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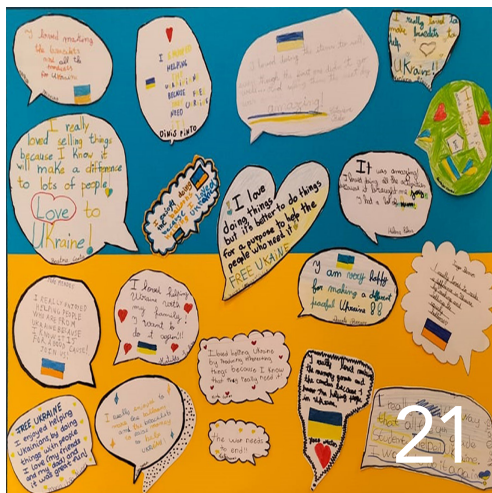
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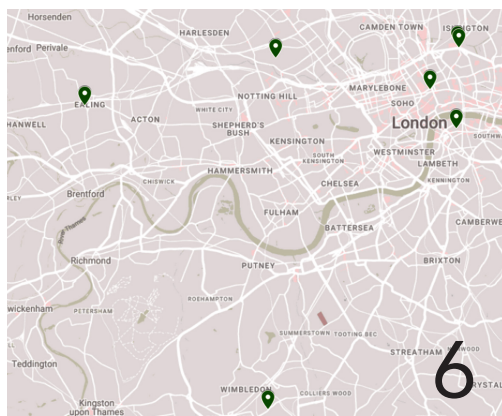
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A background image showing several hands placing puzzle pieces together against a bright, sunlit sky. The puzzle pieces are dark brown, and the sun is shining through the gaps, creating a warm, golden glow.

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Time to think outside the box

Before the new term starts, how can we create engaging lessons for our students?

Summer is finally here and we hope you're taking a well-earned breather!

Right now may even be a fantastic time to flex those creative muscles, and we have some ideas to bring some fun, outside-the-box learning to your classroom in the next term.

In this issue, the focus is all on using creative practices to enhance learning and give our students integral skills. We know that keeping students engaged can sometimes be a struggle, but what better way to learn when they don't even realise they're learning at all?

“This time it's all about you!”

As always, our research editor Gill Ragsdale has the facts behind the theory; on page 8 she takes us through the SCAMPER method of essay writing. How could this technique aid your students who might struggle with long-form writing? Then, on page 9, how does technology aid learning through music?

But it's not just all about students; on page 24, Fabio Cerpelloni speaks to ELTon nominee, Luke Thompson about Luke's English Podcast. Luke explains his creative process, and even name drops some big stars!

As always, starting on page 15 is our Special Supplement, and this time it's all about you! We asked our audience to submit the best ways they use creativity in teaching, and we received some amazing responses. Take a look and gain some inspiration!

Plus: TEFL pay conditions (page 6), US elections (page 10) and Japan's international future (page 12)—all this and more in your *EL Gazette*!

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TEFL workers take steps to map unfair pay conditions

London's TEFL workers can now easily compare pay and conditions at schools across the capital. Tom Liebewitz from the TEFL Union reports.

Last May, the Union held our first meeting to begin mapping pay and conditions for TEFL workers across London. We had an excellent turnout, with inspiring speeches from Hugh Dellar and teachers at the British Council in Taiwan who are preparing to strike.

Everyone who came filled out our survey and here are some key things we've learnt so far:

- Pay varies from £12.50 to £29.36 per teaching hour across schools.
- The median wage is £18.75.
- There isn't a single school among those we've surveyed so far that pays for planning or admin time, so the average real wages range from £6.50 to £23, with an average of £16.50/hr.
- Some schools pay for meetings and CPD, but many don't.
- When asked what the biggest issues were at their school, the most common responses were low pay and lack of paid planning and admin, summed up by one teacher as 'we should be paid for all the hours we work, not just contact time'.

We need as many responses from as many different schools as we



can get to make this data the best it can be, so if you weren't at the event, and work in a London school, then go ahead and fill out our online survey [here](#).

If you were at the event but you have some Union-curious workmates who couldn't be there, then go ahead and fill it out again with them as a way to get you all thinking and talking about the issues at your work and across

the industry as a whole; especially with the more open-ended questions, it might be interesting to see what issues they raise and to think about how the Union could support you all.

“We have a slogan: ‘Help the work along’”

On the map

Our digital map of London ELT pay and conditions is now live and can be accessed [here](#).

At the moment, the map can be a bit temperamental. This is especially true if you try to access it from your phone. If you're having trouble, we suggest copy and pasting it into your web browser.

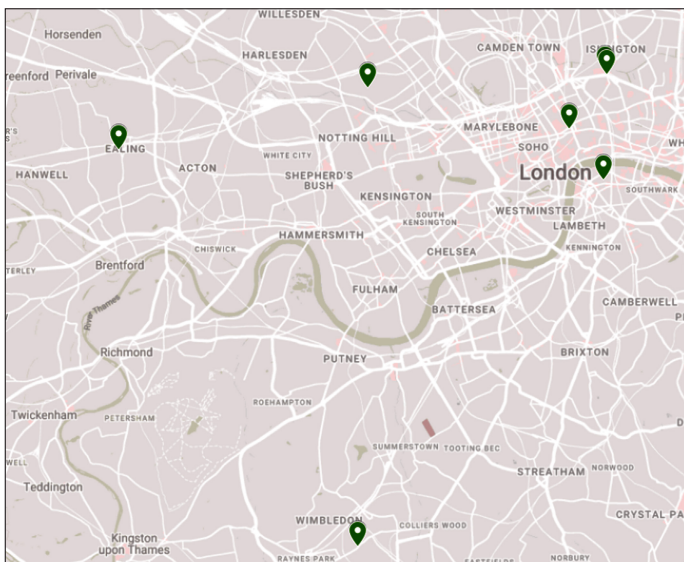
In the IWW, we have a slogan: ‘Help the work along’. So, if you don't see your school on this map, remember to help the work along by [completing our survey](#).

Even if you are not based in London, there are still ways to help yourself and your fellow teachers. During our meeting back in May, we discussed a list of

next steps. If you would like to get involved, read on to find out how:

Recent pay rises
May 2022: from £12-£13/hr to £16.10; Nov 2023 to £17.00/hr
Paid prep?
no
Paid admin?
no
Paid CPD?
n/a
Paid meetings?
no
Marking?
only for stage tests when necessary
Expected to come in early?
yes, 10 mins unpaid
Types of contracts
zero hours (claimed by management but no actual written contracts)
Sick days?
none
Pension?
yes, minimum
Amount of annual leave
Statutory minimum but no records
Other issues
unlawful deduction of pay in April 2024, no access to holiday pay records, no written contract, hours cut without consultation

Some of the information provided for a London English school



Source: Google Maps

Training

The IWW offers two main training sessions:

- Workplace organising, focusing on talking to your workmates about workplace issues and raising those issues with management.
- Union representative training, which is more legalistic and allows you to accompany workmates and fellow Union members in formal meetings with management.

Delegate meetings

We also hope to set up delegate meetings where active Union members from schools around London can meet on a regular basis (most likely quarterly). This will be an opportunity to get Union support with any issues at your school and coordinate action across the city.

Help the work along!

And, as always, there are lots of other ways that you can be a part of the Union. These include:

- Helping out with social media;

- Helping with leafleting;
- Articles for the website, such as 'My pay v. my expenses';
- Submitting articles for the 'Labour English' section of our website;
- Helping plan future social events;
- Coming to a Tuesday working group to generally help out with Union tasks.

“The reality is that TEFL is an industry and the problems of low pay and bad conditions cut across it”

Our ultimate aim is to raise standards across the industry so that TEFL can finally be seen as **real teaching**.

The TEFL industry takes its workers for granted at best and treats them appallingly at worst, but the industry simply wouldn't exist without its teachers, whether we are newly qualified or have been teaching for years. We are the most important part of the industry and we deserve pay and contracts that reflect this.

Language schools love to claim that each school is a family. But the reality is that TEFL is an industry and the problems of low pay and bad conditions cut across it. Activists in the TEFL Workers' Union have worked together to create the ELT pay conditions map so that we can have an honest picture of the industry—and so that we can all join together to demand better.

I encourage all TEFL workers, whether Union members or not, to complete the survey and contribute to the map.

Disclaimer: All the information in the map has been contributed by

teachers and we cannot verify its accuracy. Similarly, the question of the 'real wage' will be dependent on how many hours of preparation and marking each teacher puts in. However, we all put in unpaid time and we all know that the wages advertised by schools never take into account all the hard work we put into the job.

If you choose to use this information to demand pay that reflects the work you actually do, then join the growing raft of teachers who are already fighting for this by reaching out to us at tefl@iww.org.uk for the wealth of support and experience the Union can offer.

Tom Liebewitz is the chair of the TEFL Workers' Union Steering Committee (IWW). He lives in London and has been teaching English for 15 years. He wants to do so for another 15 years, so that's why he's fighting to make TEFL teaching a viable career.

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Mapping SCAMPERing

Guidance can improve brainstorming techniques for essay writing.

Brainstorming techniques improve creativity in writing tasks, especially with additional structured guidance, according to a study by Hyun-Ju Kim, Stewart Gray and Christopher Lange at Dankook and Hankuk Universities, South Korea.

Writing is generally found to be the most difficult of the four English language skills and this can be compounded for the many students who already find writing challenging in their first language. Brainstorming techniques such as mind mapping aim to elicit initial ideas on a writing topic to bridge the gap from the blank page to topic paragraphs.

This study compared two brainstorming techniques; the better-known technique of mind mapping and the more structured technique known as SCAMPER, developed by Robert Erle in the late 1990s. The aim was not only to see how well either of these techniques could support essay writing, but also which technique best supported students who generally struggle with creative writing.

Mind mapping begins with a central topic or idea in the middle of the page then branches out to related key words, subtopics, themes or ideas as they occur. These additional components then each have their own branches to related terms. The student can then pick out clusters of terms and connections as writing prompts.

SCAMPER is a much more structured technique for stimulating creative thinking. When presented with an object, situation or problem, the student applies these seven prompts: substitute, combine, adapt, modify, put to another use, eliminate, and reverse.

The 39 Korean undergraduates recruited for this study were given a weekly writing task. In week one they were asked to write a compare and contrast style essay about smartphones using the mind mapping technique to plan

their essays. For week two, they wrote a similar style essay on laptops but using the SCAMPER technique.

In week three, and four, the task was to write argumentative essays. The topic for week three was global warming using the mind mapping technique. In week four the topic was student cheating, using the SCAMPER technique.

Guidance for both techniques began with the same first two steps:

Step one: write the product/topic name in the circle on the worksheet.

Step two: brainstorm three characteristics of the product/topic and write those in circles extending from the centre.

For mind mapping, there was just one third step: brainstorm ideas for improving the three characteristics and write those ideas in extending circles.

But for SCAMPER, guidance gave the following Steps three to nine:

Step three: *Substitute* a function of one characteristic with something better.

Step four: *Combine* something with one characteristic to make it better.

Step five: *Adapt* one characteristic to make it better.

Step six: *Modify* one characteristic.

Step seven: describe how one characteristic could be *Put to another use*.

Step eight: explain what can be *Eliminated* from one characteristic to make it better.

Step nine: move one aspect of one characteristic to a different place (*Reverse*).

Before the study began, each student took the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT), developed by the psychologist Paul Torrance in the 1960s. These tests have two main components that assess creative thinking through verbal and figural tasks.



After each essay task, students were given a questionnaire to assess how they perceived their own work in terms of uniqueness, flexibility, effectiveness and the overall, holistic impression of their essay's creative content.

In addition to this self-assessment, the six highest-scoring and the six lowest-scoring students on the TTCT were selected for objective assessment by teachers not part of the study. Two essays from each of these students, one using mind mapping and one using SCAMPER, were assessed.

Overall, both techniques helped both lower and higher TTCT scoring students write effective, creative essays, with essays written by students using the SCAMPER technique tending to be rated higher, although too few essays were objectively assessed to meaningfully test significance.

The biggest difference between the techniques was found when analysing the students' self-report questionnaires. After using the SCAMPER technique, students judged their own work to be

significantly more effective and creative.

This self-perception did not differ between higher and lower TTCT scoring students. It may be that one of the major benefits of SCAMPER lies in promoting motivation and confidence.

Overall, brainstorming techniques are helpful in supporting students to formulate and organise ideas for their essays, and providing more structured guidance, in this case in the form of SCAMPER, improves confidence and may improve performance.

It seems likely that some students will prefer and do better with a more structured approach to brainstorming than others and that this would also depend on essay topic and style. Offering a choice of approaches to students could be an effective option.

REFERENCE

■ Kim, H.-J., Gray, S. and Lange, C. (2024) *Instructional Guidance for Promoting Creativity in English as a Foreign Language Writing Classrooms: A Korean Case Study*. *RELC Journal* 55(1): 79-95.

Singing from the same song book

Technology can enhance the use of music in language learning.

Combining the use of music and technology during English language learning improves students' academic achievement, creative thinking and self-esteem, as found in a study by Meng Chen, Mohammad Mohammadi and Siros Izadpanah at Harbin Normal University, China and Islamic Asad University, Iran.

Both music and technology are frequently used in the EFL classroom and this particular study sought to assess their use in combination, a technique called technology-enhanced language learning through music (TELLTM).

In Zanjan, Iran, 360 elementary-level male learners were recruited from eight language learning institutions and divided into an experimental group that would experience the TELLTM intervention, and a control group.

The age range of learners was broad, from seven to 27 years, which is typical of language schools

in this area. All participants were assessed to be at a similar elementary level using the Oxford Quick Placement TEST at the start of the study.

The TELLTM intervention comprised one 60-minute session per week over 10 weeks. In these sessions the class would typically watch a song on the class projector before learning and singing the song accompanied by movements, games and playing musical instruments.

Well-known songs typical of English nursery and primary schools were used, such as 'Wheels on the bus', 'Wind the bobbin up' and 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes'. These songs have strong, simple rhythms and associated movements.

Having obtained the appropriate consent, short videos of the students' performances were shared with school managers, as well as the students themselves and their families.

At the beginning and end of the 10-week study period, a set of three questionnaires were administered (in Persian) to assess students' academic achievement, self-esteem and creative thinking. Analyses of these scores showed that the music sessions significantly increased all three attributes.

The effect on academic achievement is likely to occur via several routes. The use of songs improves vocabulary, pronunciation, timing, fluency and intonation. This learning process is also active, rather than passive, improving motivation and engagement.

Shared music is known to promote self-esteem and the shared video performances and feedback may amplify this effect.

Adjusting for differences in initial scores, TELLTM sessions accounted for 12% of the variation in creative thinking scores in the experimental group; a strong effect for such a simple intervention of just 10 weekly sessions.



In this study, the teachers did receive some initial training, but neither the music nor the technology was particularly challenging in these sessions, suggesting that major benefits are easily within reach of any phone-owning EFL teacher, whether they consider themselves musically talented or not.

REFERENCE

■ Chen, M., Mohammadi, M. and Izadpanah, S. (2024) *Language learning through music on the academic achievement, creative thinking, and self-esteem of the English as a foreign language (EFL) learners*, *Acta Psychologica* 247: 104318

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Trump and the rise of student cynicism?

Will a Republican or Democrat victory affect the decision of students to study in the US?



As of 21 July, President Biden has dropped out of the presidential race. Find our reflections and caveats to the report on that at the end of the piece.

The United States is in the throes of a contentious election season, and US academic leaders are grappling with two major unknowns:

- How will the upcoming US presidential election impact student enrolment?
- What changes in US policies will influence international student recruitment?

Intead, in partnership with global study choice platform **Studyportals**, launched an international student-focused survey to Studyportals account holders between 11 March and 19 April 2024. The result: 2492 respondents from 106 countries.

Our resulting 2024 **'Know Your Neighborhood'** summary report presents and distils our findings as part of Intead's continuing series on global student mobility trends. Here, we uncover and examine the pivotal factors guiding international students' decisions to study abroad, exploring whether political leadership is a significantly influential factor.

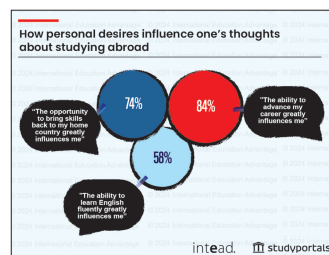
Who responded, and what they care about

Our respondents reflect the cohort of most engaged international education-seekers that we've observed in recent years.

Geographically, the largest contingent hail from Africa and Asia (largely India). In navigating study abroad options on social media, they predominantly rely on Facebook and YouTube, and their academic aspirations lean heavily towards graduate and

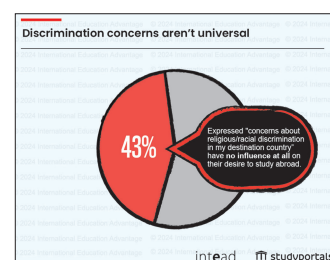
post-graduate programs (38% and 34%, respectively), particularly in STEM fields.

Learning English fluently (58%), bringing home new skills (74%), and advancing their career (84%) all rank among the most important drivers for international students seeking to study abroad.



Amidst these significant motivational factors, socio-politically, 43% of respondents indicated that concerns about religious/racial discrimination, personal safety, and political

instability had *no influence at all* on their decision to study abroad.



This reaction was even more aggressive in South America and Central America, where 70% and 63% respectively stated that concerns about personal safety in their destination countries had no impact on their study abroad plans.

Particularly for these regions, we believe that this finding suggests a familiarity with navigating complex socio-political environments, potentially desensitizing these respondents

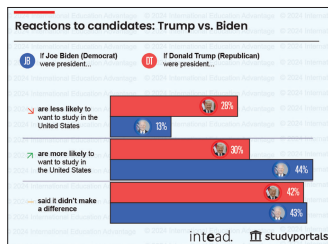
to what others may perceive as personal safety risks.

That still leaves 57% of respondents who acknowledge the influence of safety and acceptance concerns; however, the nearly half of respondents who expressed no concern at all challenge prevailing narratives about how much race-based and other violence in a study destination may influence student decision-making.

We believe these findings highlight cultural differences around perceptions of safety and discrimination as well as the resolve of many students to pursue their academic goals despite potential challenges related to discrimination, safety, and political instability.

Battle at the ballot: shifting reactions to Trump and Biden

Our findings on the respondents' reactions to Mr Trump are tamer in 2024 than they were in 2016.



Among the 30% of respondents in our 2024 data who supported a Trump presidency, responses highlight expectations of economic growth, job creation, and business-friendly policies.

These economic factors are seen as potentially beneficial to one's career prospects and access to the US job market. Respondents seem to anticipate that the Trump administration's emphasis on economic nationalism and reduced regulatory burdens will foster a favourable business environment.

Aside from the specific preferences for either Mr Trump or Mr Biden, we found a high percentage of 2024 respondents indicating that the political leadership in the United States 'didn't make a difference'—about 42% across the board—on their desire to study in the US.

This finding indicates a broader disconnect that these international students may be feeling; namely, the lived impact of any government leader's policies on international students studying in the US feels less significant, and thus, may have

diminished influence on their choice to study in the US or not.

Some education leaders may find this student thinking naive. US presidents have a significant amount of power to limit international student access to the US institutions.

Deep differences from eight years ago and region to region

The contrast in preferences between studying while the country is led by Mr Biden or Mr Trump was most pronounced between North America and Australasia.

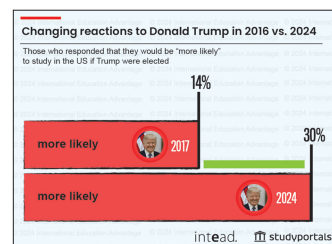
In response to a potential Biden presidency, 9% of North American respondents indicated they would be less likely to study in the US, while 46% expressed they would be more likely.

Conversely, under a Trump presidency, 55% of North American respondents said they would be less likely to study in the US, with only 23% indicating they would be more likely.

In Australasia, the preferences were nearly reversed. Under Trump, only 11% indicated they would be less likely to study in the US, while a substantial 56% stated they would be more likely.

The perception of Trump's policies and rhetoric, often seen as racially charged, has elicited varied responses between predominantly white and non-white countries. In Australasia, where the population is approximately 75% white and conservative leadership is valued, such as Tony Abbott and Scott Morrison in Australia, there appears to be a greater appeal for Trump's conservative ethos, compared to Biden's more reformist approach among international education-seekers.

Looking again at our worldwide pool, we compare these sentiments in our current survey to our 2016/17 findings conducted before and shortly after Mr. Trump's inauguration.



In 2016/17, 54% of global respondents said they were less likely to consider US studies

under Trump. In Mexico, a stratospheric but unsurprising 80% expressed their disapproval, citing hesitance due to concerns over political hostility and visa policy changes under the Trump administration.

That said, both the 2017 and 2024 survey results reveal a significant portion of respondents expressing that political leadership in the destination country has *no influence* on their study abroad plans: around one-third of respondents in both periods (32% and 42%, respectively) expressed indifference. Does that 10% increase indicate a rise in student cynicism? Or is it naivete?

What this means for 2024/25 marketing and recruiting efforts

From surprising indifference among many respondents towards political leadership's impact on their study abroad decisions and access, to stark regional contrasts in preferences between Biden and Trump, our 2024 survey reveals a spectrum of intriguing international perspectives on the future of education and global mobility.

When it comes to international education marketing in these interesting times, two recommendations are clear:

- If the Democratic candidate wins: emphasise alumni success stories with OPT and CPT to highlight career advantages for prospective students.
- If Trump wins: institutions with robust international partnerships can leverage them to deliver US degrees to students unable to travel to, or work in, the US due to restrictions that may be put in place. Based on Trump's first term, the potential for stricter student mobility limitations is a realistic concern.

Stop Press! As of 21 July, President Biden has dropped out of the presidential race, endorsing his vice president, Kamala Harris, to run for office.

This provides somewhat of a counterexample to the research insights that we offer throughout the piece.

While we explore throughout the summary report that international students considering the US are growing increasingly cynical about the effect that the

presidency has on their experience in the US, the country's push for Biden to leave the presidential race suggests a far more 'hands-on' story within the US's own domestic landscape.

These recent political developments leave room for new research into how the shift might impact the way international students, and other international groups, view the US. It raises awareness about how responsive the US public truly is to its leadership beyond simple partisan preferences.

What interests us is how this dynamism among US citizens affects the way prospective international students view the importance of the US's political leader for themselves.

All told, our report remains an in-depth exploration into the evolving views of international students towards former President Trump, comparing current sentiments with those from our 2016 research on the US political scene.

As we explore whether current students have become more complacent or cynical about potential policy changes under Trump that could significantly impact their educational opportunities, the recent dramatic shift in the political landscape of the US seems to even more deeply underscore the need to understand how US political dynamics are really perceived by students—internationally and domestically.



Ben Waxman is CEO of Intead. His three decades of entrepreneurial experience in

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Justine Hudock is Content Strategy Lead at Intead. Her training as a humor writer

and prestige strategist across a swath of Fortune 100 companies paved the way for a rich record of written work and creative direction in the international education space.

J-MIRAI

The grand concept of Japanese international education.

Japan is currently facing significant challenges, particularly in enhancing its human resources to adapt to rapid technological advancements.

Following the economic bubble burst, Japan endured years of deflation, often referred to as the 'lost twenty years'. During this time, the causes of long-term stagnation were vigorously debated, but recently, many have attributed this stagnation to insufficient investment in human resources.

To address these issues, the Japanese government launched the Council for the Creation of Future Education (CCFE) in December 2021, chaired by Prime Minister Kishida. By May 2022, CCFE had formulated its initial recommendations, and in its fourth meeting, Prime Minister Kishida underscored the importance of increasing investment to develop and secure highly skilled human resources; not just domestically, but globally.

The Council's first recommendations were comprehensive and well-received in Japanese society. They emphasised the need to foster talent with universal knowledge and skills that transcend disciplinary boundaries, and to encourage more female students to pursue STEM fields. Additionally, the Council recommended increasing the number of Master's and Doctoral graduates in society.

However, many stakeholders in Japanese international education found these recommendations inadequate; they lacked specific government policy directions related to international education.

Over the past two decades, the Japanese government has actively promoted the internationalisation of higher education, exemplified by initiatives like the 'Global 30' project, launched in 2009, with the aim of attracting 300,000 international students by 2020. Numerous universities received government support for internationalisation projects, resulting in the number of international students reaching 310,000 by 2019.

Further internationalisation to Japanese education was the focus of the second recommendations from the CCFE, finalised in September 2023, and dubbed J-MIRAI (Japan-Mobility and Internationalisation: Re-engaging and Acceleration Initiative for Future Generations).

J-MIRAI holds particular significance for international education stakeholders in Japan, outlining ambitious targets for international human resource development:

By 2033, Japan aims to increase inbound international students to 400,000 and outbound students to 500,000. They also aim to promote internationalisation in education through the expansion of English-taught courses and dual degree programs with partner universities abroad.

However, achieving these targets is being met with challenges, such as the depreciation of the Japanese Yen, alongside high travel costs, which dampen the motivation of young people to study abroad. Additionally, the governmental budget is limited, meaning Japanese educational institutions are required to work with their international partners in order to enhance the international experience through collaborative programmes, and save costs through reciprocal exchange programs.

Japanese universities also need to work with private institutions; the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), through the Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO), has endeavoured to enhance scholarship systems for studying abroad. Initiatives like the 'Tobitate! Ryuugaku Japan program' have been launched, gathering private donations totalling ¥652 million (~£3 million) in 2022 to support study abroad scholarships.

Universities could also work with various industries such as inbound tourism. Inbound tourism is becoming increasingly popular in Japan, with many local authorities trying to attract more international guests. However, they often lack the proper human resources to do so.



Through collaboration with the domestic or international tourism industry, universities can educate young people to effectively promote their local areas and develop tourism there. International students can also work in tourism and contribute to creating attractive programs for international tourists.

The future of Japanese society rests on its youth—those involved in international education in Japan are dedicated to enabling both Japanese and international youth to gain enriching global experiences. We welcome ideas and suggestions from our international partners.



Professor Mori
was Vice President
for International
Relations and
Director General of
the Organisation

for Promotion of International Relations (OPIR) of Kyoto University from 2009 to 2016. From 2016 to 2018, he was Professor at Danang University, Vietnam and from 2018 to 2021 he taught at Kyoto Tachibana University, Japan. He is a marathon runner and also a painter.

An island of growth

How Malta's recovery outperformed all other destinations in 2023.

Malta's post-pandemic recovery is a remarkable success story in the ELT sector.

Global recovery was slower than anticipated in 2023; the ELT sector was expected to recover 90% of its pre-pandemic student week volume, but our projections indicate it only reached 83%.

Malta's statistics show a completely different picture. In 2021, as travel restrictions eased and institutions adapted to new safety protocols, Malta emerged as a popular destination in the early stages of post-pandemic recovery. Fuelled by an influx of students from the LATAM (Latin American) region, student weeks rose by 80% between 2021 and 2022.

By the end of 2022, recovery had already reached 104%. In 2023, English language centres in Malta recorded 15% more student weeks than in 2019, making the island nation the fastest-recovering ELT destination globally.

Malta's convenient visa policies are one of the key factors contributing to its popularity as an educational hub. These policies, combined with Malta's relative affordability compared to other destinations and its proximity to mainland Europe, have made the country an increasingly attractive option for students.

In terms of headcount, EU nationals still dominate the market, representing 74% of students. However, Malta is gaining popularity among non-EU students as well; as non-EU



students tend to study abroad for longer periods, they delivered well over half (59%) of all student weeks spent in 2023. Non-EU students spent an average of 7.9 weeks in Malta in 2023, compared to 1.9 weeks for EU students.

Colombia emerged as the leading market for student weeks in 2023, as Colombian students spent an average of 14.4 weeks in Malta. Another market in the top 15 with an impressive average length of stay was Chile at 13.3 weeks.

According to the data from Malta's National Statistical Office, the top 10 source markets recovered, on average, 118% of their 2019 student week volume in 2023. The only markets in the top 10 that have not fully recovered are Germany, South

Korea, and Spain, reaching 96%, 91%, and 83% respectively. The fastest-growing markets in terms of student weeks in 2023 were Italy, Brazil, and Turkey.

After the rapid growth between 2021 and 2022, overall student weeks increased by 11% between 2022 and 2023. As a sign that demand is stabilising, student weeks declined slightly in a number of markets, including Colombia (–15%), South Korea (–34%) and Japan (–16%).

However, Malta's appeal as a study destination continues to grow, driven by its increasingly diverse student profile and the demand for quality and affordable English language education.

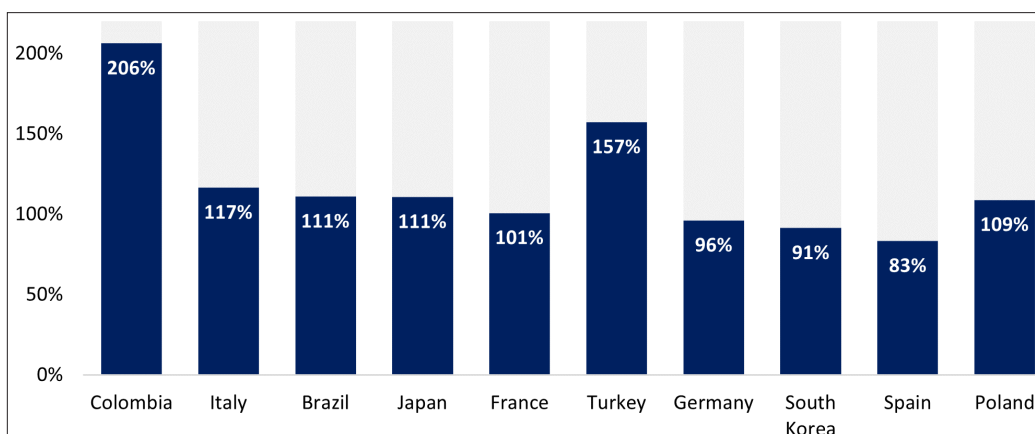
As a traditionally strong junior student destination, welcoming

39,000 under-18s in 2023 (51% of the total), Malta will also capitalise on the projected growth of the global junior market in the coming years.

Ongoing uncertainty and policy changes in other destinations, such as Canada and Australia, may also benefit the ELT sector in Malta. Restrictive policies affecting international students can damage a country's reputation, prompting students to consider alternative destinations: in this context, Malta could become an even more attractive option.

However, it will be crucial to ensure that institutions have the capacity to accommodate a larger influx of students. Over the past years, many study destinations have faced challenges due to accommodation shortages, and Malta will need to address this issue to ensure it keeps thriving as a study destination.

Recovery in top 10 source markets (2023 compared to 2019, measured in student weeks)



Source: National Statistical Office Malta, 2024

editorial@elgazette.com



Sarah Verkinova is an International Education Senior Consultant at BONARD,

a market intelligence and strategic advisory firm. She actively monitors global source market performance in over 90 countries, identifies growth opportunities, and develops market entry strategies to support individual education providers.

The temptation to 'teach to the test'

Caroline Browne of Password discusses the unintended consequences of test preparation material.

A recent [EL Gazette article](#) about research into the tendency of learners to attend crammer courses aimed at getting the grade they need on a language proficiency test, rather than actually improving their language skills, prompted me to reflect on the disjoint between the intended purpose of such tests and the students' view of them.

When it comes to English language testing for higher education, clearly institutions are looking for proof that incoming international students will be able to understand and use English as the medium of study. One would assume that students would also feel the same way—after all, sitting in lectures and seminars without being able to understand and take part in the learning experience would seem, at the very least, a real waste of a lot of money.

However, in some parts of the world, this assumption would seem to be incorrect.

Back in the early days of running Brunel's International Office, I attended an education exhibition in Taipei. In explaining to prospective students why the University needed to assess English language levels I heard over and over again how this should be each student's own choice and that they could 'learn as they go along' once they arrive on campus.

As my time at Brunel continued, I came to understand that this was a position held by many prospective students from very diverse cultural backgrounds. Clearly, this is something preparation course providers have to take into account despite, no doubt, wanting to provide language tuition which will qualitatively improve students' proficiency in English.

Part of the reason for setting up a language testing company was frustration with the consequences of students perceiving the language requirement as merely a hurdle to jump. This disconnect between students' English language test scores and their actual English language levels is one which continues to cause many institutions considerable pain, and whilst they often respond positively, spending both time and money running in-session support classes, this language learning should really occur before enrolling.

What's more, for some students the pressure of course work and exams means that fitting in English classes—which is often impossible to make compulsory for all sorts of reasons—is extremely difficult. The Taiwanese students were wrong.

In 2008, having spent a year setting up Password English Language Testing and working with CRELLA on the development



of our first test, we launched Password Knowledge, which was designed for admission to long pre-sessional and pathway programmes.

Keenly aware of the unintended negative influence an assessment can have on the teaching and learning that takes place in preparation for it, we wanted to design a 'walk-up-and-take' test with no need for, or advantage to, 'teaching to the test'.

Sample questions and a practice test were provided so that candidates could familiarise themselves with the test structure and question format, but no other material was published, nor did we endorse any course providers. Several years later, we took the same approach when launching Password Skills; though as a more complex assessment, we did offer more information about its structure.

We have sustained this position, even in the face of huge demand from students for 'exam training materials' following the development and successful roll out of the secure at-home version of the Password Skills test: Password Skills Plus. We do of course understand the stress students face when tackling a high-stakes exam of this nature.

That said, we continue to believe that test preparation focused on accessing

and preparing predicted answers does service to no one, least of all the students who subsequently struggle to complete their courses when arriving at university. So, whilst we now offer a 10-hour online preparation course, as well as a full practice test, this is to introduce students to the exam format and ensure they know how to manage their time. Our intention, as always, is to help alleviate pre-exam nerves so that test takers can perform at their optimum on the day.

Our advice to students: focus on learning the language you will need for your field of studies and to enjoy all that life at university has to offer; not on passing a particular language exam. Work with teachers who want to improve your all-round proficiency in English, with a full understanding of the demands of academic study.

And remember, if your English has genuinely reached a level appropriate for undergraduate or postgraduate study, you will do well in whichever test you take!

Caroline Browne, Founder and CEO of Password English Language Testing and former Director of Brunel International.

Creativity in practice

Spotlight on creativity
in *your* classrooms!



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The **creative** classroom: we hear from you!

Our showcase of your best creative activities in the classroom!

Is it possible to effectively combine creativity with language learning?

Creative activities are a tried and true aspect of teaching; our students use creativity through group work, writing, presentations and so on, it allows them to use the skills and language they have learned in practice and in their own unique way.

Back in June, we sent a call out for submissions, asking you to show us the ways you use creativity to teach English. We wanted to see everything from small class activities to larger programmes and projects.

We were overwhelmed by the response and received some amazing work! The passion and hard work exemplified in the submissions we reviewed showed how driven you are as educators to find new

and interesting ways to engage your students in learning.

After a lot of consideration—and much arguing!—we narrowed everything down to our top four favourites that we thought were the best and most unique examples of involving students in enriching and thought-provoking learning.

“I especially loved my ESL teacher in my American elementary school who was very patient and sweet”

So, in this issue’s Special Supplement, you’ll find some inspiring examples of ways to make learning English interesting, with ages ranging from toddlers to teenagers—though almost all can be adapted to any age group!

We hear from school directors, teachers, and even charity volunteers on how they approach difficult issues, cross cultural divides and allow creative freedom in their classrooms.

In addition to the submitted work, we have also had the privilege to chat with a New York-based writer and illustrator on how being bilingual has influenced her creative work. See what they have to say on page 20.

We hope you find inspiration in these pages and, as always, happy reading!



Students and teachers have used creative practice for good causes

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How one class used performing arts to address real world issues

18 **WE NEED TO COMMUNICATE**
Teaching communication skills through group projects in digital media

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We chat with an artist and writer about how being bilingual has influenced her work

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Teachers and students across three countries use creativity to support those in need

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Using 'loose parts play' with very young learners



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Learning by example

Using creativity and language to engage students in critical thinking.

Name: Job Martin Villafuerte
Role: English teacher
Country: Philippines
Age group: 15



Job's students design their casting call sheet involving their favourite actors

As part of my teacher-designed instructional material for Grade 10, my students participated in a literature-based lesson.

'When We Are Answerable for Our Actions' is focused on the theme of accountability among public servants and is centered on an excerpt from the first Filipino novel written in the English language in 1921: 'A Child of Sorrow' by Zoilo M. Galang.



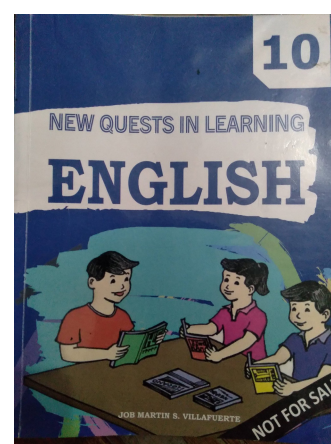
Students' election campaign posters displayed proudly!

Throughout the lesson, the students experienced working on some thought-provoking and fun activities which included:

Creating a casting call sheet: students were asked to list Filipino actors who could best portray the characters in a film adaptation of the novel.

Dramatization of an election campaign: students were asked to re-enact the election campaign of the governor in the story. They made campaign posters, songs, and speeches!

Through their fantastic work in these creative activities, we aimed to develop critical and communicative abilities among the students.

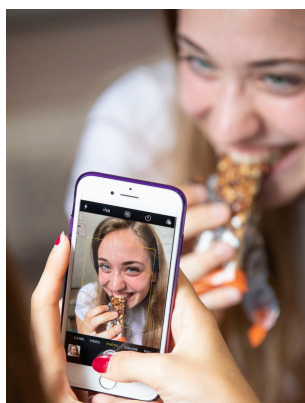


Job's personal teaching materials and the inspiration for the classwork

Hand-in-hand

Helping students with communication in order to achieve greatness.

Name: Val Hennessy
Role: Director
Country: UK
Age group: 13+



Digital media creation is a big part of engaging Val's students in their learning

Many years ago, we decided that we needed to encourage our students to use English in a creative manner.

We recognised that when students are caught up in activities which require imagination and creativity, they stop worrying about language issues; their need to communicate to achieve the end goal overrides their fear of making mistakes.

So what did we do? Well, we introduced Creative Classes as part of all Junior English courses and as an option for adult groups. These classes—Drama, Photography, Video-making, Journalism/Blogging and DJing—mean our students have to work together in English to accomplish the tasks.



The results have been extraordinary. Students use all the language they learn in their dedicated language classes and, with minimal input from

teachers, they throw themselves into creating, lose all inhibition in speaking and just get on with it!

The resulting photos and short films are astounding; the confidence engendered through drama allows even the shyest and lowest level students to shine; the articles produced by the budding bloggers are funny, insightful and a far cry from dry essays. The DJing is fun as it happens and, when used during parties and BBQs, it adds an extra dimension.



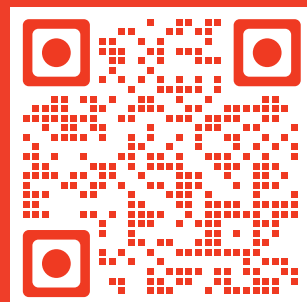
Working together in English to create beautiful photos!



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A chat with... Sophie Furman

Writer and illustrator, **Sophie Furman**, talks about her experience as a creative, using art in tandem with ESL.

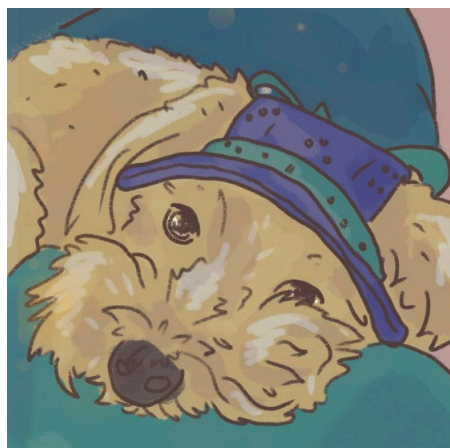
Q: Please introduce yourself and tell us a little bit more about you!

Hi there, my name is Sophie (she/they) and I am a freelance illustrator for authors and companies who lives (and draws) in Brooklyn, New York. I love all things inclusive, geeky, magical!

I am also an author for picture books, and in the past year have hired my very own, very fluffy studio assistant—my pup Cookie. I have the two cutest nephews who love to read as much as I do, and a very techy hubby who loves to bookstore crawl with me!

Q: You've lived in the US since elementary school. Where did you emigrate from?

I am originally from St. Petersburg, Russia. I have been drawing all my life, and learned drawing alongside Russian, and then, of course, English once I moved to the United States.



Sophie's studio assistant, Cookie

Q: What was your experience of learning English from a young age?

I was very lucky to have the kindest teachers who encouraged me to learn. I especially loved my ESL teacher in my American elementary school, who was very patient and sweet. This luck created in me a love of learning, which helped me to switch careers to illustration later in life.

Not being able to afford art school, I am mostly self-taught, so had to work extra hard to maintain the discipline and passion it takes to learn something new!

Q: As previously mentioned, you currently work as an illustrator. Would you say your experiences of emigrating at a young age, or being multilingual, influences your work in any way?

For sure, I would say that being multilingual helps you understand different languages like the language of both art and writing much easier. In university, I studied Comparative



Literature and Art, and later, couldn't help but write picture books as well as illustrate them.



A picture book seems to me to be a perfect balance between illustration and writing. The story is written there, but there are lots of images too, and those image and words work together to create a fun and educational book for kids.

The pictures often convey things beyond the text; for example, you're very likely to see a pet—like a pup or a ladybug—who follows the main character around in the pages, that is never mentioned in the text, but adds so much character and humour in the storytelling.

For those with tougher childhoods, picture books teach a language of healing, of opening windows and doors, and learning how to live a better and better life. I only hope that as an

illustrator and writer of them, I can give back and do the same, and help kids everywhere!

Q: Is there anything you're currently working on that you can share with us?

Yes! Right now I am working on illustrating a cute picture book about a cat for an author. I just finished a special wombat illustration for a client's newsletter, and I am always tutoring in illustration!

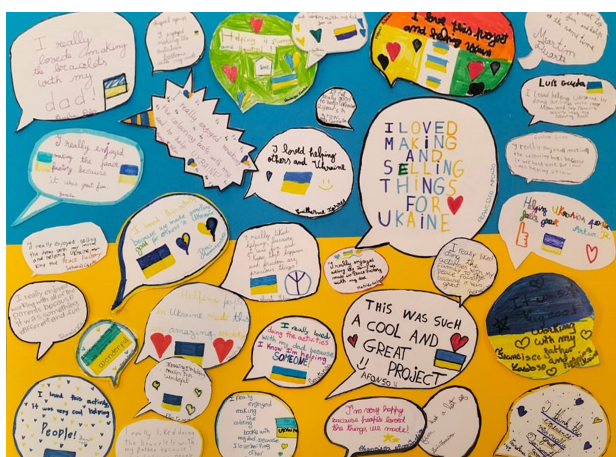
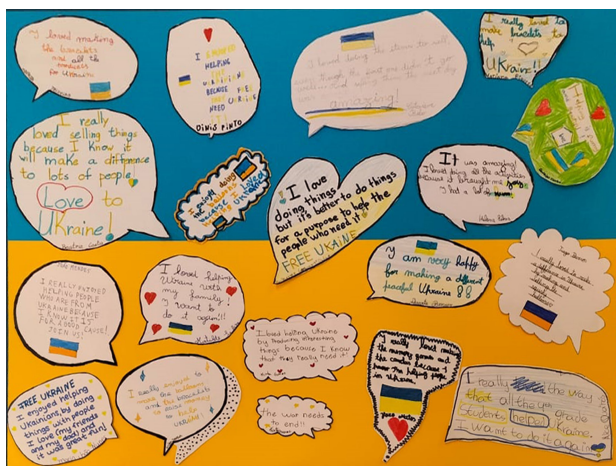


Sophie Furman is a Brooklyn-based illustrator for children's books, companies and publications who strives to champion marginalised people in their work. Take a look at [their portfolio here](#), or email: hello@sophiefurmanart.com.

Pen-pals

Students in Portugal and Spain cross a cultural divide using their language skills to support their fellow students in Ukraine, all while raising money for a good cause!

Name: Adriana Araújo, Ana Ferreira, Carla Pinto, Isabel Vieira, Patrícia Granja (Efanor Team) and Anne Robinson
Role: Senior teachers (Efanor Team), Volunteer teacher for Smart Osvita and Founder of Bracelets and Peace (Anne)
Countries: Portugal (Efanor Team), Spain and Ukraine (Anne)
Age group: 9-10 years old (Portugal), 9-14 (Ukraine)



Students' messages of love and support for Ukraine

At Colégio Efanor, the 4th-grade students participated in an inspiring activity called 'Peace Factory'. Collaborating with their parents, the students crafted bracelets in the colours of the Ukrainian flag, memory games, and squishy balloons, all sold to support the NGO 'Bracelets and Peace'.

This fundraiser was followed by the students writing positive messages in speech bubbles, which were shared with Ukrainian students who joined Anne's online class for Smart Osvita. In return, the Ukrainian students sent thank-you speech bubbles back!

Motivated by this exchange, the Portuguese students created an e-book detailing their daily routines, information about Portuguese Freedom Day, and aspects of the Portuguese language. The project culminated in a virtual gathering where both groups of students shared their thoughts and feelings.

editorial@elgazette.com

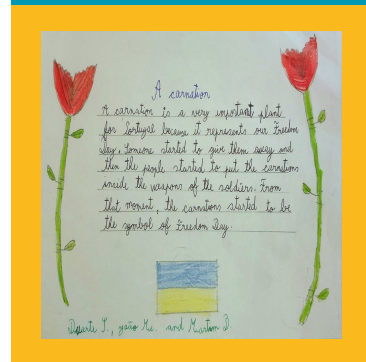
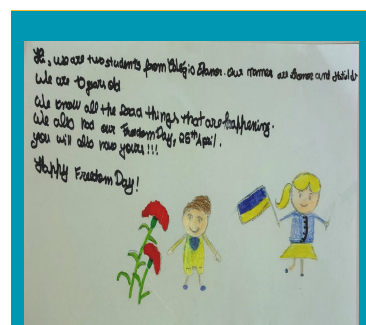


'A culmination of so many actions and gatherings'—Anne

This organically growing project aimed to empower students on both sides: some felt they could make a tangible difference in the world, while others felt seen and appreciated despite their hardships. Working in pairs and groups with their classmates and families, the students enthusiastically listened to, read, wrote, and spoke in English throughout the project.



Colégio Efanor's e-book featuring students' written work.



'Like Mary Poppins on Steroids'

A variation on Loose Parts play for very young learners.

Name: Ana Demitroff
Role: Director
Country: Spain
Age group: 1 to 6

Our language centre, like many, has been working with a younger and younger cohort. For this reason, we have spent years developing an ELT-friendly alternative to Loose Parts play in the Very Young Learner classroom.

We swoop down with bags of bits based on the themes found in pre-primary programs: colours, sizes, shapes or specific topics, like transport. The materials are mostly throwaways and unwanted domestic items, but we also supplement with shop-bought or second-hand materials.

The learners explore and play, while the teacher moves around, interacting with them through memorable micro-routines in English. The outcome is rich interaction; engaging, learner-led sessions and an implementation of the whole child approach as pupils develop more than just their English skills. It's a lifesaver, but it can lead to hoarding syndrome!



Sunshine in the classroom!



Storytelling with bits and bobs



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English on the airwaves

Learning English on the go? **Fabio Cerpelloni** chats with ELTon nominee, **Luke Thompson** all about his English-learning podcast.



Q: You started the Luke's English Podcast in 2009. What inspired you to do that?

A few things: first, I always wanted to have my own radio show, but I was an English teacher, so I felt I had missed the boat on going into radio. Then I realized I could just make podcasts with my laptop in my living room.

I'd been an English teacher for about nine years at that point, so I thought, 'Why not make a kind of radio show for learners of English?' I saw it as a chance for me to get an audience, have fun, be creative, make content, and do that thing I'd always wanted to do.

Second, I wanted to build a body of work long term, which is something that as an English teacher you don't always get to do. I had built my materials bank, but every couple of weeks I would get a new group of students, which made me feel I was a hamster in a wheel. I saw the podcast as an interesting long-term project.

And third, I viewed it as an opportunity to help people around the world learn English.

Q: Who, and what, is your podcast for?

It's for adult learners of English at intermediate and above.

Some episodes are easier to follow than others. Some are really challenging, even for advanced learners, but others are simpler. The early episodes are probably at a lower level, but the level went up as time went on. Today most of my listeners are at an upper-intermediate or advanced level. It's hard to tell for sure.

The aim is to help learners of English improve their English by doing more listening for longer periods long term. It's to help people get more English listening into their lives.

Q: How is your podcast different from others?

I always remember who I'm talking to and scaffold the listening experience for my audience. This involves explaining certain things as I go or laying out what I'm saying more clearly than I would do if I were talking to native speakers of English.

I always try to include educational elements too, whether it's about building vocabulary by explaining it, demonstrating it, or giving learning

advice. Also, I know that I'm talking to people who are probably from a different place and have a different perspective on things. If I were talking to people in the anglophone world, I would probably talk in a completely different way.

But this doesn't mean I speak more slowly or simplify my language a lot. It's more a case of explaining things more, giving more context, and perhaps repeating things more than I would if I were talking to native English speakers.

Q: How do you prepare your episodes?

Some solo episodes require little or no preparation at all; if I have guests, the amount of preparation depends on the guest and the nature of the conversation.

I've interviewed some big names in the ELT industry such as David Crystal, Nik Peachey and Santiago Ruiz de Velasco. I've also interviewed Mark Steel and Jerry Seinfeld, two famous comedians. Some interviews definitely require more preparation, but others can be very spontaneous.

Other episodes can be meticulously prepared and I'll even write a full script sometimes. I also do 'Learn English through short stories'

episodes; I read out the story and break it into chunks for video versions with Google Slides. I present almost one sentence per slide to make it easier for listeners to follow and repeat after me. Then I retell the story in my own words to make sure they've understood it.

At the end, I go through the story again explaining individual words and phrases, and teaching vocabulary.

There are also episodes where I force myself to improvise a story as a way of reviewing vocabulary. For example, if I've dealt with phrasal verbs, I'll just improvise a story trying to use all the phrasal verbs. This requires some creativity because you end up having to concoct a stupid story that you don't know where it's going. The people listening know that you're making it up, and they're wondering how the next phrasal verb is going to be included. It's a useful noticing exercise.

I have 'premium' episodes too where I go through vocabulary from a previous podcast episode.

Q: What role does creativity play in all this? English language teaching involves a lot of creativity because it's a problem solving activity. You need to come up with ideas to fix whatever the problem is.

Let's say you're teaching grammar. Classic example: the present perfect. For a lot of people, there's no equivalent of present perfect in their language, so they don't know where

this semantic space exists in their heads. That's a problem to solve. You can explain the rules, but that doesn't really help. In fact, you could make it worse because you might be confusing people and making them feel stressed about it.

I found one way of teaching present perfect simple and continuous on the podcast. I get my listeners to imagine a village where everyone is an idiot. There's one village idiot who's walking around going up to people and asking them questions. A typical dialogue might go like this:

'Hey, what are you doing?'
'I'm just throwing stones into this lake.'
'Really cool. How long have you been doing that?'
'I don't know. 7 hours.'
'How many stones have you thrown in?'
'I haven't been counting, to be honest. I don't know. About 300?'

This works well on the podcast because I can just keep going with this stupid situation. And the repetition of these idiots arguing with each other about nothing ends up being quite funny.

Q: How did you get nominated for an ELTon award in the category of Digital Innovation?

I applied in 2016 and found it easier than I expected to sell the podcast as an example of digital innovation. The panel judges

were quite positive about it and I got the nomination.

I didn't win, unfortunately, but it was great to be recognized by the industry to some extent. I went to the award ceremony, which was great, and I brushed shoulders with some big English teaching names, like Michael Swan, Nik Peachey, and my Delta tutor, Madeleine du Vivier.



Luke Thompson is an English teacher and stand-up comedian who has been making episodes of 'Luke's English Podcast' for over 15 years. The show is one of the top-rated learning-English podcasts, and has won several awards, as well as a British Council ELTon award nomination. Luke's aim is to help English learners to get more listening practice into their lives.



Fabio Cerpelloni is an English language teacher, freelance writer, author, and podcaster from Italy. Learning English became such a great passion for him that he ended up teaching it professionally in New Zealand, Spain, Ireland, and Italy, his native country. You can find out more about Fabio and his work on his website: www.fabiocerpelloni.com

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Activities for Mediation: Building bridges in the ELT classroom

By Riccardo Chiappini and Ethan Mansur
DELTA Publishing, 2021

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will at the very beginning admit that when I first received the emailed offer to review this title I thought it contained a typo and should have read 'meditation'.

When I queried this with a colleague who is much less of an ELT dinosaur than me, she informed me that like 'artificial intelligence', 'mediation' was what she called a 'buzzword'; then she asked if I knew what that meant. I'm glad to say I did, but before I opened my copy I still thought I was going to be reading about settling legal disputes and so on.

Things improved somewhat when I worked through the lengthy, rather technical introduction. I noted that while COVID was occupying most busy minds a couple of years ago, the Council of Europe had once again been at work. By constantly whittling away at its well-known framework of reference (CEFR) it had established mediation as a key concept in language use, and by extension, language learning.

A closer reading of the introduction reveals that mediation has in fact been around in less nuanced Council of Europe statements since 2001 but only slowly caught the eye of a small number of ELT practitioners. This eventually led to the CEFR establishing a new set of 'can do' statements in 2014.

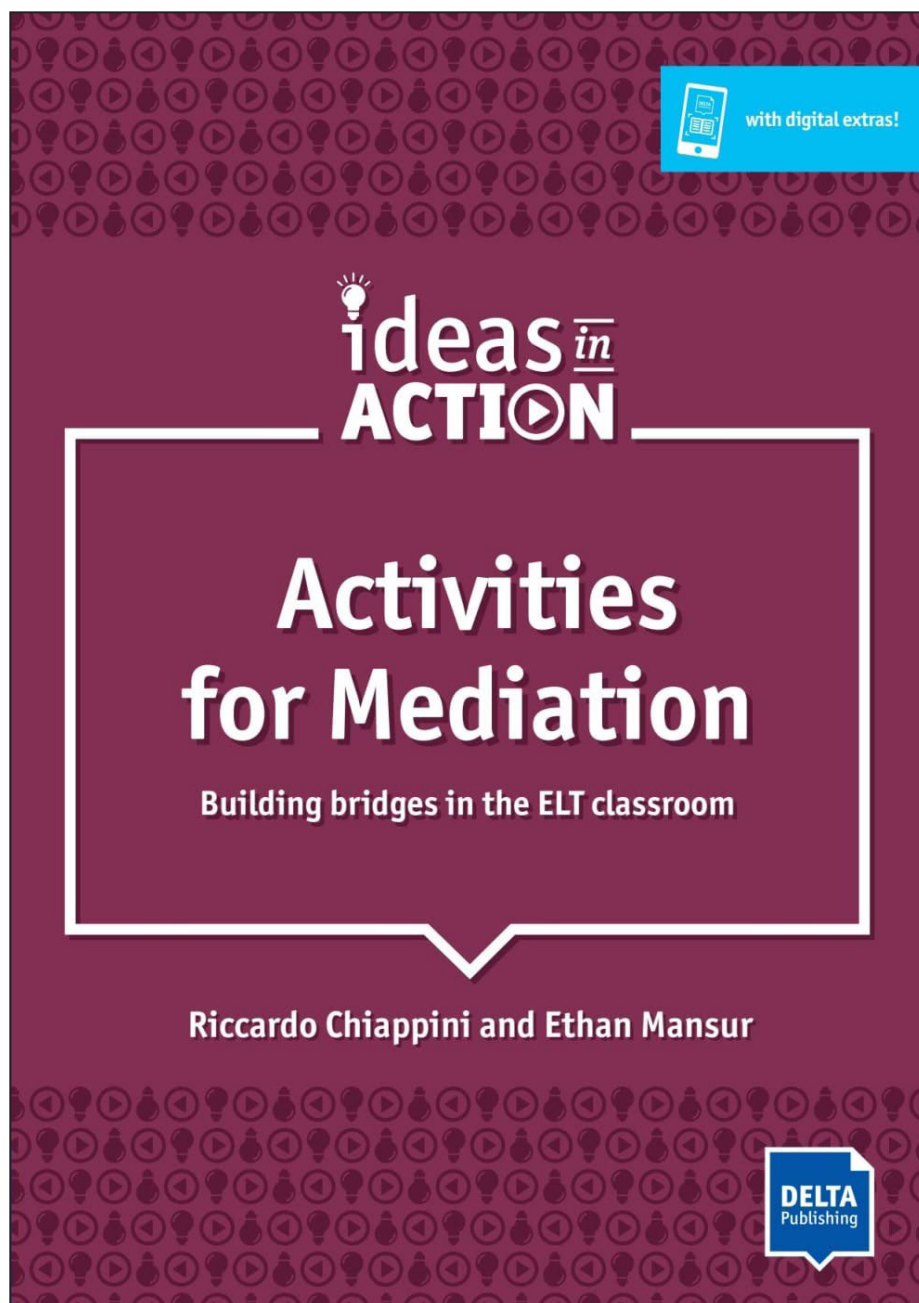
The resource book under review here covers the three categories of mediation: based on texts, concepts and communication. Most tasks within are for learners at level B1 and above, although several are for those at A1 and A2.

Mediating a text involves, among other things, explaining data, translating and note-taking. Common classroom tasks to develop such skills include information gap and jigsaw activities. In contrast, mediating concepts requires collaboration and group work in which the focus is on the process rather than the product.

Tasks enabling the development of this skill include producing a poster or writing a report. Mediating communication is related more to the layman's understanding of the term as it covers, among other things, acting as an intermediary in informal situations with friends and colleagues. Page 12 reveals a chart put together by the Council of Europe in 2020 that outlines the above in great detail.

The authors point out how barriers to communication, such as linguistic, cultural, semantic or technical may be broken down by simply providing more information, and that mediation can be intra-linguistic or cross-linguistic.

Thankfully, the introduction ends with these erudite thoughts and moves swiftly onto strategies to enable mediation development; these are listed on page 16 and then explained individually in detail. Among them are the higher-level skills of paraphrasing and translating,



By far the longest section in this title deals with mediating texts. This firstly provides tasks working with data and notes, such as 'Gaming Galore' (page 52) in which learners have to select data from an infographic about playing video games and include these in an essay for a magazine.

Within this section, I personally felt those concerning translation were of most interest. 'Celebrations around the World' (page 91) requires language learners to provide a written account in English of a short talk they gave earlier in their L1.

Mediating concepts includes an interesting group work task which involves summarising and explaining. In 'First Day at Work' (page 140), participants roleplay a work situation where a manager briefs new employees on what is required of them on day one in a new job.

An eye-catching task among those dealing with mediating communication includes 'Host Family Meeting' (page 169)

concerning facilitating cultural space by summarising socio-cultural elements relating to food and meal times with a host family. Sounds fun!

At first I had my doubts about the relevance and value of this title. As I worked through it, however, I gradually realised the importance of developing skills in all three categories of mediation, and am sure this term will increasingly permeate many a language teaching syllabus. Please take a look at this title and let me know your thoughts.



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