce from Brexit

Demand by EU students, especially from Spain and Germany, for places at Irish boarding school are soaring, according to a recent article in the *Irish Times*.

The paper ascribes this to a 'Brexit Bounce' as, once Britain leaves the EU, European children will require visas to attend independent schools in the UK.

But visa-free travel is not the only attraction.

Boarding in Ireland is generally cheaper than in Britain because the Irish state

subsidises teachers' salaries. The cheapest Irish boarding school listed by the *Irish Times* costs €8,000 a year; the most expensive charges just under €23,000. The average cost of boarding in the UK, by contrast is €33,300.

The Irish elite have long sent their children to fee-paying schools, though there are relatively few of them.

According to the *Irish Times*, only 51 of the Republic's 700-plus secondary schools charge fees, and just 18 take boarders.

Only one of those is an Irish language medium school

Virtually all Irish boarding schools are Christian foundations. Nationally, the five Catholic boys boarding schools are the best known, and these have long featured strongly in the *Irish Times* League Tables, which are based entirely on admissions rates to Irish universities, as it is illegal in Ireland to rank schools on exam results.

Although nearly half of all Irish secondary schools are single sex, there are only two girls boarding schools, both of which are linked to the Protestant Church of Ireland.

The other residential schools are co-educational Protestant foundations linked to the Church of Ireland, the Methodist Church or the Quakers. These schools are particularly attractive to international students, at least those from non-Catholic countries, and up to half of all the boarders at these schools may come from outside Ireland. Students from these schools are much more likely to go to university in the UK, the US or in another EU country.



Conglows Wood College, one of Ireland's elite fee-paying Catholic boarding schools
editorial@elgazette.com

Demand grows for year-round young learner provision

Stick with the specialist schools says *Melanie Butler*

The demand for year-round courses for groups of young learners is growing across Europe, most strongly in Italy and Spain, but what kind of provision is best for them?

On average the best provision for young learners is found among the young learner specialists, judged by UK inspection results.

Young learner specialists are awarded an average of six strengths by British Council inspectors, while the national average across all provider types is five strengths.

However, just because a provider is good with adults, doesn't mean they will also do well with young learners. In a study of British Council inspection reports, 24 UK providers whose young learner provision is inspected separately from their adult courses, we found that, on average, adult provision is awarded five more strengths than junior operations. This is a statistically significant difference.

Of course, these figures only refer to the UK – no other English-speaking country publishes inspection results. There are a number of reasons, however, why this is

likely to be true throughout the English-speaking world: few English native speaker teachers are trained to teach under-16s, and until very recently very few year-round language schools in the English-speaking world offered young-learner courses outside the summer.



Bell St Albans takes young learners year-round

Now for the good news – ten per cent of all accredited language schools in the UK now have more juniors than adults year-round. We are seeing, at least in Britain, the

rise and rise and rise of the year-round young learner specialists. These include not only the ten boarding schools who can take short stay groups, but also nearly forty private language schools.

Although most chains do better with adults, there are high-scoring chain schools, like St Giles Highgate and British Study Centres Edinburgh. There are also successful summer operators, like UKLC and Bell Young Learners, now offering courses year-round. Then there are the well-established, year-round specialists including Sidmouth International School and Globe English, both in Devon. This is also the region which boasts the largest number of young learner schools.

Not all young learner specialists excel. The 'pop up' schools which only open when a closed group books in can have problems finding good teachers. Schools in the main adult EFL destinations also seem to struggle. And schools new to accreditation often fall down on child protection. So always check the inspection reports.

But in the UK at least, the young learner specialists are on the rise.

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Down in Devon

Melanie Butler explores young learning in Devon

Devon offers the best quality of life in England, according to an analysis by wellness charity Happy City. According to the *Evening Standard* newspaper, high levels of physical activity, low unemployment and good local living conditions all helped this county in the south west of England grab the top spot.

It is also the ideal location for children's holidays, as generations of English parents will tell you. Devon has a good climate, great beaches and one of the lowest crime rates in the country. This is picture-postcard England, right down to the famous cream teas.

Small wonder, then, that it has become the young learner capital of the UK. Of the twenty accredited language schools and summer schools in the county, 17 take young learners in the summer and exactly half welcome under-16s year-round.

Devon takes its duty of care to young international students very seriously, and it always has done. The two oldest EFL operations here were junior summer schools: Country Cousins, on the North Coast, was started in 1951; while Isca, the best family-run summer school in the UK, was founded in 1966. When two year-round schools opened here in the 1970s - Sidmouth International School and Globe English Centre - they took young learners year-round virtually from the beginning. They are both now *EL Gazette* Centres of Excellence, two of just five in the entire country.

When Jane and Darrell Dumenil of Sidmouth International opened its young learner courses for 8 to 13 year olds in 1983, they began to work with the local council on child protection.

The county developed strong support measures for international students, even vetting host families many years before the British Council introduced it is own safeguarding checks. The Devon authorities still work closely with the schools, and the Devon system works in tandem with the national regulations, making the county the safest place in the UK, and possibly the world, for young foreign students.

Because the region has always welcomed young learners, it has a well-developed infrastructure to support them - great host families, teachers experienced in dealing with this age group and activity and leisure programmes especially suited to the young.

Partly as a result, the average Devon language school scores above-average on its inspection reports, and a higher proportion than average appear in the *EL Gazette* rankings of the top 100 schools.

Over the years, the development of local airports has made the region directly accessible for many more students. According to Kevin McNally, managing director of Torquay International School, another local Centre of Excellence, students from long-haul destinations can also use the hub in Amsterdam and land directly in Bristol. This is just another reason that parents and agents should consider sending young learners to study in a part of England which one traditional song compares to Eden:

*When Adam and Eve were dispossessed
Of the garden hard by Heaven,
They planted another one down in the west,
'Twas Devon, glorious Devon.*



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Talking to Torquay about **young learners**

Kevin McNally, Managing Director of Torquay International School tells *Melanie Butler* why Torquay is the ideal location for young learners

I never intended to get involved in young learners. My interest had always been in the high-end adult market, but after my first summer in Torquay, I realised that this was the ideal destination for children.

I had been shocked to see kids as young as 14 hanging round amusement arcades at 10:30 at night, completely unsupervised. Their bags and T-shirts clearly indicated that they were on a study programme run by one of the unaccredited providers who move into places like Torquay each summer and set up short-term centres.

I work on the basis that everything I do for students should be good enough for a member of my family. I wouldn't want a young member of my family to be hanging around the streets in an unfamiliar town at 10:30 at night!

I could do this, I thought, and I could do it better. We already had an excellent infrastructure at Torquay International School, and our base of homestay providers was easily adaptable for younger students.

All the statistics show demand is moving to young learner courses. So, it made business sense to start developing these programmes, while being very careful not to

allow this new venture to negatively affect our core adult business.

Some schools make the mistake of thinking young learner courses are more or less the same product as adult courses. I believe they need a very different perspective.

Safeguarding and welfare must come first. All the support staff who work with our young learners take the level three safeguarding course. We have a very high staff-to-student ratio and students are constantly supervised. Unusually, no student under 15 is allowed to walk alone to or from either school or activities.

In Devon, we are lucky in that our local council takes safeguarding and welfare extremely seriously. We have an excellent relationship with a local Safeguarding Liaison Officer, she is on hand for anything and everything. This gives me peace of mind, I feel that we have a constant third-party oversight.

Pedagogically, teaching young learners is only casually related to teaching adults. An adult knows that they are investing time and money to be with us. Young learners have no such perceptions. They have to be kept engaged at all times, and this requires enthusiastic and dynamic teaching.

There is a danger of assuming all young learners are 'more or less the same'. I am very lucky in that my academic staff go to great lengths to view every young learner as an individual. They meet frequently with each of the young learners to see what we can do to help them each achieve their full potential, and we have classroom assistants on hand to help with any pastoral welfare issues.

Taking on young learners has led to sleepless nights worrying that every child is safe and secure. But our systems and procedures do work, and as we go into our third year I feel more relaxed.

The biggest reward has been seeing how much progress the young learners can make in two weeks. Walking into a class of 11-year-olds and seeing Italians, Turks and Algerians engaging with each other erases any cynicism. I like to think having these kids at Torquay International School means, in our own tiny way, we are helping our world have a better future.



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We know it makes sense

Multisensory learning benefits students of all abilities and is an excellent way for teachers to introduce inclusive practises, says *Anne Margaret Smith*

Inclusion' and 'inclusive practice' are buzz-words in many educational sectors. Yet some teachers may still not feel confident that they know how to start implementing inclusive practices, especially if they haven't any explicit training.

These practices are rarely a part of initial teacher training programmes, and it is only with experience that we realise how much we don't know.

Some institutions, unfortunately, only pay lip-service to the idea. They set up superficial procedures that tick the inspection boxes, without investing in the professional development or resources teachers need to make the curriculum accessible to all their learners.

Many teachers, on the other hand, work constantly to develop a collaborative classroom culture, to create a culture which encourages their learners to recognise the diversity within the group, and to appreciate the benefits that this brings to their learning experience.

A growing body of research evidence, including a European Commission study from 2013, suggest that all students taught in inclusive classrooms benefit from this experience, not only socially, but also pedagogically. Inclusive practice is good practice, and anything that makes the language easier to learn ought to be help everybody.

Often, it is small changes in classroom management that yield the biggest impact. They foster a sense of belonging and mutual respect for all the members of the group.

For example, not all teachers are fully in control of the course material they use, but we can all choose how to present the material, and what aspects our students need to focus on.

We can also supplement our books with multisensory activities, so that students simultaneously see, hear and interact physically with the language.

When we activate several input channels, we stimulate more areas of the brain at once, and make more connections with the new material, which helps us to understand and retain the information. This can be done using elements of drama, for example, adding gestures to new vocabulary items, or acting out dialogues and stories. Larger physical movements have the added benefit of stimulating blood flow, bringing fresh oxygen to the brain.

Some techniques can be borrowed from visual arts: colour coding for parts of speech, or producing simple images to support memory of new vocabulary. These strategies are appealing and beneficial to many students.

One of the best ways of making lessons more multisensory is to

“Often, it is small changes in classroom management that yield the biggest impact.”

make use of music, because it activates many of the same parts of the brain as language. Apart from playing songs in order to focus on the lyrical content, change the mood of the class, or provide a springboard for creative writing, there are several

elements of music that map directly onto aspects of language use.

Rhythm, pitch, volume and tempo can be exploited as an easy and enjoyable entry route for some learners who seem disengaged, or are struggling to acquire communicative competence. These elements, of course, are found in all types of music (and speech), but it may be helpful to isolate them and focus on one at a time, before recombining them into genuine utterances.

Language professionals working with dyslexic learners have known for a long time that working on a sense of rhythm, and attention to the syllable structure of words, supports spelling skills. Improving auditory

timing allows more effective segmentation and enhances phonological awareness in other ways, too, such as sequencing of sounds.

Some learners may also benefit from explicit coaching in perceiving pitch changes, in order to understand and produce a wider range of intonation patterns. There are good arguments for helping learners to understand the effects of volume and tempo in their speech, in order to communicate their ideas in precisely the way they intend.

Implementing inclusive practices does not have to mean increasing teachers' workloads or breaking the school budget.

We set the tone of our classroom culture by modelling the respect that we want our learners to show each other. By using multisensory activities in our classes, we allow all learners to work to their strengths and have the opportunity to shine at some point in the day.

Simultaneously, we help them develop areas of learning that may be a bit weaker, giving them more strategies for approaching different types of material. Most importantly, we also send a message that language learning can, and should, be collaborative and enjoyable for everyone.

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■ Anne Margaret Smith is an ELT teacher, trainer, author and dyslexia assessor. She helped to set up the IATEFL Inclusive Practices & SEN SIG and runs her own company: ELT well (www.ELTwell.com).





Point of View

Mark Hancock

As a model for learners, RP is outdated and needs to be replaced

Is it time to dump Received Pronunciation? Most British people don't use it any more and yet we keep teaching it. Perhaps we could drop the idea of a single standard altogether, writes *Mark Hancock*

Everybody has an accent. Nobody is exempt, although many of us perhaps feel we are. That's because we tend to perceive other people's accents relative to our own, which we perceive as neutral and accentless.

An accent may come to be considered as 'standard', and again this may be perceived as neutral and accentless by the people who speak it. Hence the nonsense phrase, 'getting rid of your accent'. On the face of it, this is impossible – but clearly, what it means is developing an accent which is more like the one which is considered 'standard'.

Speaking with a 'standard' accent confers advantages – opportunities may be denied to people 'with an accent'. This is what lies behind the once-popular elocution lessons – people seeking to improve their life prospects by modifying their speech. However, we should remember that 'standard' does not mean better: as Linguist John Wells put it, '... a standard accent is regarded as a standard... not because of any intrinsic qualities it may possess, but because of an arbitrary attitude adopted towards it by society...' (Wells 1982 p. 34).

In Britain, the accent long seen as standard is 'Received Pronunciation' (RP), where the word 'received' is used in the sense of 'accepted'. In elocution lessons, RP is typically the target model, and ELT has followed the lead: pronunciation teachers have been expected to present the RP model to their students. But can RP be plausibly described as 'standard' in the sense of 'widespread'? Geoff Lindsey of University College, London, argues that it can't today.

In his recent book, *English After RP*, Lindsey explains that RP is usually represented by a set of phonetic symbols chosen over half a century ago by A. C. Gimson. He makes the point that if a person speaks in exactly the way these symbols indicate, they will sound comically old-fashioned. He suggests using alternative phonetic symbols which would be more appropriate for modern Standard Southern British English, but makes the point that if we are to stick with the symbols chosen by Gimson, we will need to avoid taking them at phonetic face value – the symbols no longer accurately describe the facts.

The bigger claim in Lindsey's book is this: that as a model for learners of English, RP is outdated and needs to be replaced by something more up-to-date, and this may be called Standard Southern British English (SSBE). This message will be greeted with pleasure by many teachers, wary of the whiff of elitism often associated with RP.

The idea of keeping the description of our standard accent up-to-date seems reasonable, but I do wonder about the implication of using this as the model in ELT. To me, this seems like teaching pronunciation as if it were



Hats off: Like many British traditions, Received P



MARK HANCOCK

an elocution lesson: changing your accent to conform to a standard in one particular nation. Is this really appropriate for the majority of learners of English in the world today? I suspect that it is probably not.

In her book *The Phonology of English as an International Language*, Jennifer Jenkins makes what I consider to be a crucial point: English is no longer just another language; it is a Lingua Franca. This *must* have implications. Most learners of English today will end up using it to gain access to a global speech community, rather than for spending time in a country where English is spoken.

In Brazil, there is an expression *para inglês ver* ('for the English to see'), meaning 'just for show' – something you would do not for any practical purpose, but only to impress some onlookers. This seems like a good description of the elocution lesson's goal: pronouncing to impress the English. In the global speech community, there is no specific reason to want to impress the English. In the world of English as a Lingua Franca, pronunciation is a working tool of communication, not just something ornamental.

We need to revisit the question of standards. For English as a Lingua Franca,

MARK HANCOCK





UNSPLASH/ALYSA TARRANT

Pronunciation has had its day

if RP is not appropriate, nor SSBE, then what should we replace these with? I think we should consider the possibility of not replacing them with anything.

This is not such a radical suggestion – it is not unlike what happens already. In most classrooms around the world, the main pronunciation model for the students is the teacher, and the vast majority of these do not have a ‘standard’ accent themselves.

I think we can afford to take a looser, more flexible attitude in pronunciation teaching. Take phonemic symbols, for example. I agree with Geoff Lindsey that if we are to stick with the symbols chosen by Gimson, we will need to avoid taking them at phonetic face value. But I would go a step further and say we should avoid taking *any* symbols at phonetic face value: this kind of precision is not helpful in teaching English as a Lingua Franca.

Let’s say that the traditional, elocution model of pronunciation teaching is symmetrical with regard to the productive and receptive skill: everybody learns to speak with the same standard accent, and everybody can be expected to understand others speaking with that same standard accent. What I am suggesting is asymmetrical: everybody strives to develop the most intelligible possible version of their own English accent, but at the same time, they need to be capable of tolerating a wide variety of accents receptively. In short: pronounce locally, understand globally.

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■ Mark Hancock wrote his first book, *Pronunciation Games* (CUP) in the early nineties. Since then, he has been teaching in Europe and writing materials, including *English Pronunciation in Use* (CUP), and various course books. His latest books, *PronPack 1-4* (Hancock McDonald ELT) received the 2017 ELTons Award for innovation in teacher resources, and a runner-up award from the English Speaking Union. Mark also uploads free articles and materials on <http://pronpack.com> and <http://hancockmcdonald.com>.

editorial@elgazette.com

OUT OF THE BOX

Spontaneity: the vital ingredient

Like actors, musicians and clowns, teachers should learn to improvise.

One topic which never gets discussed in ELT is spontaneity. Yet spontaneity is at the heart of human interaction and expression.

You may prepare your lesson, even in some detail, but once you are in the classroom, stuff starts to happen and you respond. Either you use whatever happens to pursue your plan, or you suspend your plan for a moment while you derive learning advantage from dealing with what has been offered.

Either way, you accept what the class offers (questions, mistakes, misunderstandings, students’ news, chat, worries, etc.), rather than ignoring it. This capacity for spontaneity enables us to include and relate to the unfolding and unpredictable present moment. Without it we could not even have productive conversations.

We need the lesson plan, which provides purpose and direction and tools, and we need our capacity for spontaneity – to handle the cutting edge of the present moment, as we implement the plan. Spontaneity is the taken-for-granted, elephant in the room, invisible, yet making everything possible.

We all know that spontaneity helps develop the affective qualities of the teacher. Yet ELT methodology and teacher-training focuses on the planning aspect and has built a complete discourse around it. There is no such discourse around spontaneity,

which is not observed, critiqued and developed with the rigour that planning is. Yet spontaneity is too important to be left to chance.

By contrast, training for other performance arts – theatre, stand-up, jazz, clowning – starts to practise, make visible and develop spontaneity and improvisation skills from the first day. The first rule in improvised theatre is ‘Accept the offer’ – go with the energy, and help make something useful of it. And when you find yourself doing this, a state of flow becomes possible, and even student mistakes become gifts to the class!

In a human setting you cannot do everything with spontaneity, but... you cannot do anything without it.

To start to develop a discourse of spontaneity and improvisation, the C Group and IATEFL Research SIG are holding a one day event on 2 November in Oxford.

Contact:
<https://spontaneityinelt.weebly.com/>

■ Adrian Underhill is a trainer, speaker and ELT consultant. He is a past president of IATEFL and a member of the Creativity Group.

Alan Maley was a teacher and trainer. After retirement he continues as a speaker and writer for publication. He is a past President of IATEFL and co-founder of the Creativity Group.

The judges for this year's British Council ELT Innovation Award have eschewed the standard general English course in favour of Palestinian playwriting, a Portuguese TV personality, and 'simulated native speakers'. Results will be released later in June.

Also featured are a task-based course for workplace English in *Widgets Inc* from Atama-I, and task-based general English in *On Task* from Abax.

For CLIL courses for secondary schools, however, we need to go to the Local Innovation category. *Cambridge Science* and *Cambridge Social Science* from Cambridge University Press were developed for the Madrid Bilingual Project.

Local teaching materials also feature prominently in this category: the *Teach for Change Nigeria* website offers step-by-step guides for teachers of language and literature; there are also resources for ESOL teachers working in UK prisons from the Bell Trust and De Montfort University, and a 12-week course, *ESOL Stepping Stones*, from LuCiD, designed to be delivered by children's centre staff to new mothers and their babies.

This year's most intriguing field, however, is probably to be found in the shortlist for the Innovation in Learner Resources, which features everything from the series of sixty-second videos *English in a Minute*, from Elton stalwarts BBC Learning English, to *Falar (inglês) é Fácil* written by Portuguese TV personality Cristina Ferreira, with help from the English Exam Centre and Cambridge Assessment English.

Digital Learning Associates started out with an apparently impossible aim to find authentic video materials which can work with learners at different language levels. The end result, *Ready to Run*, is a selection of original authentic videos in a range of styles suitable for students from A2 and upward. With full transcripts and teachers notes, this could well become a firm favourite.

Graded readers also lead the field in this category, but from two very different stables.

First is a series of titles based on Hollywood blockbusters from one of ELT's major publishers: the Marvel series from Pearson English Readers are full of stills from the movies and dramatic graphics, together with an audio CD. All bound to make them a hit with fans of the world-famous film franchise.

Those who like their plots more mysterious should try *Stories Without End* by Taylor Sapp. Published by small independent US publisher, Alphabet, all 24 stories – designed to be read by students from lower intermediate to advanced levels – end on a cliff hanger. The students' challenge is to provide the ending, in a reader series designed to promote writing skills.

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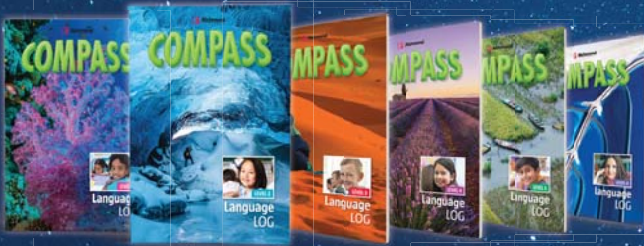
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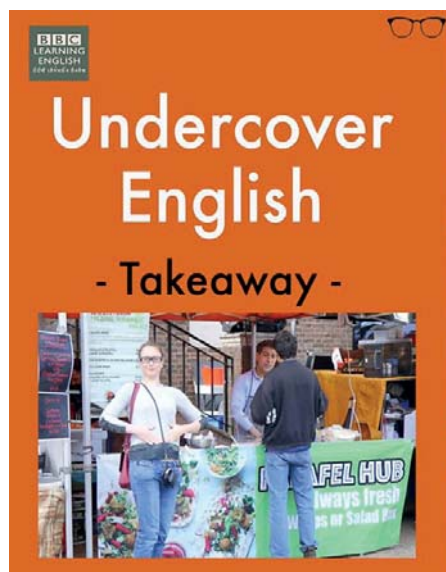
're off!

is full of unfamiliar faces

Also galloping towards a bookshelf near you are the shortlisted titles in Teachers' Resource Category, with *Teaching and Developing Reading Skills* (Cambridge University Press), *Teacher Development over Time* (Routledge) and *Understanding Teenagers in the ELT Classroom* (Pavilion ELT). The indefatigable Richard Cauldwell from Speech in Action is coming up on the inside with a new book: *A Syllabus for Listening-decoding*.

Two new on-line professional development courses complete the starting line-up: *Teaching English Online* produced by Cambridge Assessment English and the delightfully named *The Ultimate Guide to Teaching English as a Lingua Franca for ELT Professionals* from TEFL Equity Advocates & Academy.

Finally, the Digital Technology category has a heavy focus on personalised learning. There are two offerings for mobile phones: EF's *Immersion Challenge* and *Go Correct* from Big Languages. EAL children from over 30 language communities can use *Flash Academy*



BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

to access curriculum-based lessons on a phone, laptop or tablet. While Laureate's *English Simulations* promises 'realistic conversations with simulated speakers.'

BBC Learning English sticks to video with its second ELTons runner, *Undercover English*.

The runners and riders for this year's ELTons may be a mix of familiar entrants and newcomers, but as we enter the final straight, who will go the distance?

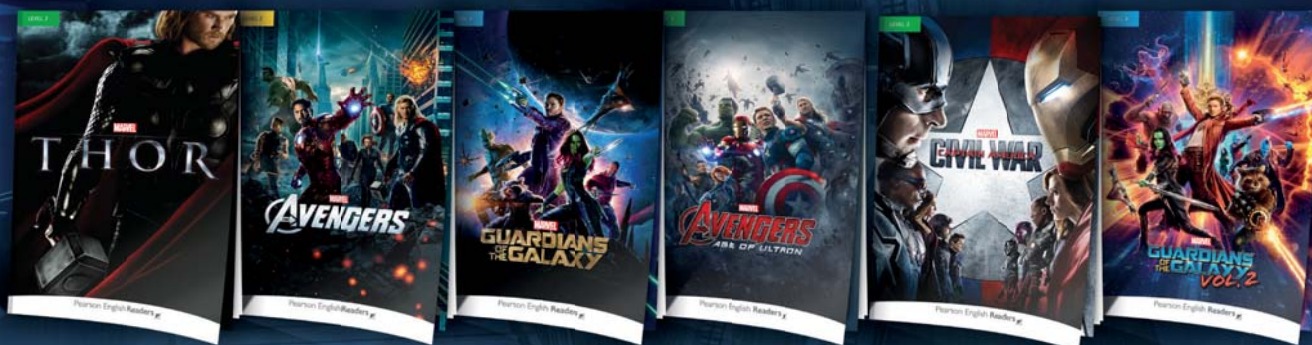
Find out who the winners are by watching the ELTons Innovations Awards ceremony live online on Monday 10 June.



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Making strides with metacognition

Gill Ragsdale explains the power of thinking aloud

‘We do not learn from experience.... we learn from reflecting on experience’, John Dewey, educational psychologist.

One of the common challenges for teachers is to teach students how to learn and so become more autonomous, efficient learners in control of their own learning. Students who think about and reflect on how they learn language employ a range of metacognitive strategies which generally help them learn more efficiently.

Metacognition is commonly defined as ‘thinking about thinking’. In education, this means learning about learning.

Thinking in this way requires a self-awareness of mental processes and a body of knowledge to work with, so it is something that develops over time. Metacognitive thinking can be developed from childhood, and it can be accelerated by instruction and regular practice.

Metacognitive strategies should be used in the three stages of learning. First, when learners prepare and plan to learn prior to a task or topic. Then, to monitor the process during the learning activity. Finally, when they evaluate the learning outcome.

Both teachers and students benefit from consciously applying metacognitive strategies throughout the learning process. The different strategies all employ a process of students asking key questions of themselves and/or others and reflecting on the answers. Teachers can use similar processes to plan, monitor and evaluate their own teaching.

Metacognitive strategies for learners should be scaffolded by the teacher. Firstly, teachers name and present the strategy, explaining how it supports learning. Then they model the strategy with an example.

Students practice using the strategy with scaffolding support, for example with hints and suggestions. They then use them with less and less support, and finally without any support. This process might occur over several lessons. Pairs and groups of students can go on to practice and give feedback on how well they are using the strategy.

In order for metacognitive strategies to become a common and regular part of lessons, teachers will need to teach not only the strategy itself but also the language required to talk about it. This can seem overly-challenging for lower-level learners but often the language can be simplified and then used routinely so that it becomes familiar. For

example, the simple instruction ‘think aloud’ can signal the routine practice of explicitly explaining what the learner is thinking during a task (as described below).

Six successful strategies

1 Introduce the idea

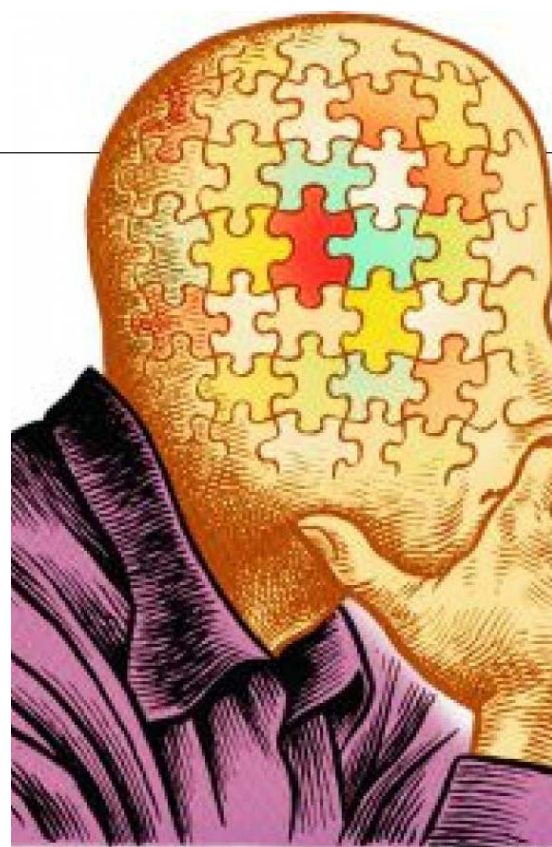
All students (and teachers), whether they realise it or not, have their own ideas and beliefs about the learning process and themselves as learners. They may, for example, have a fixed idea of their own abilities and likely level of achievement. These fixed ideas can be an obstacle to learning, and many students underestimate their potential to regulate their own learning. At the very beginning of a course, students can be asked to describe and discuss these ideas and beliefs explicitly (for example, see this downloadable resource <https://efttakeaways.home.blog/tag/metacognition/>).

Students can be encouraged to reflect on what has worked well or been challenging previously and compare their reflections. Some of the strategies on this page may arise naturally from this discussion or can be introduced by the teacher. Make it clear to students that adopting good learning strategies can greatly improve language proficiency for *all abilities*.

2 Use prior knowledge

Before a lesson or specific activity, students should draw on what they already know that is relevant. Drawing on long-term memory stores decreases the cognitive load of the new information in short-term memory and makes it easier to move the new information to long-term memory for storage. In short – it makes new information easier to remember.

When beginning a new task, students should ask themselves: ‘What do I already know about this language item or this topic?’ This could also be done by brainstorming



in groups or as a class. No task or topic will be so new that it cannot be linked to prior knowledge, and the more links that can be made – to other language items, contexts, experiences or applications – the better.

For example, given the title of a listening task such as ‘Let’s have lunch’ students should gather language items on any related content, such as types of food, places to have lunch, best time for lunch and so on. The greater the range of linked items (i.e. not just a list of food options) the more long-term memory is being activated, and the more likely it is that known language will be recognised and new items will be processed.

Students should continue to link new language to prior knowledge during learning and when evaluating learning.

3 Organise information

Accessing prior knowledge and linking information enables students to organise information for example graphically as checklists, concept maps or webs. Organizing information graphically further decreases cognitive load on short-term memory. There are many free graphic organisers online for children and adults.

For example, Venn diagrams can be used to organise language items for a compare and contrast exercise, where students write things in common in the overlapping space and contrasts in the non-overlapping spaces. Word clusters and timelines are also useful organisers.

The teacher could model this, for example with a writing exercise, by drawing a map of ideas and language items to be used and then organising related information to form a plan of the writing. Students then practice this strategy in pairs or small groups before trying it individually. After writing they can peer assess



how well the strategy was used, what worked and how the planning could be improved. It should become clear to students that the quality and content of the writing is much improved when preceded by organising and planning.

Writing tasks as short as single sentences can benefit from this approach. Lower level learners can begin by collecting relevant

vocabulary to one side before organising chosen language items into whole sentences.

4 Think aloud

This technique makes students aware of the thought processes used to tackle any language task.

The teacher first models this in example tasks such as, 'Fill in the blank: they live near you?'

The teacher thinks aloud: 'What kind of sentence is this? It's a question. So, how do we make questions in English? This sentence has 'they live,' which is present simple. So, I need the verb 'do' or 'does' to make the question. Here I will use 'do' because 'do' goes with 'they.'

Next, students try one or more examples together with the teacher. Then they do it in pairs (either collaborating or taking turns) or groups. Students can adapt and learn new strategies from listening to each other. This is an example of socially-shared metacognition that develops a classroom culture of using metacognitive strategies.

Note that *all* the thinking should be spoken aloud, including mistakes and trial and error. 'Think aloud' practice makes students more aware of how they process language, where

they are making mistakes and how they can improve. Eventually, the processes will be internalised and happen automatically without being spoken.


5 Slow down and focus

Students often rush ahead when something is confusing and challenging rather than stopping and focussing. Students should regularly slow down and focus. This may require allowing extra time for the activity although once this becomes routine, the time should be repaid by overall increased efficiency. For example, when reading they should stop after each paragraph and ask themselves:

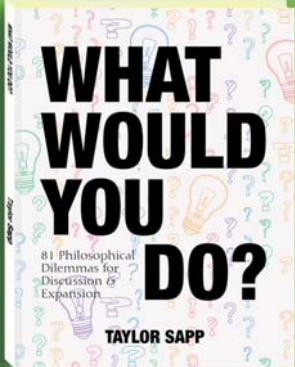
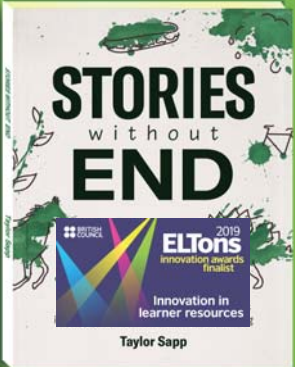
- Do I understand this?
- Is there some part that is more difficult to understand?
- What does the writer want me to understand here?
- What can I do to try to understand this?

This can be modelled and practiced as a 'think aloud' exercise.

Encourage students to use other cognitive strategies to deal with challenges, rather than just ploughing on and reading all the words without understanding the overall meaning.


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THE CAMBRIDGE GUIDE TO LEARNING ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
 Edited by Anne Burns and Jack C. Richards
 Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-40841-7

Each chapter in this superb title seems to put to bed various urban myths concerning language learning. Opening with a section devoted to 'Learners and Learning English', it looks firstly at the development of language in young children, those aged 4-12 years. It notes how the persistence of non-native accents may, according to Flege's Speech Learning Model, be due to how L2 learners perceive new L2 sounds based on their existing L1 phonetic categories.

Following this, 'Learning as an Adolescent,' focuses on the notion of a 'maturational period' (from 12-17 years), and explains how recent research in this area has shown that far from marking the point at which language learning ability seems to halt and decline, it is in fact a highly favourable age at which to learn a language. 'Learning as an Adult' in chapter three plays down the widely-held belief that beyond an alleged critical period, adults struggle to learn English, pointing out how some strongly believe that motivation and identity have stronger influences than age.

'Learning with Learning Difficulties' notes how learners with additional needs constitute between 5 and 15 per cent of the population of students in the European Union, dyslexia being the most commonly occurring difficulty. With appropriate support, the author notes how such persons are easily capable of becoming multiple language users.

Section two considers the individual, social and affective dimensions of language learning, aspects that have traditionally been more associated with second language acquisition research. Chapter six argues that motivation in learning and success in learning can fluctuate over time, and that teachers need to abandon their role as external controlling motivators in order to view students more from a whole-person perspective.

Further chapters here indicate that between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of learners from a variety of backgrounds experience language anxiety, that language learning strategies vary according to cultural, social, political and personal factors, and that the teacher plays a crucial role in learners' language identity formation.

Sections three and four look respectively at the role of language learning contexts and learning English for special purposes, such as academic and for the workplace. Interestingly, the latter examines linguistic break-downs that



Everything you need to know about EFL but they were afraid to tell you...

Wayne Trotman welcomes the new, complete, evidence-based guide

“... teachers need to abandon their role as external controlling motivators...”

occasionally occur between call-centres and callers.

As a precursor to the section that follows it, one looking at the four skills, 'Learning the Systems of English' is in focus

in section five, i.e. how pronunciation, word-level vocabulary, and phrase-level features and grammar each develop.

Later sections look at the social uses of English, in particular genres, literacy, pragmatics and the

increasing importance of developing intercultural competence. Ending the guide is a look at approaches to learning English via tasks, translation, textbooks and the use of corpora, which leads naturally onto

the closing chapters on learning through technology, online learning and learning through social media.

While each of the thirty-six chapters ends with focused discussion questions followed by key reading and a lengthy list of references, one of the most refreshing aspects of this title was the authors, whose names for the most part this reviewer of over thirty years did not recognise and who perhaps represent a new generation of experts in the field. The valuable chapter contents certainly indicate this.

Wayne Trotman is a teacher educator at Izmir Katip Çelebi University, Izmir, Turkey.



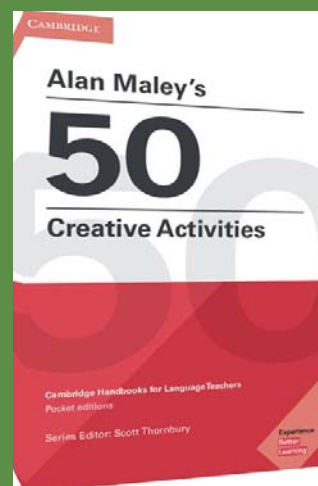
BOOK OF THE MONTH

ALAN MALEY'S 50 CREATIVE ACTIVITIES
ALAN MALEY
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
ISBN 978-1-10-845776-7

Creativity involves aspects of innovation, quality and relevance. We recognise it, even if it is difficult to define. The activities in this 100-page practical book are loosely categorised into

five areas: writing, music, drama, playing with language and hands-on. One activity, 'Literature is all around us', is based on 'metathesis', which is the reversal of items, for example, 'Work is the curse of the drinking classes.' Other ideas are similarly inventive and playful. Activities which don't appeal to me may well appeal to

others, such as: using puppets, improvisation and asking students to form a living tableau. Clearly, this book is intended for selective use. Maley provides frequent references to inspirational poems, paintings and music to weave into lessons. Brilliant, maverick and challenging in turns, but certainly never dull.

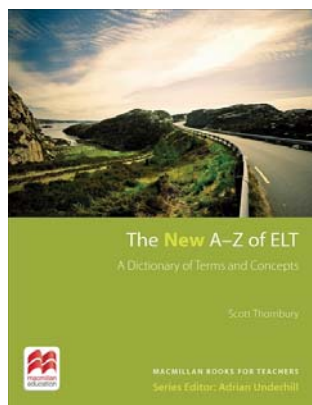


reviews in brief

THE NEW A-Z OF ELT

A Dictionary of Terms and Concepts
Scott Thornbury
Macmillan Education
ISBN: 978-1-786-32788-8

The title of this well-established reference book is self-explanatory. I loved the first version, which appeared in 2006. The new edition is more than 60 pages longer, and new entries include: academic word list, adaptive learning and mobile learning. I was delighted to see both 'Blended Learning' and 'flipped classroom' accorded their own entries. The topics are divided into three main fields: language (e.g. grammar), learning (e.g. psycholinguistics) and teaching (e.g. methodology). Many entries have been updated, and some have disappeared. Navigation is also made easier with the inclusion of colour headings. Entries are clear, concise and accessible. **Authoritative**; a must-have for teacher trainers.

**ETPEDIA™ GRAMMAR**

500 ideas and activities for teaching grammar
Daniel Barber and Ceri Jones
Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd
ISBN: 978-1-912-75502-8

This hefty, 242-page resource book contains a mixture of tips, ideas and activities to help teachers plan and deliver lessons with grammar. The ideas are grouped logically into areas such as future forms, modals, conditionals and passives. Some ideas are familiar: Kim's Game and pelmanism, for instance. Others are variants on well-established ideas, like speculating on using lottery money, but this time as a class. Others originate from the repertoire of the highly-experienced author team. I particularly like the card activity for practising the present perfect continuous. **Time-saving**; especially the 56-page bank of photocopiable material, which is easy to dip into for inspiration.

**REVIEWS COMING UP IN THE NEXT ISSUE:**

Feature: English Grammar in Use 5th Edition (CUP) by Raymond Murphy

Book of the month: Business Partner B2 (Pearson) by I. Dubicka, M. Rosenberg, B. Dignen, M. Hogan, L. Wright

Reviews in brief: Successful International Communication (Pavilion) by Chia Suan Chong

Framework First: Introducing Academic Writing and Critical Thinking (Canford) by Richard Harrison


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Growing up with clarity

Elinor Stokes tells *Melanie Butler* about life in a digital ELT family

You grew up in a TEFLing family, your father, Andrew, is a former teacher and a pioneer of Computer Assisted Language Learning. How much were you aware of ELT as a child?

Clarity English was, and is, very much a family business. Mum handled the accounts and my sister and I were involved in various tasks growing up; sticking stamps on mailshots, shredding old papers, recording sound clips for the programs.

I vividly remember my very first sales presentation at the age of seven, playing Mario Rinvolutri's *Mindgame* on stage against a boy from a local Hong Kong school to demo the program - it's left a lasting impression!

Since leaving school, I've helped out in conferences around East Asia. And now I have moved to the UK and set up a company, Atlas English, to promote Clarity programs and offer support to customers.

So, I'd have to say family life and the world of online ELT were very strongly intertwined - perhaps it was inevitable that I leaned into it.

There is always a danger that a language centre adopts a new digital resource and it just sits in a library because teachers and students don't really know it's there. How can Clarity help?

That's definitely a danger. I've found this issue can often come about when the teacher that initially championed the programmes moves on and the replacement teacher doesn't know it exists or is unsure how to use it.

It's a problem we're working hard to fight. We've created a support system with additional materials to enable teachers to effectively deploy the programs.

For example, I offer onboarding training for teachers when they first get the program. This is usually conducted over Skype or Zoom, unless they are based in or around London.

We also offer posters, leaflets and bookmarks with access instructions and QR codes on them so that students can easily find the programs on the website.

Finally, we've started producing more classroom activity sheets to give teachers a few starting exercises, so they feel comfortable using the programs.

How do you think digital learning tools can best be used in private language schools?

Over the last few years, we have worked with Telc, the European language testing experts, to create the Dynamic Placement Test. This is an adaptive, online test that can accurately place students within a CEFR band in 30 minutes. It's the digital tool that we feel fits perfectly with the private sector.



“the first thing I have to do ... is to break down preconceptions of digital language learning.”

One company that has been using it very successfully is Etherton Education, which runs academic summer courses. They have been using the test for about two years. Before that, they conducted a paper-based placement test on the day the student arrived, which was incredibly stressful.

Since they introduced the Dynamic Placement Test, not only are the students able to take it before they set off, but Etherton Education are also able to have the class structures ready well in advance. This takes a lot of pressure off everybody at the start of the course.

With a few tweaks, this system also works for continuous enrolment and year-round classes.

What is your biggest challenge?

When technology in teaching started gaining popularity, there was a knee jerk reaction from the big publishers to include some kind of digital resource to accompany every physical

course book.

Often these digital resources were hurriedly put together – they were there because everyone else offered it and not because it was a well-thought-out component.

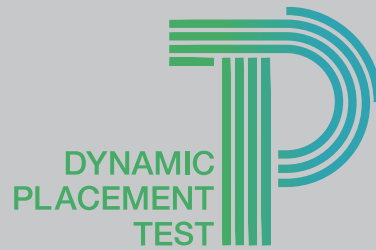
A lot of the time, the add-on CD-ROMs or USBs were left completely untouched.

So often, the first thing I have to do when introducing Clarity programs, is to break down preconceptions of digital language learning materials. Only after that, can I get into the value, uses and pedagogy of the programs we offer.

And what is the biggest reward?

It's always great to hear teachers and students say that they've enjoyed using the programs or that they've found it really useful.

The biggest reward for me recently was attending the Dynamic Placement Test standard setting in Hong Kong. It was brilliant getting to spend two days with academics and experts from all over the world, discussing and analysing questions on the test. It was a great opportunity to meet some fantastic people and have an input on a real product.



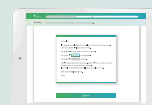
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