

# el·gazette

March 2020

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ISSUE 469

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Franklin D Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, American and British leaders during WWII

## A common language divided by two countries

The dominance of the post-war ELT superpowers is at an end

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Some stay on as  
last planes leave

### GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Too many teachers  
underestimate ELLs

### SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP?

Both US and UK hit  
hard as market falls

### BILINGUAL BATTLE

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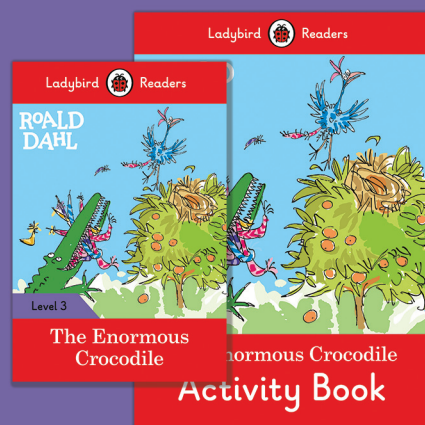
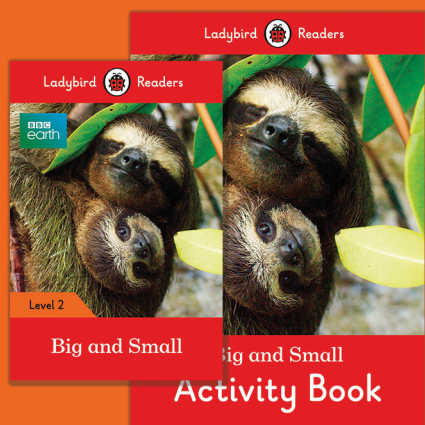
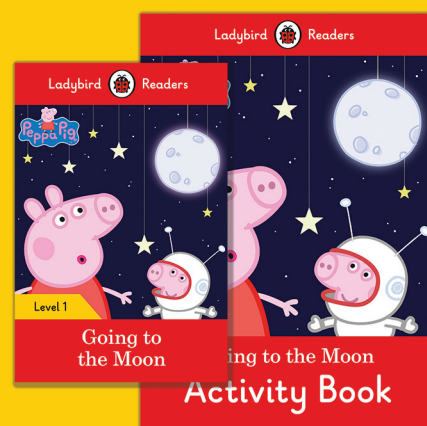
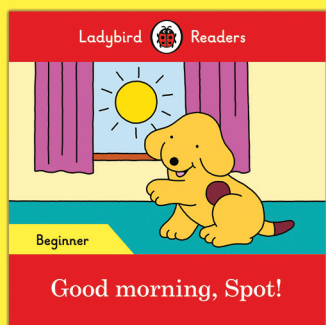


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Who reads the **el**·gazette?



# The sun sets on two ELT empires

The cosy hegemony of the US and the UK is ending.  
*Melanie Butler and Ron Ragsdale examine why*

Shortly after the Second World War, representatives of the UK and the US government met at a British country mansion to divide the world into spheres of influence for English Language Teaching (ELT). The British got Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Indian subcontinent. America took East Asia and Latin America.

But as the last evacuation flights leave Wuhan, as we report on page 6, it is not just the two ELT superpowers flying their teachers out. Australians, Canadians and New Zealanders have been flown home, with the Irish hitching a ride on the UK flights.

Is the age of the Anglo-American ELT hegemony over? As two editors from the two ELT superpowers, one British and the other American, it looks like it to us.

Even in the glory days, the duopoly was not in lockstep, following different methodological pathways. Take the difference in the way we educate children from non-English speaking backgrounds.

As we report on page 10, most US states educate English Language Learners (ELLs) separately from their L1 peers for part or all of the school day. As our report on the latest research shows, L2 children

in 'sheltered' English-only programmes are seen as less able by their teachers, and perform worse on tests, than L2 children with the same level of English who are assigned to mainstream or bilingual classes.

The whole idea of separating children with what the British call 'English as an Additional Language' (EALs) comes as a shock in the UK, where the practice has been banned since the 1980s as discriminatory. Bilingual

programmes are not an option in a country where 20 languages in one school is commonplace and one London school boasts 71.

So, which of the big two does best? The results of ELLs in the Pisa tests show the British edging it over the US, but the best ELL outcomes are found in Canada, New Zealand and Australia, which all have a higher percentage of L2 school children than the 'big two'.

The situation appears to be the same in the private language school market, where the UK and the US appear to be taking the largest hit, as we report on page 12. In both countries, teachers are taking action, with teachers protesting their redundancy in London on page 7, while in Global News, a US ELL specialist teacher is running to be speaker of the Kentucky legislature.

Are the Irish and the Canadians taking over? Maybe. They have an advantage: they are not monolingual countries, they run school systems in more than one language. The evidence and the neuroscience is clear: the monolingual mindset that bans L1 in class needs to go.

Ask Josefina Tinajero, our bilingual thought leader. She tells us on page 30 what it felt like being an L1 Spanish speaker dubbed slow at reading in the second grade of an English-only school.

"I felt ashamed and humiliated, frustrated and at times even angry. Of course, I could read! There just weren't any books in Spanish ... mine became a world of social isolation and distance."

This English-only Empire must end, ¡ojalá!

MELANIE BUTLER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF    RON RAGSDALE, MANAGING EDITOR

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### theteam .

**MELANIE BUTLER**,  
 editor-in-chief,  
 started teaching EFL in Iran in 1975. She worked for the BBC World Service, Pearson/Longman and MET magazine before taking over at the Gazette in 1987 and also launching Study Travel magazine. Educated in ten schools in seven countries, she speaks fluent French and Spanish and rather rusty Italian.



**RON RAGSDALE**,  
 managing editor,  
 gained his MA-TESOL at Portland State University in Oregon 25 years ago, and has worked in ELT publishing ever since, with teaching stints in Istanbul and Cairo. In addition to managing teams at Pearson and Cambridge ELT, including as Publishing Director, Ron has worked with Ministries and local partners in over 30 countries.



**MATT SALUSBURY**, news  
 editor and journalist, has  
 worked for EL Gazette since 2007. He is an activist in the National Union of Journalists and co-edits its newsletter, *The Freelance*. He taught English for 15 years in the Netherlands, in Turkey, in a North London further education college and now as an English for Academic Purposes tutor at the London School of Economics. He is a native English speaker and is also fluent in Dutch.



**GILL RAGSDALE**,  
 research news reporter,  
 has a PhD in Evolutionary Anthropology from Cambridge, and teaches Psychology with the Open University, but also holds an RSA-Cert TEFL. Gill has taught EFL in the UK, Turkey, Egypt and to refugees in the Calais 'Jungle' in France. She currently teaches English to refugees in the UK.



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# Teachers trapped in Wuhan as evacuation ends

by Matt Salusbury

As we go to press, the first foreign teachers flown home from Wuhan are leaving quarantine and Western governments have announced the end of evacuation flights from the epicentre of the coronavirus outbreak, bringing to a close what is believed to be the biggest-ever evacuation of expatriate English speaking teachers in peacetime.

Some 1,000 native English speakers are estimated to have been teaching in the Chinese city when the epidemic began. Many have been unable to leave, others have chosen to stay.

Around 800 Americans had been flown out by February 10, one has since tested positive for coronavirus. A 60-year-old US citizen who remained in Wuhan has died from the disease.

US Teacher Doug Perez expressed frustration at the short notice given of flights evacuating around 200 US nationals to March Air Reserve Base, California, in February – apparently after US consular staff had themselves already left.

Perez chose to remain with his Chinese-national wife and his dog. He told *NBC News* many colleagues had stayed because, “we can’t leave our loved ones.”

By the beginning of the second week in February, 500 Australians and New Zealanders had been evacuated. Australians arriving from Wuhan are quarantined on remote Christmas Island, a



Travellers wear masks to prevent infection

BZHO / SHUTTERSTOCK

thousand miles from the mainland – at their own expense.

At the time of the first flight, Australian English teacher Tim McLean was “trapped” in the city of Ezhou in Hubei Province with his Chinese partner. With no functioning public transport, he was unable to travel to the provincial capital of Wuhan for the evacuation.

When the UK chartered the first plane to evacuate its nationals at the beginning of February, British-Canadian teacher Tom Williams was still awaiting confirmation on whether his Canadian wife and son could join the flight.

The first UK flight carried 83 British nationals. Three Irish nationals were also onboard, including psychology teacher Ben Kavanagh, one of several expat teachers who posted videos of

their rare trips outdoors during their “lockdown” in Wuhan. His footage showed deserted streets except for pharmacies, which had queues going out of the door.

The second and final UK flight has now landed, carrying around 200 people. All the evacuees have now been quarantined at Arrowe Park Hospital in Wirral, northwest England.

One of several unnamed English teachers at Arrowe Park told the *Guardian* newspaper their airport bus almost didn’t make it through a People’s Liberation Army roadblock. *TES* reported that at least one British international school teacher at Arrowe Park is expected to teach online to Chinese students from midnight to 8am Greenwich Mean Time.

Other British teachers chose to remain. Steffan Atherton stayed at his school in Fuzhou with his

Peruvian wife and infant son, after consular officials told him they couldn’t join him on the first evacuation flight.

Others have found themselves trapped. Michael Mireku remains stranded in Beijing as his wife and son’s passports were being renewed at the UK embassy, which reportedly wasn’t answering his calls.

Concerns also remain about South African nationals. In late January, 23-year-old South African teacher Jessika Baling, told the *Mirror Online* she was “trapped” in her apartment, too afraid to go out. Other South Africans are still reported to be calling for their government to evacuate them. However, on 29 January health minister Zweli Mkhize told the South African press no such evacuation was deemed necessary.

## newsinbrief. from Gazette news editor Matt Salusbury

**UK:** In January, the government succeeded in defeating an amendment to the EU Withdrawal Bill that would have required the UK to negotiate “continuing full membership” of the EU’s Erasmus+ educational exchanges programme, after Brexit. Prime Minister Johnson said the government remained committed to negotiating a deal on Erasmus.

**UKRAINE:** Ukraine’s only English-language TV station ceased broadcasting suddenly in January. UATV was born in 2014, during the ‘info wars’ with Russia that followed the Russian annexation of the Ukrainian region of Crimea. UATV will now concentrate resources instead on Russian-language TV aimed at the “temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.”

**HONG KONG/ CHINA:** School students identified as participating in the recent democracy protests in Hong Kong will be refused admission to universities on mainland China. Many of the protesters who were under 18 were arrested by Hong Kong police, had their details taken and were sent home.

**INDIA:** India is “likely” to develop its own Toefl-style test of English, according to Dr Vinay Sahashrabudhe, president of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations. The planned test of English for university entry is part of an initiative to boost the number of international students coming to the country – currently estimated at 50,000 a year.

**USA:** A bill before Arizona state legislature seeks to end the longstanding ban on dual-language (English and Spanish) instruction. The bill, HCR 2001, would allow “a pretty significant array of instructional techniques that could benefit both English speakers and non-English speakers alike,” according to Chris Kotterman of the Arizona School Boards Association.

**SPAIN:** British EFL teacher Audrey Mash suffered a cardiac arrest after being caught in a snow storm while hiking in the Catalan Pyrenees. Doctors were able to revive her after six hours without a heartbeat because her body temperature had dropped to almost 20 degrees C below normal, preserving her brain. Her survival after six hours is believed to be the longest ever.



# London teachers get payout after direct action

by Matt Salusbury and  
Melanie Butler

A group of EFL teachers at a Central London language school who were made redundant on 20 December have won an “enhanced redundancy package,” following direct action.

This kind of settlement is, “virtually unheard of in the language teaching industry,” according to Anna Clark, speaking for the TEFL Workers Union, which has represented teachers at the London branch of the Delfin School of English since 2018. TEFL Workers Union is a branch of the Industrial Workers of the World union.

Following a redundancy process, a total of nine teachers, eight of them represented by the union, were made redundant on 20 December, the day before the school closed for Christmas. According to the union, this represented all the teachers employed by the school. It is not clear whether any agency teachers were working at the school at that date.

Reasons given for teacher redundancies included a sharp decline in student numbers, financial difficulties and the necessity to move premises. It is clear from company accounts publicly available at Companies House that, like many London schools, Delfin, named a good value for money school in the last

issue of the *Gazette*, has been under increasing financial pressure in the last two or three years (see market analysis on page 12).

Delfin re-opened in January, using classrooms temporarily rented in another Bloomsbury language school. The *Gazette* understands that the school is using temporary staff from employment agency Evocation EFL to teach at the school.

On 14 January, the *Gazette* attended a picket by some of the Delfin teachers and their supporters outside the South London offices of Evocation EFL. Banners on display at the picket bore the words “Evocation drop Delfin”.

At the picket, one teacher described to those present how everyone assumed TEFL teachers were on a gap year. “I’m 60,” he said, and despite being “ridiculously qualified,” still “one rung up from McDonald’s” in terms of pay and status.

Evocation told the *Gazette* that they had supplied teachers to Delfin since 2012 and, “have worked with them more regularly,” since January this year.

According to Martin Richards of Evocation EFL, the company did not know of the dispute until they were contacted on 14 January.

“We regret the circumstances of the dispute (as far as we have heard about these) but we do not



MATT SALUSBURY

Protesters outside the South London offices of Evocation EFL

consider that we are a party to it in any way,” he added.

The previous day, former Delfin teachers demonstrated outside the London branch of British Study Centres (BSC) in Bloomsbury to draw attention to Delfin’s use of teaching space there. Rooms were temporarily rented to Delfin while it waited to move to new accommodation. Simultaneous small protests were held outside other branches of BSC.

The *Gazette* is given to understand BSC management, “met with the protesters before contacting Delfin management with a request to resolve their industrial dispute or vacate the premises and offering to mediate between the two parties involved.”

Details of the claims made in this article were provided to Delfin management who declined to comment.

## Canada-bound students die in Iran air crash

by Matt Salusbury

At least 40 Iranian students and teachers from universities in Canada were killed aboard Ukrainian Airlines Flight 572 which came down over Tehran in January.

The plane was shot down shortly after take-off by hyper-vigilant Iranian air defence personnel, who mistook the plane for a hostile incoming aircraft, following the air strike by US

forces that killed Iran’s Revolutionary Guard commander General Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad.

The Iranian students killed in the crash were mostly returning to universities in Canada after Christmas holidays. The University of Alberta reported 10 students and staff lost in the disaster. The University of Windsor held a vigil for five of their students, and flags were flown at half-mast for three

Iranian students from the University of British Columbia. The University of Toronto, Western University and the University of Waterloo also reported losses.

The community colleges sector was also affected – among the dead was Delaram Dadashnejad, who was studying English at Langara College in British Columbia, and Dr Razgar Rahimi, who taught computer engineering at Ontario’s Fleming College.



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Flags were flown at half-mast



## USA:

An English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher is standing against the Kentucky State Speaker of the House in the primaries for the General Assembly, the state legislature.

Tiffany Dunn, an ESL teacher at Lassiter Middle School in Louisville, Kentucky's biggest city, founded advocacy group Save Our Schools Kentucky, with a mission to, "raise awareness of impending actions and legislation that could harm our public schools". Dunn is seeking the Republican Party nomination as a candidate in November's elections, with primaries held in May.

She is standing against House Speaker David Osborne, who has been the incumbent since 2005. He has followed "school choice policies," including setting up charter schools and a system of scholarship tax credits. Dunn is standing on a platform of "properly publicly-funded" education, which includes tax reforms such as levies on the state's casinos to subsidise education, raising teachers' salaries and protecting their pensions.

TIFFANY DUNN CAMPAIGN



Tiffany Dunn files to run against David Osborne for the Kentucky House

## MALAYSIA:

Gwen Kuar was used to her daughter getting A grades in English and regularly winning reading prizes. So, she was puzzled when her daughter's English teacher (the school was unnamed in the *Asia One* report) gave her a TP4 score, which put her just slightly above average. She asked for an explanation for the grade given by the teacher.

The reply was even more shocking. In a handwritten note, the teacher gave the rationale

behind his "sentence", explaining that he "no doubt to agree (sic)" that Kaur's daughter had reached a high standard of spoken English, but that he found other shortcomings in her English proficiency. Or that is what he appeared to mean, it was hard to tell.

The English teacher wrote "English of knowledge not for communication (sic)" and that "Communication English is different (sic) from knowledge English."

Kuar was left feeling that with English so poor, the teacher wasn't qualified to grade her daughter's performance.

## BHUTAN:

Buddhist monks in the Himalayan mountain kingdom are struggling to improvise their way through English courses after government cuts to the English for monasteries programme.

Under the government's Eleventh Plan, one to two hours of English a week became compulsory for Buddhist monasteries in the kingdom, and was funded by the government. In financial year 2017-2018 the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources recruited a total of 130 high school and university graduates to teach in 65 religious institutions.

However, according to news website *Kuensel*, the government's Twelfth Plan, starting in financial

year 2018-2019, "discontinued" the funding regime for English for monasteries. As a result, many monasteries are having to make do in any way they can.

*Kuensel* reported on the Phadojing monastery, where the principal and some volunteers teach English, with very occasional help from a passing tourist. Some monks are also trying to learn English without a teacher. The Twelfth Plan includes a Youth Engagement and Livelihood Programme, which offers some support for English classes in monasteries where the need is "severe", but with monasteries expected to bear some of the cost.



a young monk in a monastery in Bhutan

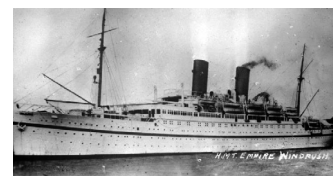
## UK:

Dominique Zaccari, a French national who arrived in the UK in 1973 and co-founded A. Zaccari's English language tutoring service in Bournemouth, has obtained an ID card demonstrating her right to remain after Brexit – using a scheme set up after the "Windrush scandal".

The scandal involved the "Windrush generation" so-named for the passenger ship *Empire Windrush* which brought many citizens of former British Caribbean territories to the UK. Many arrived as children on their parents' passports (allowed at the time), and settled in the UK despite never having – or needing – documents proving their status.

With changes to immigration policy from 2012, at least 83 of these immigrants suddenly found themselves residing illegally in the UK, and a number have been deported. The 'Windrush scandal' broke in 2018, leading to an emergency scheme which provided ID to those who'd arrived before 1989, allowing them to normalise their immigration status.

The EU Settled Status, for which all EU nationals in the UK have to apply post-Brexit, has no physical ID card, only an online "secure digital status". This has prompted some 800 EU nationals who've been in the UK for more than 30 years – including Zaccari – to apply for "Windrush" ID.



The HMT *Empire Windrush* brought the first Caribbean immigrants to the UK in 1948

IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM



Gazette news editor Matt Salusbury's selection of ELT news from around the world

## KOREA:

A Canadian English language teacher in Korea faced child abuse charges after showing her class a video entitled "What does human flesh taste like?"

The *BBC Earth Lab* video from 2016 emphasises that eating human flesh is illegal. It features journalist Greg Fort and a scientist who allowed a small sample of flesh from his thigh to be "cooked". On camera, Fort describes the "aroma" as "richer than pork or chicken".

The unnamed teachers' lawyer told the *South China Morning Post* their client had found the YouTube clip online after a question from a student, and she'd had no intention of shocking her class of students aged six and up in the city of Sejong.

CCTV footage of the class showed students burying their heads in their hands to avoid seeing the video. A police detective told SCMP that after parents "complained strongly... We're helping the children receive treatment for post-traumatic stress."

The teacher was ordered not to leave the country as Sejong police prepared a child abuse case.

## INDIA:

The northern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh has carried out a consultation with parents on whether they want their children to be educated in English-medium or in Telugu, the official state language. The Parents Committee of every government school was convened, with parents given a form and asked to tick either the "Need English Medium" or "Want Telugu Medium" box. The data will be forwarded to the Zonal Education Boards, which will report to district education commissioners.

The move follows the Andhra Pradesh government's announcement in December that it would switch from Telugu-medium to English-medium "overnight," starting with teaching Mathematics, Science and History in English in grades 1 through 6. The switch will occur in 45,000 government elementary schools.



RON RAGSDALE

Schoolchildren in Andhra Pradesh, India

The plan requires 68,000 teachers to be trained in teaching in English, and the translation of all the current state Telugu-medium textbooks.

Implementation of the plan is subject to a state High Court decision, after Telugu-language advocacy groups brought several court cases contesting the legality

of the move. The production of English-medium textbooks has been halted following a case brought by Sudesh Rambhotla, the leader of the state's Hindu nationalist BJP party. A court decision on whether printing of the English textbooks can go ahead was expected shortly after we went to press.

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# Don't judge a learner by their label: US teacher expectations of ELLs

Label, not language level, may determine teachers' perceptions, study finds

By Gillian Ragsdale

Labelling US school pupils as English Language Learners (ELLs) leads to lower teachers' expectations, except where pupils are taught in a bilingual setting, report Ilana Umansky and Hanna Dumont in a working paper from Brown University.

Classifying children by language level is standard in the US. By US federal law, the level of English must be assessed when children start school, and if it falls below a certain threshold they are identified as ELL students. Almost 10 per cent of pupils are classified as ELL, 80 per cent being Spanish speakers. A minority of schools run bilingual classes, but transitional Sheltered English Language or content-based language programmes, where ELL children are educated separately, are common.

Not all English-speaking countries do the same. In England, for example, 20 per cent of children from 300 language groups start school with English as an additional language (EAL). The most common first language, Punjabi, is spoken by less than two per cent of students, so bilingual teaching is not an option. Schools make some provision for EAL students but, unlike ELL in the US, it is not a general classification. EAL-only programmes have been banned as discriminatory since 1985.

So, is the US system of classification detrimental and if so, why? Prior research in the US has already shown that just being labelled as an ELL student can lead to lower exam scores across all subjects. Exactly how and why this happens is less clear.

Umansky and Dumont questioned whether teachers' lower expectations of ELL students might be eroding their potential. They set out to compare teachers' expectations of ELL students with those of non-ELLs by following the progress of 2,166 kindergarten children (just starting school at age 5 or 6) and



NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE/UNSPASH

Research shows that teachers may have lower expectations for ELL students

their teachers for three years.

The crucial comparison was between expectations of students classified as ELL and expectations of students with the same background and level of English who were not labelled ELL. It was not possible to change the ELL classification of individual children but a quirk in the system allowed such a comparison to be made.

Although all schools must classify students based on home language and English proficiency, the way that proficiency is measured and the threshold for being classified as ELL varies, with as many as 25 separate proficiency assessments being used across the US.

This means that students classed as ELL in one school might not be so identified in another. By giving all the children in the study their own proficiency tests, Umansky and Dumont were able to compare like with like, i.e. children with the same proficiency scores but different labels.

Each year, they collected data on the teachers' perceptions of

the students' skills and knowledge in language, maths, social studies and science. They also recorded whether Spanish was being used 'about half the time,' indicating a bilingual rather than English immersion approach to teaching.

They found that teachers did indeed have significantly lower expectations of their ELL students than students with the same level of proficiency but not classed as ELL. These lower expectations were across all subjects.

In the bilingual classes, however, expectations of ELL students were no different to those of non-ELL students.

Why might this happen? Teachers are generally pretty accurate in assessing students' skills and knowledge – but this accuracy decreases when they do not share their students' background. This is not a special fault of teachers, people in general are highly prone to judging people from their own group more accurately (or even more favourably) than people felt to be from a different group.

It is not clear why teachers' expectations of ELL students are

higher in a bilingual setting. It might reflect a difference in the kind of teachers choosing to teach bilingual classes or it might be something else associated with bilingual classes.

In the longer term, this finding will fuel the ongoing debate on use of the ELL label and the role of bilingual teaching in the US. In the shorter term, knowing that teachers' expectations are affected by the ELL label enables teacher training to address this unconscious bias directly. As America's popular media personality Oprah Winfrey says: "You can't change what you don't acknowledge".

## REFERENCE

■ Umansky, Ilana, and Hanna Dumont. (2019). *English Learner Labeling: How English Learner Status Shapes Teacher Perceptions of Student Skills & the Moderating Role of Bilingual Instructional Settings*. (EdWorkingPaper: 19-94). Retrieved from Annenberg Institute at Brown University: <http://www.edworkingpapers.com/ai19-94>



# How learning Chinese improved Ernie's English

By Gillian Ragsdale

A Chinese Artificial intelligence (AI) platform has improved AI understanding of both Chinese and English, reports Yu Sun and colleagues from Baidu Inc., Beijing.

Up to now, the race to develop AI that can understand and use natural human language has been dominated by the US tech giants Google, Microsoft and Facebook – so the human language under focus has been English.

This international competition has a fast-changing leaderboard, reporting scores on GLUE (General Language Understanding), a set of tasks developed to test how well an AI really understands language. An average human scores 87/100 and Google's BERT (Bidirectional Encoder Representation from Transformers) was the first AI to pass this milestone.

Then last December, China's ERNIE (Enhanced Representation through kNowledge intEgration) became the first to score over 90, topping its US competitors. ERNIE, from Chinese Google-type giant, Baidu, built on BERT's improvements – but with a twist.

As language teachers well know, understanding the meaning of language requires a lot more than understanding the meaning of individual words, and this has been a major challenge for AI systems.

One way that BERT trained to understand language was by hiding some words, then trying to predict what they would be by looking at the words before and after the missing word, a kind of word gap activity.

When ERNIE wanted to do the same it had to adapt the technique to Chinese. Individual Chinese characters don't carry meaning in the way English words do. The meaning of individual Chinese characters depends on adjacent characters. So, ERNIE trained by hiding strings of characters so that it learned the meaning of pairs and groups of characters rather than individual ones.

This turned out to greatly improve ERNIE's ability to understand English, too – because pairs and groups of English words also carry meaning that you cannot infer from the individual words alone, such as, 'Harry Potter' and common idioms such



PIXABAY

ERNIE and BERT are named after Sesame Street characters

as 'call it a day'. English language teachers may be surprised at the techies' surprise: perhaps more of us should consult on these projects.

GLUE scores are now so high that a new, tougher test is being used. SuperGLUE includes complex open questions such as, 'How do jellyfish function without a brain?'.

## REFERENCE

■ Sun, Y. et al. (2019) 'ERNIE 2.0: A Continual Pre-Training Framework for Language Understanding.' Preprint for AAAI-20 (Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence 2020 Conference, New York, USA). <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1907.12412.pdf>



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# Is the EFL model broken in the UK and the US?

Melanie Butler gives her view

After 30 years reporting on English language teaching, I am accustomed to waves of school closures in one English-speaking country or another. The results are predictable: students are stranded, teachers protest; occasionally, national governments get involved.

In the same period, the terms of trade have changed dramatically. To see the difference, look at the table (see below) comparing the situation in London language schools in 1987, when I stopped teaching, and the situation as I see it now.

All language schools in English-speaking countries have been affected, but it seems to me that the US and the UK have been hit hardest.

In the UK, we have seen several closures in recent months among well-established private language schools from the top of the *EL Gazette* rankings (see this month's supplement for our latest rankings). Excel English in Muswell Hill, London, closed its doors in September and Lake School of English in Oxford followed suit this January.

The international chains have not been immune: British Study Centres and Eurocentres have each closed one of their London branches, in Hampstead and Eltham respectively. Meanwhile, as we report in this issue, teachers have been out protesting after being made redundant from another London school.

In the US, we have reported on old, established language schools in both Boston and New York shutting their doors within the last year. Last September, one US university language centre laid off all the permanent teaching staff, quoting a steady decline in the length of enrolments. It replaced them with hourly-paid teachers.

Most dramatically, in January 2019, Maltese-owned language school chain EC announced it had bought the British-based

Embassy chain of language schools and was closing all Embassy year-round centres in the UK, the US and Canada.

Why is this happening? I see two main factors: courses have gotten shorter, and agents' commissions have gone up. As a result, profit margins have plummeted, and one way that schools have responded is by bearing down on their teaching costs. In the US and the UK, politically inspired visa changes have made things worse by limiting options for students to work and therefore stay longer.

The length of stay has been dropping since the mid-1990s, when UK language schools were forced to introduce continuous enrolment, as students had begun joining and leaving classes on a weekly basis. Some long-haul markets have continued to enrol

“Profit margins have plummeted and one way that schools have responded is by bearing down on their teaching costs.”

students for periods of three to six months, but students tend to head for destinations which offer part-time work visas.

This is good news for Canada, Australia, Ireland and, most recently, Malta.

But this is bad news for the US and – since the British government withdrew work rights for language students in 2011 – the UK. The high value of the dollar in the US, and political changes to the visa systems in both



UPKLYAK / FREEPIK

Schools in the UK and US are finding it harder to make the numbers add up

'the big two', have only made the situation worse.

When long-stay students disappear, so do permanent teaching jobs, although the casualisation of English language teaching is also apparent in these destinations.

This may be partly because the rise in agents' commissions have hit all the English-speaking countries, while the percentage of students coming through agents has gone up. Moving staff costs from fixed costs to variable costs is a popular move for accountants looking to make the bottom line look better.

But agents aren't laughing all the way to the bank either. As the average length of stay has dropped, so has the average commission per sale. At the same time, the internet has increased marketing costs and introduced competition from on-line only operators.

With profit margins dropping in both agencies and language schools, the terms and conditions of teachers have gone down.

In the private sector, hourly teaching rates have been dropping steadily in real terms over the last thirty years except in unionised sectors like higher education, and unionised markets like Australia where rates are broadly in line with expectation but casualisation has grown.

Across the world, profit margins have been cut to the quick. Yet teachers remain convinced that schools are raking in money, while their terms and conditions decline. So, they turn to unions and strikes and protests surge. It's hard to blame them.

Just as it's hard to blame the American-owned Kaplan International language school chain which announced last year that it had acquired a large multinational agency, and therefore, in locations where it has its own language schools it is unlikely to send students to its rivals.

Thirty years after I came up with the term Language Travel to describe this part of the English Language industry, it looks to me like this business model is broken.

Factor	1987	adj for inflation	2020
Hourly rate of pay: average in PLS	£11	£31	£13-17
Hourly rate of pay: average in Universities	£13	£37	£37-45 (may include holiday pay)
Minimum teacher qualifications required for British Council accreditation	First degree, 4 week initial course, diploma		"Normally" first degree, "post schools study" or "substantial life experience" also considered, + 4 week initial course.
Cost for 15 hours a week study Average London PLS (non-chain schools)	£99	£280	£255
Average length of stay (Adults in PLS)	12 weeks		3.5 wks
Agents' commission (average)	20% PLS 10% Universities		30-40% PLS 10-20% Universities
% students placed through agents (PLS)	50%		80%

The numbers then and now

# New Secure English Language Tests for UK migrants

By Melanie Butler

Migrants to the UK will benefit from the expansion in the number of Secure English Language Test (SELT) centres and the wider choice of exams on offer, following the announcement that the government have revised their SELTs list, as reported in the January *Gazette*. The new system is expected to go live in April.

Migrants entering the UK for family reasons, or those seeking status who are in the UK already, are expected to take a set of English Language tests in speaking and listening, benchmarked to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, known as the CEFR.

The familiar Graded Examination in Spoken English (GESE), from Trinity College

London, has been given permission to expand the number of its UK Exam Centres, and the IELTS Life Skills Test of Speaking and Listening also remains on the list.

Phil Bond, General Manager of SELT at Trinity, said they were, "looking forward to being able to expand our testing services to more locations around the country."

Two new test providers have been added to the SELT list of providers who can now offer two-skill exams at A1, A2 and B1 for UK migrants. Already well-known in language schools, PeopleCert exams in Speaking and Listening can now be taken in approved test centres run by Prometric, while Pearson are launching a new low-level two-skill test known as PTE Home which, like all Pearson tests of

English, will be computer-marked.

Currently, non-EU citizens entering the UK to marry or enter into a civil partnership, or to join family members, are required to pass a SELT at A1, those still here 2.5 years later need to pass at A2 while B1 is needed to acquire 'Settled Status', as permanent residency is now known.

It takes 200 to 400 classroom hours to improve your English by one CEFR grade across all four skills, based on a study conducted by the pathway provider INTO with Cambridge Assessment.

EU Citizens resident in the UK



UK PARLIAMENT

Language requirements will apply to all migrants, Priti Patel has announced

before January 2021 are not required to take language tests, but the language requirements will apply to all migrants after that date.

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# Putting the whole of Ireland on the map

*Melanie Butler* tours the island's EFL locations

In the last decade, Irish EFL has spread out from its three original centres: Dublin, the youngest capital in Europe; “cool, casual and affordable” Cork in the South; and Galway, the beating heart of Irish culture, in the West.

A curious language traveller could drive south from Dublin to find schools in the coastal town of Bray in county Wicklow, or further inland to rural county Kildare. Then on to coastal Wexford and the rural counties of Kilkenny and Carlow, or further south to Waterford, the oldest town in the country, before arriving in Cork.

But it is the west of Ireland which has opened up the most, with accredited schools now to be found from Tralee in County Kerry through to the pretty country town of Ennis in County Clare. Limerick, long known for its

## Facts about Ireland

The island of Ireland is divided into 32 counties, with 26 counties in the Republic and the rest in Northern Ireland, which is a semi-autonomous part of the UK. Tourism and, to an extent language travel, is seen as a cross-island industry.

- **Capitals:** Dublin is the capital city of the Republic and Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland.
- **Population:** There are just under 5 million people living in the Republic, which has the youngest population in the European Union. It is still growing, with more births reported in 2019 than deaths. Just under 2 million people live in Northern Ireland. Although the population of the island is small and is not densely populated, an estimated 80 million people around the world are descended from Irish people who emigrated to other countries over the last 200 years.
- **Language:** The main language is English, but the Irish language, a Celtic language closely related to Welsh and Scottish Gaelic, is a compulsory subject in the Republic's schools. It is also used in some parts of Northern Ireland, as is Ulster Scots, a variant of English. The importance given to language learning may be one reason why the Irish are famous for English literature, with three Nobel Laureates from across the island – making it a good location for learning English.



Nightlife in Dublin

university language centre, is now home to at least one accredited language school.

To the north, past the university town of Galway, we come to Sligo on the rugged northwest coast of Donegal. But that is not the end of our journey, because when it comes to language schools, the famous Irish border remains invisible. Already the association MEI Ireland has one member school in the Northern Irish capital of Belfast.

With Brexit looming, can we expect to see more schools: not just in the North, but all over the Emerald Isle?

## Why MEI Ireland

The destinations listed above in our whistle-stop tour of Ireland are home to language centres which are members of Marketing English in Ireland (MEI).

There are many other schools in Ireland, but since the government announced that the country's accreditation system was to be replaced in 2011, it has become increasingly difficult for new schools to apply to be accredited, and a number of mostly unaccredited schools have closed.

MEI, which only accepts accredited schools as members, also does due diligence on new members and requires all its schools to run police checks on both staff and host families. It also guarantees a free place at another school in the event of the unexpected closure of a member centre.



The Cliffs of Moher are a popular sight near Galway





The view from the top

# UK Top Language Centre Rankings 2020



SNOWDONIA, WALES BY MALGOSIA JANICKA / SHUTTERSTOCK

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# An unexpected **bonus**?

To help differentiate our very top centres we've been diving deep in the data, as *Melanie Butler* explains

**M**ore language centres have received more areas of strength from the British Council Inspectors than ever before. But now, so many centres have the same number of areas of strengths, that it has been difficult to differentiate them. One way is to split the rankings. But how to split them?

With under-16s making up nearly half of all language students coming to the UK, we have decided to give them a ranking of their own. After all, that is the norm in educational rankings. The *EL Gazette* ranking has been the only one which combines centres that teach English to children with universities!

So, we now offer two rankings. The first for young-learner specialists (though some offer adult courses as well) and the other for centres catering for adult learners.

To further differentiate providers, we looked for added value. For young-learner specialists the choice was obvious: welfare and safeguarding, a paramount concern when it comes to children who will be living away from their families. And it is also an area in which, due in part to the British Council Inspection rules, where the UK probably leads the ELT world.

“If you're signing up for a course at anything claiming to be a 'school' you are probably expecting to learn something.”

We have given bonus points for five areas, using the detailed data in the inspection reports. To see what we've done and how we've done it turn to page 20.

We have placed providers with the same score based on the summary statement areas of strength in the same percentile band. But rather than arbitrarily following alphabetical order, we have listed tied centres according to the number of bonus points they've obtained.

The differences are slight, and a difference of less than 0.20 on the bonus point total is unlikely to be statistically significant, but it still highlights differences between one provider and another when it comes to caring for children.

But how do you measure added value in courses for over-16s? The stock industry reply is to look at the 'learner experience', which is fine if you think the main aim is for the students to have a good time.

Our position, however, is if you're signing up for a course at anything claiming to be a 'school' you are probably expecting to learn something. So, the learning experience is what we have focussed on.

As you will see on page 25, we have used the data in the category of teaching and learning. And, for the first time, we have made one adjustment to the British Council system: the inspectors do not award a strength to centres where all teachers meet the criteria that they should be educated to degree level or have an EFL diploma at postgraduate level.

We have awarded an extra strength to the roughly 50 centres who have met this requirement in full. In this area, the UK doesn't lead the world. In fact, it lags behind the US, Australia, Canada and Ireland. We are not saying all teachers should be graduates, but those that aren't should complete a diploma.

Before you send us an e-mail asking what evidence we have for gainsaying the British Council, please read the article about the impact of graduate teachers on student outcomes on page 25.

MELANIE BUTLER, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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## Age matters

Melanie Butler presents our two new top language centre rankings

At this time of year, the *EL Gazette* reveals the top UK language centres, based on the results of the latest British Council inspections. The figures include the results for more than 90 per cent of the centres that were inspected in 2019; at the time of going to press, only 17 still had reports outstanding.

This year we have decided to split the top rankings in two: one ranking for centres focussed on over-16s and one for under-16s. There are three reasons why.

Firstly, over-16s can't normally attend young learners' schools and vice versa. If you are looking for a school for a 12-year-old, you don't want to know the ranking of a university language centre. Similarly, a 32-year-old wanting a business English course isn't interested in boarding schools.

Secondly, 70 per cent of UK accredited centres are mainly for adults aged 16+, though many take closed groups of under-16s or run summer schools. The other 30 per cent of operations are only, or mostly, for under-16s.

The number of young-learner specialists has increased since the British Council introduced the rule that language schools with two or more young learners' operations held off-site must have their junior operation accredited separately.

It is now easier to see if the scores of the adult centres are reflected in the inspection results of their young-learners' operations. And that's the third reason we have split the rankings: there is no clear



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\*based on EL Gazette's review of British Council inspection results

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correlation between how good an organisation is with adults compared to its results with younger learners.

A *Gazette* analysis of 30 organisations accredited separately for adult centres and young learner operations revealed that in 19, the young learner operations were awarded fewer areas of strength than the average for their sister adult centres. In only three of them did YL operations score higher. In eight, the results were broadly the same.

The graph for chains on the opposite page illustrates this. All of the small chains which only have adult schools (marked as black dots)

“It is now easier to see if the scores of the adult centres are reflected in the inspection results of their young-learners' operations.”

have their schools within a four-point range, from their lowest scoring centre to their highest. That is statistically significant because in the UK industry, four points is one standard deviation – meaning all the schools within a four-point range are consistently of the same level of quality.

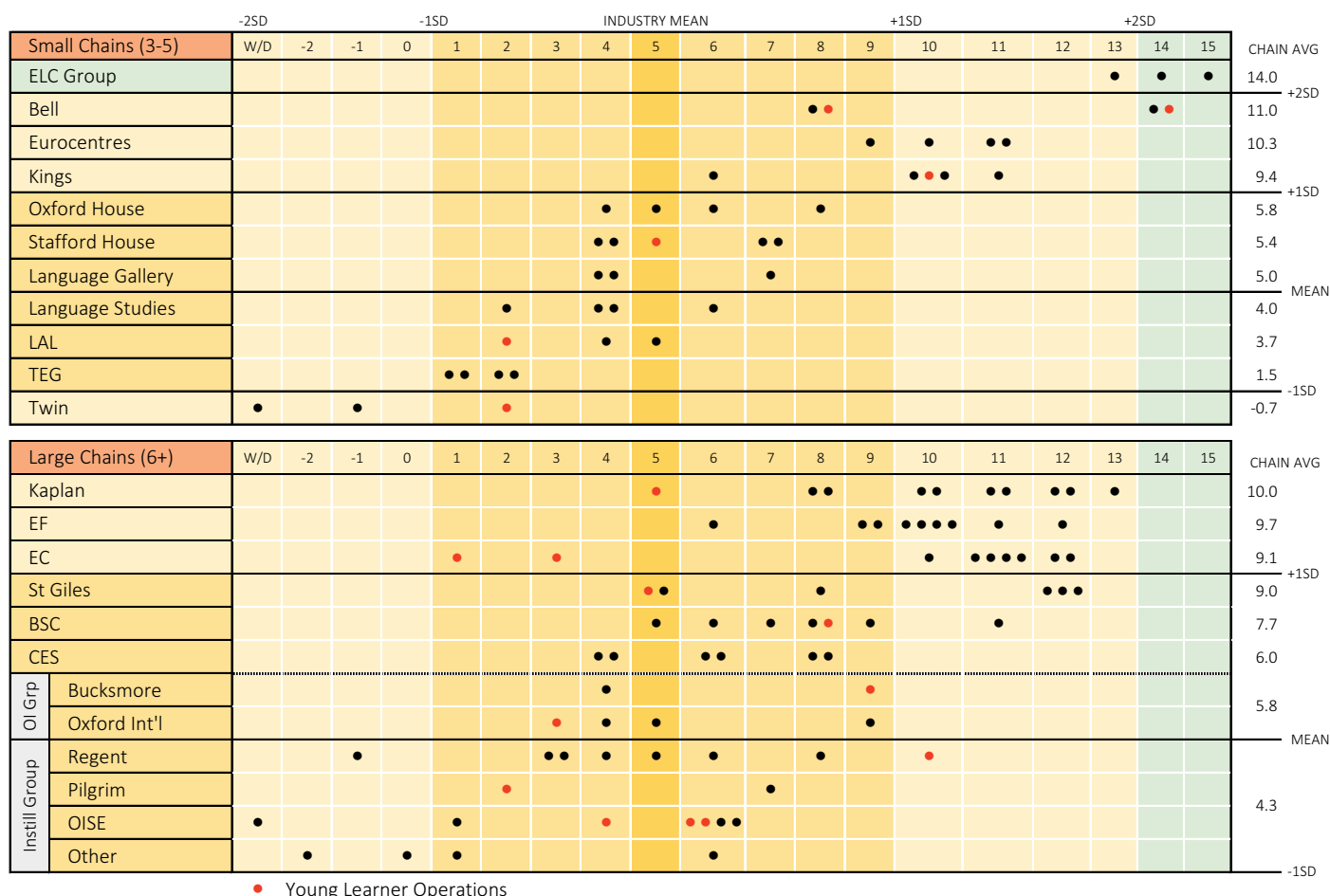
Look at the chart again. Only two of the five small chains with young learners' operations (the red dots) have all their operations in the four-point range.

For larger chains, we would expect a larger range, up to a maximum of eight points, or two standard deviations. When we look at the larger chains (excluding the groups with more than one brand), only St Giles has all its operations, both junior and adult, within the eight-point range we would expect. EC, by contrast, has an 11-point range between its highest scoring adult centre and its lowest scoring junior operation.

In UK EFL, just because you're good with adults doesn't mean you're good with kids. It's not surprising: primary schools rarely run universities, and vice versa. In education, age matters.

# Linking up the data

Melanie Butler looks at chain schools



How good are the chains? First, we need to define what we mean by a chain. In the UK, we can distinguish between *chains*, with schools that are all branded with the same name, and *groups*, where a number of schools or brands have the same owner.

The ELC group, for example, is a not-for-profit group with three schools for over-16s: The English Language Centre Brighton, The English Language Centre Eastbourne and the newly acquired school English in Chester. It is both high scoring, the mean average being 14 out of 15, and consistent, with all three schools scoring in a three-point range.

TEG, which stands for Thompson Education Group, is a small, branded chain at the bargain end of the over-16s market. It is extremely consistent, but perhaps inevitably, given the price, low-scoring.

The larger the group, the harder consistency becomes. EF does well, with nine schools scoring within a six-point range. If we remove its lowest scorer, which is managed by a different EF division, its language school operation becomes astonishingly consistent. But to the consumer, EF is a single brand.

As we report on the opposite page, few players in EFL are equally good with over-16s and young learners, and it's their junior operations that let down Kaplan and EC.

The UK's largest group, Instill, has three separate brands plus four individually-run schools. With 23 accredited operations, they have some strong schools and a top ten per cent summer school operation. The one thing they don't have, judged by their British Council reports, is consistency.



The English Language Centre school in Brighton



## Top for under-16s

Melanie Butler explains the ranking of language centres for young learners

Language centres for young learners are the fastest-growing sector in UK EFL, now accounting for 30 per cent of all accredited provision.

By language centres for young learners we do not, of course, mean that all of them only teach under-16s. Four of the top centres for under-16s are also *EL Gazette* Centres of Excellence for adults: Sidmouth International School, St Giles Highgate, St Clare's Oxford and IH London.

An increasing number of adult language schools also offer courses to under-16s. However, in this ranking we only include centres which had a majority, or significant minority, of under-16s enrolled at the time of their last inspection.

Thirty-three accredited language centres which focus on under-16s now receive an area of strength in more than half of the 15 areas under which they are inspected. That means that the top 25 per cent of YL centres are squashed into just six bands. So how can we tell them apart?



MILLFIELD ENTERPRISES

The main area in which provision for under-16s differs from that of adults is the level of *Safeguarding of Under 18s*; the three areas under *Welfare and Student Services* are also key for this age group. We have also looked at the area of *Premises and Facilities*, which also impacts on student well-being.

So, we have weighted the scores by assigning a maximum of six bonus points for the criteria covered under these headings.

**Differences in bonus points are used to show slight differences under these categories and do not affect the overall ranking score of each centre.**

The bonus points are based on the number of individual criteria marked as a strength on the British Council report in the areas we have put under the spotlight, as well as one bonus point for getting strengths in each of these areas in the summary statement.

A strength is deducted for any criterion in a given area which is judged as *Not met*. The British Council place particular emphasis on the importance of meeting every criteria, and one judgement of *Not met* means an area of strength will not be awarded by the inspectors in the summary statement.

If any of the individual criteria in one area are not applicable to the school in question, the school would have a lower possible maximum. The number of criteria in a given area can also vary from year to year. For example, in 2017, centres could be awarded strengths in just two of the five criteria in the area of *Academic Staff Profile*. Since 2018, three out of four criteria can be marked as strong.

To iron out statistical differences, we calculated all results as a percentage of available criteria for each area reported across the same base number. This does not entirely eliminate the statistical discrepancy and so **differences of less than 0.2 are unlikely to be significant.**

## Reading the reports

You can see how the system works by looking at the extract below from a 2017 report. There are eight criteria in this area but two are marked N/A under Strength, which means a strength cannot be marked.

In this example, a strength is marked for three out of the six applicable areas, which is fifty per cent. This means it is eligible to be awarded an area of strength in the summary statement.

However, one criteria is marked *Not met*, so a point is deducted from the strengths in this area, giving a net of 2 out of 6.

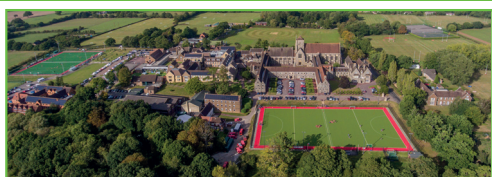
### Care of under 18s

Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
C1 Safeguarding policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C2 Guidance and training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C3 Publicity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C4 Recruitment procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C5 Safety and supervision during scheduled lessons and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C6 Safety and supervision outside scheduled lessons and activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C7 Accommodation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C8 Contact arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/a	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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rank	Under 16s Centres	Centre Type	Last Inspection	Percentile	Bonus Points	Areas of Strength in Summary*	Premises	Care of Students	Accommodation	Leisure	Safeguarding Under 18s
			year	Ranking	max 6	max 5	max 6	max 7	max 7	max 5	max 6
1	Summer Boarding Courses	MC	2018	Perfect	5.00	5.0	5.0	6.0	4.0	4.0	6.0
2	Discovery Summer	MC	2018	3%	5.50	5.0	6.0	7.0	5.0	4.0	6.0
3	Bell Young Learners Centres	MC Ch	2019	3%	4.50	4.0	6.0	6.0	1.0	5.0	5.0
4	Broadstairs English Centre	PLS Y	2019	3%	4.33	5.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
5	Millfield English Lang Hols	BS	2018	5%	5.17	5.0	5.0	7.0	5.0	4.0	5.0
6	Bishopstrow College	BS	2016	5%	5.10	5.0	5.0	5.8	5.0	3.8	6.0
7	Isca School of English	Fam SS	2017	5%	5.07	5.0	5.0	4.7	6.0	3.8	6.0
8	St Edmunds College SS	BS	2017	5%	4.47	4.0	4.0	5.8	2.0	5.0	6.0
9	Heathfield Summer	BS	2016	8%	4.78	5.0	5.0	4.7	4.0	5.0	5.0
10	St Giles Highgate	Ch Y+A	2017	8%	4.24	5.0	4.0	4.7	4.0	3.8	4.0
11	Harrow School Short Courses	BS	2019	12%	4.61	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.7	5.0	5.0
12	Concord College Summer	BS	2017	12%	4.58	5.0	6.0	3.5	4.0	5.0	4.0
13	Exsportise	MC	2019	12%	4.28	5.0	3.0	6.0	4.7	3.0	4.0
14	Buckswood Overseas SS (BOSS)	BS	2017	12%	3.58	4.0	4.0	3.5	4.2	3.8	2.0
15	Wimbledon Sch of Eng Juniors	PLS MC	2018	19%	5.50	5.0	6.0	7.0	5.0	4.0	6.0
16	St Clare's Oxford	BS +PLS A	2018	19%	5.00	4.0	5.0	7.0	5.0	4.0	5.0
17	Sidmouth International	PLS Y+A	2017	19%	4.97	5.0	3.0	5.8	6.0	5.0	5.0
18	Stonyhurst Language School	BS	2018	19%	4.64	4.0	3.0	4.0	5.8	5.0	6.0
19	Bede's Summer School	BS	2017	19%	4.60	5.0	3.0	5.8	4.0	3.8	6.0
20	Manor Courses	Fam SS	2016	19%	4.57	4.0	5.0	4.7	4.0	3.8	6.0
21	Regent Summer School	Ch +SS	2018	19%	4.33	5.0	5.0	5.0	4.0	3.0	4.0
22	ECS Jr Summer (Port Regis)	Fam SS	2018	19%	4.00	4.0	5.0	4.0	4.0	1.0	6.0
23	Sherborne International	BS	2019	19%	3.94	5.0	3.0	4.0	4.7	3.0	4.0
24	Kings Summer Camps	Ch +BS	2019	19%	3.78	5.0	3.0	4.0	4.7	3.0	3.0
25	Moreton Hall Intl Study Centre	BS	2017	25%	5.17	4.0	3.0	7.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
26	International Student Club	Fam SS	2016	25%	4.97	5.0	6.0	5.8	4.0	5.0	4.0
27	Windermere Intl Summer Sch	BS	2017	25%	4.81	5.0	4.0	5.8	4.0	5.0	5.0
28	UKLC	MC	2018	25%	4.28	5.0	3.0	4.0	4.7	4.0	5.0
29	Churchill House Summer Centres	PLS MC	2018	25%	4.00	5.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.0	4.0
30	IH London Young Learners	PLS Y+A	2019	25%	3.53	4.0	4.0	4.0	1.2	3.0	5.0
31	St. Giles Eastbourne	Ch Y+A	2019	25%	2.39	1.0	2.0	3.0	2.3	3.0	3.0
32	The English Experience (UK)	PLS Y	2019	25%	2.03	2.0	2.0	1.0	0.2	3.0	4.0
33	Bucksmore Education	MC	2017	25%	1.54	1.0	0.0	2.5	0.0	3.8	2.0

## KEY

**Ch** (chain): a group of schools under one brand or a group of schools or brands under the same ownership

**BS**: Boarding School

**Fam SS**: Family-run Summer sch

**MC**: Mult Centre Summer schs

**PLS Y**: Private Lang Sch for under 16s

**PLS A**: Private Lang Sch for 16+

a criteria was not met, so a strength was deducted

\*Areas of Strength in Summary Statement, of those 5 here

NB Differences in total Bonus points awarded reflect slight differences in outcomes. Difference of less than 0.20 are unlikely to be statistically significant



# Who does best in the Young Learner rankings?

*Melanie Butler* examines the results sector by sector

Two things set the UK junior market apart from competitor countries. First, most of the courses are residential, especially in the summer, and second, the high level of child protection, or safeguarding, as the British call it, demanded by the British Council inspectors.

Of course, Britain is famous for its boarding schools, and the Harry Potter books have made the idea of boarding popular with children across the world. But any residential care for children, from orphanages to scout camps, demands a high level of safeguarding, and in the UK, children's welfare on language courses is in the remit of the British Council inspectors.

Boarding schools have been subject to strict safeguarding regulations for many years. But an analysis of the rankings shows that the two residential centres with the highest scores in child protection, Discovery Summer and Wimbledon School of English Juniors, are not owned and operated by year-round boarding schools.

There is still, of course, a demand for non-residential courses, and the top ones on our list include family run summer schools, two year-round dedicated young-learner centres, Broadstairs English Centre and the English Experience (UK), and one private language school which also has adult courses: Sidmouth International School. There is also one year-round boarding school, St Clare's Oxford, which runs a year-round private language school.

The traditional family-run summer school operations are holding their own with Isca, Manor Courses, ECS and the International Student Club all making our list.

The most common form of summer school, however, is the 'multicentre', where an organisation runs residential courses in more than one location, often in boarding school facilities. Many of these are run by organisations which only operate vacation courses, and five of these make our charts: top performer overall Summer Boarding Courses, Discovery Summer, Exsportise, UKLC and Bucksmore Education. Three private language schools in our list have successful young-learner operations: Wimbledon School of English, International House London, and Churchill House; as do four chains: Bell, St Giles, Regent and King's; and one boarding school, Bede's, which runs courses in seven locations, including other boarding schools and universities.

But it is the traditional year-round boarding schools which dominate the young-



Hurst College, home of Manor Courses International Summer School

learner sector. Based on their inspection reports, only 22 boarding schools opt to be accredited by the British Council (25 if we count the language schools which share premises with boarding schools owned by King's), so they make up less than 5 per cent of all accredited centres and 15 per cent of young-learner specialists. But they also have

the highest mean average score of any sector, with 8 areas of strength out of 15, and they make up nearly half of all the top-ranking young-learner specialists.

To celebrate their success, we have given them their own listing on this page (tied rankings are ordered by the bonus points, as explained on page 20).

Rank	Top Boarding Schools	INSP	Rank %	B Pts
1	Millfield English Lang Hols	2018	5%	5.17
2	Bishopstrow College	2016	5%	5.10
3	St Edmunds College SS	2017	5%	4.47
4	Heathfield Summer	2016	8%	4.78
5	Harrow School Short Courses	2019	12%	4.61
6	Concord College Summer	2017	12%	4.58
7	Buckswood Overseas SS (BOSS)	2017	12%	3.58
8	St Clare's Oxford	2018	19%	5.00
9	Stonyhurst Language School	2018	19%	4.64
10	Bede's Summer School	2017	19%	4.60
11	Sherborne International	2019	19%	3.94
12	Kings Summer Camps	2019	19%	3.67
13	Moreton Hall Intl Study Centre	2017	25%	5.17
14	Windermere Intl Summer Sch	2017	25%	4.81



# Wise words from a summer school super-head

Millfield's Mark Greenow reveals to *Melanie Butler* his secrets for success

**H**e doesn't just run Millfield English Language Holiday Courses, our top-ranking boarding school courses. Millfield's Mark Greenow also hosts a major EFL conference and is an inspiration to many. Here are his top tips for dealing with key stakeholders:

## 1) To parents worried about the safety of their child

If they want to let their precious little things fly the nest for a couple of weeks, I tell them that I am a 'professional babysitter'.

I appreciate their trust and I know it is a huge responsibility. I assure them we will do everything we can to protect the children from the environment with risk assessments, from the staff with DBS checks and from each other – that's why we have Houseparents.

Our Medical Centre protects them from illness and injury, the Prevent programme from radicalisation and we have Designated Safeguarding Leads to protect students from themselves.

Most importantly, we train and induct every member of staff to understand this multi-layered approach and strive to create a caring culture that all staff are responsible for.

Having said all that, I don't believe in wrapping everybody in cotton wool. It is important that the students have new experiences and let themselves go a little – in a controlled way! Things inevitably will happen. It is how you deal with them that counts.

## 2) To summer school teachers

Engage with and listen to your students. Preparation is important, but don't obsess about it. However much you plan, you never really know where a lesson is going to go. Students will forgive a bad lesson or two if they see you care.

The best teachers are perpetual learners, good sharers and great listeners. It is important that they know that they can't control what students learn. They can only control what they do. So, concentrate above all else on the PROCESS of learning and give the students time to REFLECT on what they are doing and why.

As time goes by, the students may not remember what you taught them, but they will remember how you made them feel.

## 3) To students on the first day of the course

I enjoy giving welcome talks and I work hard preparing them. It is a

“Students will forgive a bad lesson or two, if they see you care.”



MILLFIELD ENTERPRISES

chance to set the boundaries and spell out the 'rules' whilst establishing our values.

But I do it in a fun way. For example, because I am not brave enough to take a telephone from a teenager, I show them a video of phones going into a crusher to the sound of the song *Goodbye My Lover*. I tell them this is what will happen if they use their phones in the Dining Hall instead of talking to the people around them!

I tell them they are here to improve their English but that they can learn more important things like learning to learn and learning to love learning. This will ultimately be more

important than learning twenty phrasal verbs. They can also learn to be curious, learn more about themselves and learn to respect others. I also tell students that I am going to make them cry, but only because they will have such a wonderful time they won't want to leave!

Most importantly, a summer school is a chance for students to reinvent themselves and learn to live in the moment. In words beginning with 'e': educate, engage, enthuse, entertain, energise, entrust and enthrall.

## 4) To agents

Agents need to take the time to really understand the schools they are working with and avoid working with too many schools. They need to be led by quality, not commission. Some agents pigeon-hole schools, sending all hockey players to one and tennis players to another, just because they have always done it that way.

Some of my best agents were previously students or staff! I love working with them because they completely get it. They know how important this intense shared experience can be and they know the passion and dedication that goes into making it happen. Some of them come back as Group Leaders. That means a lot to me.

## 5) To inspectors

I believe in inspections and, evidently, we do quite well at them, but I do wish there was a way they could get more to the heart of the matter. In my opinion, inspectors spend a disproportionate amount of time in summer schools observing the teachers.

Schools have to meet the standard set of tick boxes. For example, inspectors seem to be obsessed with the teaching of pronunciation. OK, but there are many pedagogical reasons to argue that English can be taught very well without using IPA. Many teachers aren't trained to use it: phonetics is not a major focus on the Celta syllabus. Even with great academic support and in-house training, it can be difficult for a summer school to fill the training gap.

As an inspector, I would really want to get deep into the school and test that learning is taking place holistically: in the activities, in the houses, on the playing ground. I would want to feel the mood and culture of the school. I must confess, though, I don't know how to write a tick box for that!



Tug-of-war at the Millfield summer fete

MILLFIELD ENTERPRISES

## At the top for 16+

Melanie Butler explains

The top language centres for students aged 16+ now receive an area of strength in 80 per cent or more of all the areas under which they are inspected. That's a higher average than achieved by young-learner centres (see pages 18-19) partly because there are around two and a half times more schools, colleges and universities specialising in adults.

That means that 30 centres are squashed into just six bands. So how can we tell them apart?



### Reading the reports

This extract from a 2017 report shows how inspectors can score criteria. There are six criteria under which the inspectors can mark a result. T20 is marked N/A, showing it is not applicable to this centre. All five of the other criteria are marked as met and three have been marked as strong.

No criteria is marked as *Not met*, so under the bonus point system it has scored 60 per cent. This will be reported as 60 per cent of the base score of 6, which is 3.6.

Learner management					
Criteria	Not met	Met	Strength	See comments	N/a
T17 Placement for level and age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T18 Monitoring students' progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T19 Examination guidance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T20 Assessment criteria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
T21 Academic reports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
T22 Information on UK education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

We decided to weight the scores based on outcomes in *Teaching and Learning*, one of four categories under inspection in all centres, by assigning a maximum of six bonus points. **Differences in bonus points are used to show slight differences in this one category and do not affect the overall band score of each centre.**

The six bonus points are based on the number of individual criteria marked as a strength on the British Council report in the five areas in the category of *Teaching and Learning*, plus the number of those areas awarded a strength on the inspectors' summary statement.

A strength is deducted for any criterion in a given area which is judged as *Not met*. The British Council place particular emphasis on the importance of meeting every criteria, and one judgement of *Not Met* means an area strength will not be awarded by the inspectors.

The exact number of criteria applicable in each area varies from centre to centre, as you can see from the 2017 report reproduced on this page. In that example, one element out of six in this area is not

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# Do teachers need **degrees**?

Research shows it matters,  
says *Melanie Butler*

**A**cross the developed world, a first degree is a prerequisite for teachers working in mainstream education, but not in preschool.

First degrees are also a requirement for the accreditation of language schools in the US, Canada, Ireland and Australia. But not in UK EFL.

In April 2019, the British Council downgraded its requirement for a Level 6 (first degree equivalent) qualification for teachers in accredited language schools from “except in exceptional circumstances” to “normally”. Evidence of “engagement with post-school learning and/or substantial life experience” is required for non-graduates.

However, there is clear evidence that graduate teachers increase student outcomes, even among preschool children. A major study in England found having a Level 6-qualified teacher can make a long-lasting difference.

The EPPE cohort study in England followed 3,000 children (both L1 and L2 English) from birth to age 16 to measure the key variables affecting educational attainment. One focus was the impact of preschool on later education. After controlling for family variables, it found that having Level 6 teachers at preschool was a strong predictor of a child's learning outcomes at age 11.

“Every increase in the educational level of staff, from level three to four to five, predicted an increase in children's outcomes,” Professor Kathy Sylva, who led the EPPE study, told the *Gazette*.

“But Level 6 was the elbow point. It predicted a stronger increase in outcomes at 11 than all the other increases in educational levels put together.”

Is EFL the only area of education in which degrees don't matter?

applicable to the school in question. So, it has four strengths out of five rather than six – a slight statistical advantage.

The number of criteria in a given area can also vary from year to year. For example, in 2017, centres could be awarded strengths in just two of the five criteria in the area of *Academic Staff Profile*. Since 2018, three out of four criteria can be marked as strong.

To iron out statistical differences, we calculated all results as a percentage of available criteria for each area reported across the same base number. This does not entirely eliminate the statistical discrepancy and **differences of less than 0.2 are unlikely to be significant**.

An additional bonus of 0.25 is awarded under criteria T1, under *Academic Staff Profile*, for centres where all staff either have a Level 6 qualification (a first degree or equivalent), or are fully qualified EFL Teachers (TEFLQ) with an EFL Diploma at postgraduate level. Inspectors cannot award a strength under this criteria.


rank	Adult Centres	Centre Type	Last Inspection	Percentile	Bonus Points	Areas of Strength in Summary*	Academic Staff Profile	100% Staff with L6 Qualifications	Academic Management	Course Design	Learner Management	Teaching
			year	Ranking	max 6	max 5	max 3	bonus	max 6	max 6	max 6	max 8
1	Wimbledon School of English	PLS	2018	Perfect	5.54	5.0	3.0	0.25	6.0	6.0	5.0	5.0
2	ELC Bristol	PLS 16+	2018	Perfect	5.44	5.0	3.0		6.0	4.8	6.0	6.0
3	London School of English	PLS 18+	2019	Perfect	5.15	5.0	3.0	0.25	6.0	4.8	3.0	6.0
4	ELC Brighton	Ch	2019	Perfect	4.76	5.0	3.0	0.25	6.0	3.6	4.0	4.0
5	London Sch of Eng Canterbury	PLS 18+	2019	Perfect	4.48	5.0	3.0		3.0	4.8	3.6	6.0
6	LSI Portsmouth	PLS 18+	2018	Perfect	4.41	5.0	2.0	0.25	4.0	3.6	5.0	4.0
7	Bell Cambridge	Ch	2018	3%	5.29	5.0	3.0	0.25	6.0	3.6	5.0	6.0
8	IH London	PLS	2017	3%	4.69	5.0	3.0		5.0	3.6	5.0	5.0
9	University of Manchester	Uni 18+	2017	3%	4.34	5.0	3.0	0.25	3.6	3.6	3.0	5.0
10	English in Chester	Ch	2019	3%	4.05	4.0	3.0	0.25	5.0	3.6	3.0	3.0
11	Kaplan Oxford	Ch 16+	2016	5%	4.83	5.0	3.0	0.25	4.0	6.0	3.0	5.0
12	Edge Hill University	Uni 18+	2018	5%	4.51	5.0	3.0	0.25	3.6	5.0	3.6	4.0
13	East Sussex College, L & E	FE 16+	2018	5%	4.13	5.0	3.0	0.25	3.0	3.0	3.0	5.0
14	ELC Eastbourne	Ch 16+	2019	5%	3.95	5.0	3.0	0.25	4.0	2.0	3.0	4.0
15	University of Liverpool	Uni 16+	2018	5%	3.00	4.0	0.0		3.0	3.0	3.0	4.0

KEY	Ch (chain): a group of schools under one brand or a group of schools or brands under the same ownership					a criteria was not met, so a strength was deducted						
	ELC: English Language Centre					*Areas of Strength in Summary Statement, of those 5 here						
	FE: Further Education College					NB Differences in total Bonus points awarded reflect slight differences in outcomes. Difference of less than 0.20 are unlikely to be statistically significant						
	IH: International House											
	PLS: Private Language School											
	TT: Teacher Training Centre											
	16+ 17+ 18+ Minimum age											

# UK TOP SCHOOLS 2020


rank	Adult Centres	Centre Type	Last Inspection	Ranking Score	Bonus Points	Areas of Strength in Summary*	Academic Staff Profile	100% Staff with L6 Qualifications	Academic Management	Course Design	Learner Management	Teaching
			year	max 10	max 6	max 5	max 3	bonus	max 6	max 6	max 6	max 8
16	BEET Bournemouth	PLS 16+	2017	8%	5.25	5.0	3.0	0.25	6.0	4.8	3.6	6.0
17	EC Oxford	Ch 16+	2017	8%	4.30	4.0	0.0	0.25	4.0	6.0	4.0	5.0
18	Kaplan Manchester	Ch 16+	2017	8%	4.27	4.0	0.0	0.25	3.0	6.0	4.8	5.0
19	St Giles Brighton	Ch 16+	2019	8%	4.20	4.0	2.0	0.25	4.0	2.4	5.0	5.0
20	St Giles London Central	Ch 16+	2017	8%	4.11	4.0	1.5		4.0	4.8	4.0	5.0
21	IH Newcastle	PLS	2018	8%	4.06	5.0	2.0		5.0	3.0	3.0	5.0
22	King's College London	Uni 17+	2017	8%	4.04	4.0	1.5	0.25	3.6	4.8	3.6	4.0
23	Liverpool School of English	PLS	2018	8%	3.95	4.0	1.0	0.25	5.0	3.0	3.0	5.0
25	NILE Norwich	PLS TT	2019	8%	3.64	5.0	2.0		3.6	3.0	3.0	4.0
24	IH Bristol	PLS	2016	8%	3.64	4.0	3.0		3.0	3.6	1.0	6.0
26	St Giles Highgate	Ch	2017	8%	3.61	4.0	1.5	0.25	3.0	3.6	3.0	4.0
27	EC Bristol	Ch	2017	8%	3.32	4.0	0.0		3.0	4.8	3.0	4.0
28	EF International Oxford	Ch 16+	2019	8%	3.32	3.0	0.0		4.0	4.8	4.0	3.0
29	University of Brighton	Uni 18+	2019	10%	4.94	5.0	3.0	0.25	4.0	5.0	3.6	6.0
30	University of Leicester	Uni 18+	2017	10%	3.86	3.0	1.5	0.25	6.0	6.0	0.0	4.0

KEY	<b>Ch</b> (chain): a group of schools under one brand or a group of schools or brands under the same ownership		*Areas of Strength in Summary Statement, of those 5 here <i>NB Differences in total Bonus points awarded reflect slight differences in outcomes. Difference of less than 0.20 are unlikely to be statistically significant</i>
	<b>ELC:</b> English Language Centre	<b>PLS:</b> Private Language School	
	<b>FE:</b> Further Education College	<b>TT:</b> Teacher Training Centre	
	<b>IH:</b> International House	<b>16+ 17+ 18+</b> Minimum age	



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# For adults only?

Melanie Butler analyses the 16+ results

**P**rivate language schools dominate the rankings for over-16s. But not just any private language schools: the long-established ones.

The single best indicator of excellence is being a member of The English Network (TEN). With the entry of the **London School of English**, the oldest language school in England, every single adult language centre with a perfect score of ten is a member. All three schools in our top 'chain', the English Language Group (see page 19), are members; while the number two in our young learners ranking is another new member: **Discovery Summer**.

But ELT's answer to the Russell Group (another educational association which recruits from the top, long-established institutions) isn't altogether consistent. Although 12 of its 13 accredited organisations are *EL Gazette* Centres of Excellence, there is one outlier – a young learner operation with just three strengths.

The teacher trainers do well: **Bell Cambridge**, **BEET Bournemouth** and **NILE** all make the top 30, along with three affiliates of International House.

**IH London**, **IH Newcastle** and **IH Bristol** all carry the IH flag. With TEN members **LSI Portsmouth** and **Torquay International** joining its affiliates, IH has nosed ahead in the overall ranking from old rivals **St Giles**, another teacher-training pioneer which has three centres in the top 30.

Three other chains make an appearance: **Kaplan** and **EC** have two centres each and **EF Oxford** also makes the grade. Hats off, too, to **Liverpool School of English**, another long-established, high ranking school.

But the grand, old private language schools don't have it all their own way. There are five universities in the rankings: **Manchester**, **Liverpool**, **Edge Hill**, **King's College London**, **Brighton** and **Leicester**. That's 15 per cent of all accredited university language centres appearing in the top 30 but then, as we pointed out in the last issue, the universities are the second-best performing sector in the industry.

That just leaves **East Sussex College in Lewes** and **Eastbourne**, previously called **Sussex Downs**, and our top-ranking Further Education College, heading up a sector which is steadily moving up.

## Focus on FE

The UK's Further Education Colleges, which educate British and international students ages 16 and over, are a bit of a hidden gem. Buffeted by government policy and forced into mega-mergers, the sector is emerging from a decade of reform and re-organisation

with an interesting offer for international English language students.

There are 33 accredited FE colleges, as they are affectionately known, and with a mean average score of six points they have pulled ahead of the industry average, which is just five. Over a third of them, listed on this page, are *EL Gazette* Centres of Excellence.

They are particularly strong in Teaching and Learning. Teaching is an area of strength in more than half of these colleges, which are conveniently scattered across the map of Britain. And, they are twice as likely as the rest of the industry to gain a strength in Academic Staff Profile.

One difference is they only run short courses in the summer, otherwise enrolment

is for ten or twelve weeks. This means they can offer longer contracts to teachers, as well as better pay than most of the private sector. And it's their teaching which is the secret of their success.



Students at BEET Bournemouth

rank	FE College Centres of Excellence	Last Inspection	Percentile	Bonus Points
		year	Ranking	max 6
1	East Sussex College, L & E	2018	5%	4.13
2	Perth College	2018	12%	5.01
3	Guildford College	2019	12%	4.20
4	Dudley College	2018	12%	3.24
5	Hilderstone College, Broadstairs	2017	19%	4.02
6	Belfast Metropolitan College	2018	19%	3.74
7	Chichester College	2018	19%	2.54
8	Nottingham College	2017	19%	2.31
9	South Thames College	2017	25%	4.51
10	Cardiff and Vale College	2017	25%	3.91
11	Sheffield College	2018	25%	3.07
12	Itchen Sixth Form College	2017	25%	1.80
13	Pembrokeshire College	2019	30%	4.20
14	Newcastle College	2019	30%	3.70



## Community spirit

Joshua Coffey of Concord College sums up forty years of summer fun

**Concord College Summer School is 40 years old this year. What makes it special?**

The college is stunning, and the Summer School is an amazing, fun environment to be in. From the hustle and bustle of planning, then preparing during the short time between main term finishing and summer school starting, I personally feel an anxious sense of excitement. I wonder if it's the same for everyone?

From the moment students arrive, it's a happy place to be.

I'm a huge fan of the staff – from the teachers to the sports team, every activity

seems engaging. As a marketer, I'm often doing laps of the campus behind the lens of the camera, wishing I could get involved.

**Concord is a boarding school where the majority of students are international. Is that important?**

The college benefits from an international community. With more than 35 nationalities attending during main term and each summer course, we're able to provide students with the British boarding experience whilst learning to understand other cultures.

I think the mixture of nationalities and meeting new people creates a summer school full of excitement. You can actually feel the buzz. The sense of community makes it a place that students can feel at home.

**For parents, safety and education are often the biggest concern...**

As the standard of education here is so high, naturally the safety meets the same

standards. That's why so many students return year after year for our summer courses.

Boarding parents are there for the students, day and night, and create a safe, homely environment. From my experience, all of the staff deliver the best possible care – whether it's student homesickness, health or wellbeing. Great education and safety go hand in hand, especially after 40 years!



CONCORD COLLEGE



CONCORD COLLEGE



Joshua Coffey has worked for Concord College Marketing & Alumni Department, and as a Marketing Assistant for the Summer School, since September 2017.

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# Watch what teachers do and help them do it better

Classroom observation is key to course innovation, Mariela Gil tells *Melanie Butler*

**M**ariela Gil thinks reading and writing are essential skills, even for the youngest learners. It is, she tells me, “never too early to start developing literacy. Literacy development can start in the womb!”

“But Literacy is so much more than reading and writing skills. Our literacy practices are tied to our identities, to who we think we are. And school literacy practices unlock so much in society. They are key to accessing other subject areas apart from English and eventually to studying in the English medium.”

It was observing teachers in the classrooms around the world that inspired her and her team to produce two course books for each level of her new project, *Global Stage*, one focussing on language and the other on the development of literacy.

Mariela and her team saw how much pressure teachers were under from parents and governments to include elements of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) and Global Citizenship into their lessons. What the teachers need, the course should provide, Mariela believes.

“The most satisfying thing about working on *Global Stage* was being able to incorporate ideas such as global citizenship so that it’s woven into the course.

There are stories in the literacy book about a boy with autism, a girl who has to make difficult choices, they are really inspiring,” she tells me.

But it’s generally believed in ELT that reading and writing are transferable skills. If you can do it in your own language you can transfer that to English. So why teach them?

“Yes, they are transferable skills,” she agrees, but, “you still need to practice them to internalise them! Also, there is an aspect of writing which is very cultural. So, in our writing lessons we included a model so children would know what is expected of them, a focus on mechanics so that they can practice...”

What about phonics? *Global Stage* has them too.

“Each of our Literacy book units includes a phonics activity in the book and then a phonics worksheet for teachers to download for extra support.”

But as Mariela points out, this is a global course book, and different parts of the world have different approaches to phonics and the emphasis on it varies greatly. What the teacher needs, the course book should provide – and if other teachers don’t need something, they can leave it out.



It’s the same with grammar: some teachers like to give rules, others want students to work them out, so the interactive course book allows teachers to choose their approach.

That’s cultural too, I point out. A lot of cultures, even in Europe, believe in explicit instruction and have an educational tradition of learning deductively from explicit rules.

Others, like the Anglo Saxons and the Nordics, prefer implicit learning and inductive thinking, working out rules from examples.

“I hadn’t heard that before,” said Mariela, though she doesn’t sound surprised. It fits in with the *Global Stage* philosophy of watching what teachers do and helping them do it better. “Who are we,” she says, “to tell teachers what they are doing is wrong?”

“But why the emphasis on collaborative learning,” I ask, “isn’t that culturally specific, too?” Yes, there is a lot of emphasis on collaborative learning, particularly in the literacy part of the course. Isn’t reading and writing naturally something you do by yourself?

Mariela does not agree. “I like the concept of literacy practices,” she tells me, “because literacy doesn’t happen in a vacuum. It’s a social practice.”

Process writing, too, works well when children work in co-operative groups, drawing on the different strengths of team members. “That form of writing is very cultural and needs to be practiced as well.”

Watch what teachers do and help them do it better. Visible thinking, co-operative learning, process writing: if teachers want to

use these approaches, Mariela and her team aim to help them.

“One of things we saw,” she tells me, “is that students were asked constantly to stand up and speak.” So, the team set out to make the speaking sections of *Global Stage* as well-developed and complete as possible.

And everything is designed to be as transparent as possible. Structured, scaffolded, methodical. “Everything on the page for grammar, vocabulary, speaking, writing...”

*Global Stage* is a labour of love.

“This is a course that was loved by many, many people, from

authors to editors to designers. A lot of people put their hearts and souls into it,” Mariela tells me. “Just today somebody who was on the team contacted me. They are working in a different department now, nothing to do with language teaching. They just wanted to know how the course was doing...”

“Who are we to tell teachers what they are doing is wrong?”



**Mariela Gil** has a Masters in TESOL and taught English in the US, Thailand and Mexico before joining Macmillan Education in 2002. She is currently

Publisher for American English Pre-Primary and Primary. She is passionate about childhood development and learning, as well as creating the best possible learning materials to support teachers and students in the classroom.

# Improving the outcomes for Latino learners

Ron Ragsdale talks to Dr Josefina Villamil Tinajero

*You were born in Mexico and came to Texas at the age of five with your family. What is your most vivid memory of your early days in school in America, and how has your school experience informed your practice as a teacher and teacher educator?*

**A**s a child, I was labelled LEP (Limited English Proficient). It all started when a note on my report card from my second-grade teacher to my parents read: “Josefina needs to express herself in class and when she is playing with the other children. The ‘U’ or unsatisfactory grade in reading is because of her language difficulty.”

I felt ashamed and humiliated, frustrated and at times even angry. Of course, I could read! There just weren’t any books in Spanish to prove it to my teacher and classmates.

My dad, who was college-educated in Mexico, gave us a wonderful gift—a tremendous sense of pride about our language, our culture and our history. Inside, I was dying to share all that knowledge with my teacher and classmates. But I wasn’t able to express my thoughts in English.

I don’t remember ever talking to my second-grade teacher and I hardly remember my classmates. Mine became a world of social isolation and distance—and that produced a great deal of anxiety.

But I was a pretty stubborn child! Instead of becoming bitter, I became even more

determined to do well in school and to do something so that one day no child would suffer what I experienced.

For me, the turning point came in the 7th grade. Finally, I knew enough English to feel comfortable in doing academic tasks and I was a member of the Junior Honour Society. Later, I graduated as class valedictorian.

Because of this experience, improving educational opportunities for linguistically and culturally diverse students has become my mission. Developing instructional materials to meet their needs is my passion. And bilingual/ESL teachers are my heroes.

The possibility of implementing the very best programmes that can change the lives of children, particularly linguistically diverse

children, is what inspired me to become a bilingual teacher and later a teacher of teachers.

*Your particular area of interest is literacy. What drew your interest to literacy and what is the most important message you would give to teachers working with English language learners?*

Going to school and not knowing how to read in English, but being a proficient reader in Spanish, was what drew my interest to literacy and bi-literacy.

My message to teachers working with ELLs is to establish a high-quality literacy environment to support their language, cognitive, and other developmental outcomes.

Part of building that high-quality learning environment includes using children’s L1, in addition to English. Although this is one of the most controversial issues in education of ELLs today, there is sufficient evidence that teaching children to read in their home language can support their literacy

development in English, while at the same time helping them become bilingual and bi-literate.

There is ample research showing that bi-literacy and particularly dual-language programmes, help students become bilingual and bi-literate—something that is valuable linguistically, cognitively and eventually economically.

Studies of 50-50 English-Spanish programmes have found that young children are able to develop English skills on par with their monolingual English-speaking peers, while also developing their Spanish skills.

So, provide literacy instruction in children’s home language (for at least 6 years, but preferably through high school) alongside English.

*You champion a four-stage lesson model which you call: I do it, we do it, you do it together, then you do it alone. How exactly does that work?*

I and my colleagues across the United States have authored, championed and integrated the four-stage model into our reading

instructional materials to encourage independent learning. We refer to this as the Gradual Release of Responsibility. It provides teachers with an instructional framework for moving from teacher knowledge to student understanding and application in a way that ensures all students are supported as they acquire the skills and strategies necessary for success.

Students move back and forth between each of the components. This creates a student-driven environment where students get the instruction they need at the moment they need it. This is how it works:

**I do it (Direct Instruction):** The teacher explains and models to students what it is they are learning to do. The teacher provides direct instruction, models and conducts think-alouds. The students listen and ask for clarification.

**We do it (Guided Instruction):** The teacher and students work together and share the instruction. Students practice while the teacher provides interactive instruction, checks prompts, provides additional modelling and meets with need-based groups.

**You do it together, I watch (Collaborative Learning):** The students work in groups to produce something related to the topic, sharing their understanding before they apply it independently. The teacher observes, provides feedback, evaluates, determines their level of understanding and offers corrective feedback.

**You do it, (Independent Practice):** Students apply what they learned to independent learning tasks assigned by the







SHUTTERSTOCK: EIKO TSUCHIYA

Go to College?’ and, ‘What are My Interests and Abilities?’ Simultaneously, the mothers participate in workshops such as ‘What Can my Daughter Be When She Grows Up?’ or ‘What Are My Daughter’s Interests and Abilities?’

Academic Development activities include workshops for both mothers and daughters on time management and schoolwork. Mothers also have an opportunity to enrol in the General Education Development (GED) and receive their high school equivalency or take English classes at a local community college or university.

For the Community Development area, the girls plan and implement a community service project, while their mothers explore community resources that might be used for their own or their daughters’ further development.

The Personal Development topics bring the girls together to discuss topics such as family relationships, peer pressure and feeling better about themselves. Mothers participate in workshops such as, ‘How Can I Help My Daughter Feel Better About Herself?’

Essentially, the programme was designed to socialise the girls about planning their future careers, beginning with focusing on their academic and leadership skills. At the same time, mothers were familiarised with academic options. All of these activities also promote and improve communication and bonding between mothers and daughters.

Gender has frequently operated as a major barrier to educational completion in Latino communities, due to a wide variety of socioeconomic, cultural and attitudinal factors. At the same time, strong family relationships and maternal expectations are crucial in Latina girls’ academic success, especially in preventing dropouts.

teacher, both in and outside of class. The teacher checks for understanding and to identify needs for re-teaching.

**You are famous in Texas for creating the Mother-Daughter programme. What does that involve and why do you think working with parents is so important?**

In June of 1986, I led a group of concerned educational professionals on the US/Mexico border, including participants from the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), the Ysleta Independent School District and the local YWCA. Together, we formed a coalition to address the widespread problem of high dropout rates among Latina females. This coalition created the El Paso Mother-Daughter (M/D) Program to provide academic intervention for 6th grade Latina girls at high risk of becoming school dropouts.

In the traditionally close-knit Latino family, the mother exerts a particularly powerful influence on her children. Thus, Latino mothers have the potential for influencing their daughters’ (and sons’) educational career choices. So, mothers are an integral part of the program.

The M/D Program began by initiating activities around four important developmental areas: Career Development, Academic Development, Community Life Development, and Personal Development.

For example, in the Activities for Career Development module, the girls participate in workshops entitled, ‘What Does It Take to

that promote language learning and help students develop learning strategies and critical thinking skills. Prepare lessons with clear language and content objectives and engage ELLs in the use of authentic language.

4. Adapt Lesson Delivery as Needed: Observe and reflect on ELLs responses, to determine whether the students are reaching the learning objectives. Vary your oral language input, using L1 if possible, presenting visual aids and arranging peer support.
5. Monitor and Assess Student Language Development: ELLs learn at different rates, so regularly monitor and assess ELLs language development to advance their learning efficiently. Gather data to measure student language growth, monitor students’ errors through frequent interaction and provide ongoing feedback.
6. Engage and Collaborate within a Community of Practice: Collaborate with others to provide the best support for ELLs. Participate in continuous learning and developing leadership skills so you can be a resource to your school, as well as getting involved in designing and developing curricula.

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**There are six things that teachers need to remember when working with ELLs. They are derived from a set of Principles for Exemplary Teaching of ELLs that I developed along with two other authors on the McGraw-Hill Instructional Programmes (*Wonders and Maravillas*).**

1. Know your ELLs: Learn basic information about their families, language, cultures and educational backgrounds to engage them and to deliver lessons more effectively. Tap into ELLs prior knowledge and talents.
2. Create Conditions for Language Learning: Create a classroom culture where students feel comfortable. Demonstrate an expectation of success for all learners and plan instruction which enhances and supports ELLs’ motivation for learning.
3. Design High-Quality Lessons for Language: Plan meaningful lessons



**Dr. Tinajero** is currently a Professor of Bilingual Education and was previously Dean of the College of Education at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). She serves as Director of the UTEP Mother-Daughter/Father-Son Program, and Chair of El Paso Do the Write Thing, a violence prevention program for middle schoolers. She is the current president of NABE—the National Association for Bilingual Education

# Teach in Turkey

*Umair Ahsan* shares his experience of teaching in the ever-fascinating country of Turkey

## Why Turkey?

**T**urkey remains a popular destination for English language teaching, and there are always opportunities, both in universities and language schools.

Though the economic picture continues to be far from rosy, and political turmoil is part of everyday life, the attractions of living and working in Turkey remain considerable. Few places can offer such an appealing combination: spellbinding cultural attractions, exotic landscapes, rich history, warm people, great food and generally good infrastructure (in terms of transport, healthcare and shopping).

## What qualifications do I need?

For an English Instructor position, most universities stipulate a minimum requirement of an MA TESOL (or equivalent). Some may show flexibility for native English speakers, depending on previous experience, though it is worth noting that English Instructors of local Turkish origin are required to be qualified to Masters level, so the same criteria are increasingly applied to foreign hires.

The Cambridge DELTA is widely accepted as an MA TESOL equivalent, though you may not see it mentioned in job advertisements.

If you plan to teach at a language school, there's more flexibility in terms of qualifications (with some not requiring any at all – just being a native English speaker is enough). Be wary of such operations though: the working hours can be awkward, pay rates low, and the management far from receptive

to complaints. Plenty of anecdotal evidence exists that the promises from such outfits are worth less than the paper they are written on; especially when it comes to paying on time (if at all) and securing work permits.

Good language schools do exist, and they are worth seeking out. They will usually have stricter requirements in terms of qualifications, akin to universities.

## How much can I earn?

As a single person, 6000 lira/month – almost exactly \$1000 at the time of writing – is the minimum you would need in one of the big cities (Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir or Antalya). A reputable university should offer you at least that amount if you have the requisite experience and qualifications.

In terms of living with a family, add on 1000 lira/month for each dependent. Realistically, however, it would be unusual to find a university teaching position that pays more than 8000 lira/month (\$1350), and that is for a highly qualified native speaker.

A few things to bear in mind. Firstly, the Turkish Lira remains weak, and inflation is high. Local people have seen a dramatic decrease in their spending power, while foreign staff find it increasingly less viable to convert a portion of their salaries into foreign currency for savings.

If you plan to spend your earnings entirely

“The attractions of living and working in Turkey remain considerable.”

in Turkey, then this isn't such an issue. But if you want to save money, Turkey is probably the wrong country. Unless, of course, you can find one of the rare teaching positions that pays in US dollars. International schools and

select universities do pay in foreign currency (c. \$2000-2500 a month to start), but competition for positions is fierce, and you'll be worked hard for your money.

Generally speaking, salaries in Turkey have

not been able to keep pace with the double whammy of the lira's precipitous decline (nearly halving since 2016) and high inflation (peaking at over 25 per cent in 2018). And a combination of economic constraints for the universities themselves, together with an influx of highly qualified, highly skilled English instructors from places like Iran and Syria has increased competition for teaching positions at university level. The cachet that native English-speaking teachers once had is not as strong and as a result they can no longer command a guaranteed premium.

## Any other perks?

Many ads will state that the position comes with health insurance, without specifying whether that means Turkish state health insurance or private insurance. There is a big difference in terms of quality and service. While the latter was a widely available perk at private universities just a few years ago, it is increasingly restricted to select employers.

Most universities do not offer accommodation, though some may offer an allowance. Some will offer a flight allowance, or a round-trip ticket to your point of origin. Other common benefits include free/subsidised lunch and service buses – which usually travel a set route.



The Ishak Pasha Palace in eastern Turkey, constructed in the 16th century.

FRANTIC00/SHUTTERSTOCK



Bosphorus Bridge, Istanbul, connecting Europe and Asia



## Visas and immigration

If you are applying for a job from outside of Turkey, then you could be asked to acquire your work visa from your nearest Turkish embassy before traveling. If you are already some way into the process of applying for positions, it's a good idea to get notarised copies of your certificates and transcripts (translated copies might also be requested).

Make sure your employer agrees to pay for your work permit. This should be a given for any respectable employer, especially for full time positions. If they refuse, it begs the question as to how supportive they will be in other respects.

It is possible to apply for a work permit after entering the country on a tourist visa. For US, Canadian and Australian passport holders, a tourist visa must be obtained in advance (up to 90 days). For citizens of individual EU member states, requirements vary and should be confirmed before you travel. Requirements for UK passport holders could change after Brexit.

However, I would strongly recommend not traveling to Turkey for work without a minimum of a contract in hand. You do not want to run the risk of overstaying on your tourist visa – penalties can be arbitrary, and the Turkish state bureaucracy can be capricious. (I've seen minor infractions punished by a six month ban on re-entering the country, whilst a colleague who overstayed for a whole year was given a \$100 fine when he eventually left the country.)

Should you leave your contract early, you'll have to hand back your work permit, and the onus will then be on you to secure continued residency, by applying for an *ikamet* (residency permit). This brings the burden of proving you have sufficient financial means to support yourself and acquiring compulsory private health insurance for (non-employed) foreign residents.

Secondly, while I had a great time living and teaching in Turkey, as did pretty much every expat I ever met, the opportunities for meaningful career progression are limited. At university level you can gain some great experience using your own initiative, e.g. developing materials, presenting at one of Turkey's numerous conferences, etc. By all means, do it. Just don't expect that it'll lead to promotion.

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ected beginning in 1685

Rent will be your most significant outgoing – certainly in the larger metropolises of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Check out the residential section on [sahibinden.com](http://sahibinden.com) to get an idea of current rental prices (it has an English version, though many of the ads will still be in Turkish). For a one-bedroom flat in a safe and accessible part of Istanbul, budget for 2000 lira/month. Ask your prospective employer to put you in touch with current staff who could give you tips on renting. Commuting in Turkey's bigger cities quickly goes from exciting to exhausting, so choose your location carefully.

In Istanbul, fashionable expat enclaves like Cihangir will be well out of a university teacher's budget, as will popular areas like Kadikoy. There are many other interesting and more reasonably priced areas to live in (and the larger Turkish cities have abundant public transport options).

### How many hours will I teach?

With a private language school, you can choose your own hours. However, employers will only secure work permits for full-time employees.

At university level, the cushiest faculty jobs require as few as 12 hours a week, though marking workloads are high. This can go up to 20 hours, though you should be wary of any request to teach more than 20 hours. You should take it as a given that you may be asked to show flexibility and cover for colleagues in both faculty English and preparatory programmes.

Preparatory positions tend to have a higher teaching load – you might be teaching anything from 18 to 30 hours a week. These positions (usually) come with fewer marking duties, though tend to be very busy when it comes to examination and assessments.

When corresponding with a potential employer, be sure to ask about the English language department's structure, the

teaching commitments for the preparatory and faculty programmes, and the likelihood of progressing from 'prep' to faculty, if that's your goal.

In many universities, faculty positions are viewed as a promised land, away from the drudgery of prep teaching. This is somewhat simplistic – and unfair to some of the better preparatory programmes – however, having taught both in my time, there is no doubt that the faculty positions offer greater autonomy, variety, and scope for creativity in terms of teaching and materials development.

### Other opportunities

US and Canadian citizens will have an abundance of private teaching opportunities open to them. Rates of 100 lira/hour are not uncommon, and you should consider group classes to maximise your earning potential. TOEFL preparation is in high demand, though it is possible to find other related work (such as proofreading) as well.

If you fancy something different, you could offer your services to the numerous voiceover and acting agencies found in the major cities. They often require a standard English or American accent. The demand for such services is variable, so don't expect to get called often; however, rates are generally high.

And, if you have any other useful skills (teaching yoga, for instance) then that can also be a source of additional income. Just be warned that the wording of your contract will likely prohibit any outside work; but in practice I've never seen or heard of it being enforced.

### What should I look out for?

Two things chiefly. Firstly, the higher education council (YÖK) issue work permits for university teachers, and those permits include your residency. While this reduces bureaucracy on your side, it means that your permission to stay in the country is dependent upon your employer.



## Point of View

Lara Statham

# "We should start by putting ourselves first, not our students"

Students suffer when teachers are stressed out, argues *Lara Statham*

**W**e always hear that we should be putting our students first. And I believe that many of us do just that.

We really want our students to learn and we reflect on our lessons with the aim of getting our message across more clearly; we adapt tasks to the needs of our students and supplement with extra materials to increase student motivation.

But outside the classroom, English language teachers are increasingly overstretched. And this is a serious problem that impacts on lessons. Not only for the teachers who are stressed or burnt out, but also for the students who, as a direct consequence, are not getting as good a learning experience as they should.

In the private language school sector, English language teachers are often required to teach across a wide range of course types, with very little time left over for lesson planning, deep reflection on performance and continuous professional development.

Combine that with contracts and pay that, in the UK and Ireland at least, can vary wildly. Then add the trials of accomplishing everyday tasks such as shopping, household admin and medical appointments.

I would argue that the difficulties in juggling this load directly obstruct effective classroom dynamics and learning. Not least because students find themselves struggling with exactly the same pressures in their own work and home environments.

'Busyness' has become truly toxic, and few of us know how to cope with the merry-go-round of demands in our lives.

On top of this, students expect to learn more quickly and effectively than ever before. So, in today's world of fast-paced, technology-driven, and disruptive innovations, we need to change our approach to tackling these challenging issues. But not by introducing a new teaching methodology.

I believe we should start by putting ourselves first, not our students. Only then can we really provide a learning experience that matches students' actual needs and expectations.

However, rather than expect schools, institutions and organisations to make our lives easier, we must take responsibility for our own well-being by developing healthier habits to ensure we are fit to step into the

classroom, can apply effective classroom management techniques to deal with the pressures of classroom dynamics and respond constructively to our varying professional demands.

In short, we each must find ways to effectively manage ourselves before we can effectively manage others.

It's really a win-win. Spending time on our own needs first allows us to be healthier and happier, more comfortable with ourselves and feel a deeper sense of meaning and purpose.

By focusing on our own well-being, our professional lives can flourish because we are able to focus more clearly, make more conscious choices and decisions and fine-tune our teaching so that our students learn faster and better.

Ironically, it is only by consciously slowing ourselves down and being more mindful that we really become more effective teachers,

“Few of us know how to cope with the merry-go-round of demands in our lives.”



Improve your teaching by combating the stress of

having a much healthier, meaningful and productive impact on our students and their futures as L2 speakers.

Here's what we can do...

### Be mindful

Being aware of our own breathing, body and mind by following a mindfulness meditation practice is a great way to de-stress, re-focus and reflect with more intention. Apps such as Headspace and Calm can get you started on your meditation practice.

Start with 10 minutes before leaving for work and 10 minutes when you get home. You will find that a calm, happy and more intentional demeanour can also affect your students, who will respond to your deeper self-assuredness and calm responsiveness.

### Think less

Endless thinking about lesson plans and ruminating over different ways you could have done this and said that is simply exhausting. Put some strategies in place to prevent this energy drain.

First, start to notice when you are overthinking or running a commentary in your head. Step in with some slow, intentional mindfulness breathing to return to the present moment.

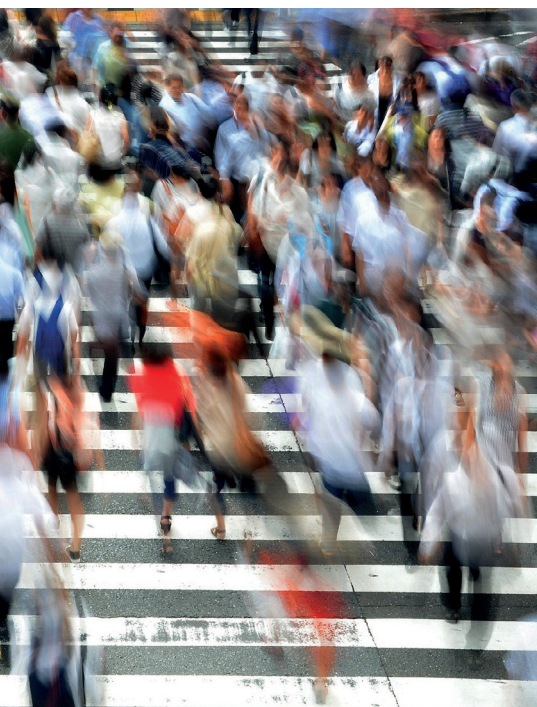
Then focus pragmatically on the things you need to get done in the here and now... and do them.

### Set boundaries

Give yourself permission to say 'no' once in a while. Your time and energy are precious. But boundaries can also be fluid, so when the going gets tough you can politely delegate, and when you've got more headspace, giving someone a bit of extra time will be appreciated. People will see this and respect your time more than if you always say 'yes'.



# OUT OF THE BOX



PIXABAY

f a busy life

## Treat everyone as individuals

Everyone has differences in their personality, beliefs and values. Learn to observe those differences carefully and respond to students individually.

To increase rapport, use a more direct approach with more dominant, gregarious students, and a softer approach for students who are more reflective and task-focused.

## Think before you speak

Stop and think before you react to a comment or behaviour that irritates you. When you teach, you are reaching out to people who have similar pressures to you. Everyone is busy and struggling to get more done in the same amount of time.

A non-judgemental comment is far better received than a rebuke or ill-judged criticism when you don't know what is going on for that student.

## Swap roles

I show my teenage students a TED Talk by teenager Adora Svitak, who talks about the idea that adults can learn a lot from kids.

I follow this up with giving my students the option of giving a 6-minute micro lesson (I call it '6-minute teacher') at the end of each class to teach us something about the English language. This is a great way to foster rapport and a productive learning environment.

*Lara Statham currently works at the Università di Torino in the Department of Foreign Languages, Literature and Culture. She is also a qualified Life Coach and is interested in using coaching techniques to improve teacher well-being and to promote faster and better learning in the classroom. Email: [larastatham@larastatham.com](mailto:larastatham@larastatham.com) website: [larastatham.com](http://larastatham.com)*

# Being a *Woman of Color in ELT* in Japan

Women of color in ELT need a safe, courageous, and supportive space,  
*Dr Parisa Mehran argues*

ELT in Japan is dominated by male, 'native speaker' (code for white) teachers, which makes job hunting for non-white, female, non-Japanese, 'non-native' speakers very challenging.

To tackle native speakerism, TEFL Equity recommends highlighting your strengths, and not to be put off by the 'native speakers only' job ads. However, I no longer find this empowering. We need to focus on eliminating racist conditions, not on fixing marginalised teachers.

One employer admitted to me: "I don't know about Iran. If X hadn't introduced you, I wouldn't have hired you."

Recently, 'non-native' speakers are being encouraged to apply for university positions in Japan, but these are often part of efforts to 'internationalise' Japan and are simply tokenistic.

In my first university job in Japan, I learned that as a WOC (Woman of Color, a political term), I needed to protect myself. I learned that I should not apply for a job without knowing about the workplace.

I admit that I was racially unaware when I came to Japan. If I could go back in time and give myself some advice, I would say to avoid predominantly white ELT organisations, to educate yourself on micro-aggressions and racial harassment and learn how to respond to them, and to find networks that are meant for you.

Along with other colleagues, I have been involved in setting up Women of

Color in ELT ([womenofcolorinelt.wordpress.com](http://womenofcolorinelt.wordpress.com)), a safe, courageous and supportive space for English language teachers who identify as WOC. It is a decolonial, intersectional feminist, anti-racist, anti-elitist, anti-precarity and anti-frontera movement by WOC for WOC. As a matter of fact, WOC are not 'included', nor are they 'tolerated'. They are welcomed, valued, respected, listened to, heard and supported by each other.

WOC in ELT aims to build collective power for equity and systemic change by providing a platform to give voice and visibility to WOC who are often pushed to the sidelines in the ELT world.

Our use of the term 'Women of Color' is an act of solidarity. It is meant to unite and welcome WOC from all shades of colour and all walks of life and experiences, and it is intended to focus on the experiences of women who have been historically and systematically marginalised and excluded.

If you are interested, please contact us at [womenofcolorinelt@gmail.com](mailto:womenofcolorinelt@gmail.com).

■ *Parisa Mehran was born and raised in Tehran, Iran, and holds an MA in TEFL from Alzahra University, and a PhD in CALL from Osaka University. She teaches English at several Japanese universities and a conversation school. Her passion for social justice has led her to engage in different ELT movements for change and is now a racial equity advocate in ELT.*

When I am afraid to speak  
is when I speak.  
that is when it is most important.  
— the freedom in fear.

Nayyirah Waheed, Instagram poet

## SOCIAL INTERACTION IN LANGUAGE TEACHER EDUCATION

Fiona Farr, Angela Farrell  
and Elaine Freeman  
Edinburgh University Press, 2019  
ISBN: 978-1-4744-1264-3

**T**his book uses empirical data, i.e. data based on actual observation, to demonstrate how novice and early career teachers pursuing MA and doctoral studies can be understood both as a community of themselves alone, and as apprentices to the world of English language teaching. Such understanding is gained by discourse analysis of a carefully created corpus.

However, as the findings that outline the processes through which student teachers are able to form their identity and become socialised into the community of English language teachers are not immediately clear without detailed reading, I initially felt the most likely beneficiary of such a study would be those researching this area.

Chapter One introduces the context in which the data in the corpus was gathered, ranging from institutional, classroom, on-line and academic discourse. Following this, the theoretical and pedagogical arguments for a data-led approach to teacher education are presented. As the latter deals with aspects such as socio-cultural theory and Vygotsky's much mentioned 'Zone of Proximal Development' (each explained in the necessary glossary at the start of the book), this section requires close reading; no more so than when the work of Donald Freeman, that giant in the education of second language teachers, is discussed.

Table 2.2 outlines the generations involved in studying the mind of the budding language teacher. It describes how research on trainee teachers has moved from considering them as people with individualistic minds – ideas that were initially explored using Behaviourist methods such as Audio-lingualism and Suggestopedia. The current generation of research appears to view trainee teachers as socially situated and involved in complex, chaotic systems. Yet what these systems are is not really made clear.

Chapters four and five provide the most direct value to the teacher-educator, as they describe and draw on the data to provide a snapshot of the ways teachers are socialised into the ELT community. This includes an exploration of what are described as a 'shared repertoire' of sub-categories of the metalanguage and topics constantly arising



SHUTTERSTOCK

# Becoming a language teacher

Wayne Trotman reviews a study of the  
socialisation of trainee-teachers

among novice teacher talk. Findings show how topics such as educational theory and practice were much more likely to be discussed online than in face-to-face tutorials. This was reflected, although to a lesser degree, in the sub-categories of linguistics and learning contexts. Helpfully, pointers for both trainers and supervisors are provided. For example, suggestions that in teaching practice feedback sessions the focus should perhaps be more on professional norms than individual student-teacher performance.

Chapter Six explores the complex field of language teacher

identity – '...a construct of how I see myself and how I think others see me' (page 103); and describes pronoun usage among novice and experienced student teachers. The data shown here indicates how the former tend to be more preoccupied with their own experiences and sharing them with others, with language such as, 'I was' / 'I think' / 'I had' at the top of the list.

The penultimate chapter focuses on the language of reflection where, along with

questioning and reasoning, the functions of narration, cognition, stance and evaluation were core features. It is also pointed out how narration, and questioning and reasoning, tend to re-occur as teachers seek to better understand themselves.

The closing chapter on conclusions and implications underlines key findings concerning metalanguage and topic, language teacher identity and reflective practice. For example, how the types of mediation and guidance that lecturers, teaching practice supervisors and peer tutors provide may need to take into account trainees from international backgrounds. It also considers the vital nature of creating opportunities for novice teachers to engage in collaborative dialogue with experienced colleagues.

Although largely theoretical in its early chapters, close reading of the remainder of this title provides much food for thought for those interacting with trainee teachers on a daily basis.



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

“Topics such as educational theory and practice were much more likely to be discussed online than in face-to-face tutorials.”



## BOOK OF THE MONTH

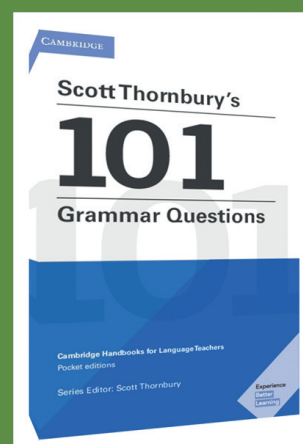
**SCOTT THORNBURY'S  
101 GRAMMAR  
QUESTIONS**

Cambridge Handbooks for  
Language Teachers  
Scott Thornbury  
Cambridge University Press  
ISBN: 9781292237206

How many conditionals are there? How many tenses? The questions in this pocket handbook are frequently asked by language teachers,

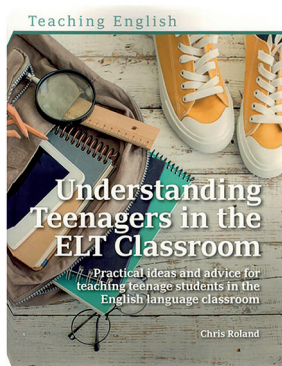
often on online discussion forums. Each answer is afforded one page, a self-imposed limitation which promotes both clarity and brevity and avoids overly complex explanations. This book aims to be a go-to reference for teachers facing a grammar puzzle: is it correct to say: "10 items or less"? What about: "Who or whom"? Section A answers general questions like:

"What is prescriptive grammar"? The other five sections cover areas such as nouns, articles, verbs and syntax. The handbook draws on both the author's extensive experience and authoritative sources, including Michael Swan. A short glossary defines terms like corpus, end-focus and backshift. Insightful, occasionally humorous and always worth reading.

reviews**in**brief.**UNDERSTANDING TEENAGERS IN THE ELT CLASSROOM**

Practical ideas and advice for teaching teenage students in the English language classroom  
Chris Roland  
Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd  
ISBN: 9781912755004

This book is not only full of ideas and advice for teaching teenagers, it also explores underlying principles, offering reflections on the deeper rationale for classroom procedures. The 24 chapters cover a wealth of areas including lesson planning, autonomy and differentiation. A fun chapter discusses how to use technology to increase student participation. Another chapter stresses the importance of reasoning with teenagers. The examples of 'discipline strategies' are hugely helpful. The book is packed with personal anecdotes and illuminating transcripts of real teacher-student exchanges. Often inspirational, it is written from the heart. Essential for those who teach teenagers. Highly recommended.

**BUSINESS PARTNER B1**

O'Keeffe, Lansford, Wright R.,  
Frendo, Wright L. Pearson  
ISBN: 9781292233543

This business English coursebook aims to help students communicate effectively in the workplace. The eight units cover areas like innovative design, projects and global markets. One strand in each unit is built around a video-based communication skills training programme. Students choose whether to watch scenario A or B first, and then compare how different approaches lead to different outcomes. This method could well generate fruitful discussions in areas like building rapport and conflict management. The eight case studies, called business workshops, are realistic; extracts from the *Financial Times* provide authentic content. Level B2 was reviewed here last year. Worth investigation.

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

Feature: *Developing expertise through experience* (British Council) edited by Alan Maley.

Book of the month: *ETpedia™ Management, 500 ideas for managing an English Language school* by Fiona Dunlop, Keith Harding and Robert McLarty

Reviews in brief: *Language Course Planning* (OUP) by Brian North, Mila Angelova, Elzbieta Jarosz, and Richard Rossner; *Perspectives Upper Intermediate Student's Book* (National Geographic Learning) by Hugh Dellar and Andrew Walkley (series authors include Daniel Barber, Amanda Jeffries and Lewis Lansford)

Reviews by Pete Sharma for Bournemouth English Book Centre: [www.bebc.co.uk](http://www.bebc.co.uk)



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# "Our house is always open"

IH London CEO Mark Rendell tells *Melanie Butler* why the future of ELT is innovation

**As CEO of International House London and in-coming chair of English UK, you are a big name in the industry. But what is your first memory of teaching?**

I literally stumbled into English language teaching (ELT) as a way of extending my stay in Poland in 1993 after my savings, from a temporary desk job at the Midlands Electricity Board, had run out.

After a short induction in the direct method, I was assigned a copy of the heavily prescriptive teachers' book and bundled into the classroom to lead a one-to-one lesson with an actual Polish prince, Prince Czartoryski. I had scripted all my questions but, unfortunately, I ran out of material half-way through. It was excruciatingly awkward.

One of my best – and worst – experiences was when I delivered my maiden workshop at IATEFL Poland. I chose a topic that excited me: connected speech.

To my horror, the pronunciation guru, Adrian Underhill, was sat right there in the front row beaming back with encouragement. He seemed to enjoy the many activities even though I had plagiarised most of them from his eminent publications.

Serendipitously, Adrian is now a trustee at IH London – I can only hope that he has no recollection of that fateful day.

**IH London is one of UK ELT's founding organisations, with a global strength in teacher training. What do you see as the greatest advantage of running a 'National Treasure', and what is the biggest challenge?**

The forerunner to the CELTA qualification was brought into existence by the founder of IH, John Haycraft. (It was taken over by the University of Cambridge.) John was a great visionary who saw the need to professionalise what was then something of a cottage industry.

IH continues to be synonymous with the highest standards in the industry and a CELTA, DELTA or other IH teacher qualification carries great kudos.

But our biggest challenge is to continue to keep teacher training fit-for-purpose. We recently incorporated flipped learning into our programmes, allowing more content to be covered outside of class. This frees up trainers to support their trainees in their teaching practice.

**IH London only recently moved into teaching Young Learners. Now it's one of only three organisations in the top UK rankings for both adults and young learners. What's your secret?**

I am delighted. It is a real achievement to be able to demonstrate a high level of consistency and quality with very different age groups.

The young-learner sector is the fastest growing in the UK and there is so much scope for innovation. Parents seek new advantages for their children and while language remains the core ingredient we also focus on 21st century skills: confidence building, critical thinking, creativity...

One of my favourite experiences in the last twelve months was a demonstration session run with Lego Education. They're a partner in our new IH Space Challenge programme (offering robotics and coding for juniors). I bellowed an almighty cheer when my team landed the lunar rover onto the shuttle pickup point!

We also have a real commitment to safeguarding and child protection. The UK is a global leader in this area, due to the rigorousness of the Accreditation UK regulatory regime run by the British Council. Finally, we care about the planet and carbon offset all of our young-learner travel, in line with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

“We are playing our part by sharing our expertise”



Mark Rendell

**You are about to take over the chair of English UK. What do you think is the most important change UK EFL needs to make and how can IH London help?**

As the national association, we will continue to represent the industry at this time of change and uncertainty. We will stand shoulder-to-shoulder with educators from other sectors to make sure that students and teachers can continue to come to the UK and enjoy the world-class education, heritage and liberal lifestyle here.

A good command of English is a pre-requisite for global participation, so learners are more goal-driven and have higher expectations than ever before. UK programmes need to continue to innovate and adapt by offering clearer learning outcomes,

communicative skills development and a safe, fulfilling and cosmopolitan learning experience.

At IH London we are playing our part by sharing our expertise. We hosted the 'Future of Training Conference' last November, which was a wonderful forum for trainers to come together to explore the latest ideas. We are an International House and our house is always open.

*Mark Rendell is the CEO of International House London and Vice-Chair of English UK. He has been involved in ELT for 26 years, during which time he has travelled the world. Mark's claim to fame is that he was a supporting actor in the unacclaimed film, The Bromley Boys.*



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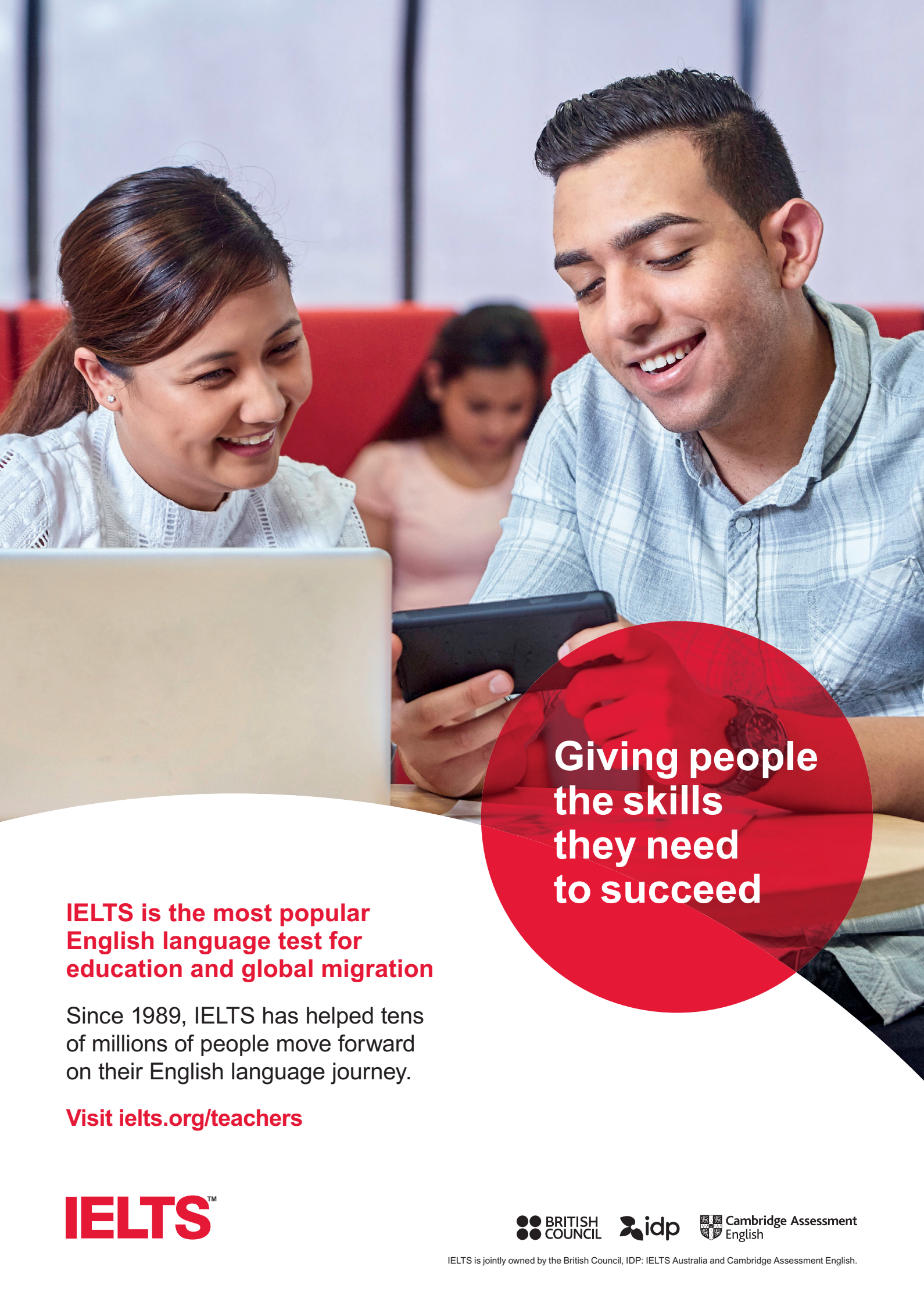
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