

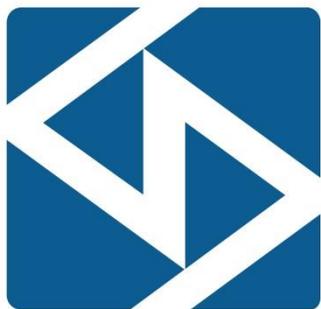
JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2018

# ELT NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NO. 01 · JAN-FEB 2018 · VOLUME 12

ISSN 1820-9831 (ONLINE)

English Language Teachers' Association, 28 Nemanjina, 11000 Belgrade, Serbia  
[www.elta.org.rs](http://www.elta.org.rs), [office@elta.org.rs](mailto:office@elta.org.rs), +381 63 210 460



# ELTA Newsletter

**ISSN 1820-9831 (Online)**

ELTA – English Language Teachers' Association  
Nemanjina 28, 11000 Belgrade  
Serbia + 381 (0) 63 210 460 + 381 11 36 11 644 ext. 110  
[elta.kancelarija@gmail.com](mailto:elta.kancelarija@gmail.com)  
Olja Milošević, ELTA President  
[serbia.eltapresident@gmail.com](mailto:serbia.eltapresident@gmail.com)

## **Editor-in-Chief:**

Maja Jerković, Vocational Medical School, Zrenjanin, Serbia

## **Co-editors:**

Branka Dečković, Vocational Medical School, Kragujevac, Serbia  
Milena Tanasijević, English Language Lecturer, Belgrade Metropolitan University, Serbia  
Zorica Đukić, The School of Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, Belgrade, Serbia  
Bojana Nikić Vujić, MA, The School of Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, Belgrade, Serbia  
Vicky Papageorgiou, ESL Instructor, Metropolitan College, Thessaloniki, Greece

## **Proofreaders:**

Milena Tanasijević, English Language Lecturer, Belgrade Metropolitan University, Serbia  
Zorica Đukić, The School of Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, Belgrade, Serbia

## **Editorial:**

Vicky Papageorgiou, ESL Instructor, Metropolitan College, Thessaloniki, Greece

## **Cover designer:**

Marija Panić, ELTA - English Language Teachers' Association, Belgrade, Serbia

## **Website:**

<http://elta.org.rs/elta-newsletter/>

**Send your submissions electronically to:**

[newsletter.elta@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.elta@gmail.com)

The authors bear full responsibility for the content of their articles.

ELTA Newsletter is published bi-monthly.

## Editorial January – February 2018

Welcome to the first newsletter of the new year! It's been freezing cold in many European regions lately but teachers never stop working, studying, reading, caring for their professional development and keeping themselves busy. So sit back and relax with a nice cup of tea in your hands and let us provide the reading for you.

This time, in our **Feature Article** **Anže Perne** from Slovenia tries to answer the question 'Why blogging' underlining that 'blogging is engaging, current, and it makes students to produce language'.

**Zorica Đukić**, our co-editor, gives an account of the ECML (European Centre for Modern Languages) Project "Digital Literacy for the Teaching and Learning of Languages" in the **ELT Flash Section**. As she explains, this is a project whose aim is to provide teacher training in digital literacy across Europe. The workshop took place at the ECML headquarters in Graz, Austria, last October. **Svetlana Gavrilović**, describes how three second-graders of Užice Grammar School, Marija Cvijović, Nevena Baković, and Aleksandra Virić, thought of, prepared, organized and hosted a quiz to mark Harry Potter's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in their school.

In the **Borrowed From Section**, this time we are hosting **Katherine Bilsborough** talking about emerging principles for ELT materials writers, a post that was originally written for the MaWSIG (Materials Writing SIG) blog.

Also in the **Students' Corner**, **Luka Jovičić**, a student of **Mirjana Savić Obradović** writes about 'A place' and **Aleksandra Kiković**, a student of **Svetlana Gavrilović's** sent us her poem, 'I've Made up My Mind'.

Finally, **Branka Dečković** with her permanent column of the '**Upcoming events**' shares with us all the important dates for the ELT events all over Europe. Keep your calendars and your pencils ready!

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of the ELTA family who have been reading us, encouraging us to continue, sending us your work or your students' work. Without you we couldn't have made it! Do not forget you can send us your submissions any time you want at [newsletter.elta@gmail.com](mailto:newsletter.elta@gmail.com)

More importantly, we would like to thank our two editors, **Bojana Nikić Vujić** and **Branka Dečković** for being our devoted editors for so many years. We are happy to say, they will continue to help us with our publications until new editors are chosen. Branka will still be the one to bring you ELT news, and Bojana will continue her activities as our ELTA Journal site administrator. We wish them success in their new ventures.

From the **Editorial Team**

# Why Blogging?

**Anže Perne, Gimnazija Vič, Ljubljana, Slovenia**

**Keywords:** blogs in ELT/ESL, writing in ELT/ESL, ICT in education, computer mediated communication in education

Blogging, e-mails, Web sites, and other types of CMC (Computer Mediated Communication), enable students to have more control over the content, making autonomous learning more attainable (Littlemore and Oakey 2004: 110). ICT and its uses are almost limitless, but caution has to be taken as not all activities may be equally appropriate. That is why English teachers should be aware that ICT is not just operating hardware and software. The new media provide new ways of connecting people, ideas, images, and information, thereby offering new possibilities for learning. I think it is great that the mentality is changing and that more and more teachers use ICT. What seemed impossible a decade or two ago is now becoming a reality.

I have been attending seminars and conferences for about eight years, listening to various speakers talk about ICT. Facebook, Twitter, and chat rooms, for example, seem to be penetrating into our classrooms more than ever. In the vast array of ICT uses, blogs or blogging was perhaps most emphasised. We were always given various practical examples how to use blogging. Although the practical is what we as teachers need, I still missed somewhat more “theoretical” information, telling us what we can achieve by blogging, why use blogs, how the students can benefit from blogging, etc. That is why I decided to find the information myself.

Blogs and other features of ICT are essential if we want to cope with the so-called generation Z. Caution should be taken as in my experience our students are more likely to be “tech-comfy” and not “tech-savvy”. But when it comes to blogs in the ELT classroom, this does not really matter. Most of the students would be able to use blogs without detailed instruction. As something that we can use for language acquisition, our students need to be intrigued by it, not having to be completely “savvy” with it.

According to Graham, blogging is becoming increasingly popular as a language learning tool. There are several reasons for using blogs:

**1. To provide extra reading practice for students.**

This reading can be produced by the teacher, other students in the same class, or, in the case of comments posted to a blog, by people from all over the world.

**2. As online student learner journals that can be read by their peers.**

The value of using learner journals has been well documented. Usually they are private channels between teacher and student. Using a blog as a learner journal can increase the audience.

**3. To guide students to online resources appropriate for their level.**

The Internet has a bewildering array of resources that are potentially useful for the students. The problem is finding and directing the learners to them. For this reason, we can use our tutor blog as a portal for your learners.

**4. To increase the sense of community in a class.**

A class blog can help foster a feeling of community between the members of a class, especially if learners are sharing information about themselves and their interests, and are responding to what other students are writing.

**5. To encourage shy students to participate.**

There is evidence to suggest that students who are quiet in class can find their voice when given the opportunity to express themselves in a blog.

**6. To stimulate out-of-class discussion.**

A blog can be an ideal space for pre-class or post-class discussion. And what students write about in the blog can also be used to promote discussion in class.

**7. To encourage a process-writing approach.**

Because students are writing for publication, they are usually more concerned about getting things right, and usually understand the value of rewriting more than if the only audience for their written work is the teacher.

**8. As an online portfolio of student written work.**

There is much to be gained from students keeping a portfolio of their work. One example is the ease at which learners can return to previous written work and evaluate the progress they have made during a course. The students can use this in their European Language Portfolios.

**9. To help build a closer relationship between students in large classes.**

Sometimes students in large classes can spend all year studying with the same people without getting to know them well. A blog is another tool that can help bring students together.

(Graham 2005)

Graham's list can be extremely useful for teachers who want to use blogs in their classroom. For example, blogging can be done as a project activity: students are given an introduction to blogging at the beginning of the school year and are then asked to write their blogs throughout the year. This can involve written blogs or photo blogs (perhaps on Instagram), getting the students to comment as an activity. Every month or every two months there can be a lesson dedicated to blogging, where the students and their teacher check the students' experience, problems,



knowledge they acquired, etc. This type of activity also requires a lot of work on the teacher's part. For blogging to work as a language learning activity, the teacher should read the students' blogs regularly. This would enable them to monitor the students' progress and to see their language errors, for example. It would not be necessary to reflect on this in the classroom. The teacher could simply reply to the students' posts on their blogs. While this can really be an intriguing activity/project for the students, it would require a lot of time input for the teacher, especially if they decide to start such an activity in more than one class.

Blogging is engaging, current, and it makes students to produce language. Despite all the advantages of blogging, there are still some people that advocate against using the new technologies, claiming that eventually we will stop talking to our students. They should start blogging themselves and perhaps they will learn that blogs need not decrease student talking time in classrooms. In fact, they can stimulate discussions and let the students use English outside the classroom.

## References

- **Graham, S.** Blogging for ELT. *Teaching English (British Council, BBC)* [On-line]. Available: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/blogging-elt> (22 Oct 2017).

- **Littlemore, J., and Oakey, D.** 2004. Communication with a Purpose: Exploiting the Internet to Promote Language Learning. *In: A. Chambers, J. E. Conacher, and J. Littlemore* (eds.). 2004. *ICT and Language Learning*. Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Anže Perne** teaches English at Gimnazija Vič in Ljubljana, Slovenia. He is also the secretary of the School Committee for the Matura and Erasmus+ KA1 coordinator. In his teaching, he especially focuses on ICT and popular culture.

*The photo in the article is published under the Creative Commons Zero (CC0) license.*

## Report on the ECML Project

### “Digital Literacy for the Teaching and Learning of Languages”

Zorica Đukić, School of Pharmacy and Physiotherapy, Belgrade, Serbia

**Keywords:** Digital literacy, pedagogical approach, social interactions, real-world tasks

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) has developed a project “Digital literacy for the teaching and learning of languages” to provide teacher training in digital literacy across Europe. It started in January 2016 and will run until December 2018 as part of a wider ECML programme called “Languages at the Heart of Learning”.



\*Fig. 1: The project team

The project coordinator, Christian Ollivier, from the University of La Réunion in France has been accompanied by three team members: Catherine Jeanneau, University of Limerick, Ireland,

Ulrike Hoffman, Fachhochschule Salzburg, Austria, and Katerina Zourou, Web2Learn, Greece. The e-lang project team has been extended by two researchers and associate partners from Canada: Catherine Caws and Marie-Josée Hamel (Fig. 1). They successfully achieved their goals with the project workshop to introduce forty participants from thirty-four countries to the concept of real-world tasks and to the pedagogical approach based on social interactions. The seminar was held at the ECML headquarters in Graz, Austria, on 10-11th October 2017 (Fig. 2).



\*Fig. 2: "Digital literacy for the teaching and learning of languages" workshop participants

In the pre-workshop activities, the participants were engaged in the productive online discussion on various related topics on the forum. Furthermore, they were introduced to a draft version of the pedagogical framework which is to be available for download on the project website at the beginning of 2018. Likewise, the entire training programme on Moodle will be accessible for teachers interested in developing their digital literacy.

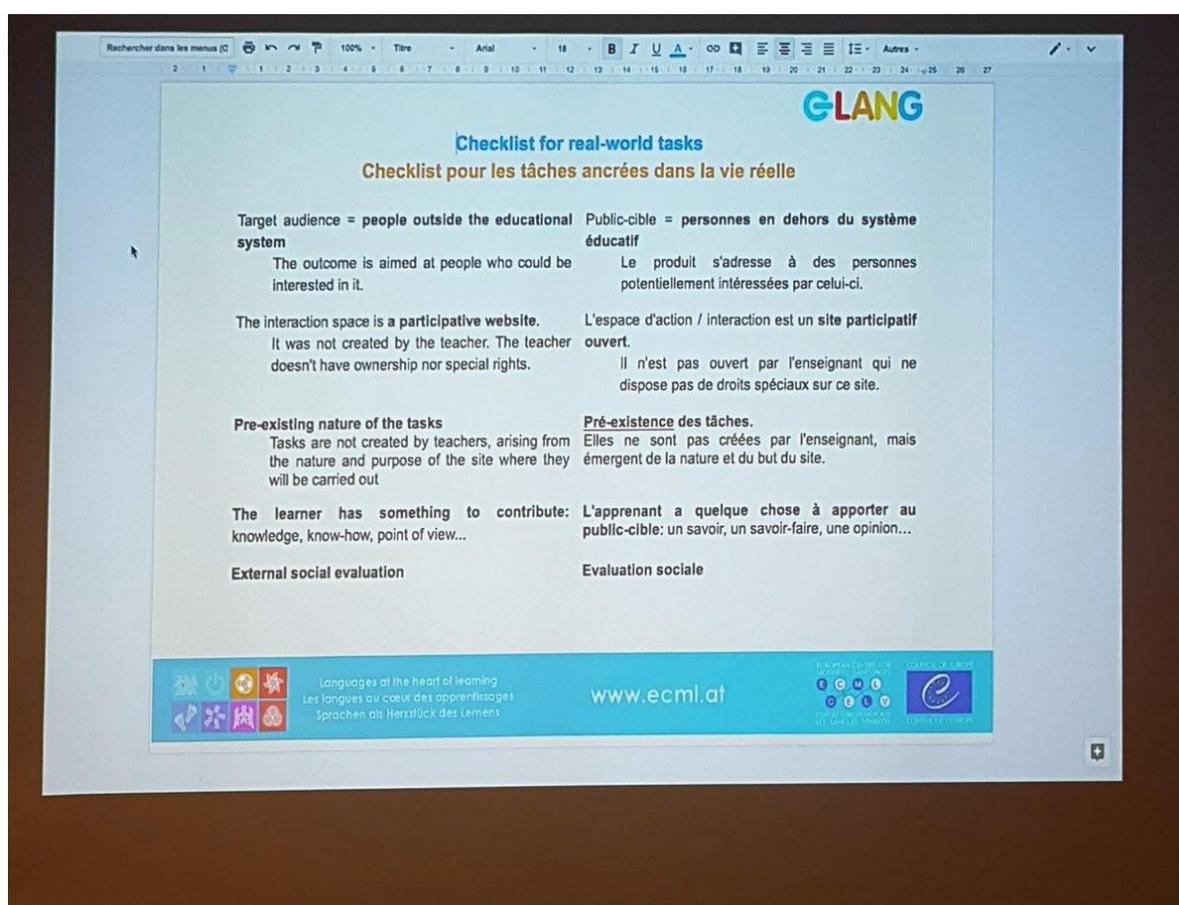
When defining their pedagogical approach, Christian Ollivier and the team start with terminology clarification. It is understandable to expect new definitions of digital literacy with the modern world evolution. The team sees it as a combination of technology, meaning-making, and interaction literacy.

- Technology literacy has been explained as the ability to select and apply digital resources. Not only is it important for teachers to know various devices or apps exist, e.g., online dictionaries, but they must know how to use them if they are to advise learners on how to adapt digital resources to their needs.
- The project members regard meaning-making literacy as a synthesis of information, media, and visual literacy. According to the Prague Declaration, information literacy is “the ability to identify, locate, evaluate, organize and effectively create, use and communicate information to address issues or problems at hand.” (UNESCO, 2003, p.1). Media literacy deals with creation and perception of messages on various new platforms (e.g., emails), while visual literacy represents the capacity to make meaning from information presented in images.
- Interaction literacy is the central part of the project. It incorporates communicative and collaborative skills as well as the capability to use and evaluate a significant amount of data in real time (e.g., in public chats). Students have to be interaction literate to exchange and collaborate efficiently while using technologies.

Ethical and critical concepts frame all these literacies. They require users to be aware of how to behave appropriately, to be familiar with online security and digital identity. Students have to be informed of the overall impact that digital practices may have. The project team points out that “technology by itself cannot guarantee a successful learning outcome, but it can enhance learning if it is carefully integrated to the teaching methodology”, and “if learners are systematically engaged in a review of its benefits, limitations and potential risks” (Ollivier, 2017, p.7). Although students use new technologies a lot, they do so mainly for social exchanges. Research has shown they cannot transfer these competencies to learning purposes. That is why they should be supported to create their personal learning environment (PLE), with all the resources, both digital and non-digital, useful for language learning. They should be trained to create digital content (e.g., on collaborative sites) and not to be just passive users (e.g., of

online dictionaries). They should be encouraged to reflect on the resources they have used and combined to complete the meaningful tasks successfully.

When it comes to the definition of tasks, the importance of social interactions is highlighted by this approach. If learners are directed to a variety of social interactions, they will develop a real ability to communicate. In a situation where teachers or textbook authors do not create tasks, students would talk to "real" people outside the educational system, and not only to their teachers or classmates. The range of social interactions is larger in real life than it is in the classroom. Social networks or participatory sites are already full of potential tasks.



\*Fig. 3: Checklist for real-world tasks

As for terminology, there are again many variations in theory. The term 'real-life task' is used most often for those that are closest to the use of real-life language. They seem realistic, even authentic, but they only imitate real life. Ollivier and the team offer the term 'real-world tasks' (Fig.3) for those that people do outside the classroom, such as taking part in a discussion

forum, posting comments in an online journal, contributing on sites such as Wikipedia, or exchanging recipes at one of the specialized cooking sites. The primary goal of such tasks becomes the use of language for communication, the exchange of experience and opinion, or cooperation with others, while language learning itself ceases to be the main objective. Since they carry enormous social dimension, it is crucial that such tasks are not imposed on the student, but rather presented as an option. The teacher is there just to inform students about sites that may be relevant to a particular purpose or topic, and to direct or encourage them in their decision-making process. Technology has led to this change in the role, where teachers become trainers, guides or facilitators. The form of evaluation has also been altered. The emphasis has changed from teacher evaluation to a wider audience evaluation which happens outside the classroom. It is clear how motivating it could be for students to know that their work will be published online, for "real" readers. Besides, students become aware of the required level of quality that is expected in their tasks. If they give inaccurate data, do not meet the criteria, or do not accept the degree of formality or informality in the used language, the product of their work will be removed from the site. On the other hand, as long as "real" readers can clearly understand the message, students' potential language mistakes will be excused, because readers will know they use a foreign language as a medium to communicate the idea, which is a priority.

It is interesting that real-world tasks do not have to change the structure of the class itself. Unless it is a synchronous type of communication, everything can be done in the classroom, without the Internet. Then, later, a student with the Internet access could post the prepared material on site.

While there is a number of similarities between real-world tasks and project-based learning (PBL), one of the differences is the duration of the activity. The PBL task is performed in a more extended timeframe because it implies a division of work among the team members and different phases within a project. Real-world tasks can be run individually or in a group, and can only require as much time as it would take to perform any other classroom task. Apart from this, the teacher is no longer connected with space where students' task is realized, nor bridges the gap between the classroom and the outside world. The teacher does not mediate between learners and "real readers" in the process of their social interaction, which only contributes to the authenticity of the tasks and overcoming of classroom limitations.

The advantages of using online language and social interaction of this kind are numerous. They contribute to the development of students' identity, self-confidence, and socialization. They intensify exposure to the target language and culture, raise linguistic awareness and help the transfer of ICT competencies to educational purposes.

The project team designed the tasks for the workshop in accordance with the pedagogical approach they presented. The actual engagement of participants in the creation of real-world tasks was particularly fruitful and motivating. The fact that they were to be integrated into the project itself inspired the participants in providing interesting and valuable contributions.



\*Fig. 4: The workshop participants discussing grammatical competency

An enthusiastic and knowledgeable crowd attended the workshop, to include language teachers, methodology professors, researchers or experts in digital didactics. Among others, there were seven representatives from the countries of former Yugoslavia who were eager to collaborate and share their experiences and ideas (Fig.4). It has been a joy and privilege to meet them and work together.

The participants were truly productive taking part in group work. In a friendly atmosphere, they had constructive discussions and exchanged information concerning practical language learning applications and platforms. This proved to be a useful seminar where participants could gain insights into teaching methodology and reflect upon their further practice in directing students towards autonomy and lifelong learning.

In conclusion, teachers who are interested in developing their digital literacy are recommended to explore the full training programme which will be available on Moodle platform by the end of 2018 <http://bit.ly/2zCUDjH>.

### References:

Ollivier. C, (2017). *Digital Literacy for the Teaching and Learning of Language towards a Socio-Interactional Approach to Foster Autonomy in Language Learners and Users*. A Draft Version of an e-lang project from the European Centre for Modern Languages of the Council of Europe, Graz.

### List of Figures:

Figure 1: ECML/Council of Europe (2017). *Ready to roll*. Online image. Retrieved Oct 10, 2017 from [https://twitter.com/katrinrulokoz/status/918002688524251136/photo/1?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2](https://twitter.com/katrinrulokoz/status/918002688524251136/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2) Reprinted with permission.

Figure 2: ECML/Council of Europe (2017). *Workshop “Digital literacy for the teaching and learning of languages”*. Online image. Retrieved Oct 12, 2017 from [https://twitter.com/katrinrulokoz/status/918063840956440577/photo/1?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2](https://twitter.com/katrinrulokoz/status/918063840956440577/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2). Reprinted with permission.

Figure 3: ECML/Council of Europe (2017). Fleur Ruth Prinsen. *Teachers... are you ready for having students learn through real world tasks?* Online image. Retrieved Oct 11, 2017 from [https://twitter.com/Fleur\\_Uni/status/918005594732355584/photo/1?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2](https://twitter.com/Fleur_Uni/status/918005594732355584/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2). Reprinted with permission.

Figure 4: ECML/Council of Europe (2017). *Ulrike animating the discussion on grammatical competency*. Online image. Retrieved Oct 11, 2017 from [https://twitter.com/katrinrulokoz/status/918051019795333120/photo/1?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref\\_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2](https://twitter.com/katrinrulokoz/status/918051019795333120/photo/1?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fstorify.com%2Fkatrinrulokoz%2Felang-project-day-2). Reprinted with permission.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Zorica Đukić** is an English language teacher with over 30 years of experience in teaching students of all ages. She is currently working in a vocational secondary school. She is a certified Educational Advisor and member of the Teaching Licence Board. As an external associate at the Institute for the Improvement of Education, she has assessed numerous coursebooks which have been accredited by the Ministry of Education. Being a supporter of CPD, she has participated in various seminars, webinars, and conferences. As a member of the National English Language Teachers' Association (ELTA), she has been working as a *Newsletter* and *ELTA Journal* co-editor, ELTA Serbia Board member, and ELTA Belgrade coordinator.

\*The author certifies that she has the permission to publish these photos.

# Harry Potter Quiz

Svetlana Gavrilović, Užice Grammar School, Serbia

**Keywords:** Harry Potter, quiz, games

In the true spirit of the wizardry and witchcraft of J.K. Rowling's planetary phenomenon called Harry Potter, three second-graders of Užice Grammar School, Marija Cvijović, Nevena Baković, and Aleksandra Virić, thought of, prepared, organized and hosted a quiz to mark Harry Potter's 20<sup>th</sup> birthday in their school. Nearly fifty Harry Potter lovers applied for the competition, keenly anticipating the 11<sup>th</sup> December when twenty slips of paper with their names were drawn out of a box to decide on the twenty contestants. This, however, did not put their impatience to an end since they had to wait for the 14<sup>th</sup> December and the night of the quiz to see which of the four teams – Hogwarts' houses – they would be competing for. In the course of the evening, these twenty connoisseurs of Harry Potter books and films proved to be omniscient answering successfully the difficult questions on spells and potions, most of which were all Greek to the attending teachers and parents, doing jigsaw puzzles and distinguishing between the voices of the leading characters. In the end, Hufflepuff achieved a narrow victory over Slytherin and won the prizes sponsored by Pearson and English teachers of Uzicka gimnazija.

Helping themselves to some butterbeer and butterscotch popcorn, both the participants and the audience enjoyed this tiny little bit of Harry Potter magic in Užice.









\* \* \* \* \*

**Svetlana Gavrilović** has been teaching English for nearly thirty years now. She is currently working in Užice Grammar School.

\*I certify that I have the right to publish these photos.

## BORROWED FROM...

### Emerging principles for ELT materials writers

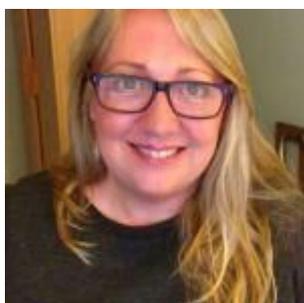
This was originally posted in

<https://mawsig.iatefl.org/emerging-principles-for-elt-materials-writers/>

**The author is Katherine Bilborough**

**Keywords:** ELT publishing, Materials writing, MaWSIG

\*\*\*\*\*



In this post, Katherine Bilborough discusses the need for principles in materials writing and outlines some of her own principles and those of others. The MaWSIG blog features guest posts by members – please get in touch if you would like to write for us.

Put your hand up if you write ELT materials, either for your own classes or as part of your professional work. Now put your hand up if you've ever been taught how to write ELT materials. The likelihood is that you haven't had much (or any) training and that most of what you know has been self-taught or learnt on the job. But in these changing times, more and more teachers are working on writing projects ... so wouldn't it make sense to provide some kind of training?

#### **A training course for ELT materials writers**

With this in mind, I designed and delivered a four-week online course for iTDi

(<http://itdi.pro/itdihome/creating-elt-materials.php>) called *Creating ELT Materials*. In a live session each Sunday, I presented background theories and aspects of ELT

writing; these included *Frameworks for ELT Writing* and *Copyright and Authentic Texts*. Participants then had to do two things each week: (a) complete a materials creation task, which their peers and I would critique; and (b) take part in a discussion related to one of the week's themes. In week 1, after covering *Principles in ELT Writing* in the live session, the discussion question was as follows:

***Which principles of material design are most important to you? Why?***

In the live session I first gave an overview of the principles outlined by Tomlinson (1998); I then shared my own principles for ELT writing, explaining that we can, of course, use or reject any established principles and – even more exciting – think up some of our own.

**Tomlinson's principles (in brief)**

Tomlinson highlights six principles which he believes should drive materials development. Materials should

1. expose the learners to authentic language;
2. help learners pay attention to features of authentic output;
3. provide opportunities to use the target language to communicate;
4. provide opportunities for outcome feedback;
5. arouse and sustain learners' curiosity and attention; and
6. stimulate intellectual, aesthetic and emotional involvement.

Tomlinson emphasises that materials should be driven by learning and teaching principles rather than developed in a spontaneous manner. He also underlines the importance of paying attention to what teachers and learners want from the materials they use.

**Jill Hadfield's 'framing principles'**

After attending Jill Hadfield's splendid session *Do Writers Have Principles?* at the 2014 IATEFL conference, my interest in writers' principles grew. I recently contacted Jill to ask if she was continuing her research in this area; I'm glad to report that she has published a book chapter and a journal article on the subject – all part of her PhD – and that she has a new research project underway. Jill introduced me to the Ellis

Principles (2005), which are related to language learning in New Zealand secondary schools, and to Nation's Principles (1993). Her own list of framing principles is interesting: there are overlaps with other theorists, but she has also taken into account the teacher's needs, something missing until now. I look forward to seeing it in publication.

After some self-reflection, I've come to the conclusion that my principles change from project to project. For one particular project, I needed to create materials which had

1. input at an appropriate level (Krashen's  $I + 1$ );
2. grammatically correct English;
3. language that is useful for the learners' context;
4. a visually pleasing design;
5. accessibility to learners of all kinds, in all contexts;
6. logical sequencing;
7. flexibility / adaptability;
8. appropriate content (PARSNIPs ... or not!); and
9. clear and appropriate instructions (rubrics).

As you can see, I've taken on board some of Tomlinson's principles, but I've also rejected some and added a couple of my own. I had my reasons for including each item to my list. For example 'flexibility / adaptability' was important as this was a coursebook which was going to be adapted for another level and context. On the writers' course I felt it was important for participants to consider the discussion question from within their own contexts. I expected disagreements and conflicting opinions about which principles should be included.

The ensuing discussion was enthralling and revealed much about the changing times we're writing in, with some writers throwing spanners into the works of what we have, until now, considered to be sacrosanct. I've extracted a few examples of emerging principles.

### **Emerging principles to consider**

*Materials should include information about the real world and compromising principles.*

This issue of whether to include or actively exclude material of a sensitive nature is complicated. In some contexts writers receive guidelines about no-go areas. But increasingly, teachers around the world are showing an interest in global – and often controversial – issues, for which they need materials.

*Audio materials should include non-native English models.*

This is a hot topic at the moment as more and more professionals realise that the English their students are likely to experience will be spoken by non-native speakers. So for this participant, ‘authentic’ means ‘non-native’.

*Create materials that can be accessed in different formats.*

This refers to digital materials, of course: IWBs, tablets, smartphones ... but it also refers to contexts with limited technology. Sometimes print versions of materials are a must.

*I want something that can be created within minutes, not hours. And also, it must be improved with minor tweaks, not major overhauls.*

This participant is speaking from experience. He creates his own materials; he is also a teacher, a school owner and a parent. This means time is in short supply. This is a good example of a principle that is quite personal. We all complain about not having enough time, but I wouldn't have thought of including this as a principle. Maybe I should.

*Good material should be presented in multiple formats as every student learns differently.*

This participant is referring to learning styles and suggesting multiple formats to address this issue. In most contexts this might be unachievable because of costs, but in more localised contexts or self-publishing, it can be achieved.

*Materials should provide opportunities for feedback.*

This point was made with regard to digital materials. One of the problems of some online activities has been the inadequacy of online feedback.

My favourite comment from the discussion is this one:

*I feel like different materials require different principles – not least of all because paid work sometimes means compromising principles that I'd rather keep!*

This is thought-provoking and raises several interesting questions. How far should we compromise our principles? Is it okay to replace our own principles with those of an editor or a publisher? Might it be a good idea to sit down at the beginning of a new project and draw up principles which both parties agree with?

On reflection, it makes perfect sense that the principles of ELT material design are changing. These principles are informed by teaching and learning theories, and these are changing. I suggest we embrace these changes. From now on, before I start each new project, I plan to draw up a list of appropriate principles; I will use this as a checklist as I work to make sure I haven't drifted.

Which principles are important to you, and why? I'd love to hear your ideas.

## References

- Nation, I. S. P., 1993. Sixteen principles of language teaching. In L. Bauer and C. Franzen, eds. *Of Pavlova, poetry and paradigms: Essays in honour of Harry Orsman*. Wellington: Victoria University Press. pp. 209–224.
- Tomlinson, B. ed., 1998. *Materials development in language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

**Katherine Bilsborough** is a freelance ELT author living in northern Spain. She writes coursebooks for OUP, Macmillan and others as well as monthly lesson plans and blog posts for the British Council's website *TeachingEnglish*. Katherine hasn't got her own blog but enjoys hijacking other people's blogs and has been called 'the interloping blogger', a title that makes her smile. When Katherine isn't writing, she's either gardening, reading or lying on the sofa watching telly.

## About MaWSIG

With over 4,000 members internationally, IATEFL is one of the most thriving communities of ELT teachers in the world. The Materials Writing SIG (MaWSIG) is one of sixteen Special Interest Groups within IATEFL. Other SIGs focus on areas such as Teacher Development, Learning Technologies, ESP, Young Learners and Teenagers, Business English, Pronunciation, and so on.

MaWSIG is for teachers who create their own classroom materials; aspiring writers who would like to get their work published; published authors and ELT editors, publishers and designers. It aims to share and promote best practice in ELT materials writing; offer professional development to writers and editors, and connect our members with other writers and publishers. We have regular blogs on our website at <http://mawsig.iatefl.org/> where authors discuss the issues that we face today as writers. We also organise regional meetups where members can network, collaborate with teaching organisations like TESOL-Spain on joint-conferences, and we put on our own face-to-face conference once a year. MaWSIG is run by a committee of volunteers comprised of ELT writers and editors. You can contact us at [mawsig@iatefl.org](mailto:mawsig@iatefl.org).

## **A Place**

**Student: Luka Jovičić, IVe**  
**English teacher: Mirjana Savić Obradović**  
**Mathematical Grammar School, Belgrade, Serbia**

Far away from everything, hidden away in the woods, there is a small place so few people know about that it has no name. No one lives there and only a couple of elderly people visit occasionally their otherwise abandoned houses.

Once upon a time, there was a village. The nature was flourishing. The fields were green, filled with numerous insects whose songs never allowed the silence to take over. As long as the sun was up in the sky, the cattle enjoyed the freedom they were given to run around from one end to the other. There were two lakes which satisfied everyone's thirst, the only difference being people got the pump and pipes up to their homes. When the sun got to its peak, the animals moved closer to the woods and had their hours-long nap, after which they had another run around the fields that ended in the stables, where they would spend the night.

The sheep were probably the ones which needed human attention the most, and along with a dog, someone had to bring them to their sleeping places. People's work, for the most part, constituted of taking care of the animals and the gardens. It was all they had and all they really needed. There was nothing particularly interesting in their lives, every day being pretty much the same. Everything they ate and drank was produced by them; they were independent of everyone else and lived off their work. There were no stores, and on rare occasions someone needed a thing which wasn't available, they had to drive a dozen kilometres to the next larger place to buy something.

The goats' bleating marked the beginning of the night, which was the forest animals' time. Seeing the goats, on the other hand, sometimes wasn't possible, not even with a pair of binoculars. That shouldn't be surprising - having in mind they rarely ever left the forest and the only thing lighting up the night was the moonlight, it becomes clear why if you wanted to see

one, apart from the eyesight, you needed a pretty sharpened ear too. The wolves and boars weren't as shy, and unlike the goats, they waited for the moon to come down.

They also didn't come out for the purpose of producing noise, but on the contrary, their goal was to be as quiet as possible. The wolves preyed on the domestic animals and the sheep in particular, while the boars, being herbivores, preferred potatoes. In order to satisfy their needs, most times they needed to go all the way to the people's houses, doing their best not to be spotted. The humans needed to get particularly crafty with their traps in order to stop them, and after some time, the forest creatures found a way around every one. Left optionless, every now and then, a desperate man needed to reach out for the gun in order to defend what was his. Being woken up by a gunshot echoing between the hills wasn't a strange thing, but it was always unsatisfying. It brought up some weird, in a way vile feeling, even knowing its main purpose was to scare off the beasts. Indeed, unlucky shooters rarely shot anything. Most times it was simply too dark to see anything.

Sans nights when the wild animals got too close and tore up the fences which needed to be identified and brought back up as soon as possible, mornings were, at least, as boring as the rest of the day. Morning coffee, followed by either feeding the small animals, letting the sheep out, taking care of the plants or preparing lunch were all usual routines which were carried out at the beginning of a day. It seemed as if the loop would go on forever.

Then the war came. Gunshots suddenly became an everyday thing, this time while the sun was still up. Their primary goal wasn't scaring away anyone, but rather causing maximum harm. However, it did have such an effect, because those who could, moved away quickly, taking everything they had with themselves and if possible crossing the border in search of better life. And if you had the chance to ask anyone present there, you'd learn that everything was better than the hell which broke out.

Morning coffees, greetings of hello to and from the neighbours, fresh milk mugs were only some of the things which became a happy memory. There were no communities any more. The cattle that were unfortunate enough to remain or be left behind ran to the woods. But that wasn't a run for their life, even they knew believing in that would be pointless; instead they were merely looking for a better way to die than from a cold bullet which would eventually penetrate their

bodies if they had stayed. The run, ironically, was in hope of finding more humane treatment away from the humans who were obviously no longer capable of that, even if that meant running into some beasts' jaws which became surprisingly warm. If nothing else, at least, that way their deaths had some purpose.

Some crafty traps still existed, but this time they were meant for other people. Sometimes it meant placing a landmine on one of the forest paths, causing a large explosion, blowing up the vehicle and causing almost certain fatal casualties. Other times it included burning down large portions of land, fences, or buildings. Bombs fell, some large enough to create small craters, leaving permanent marks. Nothing was ever the same.

If, by any chance , you find any living witness to all that, chances are you won't get them to talk much, at most they'd be retelling some generic war scenes. And if you dare ask about the cause, the purpose, the aftermath (apart from the obvious death and destruction), you'll only observe a disappointing look to the floor, followed by a gasp. Because there were none! It was not their choice, remaining on two sides they were separated from themselves, by something larger, by someone "up there". It's the way the things were.

It just was, until there was nothing to be.

# **I've Made up My Mind**

## **Body Idioms**

**a student Aleksandra Kiković, a teacher Svetlana Gavrilović**

Maybe I fell head over heels in love with you,  
Maybe I was out of my mind.  
But now it's time for a new beginning  
I will get this weight off my chest,  
I will put on a brave face,  
I've made up my mind.

A lot of time stays behind us  
And many years are in front of me,  
So I'll give you the cold shoulder,  
Now my feelings are colder and colder,  
I've made up my mind.

You can go wherever you want,  
You can have a mind of your own,  
I wouldn't be a pain in your neck.  
And I see eye to eye with you –  
It is very, very late.  
I've made up my mind.

That's why I'm leaving this place,  
'cause why would I cry my eyes out?  
And why would I lose my head?  
It's really, really the end.  
I've made up my mind.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Aleksandra Kiković** is a fourth-grader of Užice Grammar School with the sensitive soul of an artist. She is keen on languages, poetry and acting.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

- Conferences
- Competitions
- Summer camps
- Webinars

## CONFERENCES

*\* Call for papers still open for some of the conferences, check it out*

### ✓ ELTA's YL SIG Day: Joy of Teaching Young Learners

Date: March 3rd, 2018.

Place: Novi Sad, Faculty of Law and Business Studies, Dr Lazar Vrkatic

For more, follow the link: [YL SIG](#)

### ✓ ELTA'S ECO CHALLENGE

ELTA invites primary and secondary school students to join our mission to raise ecological awareness and get involved in the protection of the environment so that we can all live in a healthy world.

Students are invited to:

- make a short video (up to 2 minutes; no use of copyrighted material is allowed),
- make a poster/comic (only photographs, drawings and illustrations created by the students are allowed) or
- write a poem sending a message to their peers to protect the environment.

The maximum number of students per project is 6.

**Submission deadline:** 1 March, 2018

Project selection: 1-10 March, 2018

Voting: 10-20 March, 2018

**Winners announcement:** last week of March

*For more, follow the link: [ECO Challenge](#)*

## ✓ **Small Bites for Teaching and Learning English 2**

A series of half-day professional development seminars, will be offered to teachers in Serbia.

The workshops are designed by teachers and your ELTA team. They cover a range of topics, from teaching grammar in a meaningful and enjoyable way to using diverse forms of narratives. In each town, a different topic will be covered, and we hope that it will be just the one you are most interested in.

*For more, follow the link: [Small Bites](#)*

## ✓ **39th TESOL Greece Convention**

Date: 3-4 March 2018

Place: Athens, Greece

*For more, follow the link: [39tesolgreece](#)*

## ✓ **25th International IATEFL Slovenia Conference 2018 – Imagine...**

Place: Terme Topolsica, Slovenia

Date: 8-11 March 2018.

*For more, follow the link: [Imagine...](#)*

## ✓ **52<sup>nd</sup> Annual International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition**

Place: Brighton

Date: 10-13 April 2018

*For more, follow the link: [IATEFL Brighton, 2018](#)*

✓ **26<sup>th</sup> Annual HUPE Conference**

Place: Valamar, Poreč

Date: 20-22 April 2018

*For more, follow the link: [26th HUPE Conference](#)*

✓ **16<sup>th</sup> ELTA Serbia Conference – New Trends: The Teacher’s Guide Through ELT Galaxy**

Place: Teacher Education Faculty, Belgrade

Date: 11-12 May 2018.

*For more, follow the link: [16th-elta-serbia-conference](#)*

✓ **Nove tehnologije u obrazovanju 2018 - British Council**

Place: Belgrade

Date: 8-9 June, 2018.

*For more, follow the link: [Nove tehnologije u obrazovanju](#)*

✓ **27th IATEFL POLAND Conference - WROCLAW 2018 - THE MEETING PLACE FOR EXPERTS**

Place: WROCLAW, Wrocław University of Science and Technology.

Date: 21-23 September 2018

For more, follow the link: [IATEFL Poland](#)

### ✓ SO(U)L Camps

Place: Sremski Karlovci, Serbia

Date: 15-22 July, 2018.

For more, follow the link: [SO\(U\)L Camps](#)

### ✓ TESOL Awards, Honors, & Grants

TESOL offers numerous awards and grants to honor excellence in service to the field and research, and to enable TESOL members to attend the Annual TESOL Convention & English Language Expo. Apply for these awards and grants yourself and share the information with your students and colleagues.

For more, follow the link: [tesol-awards-honors-grants](#)

## WEBINARS

### ✓ Macmillan webinars

[Macmillan webinars](#)

### ✓ OUP webinars

[OUP webinars](#)

### ✓ NILE Webinars

nile-elt

# ELTASERBIA

WWW.ELTA.ORG.RS

Copyright © 2017 English Language Teachers' Association. All rights reserved.

