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Croatian Association of Teachers of English



# HUPEzine

No. 17 · June 2023





HUPE IS A  
*Journey*  
*enjoy the*  
*Ride*

**31<sup>st</sup>**

**Annual International  
HUPE Conference**  
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# Editor's Note

Dear teachers,

Welcome to the latest edition of HUPEzine.

It is with great pleasure and enthusiasm that I greet you at the end of this school year, performing my new role as HUPE's newsletter editor.

We would like to inform you that there have been some recent changes in our executive board. HUPE elections were held in March and since March 25th, 2023, we can warmly welcome our new board members:

- Gordana Bujanić Tretinjak, president
- Nino Sertić, vice president
- Tihana Svoren Kolarec, international coordinator
- Sanja Paić, secretary
- Ivana Kasunić, newsletter editor
- Gorana Todorović, public relations
- Sanja Pratljačić, treasurer

While we bid farewell to some of our previous board members, we express our gratitude for their contributions and dedication to the HUPE board.

Furthermore, I want to express my deepest gratitude to our contributors and readers for your continued support and commitment.

In this issue, we aim to provide you with a range of articles and insights that will inspire and enhance your teaching journey whether you are an experienced educator seeking fresh ideas or a novice teacher looking for guidance.

Lastly, we encourage you to actively engage with our magazine by submitting your own articles, lesson plans, success stories, and teaching tips. Your contributions will not only enrich the magazine but also inspire and empower your fellow teachers.

Have a successful and relaxing school year.

Ivana Kasunić,  
newsletter editor

## Impressum

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### Contributions:

The best way to support your association and the HUPEzine is to write to us and send us your contributions. All contributions should be submitted by e-mail.

Write and send your contributions to the HUPEzine editor. Please, be sure to write your name, surname and affiliation / institution and address at the beginning or end of the text

Disclaimer:

**The views and opinions expressed in Hupezine and Hupe newsletter articles are those of the authors and do not reflect the official policy, position or views of HUPE organization.**

# Let's speak

**Written by: dr. Gabi Čakš, prof.**

**English teacher at Primary School VIZ II. OŠ Rogaška Slatina, Slovenia**

**Keywords: speech, presentation, primary school, motivation**

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This article presents some possible ways of how a teacher motivates learners to prepare and to present their own speaking activity called speech presentation as an opportunity for oral examination. Speaking activity is one of the skills that students should master. While teaching students to speak we have to have in our mind that students have to be well prepared, they have to have enough knowledge or input how to build a speech presentation. Vocabulary input, grammatical structures, good pronunciation, communication skills and students' well-being have to be puzzled together.

When it comes to classroom speaking activities, I try to motivate learners to a real-life situation, authentic activities, meaningful and important tasks for our learners. If we want our learners to speak we will have to provide enough practice in a safe classroom environment.

An extensive vocabulary and grammatical structures are crucial to being able to communicate with everybody.

On one hand, we have students who like to talk all the time and that is why a speaking activity is not a challenge for them. Some students face many dilemmas when they are faced with a speaking activity or speech presentation because of their English proficiency, pronunciation, low self-esteem, lower speaking confidence or any other personal fears.

Communication is a very complex system. Language is not only a tool for speaking, it is much more. It reveals ourselves in non-verbal and verbal communication. For some students communicating in front of the class and their teacher can be stressful and can put them in an anxiety state.

My suggestion was that preparing a speech is a great opportunity for the last oral examination. Students could pick their own topic. If we want our students to be well prepared they have to relate to the topic in a way that inspires them, that comes out of their interests, talents or likes. It is important that topics and the choice come out of their inner world.

What to choose? My students chose different topics- country spotlight, travelling, family and traditions, describing their idols, favourite sport clubs, cars, music groups...

How? They had some guidelines to help them build their speech. It couldn't be longer than 3 – 5 minutes. They had to make a poster with pictures for visual and general support. Reading was not allowed and they couldn't use a written text in their hands.

Why? As mentioned earlier, speech presentation shows higher language goals and prepares a student for communicative skills for life. One cannot function without communicating with another, especially not without a foreign language.





What to mark? I have decided to mark the use of grammatical structures, enriched vocabulary, pronunciation and overall presentation. Each student could get 20 points, 5 points for each category. After the presentation, a presenter received a peer evaluation and was able to give a self evaluation as well.

Optional or obligatory? Important. I suggested to my students that speech presentation is an obligatory assignment for everyone, but receiving the grade for the speech is optional. The latter means that students had to prepare a speech and after the peer and self evaluation they could choose if the received mark is written into the markbook. This kind of strategy and decision was one of the greatest, because students weren't under the stress of getting a bad or unwanted mark. Knowing the fact that this was their first public speaking presentation in foreign language, this was a bonus fact.

And? All students wanted to »keep the mark« except two, which is fine. The main goal to motivate my students to prepare an individual speech presentation was successful and it was a good, educational and non-stressful assignment for them and enjoyable to me.

However, our next step towards higher standards of speaking freely and fluently, expressing their own opinion in a debate, discussion or motivational speech such as TED TALK activity, will not be a problem for them in the future. Every teacher has to keep in mind that presenting in front of the audience isn't easy, especially not for students who are still processing and getting their experiences in learning and receiving their communicating skills. The teaching method has to be adapted to learners' needs and their developmental level in a safe and supportive classroom.

## SELF EVALUATION LIST/ EVALUATION LIST – 6. Grade (12 years)

CATEGORY	WHAT TO MARK ?	How successful was I?
VOCABULARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>extensive vocabulary</li> <li>rich vocabulary</li> <li>vocabulary connected to the topic</li> <li>new words and their explanation (if needed)</li> </ul>	
PRONUNCIATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>good and understandable pronunciation</li> </ul>	
GRAMMAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>different grammar structures (personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, verb to be, present simple all forms, can/can't, use of numbers, interested in/good at, have got/haven't got)</li> </ul>	
OVERALL PRESENTATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>communicating with audience</li> <li>eye contact</li> </ul>	



Dr. Gabi Čakš is a teacher at VIZ II. OŠ Rogaška Slatina, Slovenia. She has graduated in English and American studies at the Faculty of Arts in Maribor, Slovenia, and continued her education at the Pedagogy faculty in Maribor where she has finished a study programme for teaching English to young learners. She has been teaching for 12 years in primary school in Slovenia. She has also finished a study programme of Gestalt pedagogy at the Theological faculty at University in Ljubljana and her PHD thesis in gestalt pedagogy in 2022. She has attended International conferences as a speaker.

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# Fun vs Learning

Ivana Bokavšek, English teacher, teacher adviser

Elementary school Spinut, Split

## Can learning be fun?

Figure 1

As this simple picture carries a certain connotation, we cannot ignore its message. Two processes, learning and teaching, need to be reflected here. The first one implies a formal acquisition of knowledge that comes only by the students' repetitive, constant and persistent studying of the textbook. It can be described

as a plain, durable, and therefore hard-working attempt to understand the subject. Taken by its primal essence, it leaves an impression of a serious, scholastic, and usually monotonous way of being informed and knowledgeable which does not include any possibilities of being creative, spontaneous, or rather playful in acquiring knowledge. It is relatively questionable how effective that learning is, concerning its short and long-term results. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the educational upbringing dimension accompanies this most common way of learning. Self-discipline, responsibility, organizational skills, dedication, and patience are just some of the many other values students can develop and gain.

The most common rising issue teachers, students and students' parents deal with is the reciprocal relation of learning and teaching. If learning reflects teaching methods that mostly prevail in the classroom, then, unquestionably, it is certain whose responsibility it is to teach our students various learning methods. The teaching process, naturally, results with a continuous conscious or subconscious self-reflection that brings some inevitable questions out into the open: Which teaching methods do we apply in our classrooms? How often do we change our teaching approaches and strategies? Is our students' learning a mirror image of our teaching? Which teaching goals do we want to achieve? Which learning outcomes do we want our students to accomplish at the end of our lesson? Is our teaching a little bit outdated as compared to the educational needs of new millennium generations in our classes? Is my lesson motivating, challenging, encouraging, energetic and thought-provoking? What do we need to change in our everyday teaching practice? Would we gladly be students in our classes?

Getting back to the picture, we can conclude that none of us, teachers, would eagerly admit that our classes are

reluctant to be inspirational, active, open-minded, enquiring and competitively engaging. Otherwise, our student-self would justifiably seek another learning spark.

## The purpose of gamification

By implementing the process of gamification to its fullest, we can make our students' learning well-adjusted to today's lifelong learning challenges. Games have been used in classes as a useful, refreshing teaching element for a long time, but its significance has only been amplified recently due to the generations surrounded by the use and influence of virtual games. The question we can start with is, what is a proper game and how is it used as a teaching and learning tool? Is it a quiz that tests our students' knowledge and gives us a kind of feedback, where students feel only the thrill of racing against time and chasing first place positions on the leaders' board? It is a useful, quick, formative assessment tool that serves to inform us how well our students are dealing with the material we want them to comprehend. It cannot be certainly taken as a well-designed game which combines a lot of elements or different curricula. Its design should start from the neat lesson plan where learning outcomes need to be the starting point from which to build all the consequent lesson phases. Here and again, we need to find the answer to the question: Which active verbs from Bloom's taxonomy can we use to identify the learning outcomes? A student investigates ... organizes ... relates ... questions ... solves? Unsurprisingly, there are many more options.

This properly navigates us towards the right cross-curricular implementation. We need to be aware of its time-consuming issue in order to let our students finish the game on time.

Before we plan and create our game, we need to decide where it will be played, indoors or outdoors, and we need to be aware of certain teaching working conditions, such as: problems with fast internet access, lack of space, noise distraction, GDPR issues, digital tools licences or other requirements.

Since the focus of a modern teaching environment is on our students, we need to put our students in the centre of our teaching process. That makes us monitor the whole process of their active learning. It is a tough task to design a well-developed game which encourages stu-

dents to learn independently, but in the course of time, its benefits are numerous. Teachers can easily formatively assess their students' accomplishments because students take the role of carrying out the tasks while the teacher stands aside, observes the students' gaming pace and their learning results. When students are solving puzzle by puzzle, they are naturally driven by curiosity, and they want to know what comes next. They are implementing the required knowledge of different subjects in order to get to the final result. While they progress through the game, they receive instant feedback, whether negative or positive, which is a huge plus. It keeps them moving forward in their learning progress. If the game consists of different levels, then it is recommended to include points, stickers, or something similar as rewards throughout the game, because that way they have a feeling of improvement. Games encourage a friendly competition among students, and if it is played in teams, each member is involved in helping the team move forward.

## It's not just a game!

Although originally, scavenger hunt is a team building game which does not result in achieving a final reward, but in having fun together and in solving puzzles outdoors, it is definitely usable in a teaching context as well. It lists several good points. It is timeless to play, meaning that there is no danger of having an old-fashioned game, thus insufficiently intriguing to the Alpha Generation. It is flexible to temporary conditions, so it can be played in the classroom in case of bad weather or if we want our students to be more focused on solving the puzzles than on spending time searching for clues outside. If time is limited, then it is highly competitive which definitely makes our students more active and concentrated. If the puzzles are well created, in the form of two-three statements that lead to the question, in other words the question is hidden in the puzzle, then a team has a two-component, demanding task: to detect the question and to find the solution. This process makes our students work in a team, where all members evenly participate and build the sense of a collective contribution. Since the English language can be combined with a lot of other school subjects, various subjects can be correlated : Croatian language, History, Geography, Art, etc. Puzzles should be of moderate

difficulty level in order to keep our students' attention and interest, and students' logical thinking is activated to get to the point. English teachers are obliged to guide their students in finding and using online information which is necessary in solving the puzzles. Developing media literacy is one more added bonus of this game.

If there is an element of the gripping excitement of a story, secrets, or interesting characters, then a scavenger hunt becomes a real, lesson-like adventure!

Here is one short example of an introductory part of a scavenger hunt game based on one adventurous story that all children love. Which possible question do we need to answer here?

As a real book lover, who enjoys narrating adventurous and thrilling stories in November, you have found yourself at the foot of Mt Vaea. To find our famous Scorpio, you need to prepare yourself to a quite challenging hiking route. Don't be afraid of him. His imaginary world reflects a man's troubles and desires.

## Conclusion

As the title of the article indicates, "Fun vs Learning" is a common reaction to the idea of implementing games and gamification in teaching the English language, hopefully after this enquiry, we can say:

Fun & Learning!

Image credit: "by Clker-Free-Vector- Images via [Pixabay](#)"

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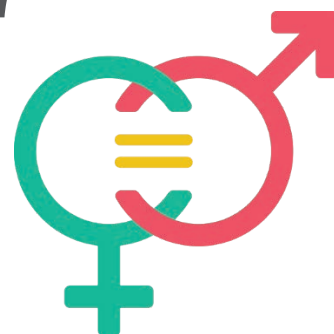
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# HOW TO PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY IN YOUR ENGLISH CLASSROOM

*“Different genders, but equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities!”*

Nataša Bebić Bačan and Davorka Bronzić

English Teachers, Teacher Advisers  
Elementary School Župa dubrovačka



Even though we live in an age when children's rights, human rights and values, such as equality, diversity and tolerance are considerably represented and incorporated in our curriculum, teachers still struggle with ways to promote them in their everyday teaching practices. A possible reason for this problem could lie in the fact that our curriculum is cluttered, and many teachers would comment that they hardly ever find the time to discuss any topic with their students on a deeper level. Another reason could be that we still live in a society with a strong divide on gender roles, full of prejudices and stereotypes, and that gender roles our students have adopted at their homes could not be easily changed at school. However, in our opinion, the main reason lies in the fact that many teachers have not identified this issue yet and consequently they are not aware of the importance of dedicating their time and effort on promoting gender equality in their classrooms.

Feeling deeply disappointed about the fact that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century schools there are still many examples of gender inequality and stereotypical behaviour, we conducted two surveys at our school - one for the students and one for our colleagues - making enquiries about gender stereotypes and prejudices among both groups in order to make the changes needed to achieve gender equality and create better school environment for everyone. We are proud to emphasize that the authors of the survey questions were our students who were inspired by real-life and school-life situations. The results showed that a significant percentage of our students think that, for example, "the man is the head of the household" or that the most important trait of a girl is to look pretty. The survey among teachers showed that our colleagues identified

some of their own gender stereotypes which they were not aware of. For example, some of them expect girls to be neater or more responsible than boys, or don't have equal behaviour expectations for all students. Generally, the results show that girl and boy students are treated differently and expected to behave in distinct ways. Both groups found their participation in this research very interesting and useful.

As every change starts with us and we can't change if we are not willing to make the steps to change within ourselves, the authors of this article hope that it will inspire their colleagues to question themselves, reconsider their attitudes on the topic and include promoting gender equality in their everyday teaching. We can all agree that facilitating awareness and learning about equality is important for our students throughout various stages of their lives, from picking a colour of their T-shirt or doing the chores to choosing their future profession and having lots of different options in life. So, what can we do?

First of all, we should realize that we do not need any additional time to promote gender equality. We can simply incorporate it in our day-to-day teaching practice by choosing the appropriate teaching materials and teaching methods. We have to ensure that our teaching materials are free from gender stereotypes. The characters, examples and illustrations in our textbooks are sometimes typically associated with a particular gender. By creating our own teaching materials, we can challenge these deep-rooted gender roles and expectations. When providing examples for any language content, we can choose the subjects more carefully. For example, we can say that Bill is making dinner or Susan is fixing her bike, instead of



the other way around. When teaching vocabulary related to jobs and professions we can, for example, include a female construction worker or soldier and a male kindergarten teacher or nurse. Also, we can teach gender-inclusive vocabulary, for example, a police officer or a flight attendant instead of a policeman and a stewardess. We should encourage our students to take part in role-playing as well as discussions and debates about gender equality or engage them in different writing activities on a given topic. This will help develop their language skills and challenge their beliefs at the same time. While practicing listening or reading comprehension skills we can choose authentic, age-appropriate materials such as articles, videos, podcasts, or stories and books from different cultures to expose our students to different perspectives on gender and help them understand gender diversity. We can simply make sure that each gender is equally represented in any educational material we use. Even if we come across an example of gender inequality in our textbooks, we can always point them out and encourage our students to think critically.

Our personal experience can also be used. If you are a female teacher, you can empower your students by telling them about your own professional path and success. Being a male teacher, you can share how it feels to be a man on a job which is considered to be mostly a female occupation and explain that gender inequality is not just about girl students and women. It can also negatively affect boys and men.

If you wish to take a step further and devote more time to the topic by using CLIL, you can incorporate observing important dates like International Women's Day, International Day of Women and Girls in Science, International Day of the Girl Child in your English language curriculum. With the variety of material on the Internet and through different awareness activities you can help your students identify instances of gender bias while learning English. By doing projects you can deeper explore gender concepts and roles from different communities, historical events, laws, cultural changes, traditions. Mix boys and girls to work on projects together, avoid segregating them into separate teams and choose the activities both genders will feel safe and comfortable doing.

As for the survey conducted among teachers at our school, there are some tips we would like to include in this article that not only refer to English teachers, but all educators who wish to reflect on their teaching methods and classroom management policies. Promote gender equality by avoiding certain terms and phrases when addressing your students, such as "guys" or "girls". Use gender-neutral phrases like "everyone" not to make any group of your students feel favoured or excluded. More importantly, do not refer to stereotypical characteristics like "boys don't cry" or "be a good girl" which limit understanding of gender

roles. Phrases "like a girl/like a boy" signal to children that there is an appropriate behaviour for each gender. Use them as undesirable and negative examples, point out the gender implications of these statements and help find alternative phrasing. Avoid any type of segregation in your classroom, such as separate lines or separate activities, and mix seating up. By creating a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment, we can help our students to become more accepting and respectful of each other.

Last but not least, gender equality can and should be promoted at school through first identifying the gender stereotypes in our society and problems of discrimination and then facing them through various activities, making an equal effort to empower not only our girls, but boys as well. Sometimes in the effort to empower girls and give them a voice, we forget that our boys also need support in fighting against the gender roles imposed on them by the society.

In conclusion, what members of both genders have to identify and accept is that they are not biologically equal or identical, but equal opportunities and support should be provided to all, especially in education. So, don't let your students' gender be the measure of their potential!

#### Online References:

Teacher Survey Questions: <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=FvJamzTG-gEurAgyaPQKQkbSZMoleRkdPqx65D4xLI5VUNk-FJRERTMEdHVktCMUJIQ0ZVTIBZQTJFNi4u&sharetoken=jrbL6y19hnLJwXDEIV0I>

Student Survey Questions: [https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=FvJamzTGgEurAgyaPQKQkZsHmywfbYFHi\\_eLDfnZGtUMkwzNUp-CQTFPS0gyOEFNVzKxMjFRU1VGVi4u&sharetoken=OHXU7uzgz712gF1g2rYJ](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=FvJamzTGgEurAgyaPQKQkZsHmywfbYFHi_eLDfnZGtUMkwzNUp-CQTFPS0gyOEFNVzKxMjFRU1VGVi4u&sharetoken=OHXU7uzgz712gF1g2rYJ)

English Classroom Ideas: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education/sdgs/material/05#:~:text=Gender%20Equality%20is%20a%20principle,in%20school%20and%20in%20life.>

# Empowering EFL Learners: Integrating Digital Skills for Success

Lidija Šaravanja, Ivana Marinić

Being a teacher of English has always been an exciting and challenging task. Although the primary aim of English language classes is to help students attain fluency in the foreign language, English teachers must continue to learn and teach beyond this goal. They need to continuously expand their knowledge on a wide range of subjects - from sports, music, and literature to history, geography, nature, the environment, politics, and beyond - in order to effectively teach language related to diverse themes and topics that can spark their students' interests.

In the 21st century, and particularly during the pandemic, teaching has undergone a transformation, necessitating a new set of proficiencies and knowledge from teachers - English teachers included. Digital literacy and expertise have emerged as a critical skillset. Digital skills are the set of skills needed to access, use, and critically evaluate digital tools, information, and content in a range of contexts, as well as to create and communicate information and content using digital tools and technologies. They encompass a broad range of competencies, including basic digital literacy, information management, communication, problem-solving, and creativity in digital environments.

Teachers who want to 'survive' in the contemporary teaching environment must become digitally skilled to incorporate these skills into their teaching. The world of technology is changing quickly, and, unfortunately, our educational practices do not seem to follow. We live to witness the development of Artificial Intelligence which collects and summarises information for us. On the other hand, 89% of Croatian students report lacking educational content dealing with media literacy, mainly misinformation and disinformation, social media influences on people's health, privacy protection, sexting and sextortion, and media content analysis (Dokler, 2022). Traditionally, digital literacy and safety have been seen as a part of the school IT curriculum. Still, the times we live in suggest that we need to 'move fast' if we want to keep up with technological development. An interdisciplinary strategy that incorporates digital literacy education into the curricula of all possible subjects is needed to cultivate various critical digital skills.

Under the umbrella term of Digital Intelligence, the DQ Institute has identified the skills required to proficiently

and efficiently use digital technologies. The DQ Institute is a non-profit organisation that focuses on promoting digital citizenship and digital intelligence skills among young people worldwide. Digital Intelligence combines social, emotional, and cognitive abilities to navigate the digital world effectively. It involves five key areas: digital identity, digital use, digital safety, digital security, and digital emotional intelligence. These areas encompass a wide range of competencies, including digital literacy, critical thinking, communication, empathy, and responsible decision-making in digital contexts.

We believe these topics may and should become a part of the foreign language curriculum because they relate to the aims outlined in the English as a Foreign Language curriculum.

First, communication in EFL classes is a tool and goal of each lesson (English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills and their development) occurs in both non-digital and digital environments. Nowadays, learning often involves using various digital tools and websites, which can expose students to dangerous online behaviour. We must ensure that our students are safe online, meaning that we must teach them how to navigate the digital world safely.

Another aim listed in the Curriculum is to understand and use English for various purposes in a range of contexts. Since a considerable amount of our students' English language usage occurs online, it is vital to maintain safety and discern between secure and risky digital settings.

Given the prevalence of online meetings and cross-cultural interactions, the ability to appreciate diverse cultures has never been more crucial. Modern education must integrate social and emotional competencies, including empathy, respect, and responsible decision-making, to prevent misunderstandings or conflicts.

The Curriculum highlights the significance of fostering critical thinking and problem-solving abilities, which will enable students to assess, analyse, and synthesize information in English. They will also use English to search for information that can assist them in addressing real-life challenges, requiring them to differentiate between trustworthy and untrustworthy information sources. Digital intelligence entails critically evaluating digital tools, infor-

mation, and content. By honing these skills, learners can become more discerning consumers of digital media and engage in more informed and meaningful digital communication.

Here are a couple of activities that can help you incorporate the development of digital skills into your EFL lessons.

## ONLINE SAFETY

1 Teach your students online safety by helping them **create a strong password**. Of course, once you teach them how to do it, they should do it at home and not share their password with anyone.

### Create a strong password

Combination of letters, numbers, upper and lower characters, special characters  
e.g. H/p'=89"@pc

### Yet easy to remember!

Some word/expression which is not in any way connected to you  
e.g. washing machine

Turn letters or sounds into numbers or special characters that look similar  
W0\$1nM@\$1n

Add the first three letters of the app you are logging into  
W0\$1nM@\$1ngma

2 Spot & stop the bully. This activity is suitable for Present Perfect practice, yet it deals with **cyberbullying and how to react to it**. The activity may be used as an encouragement for your students to share their online experiences.

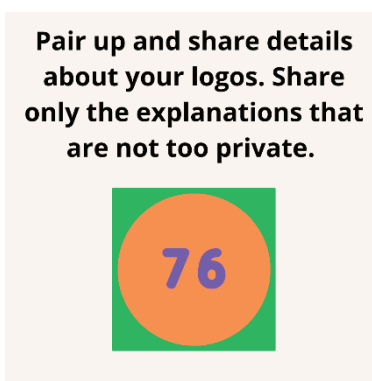
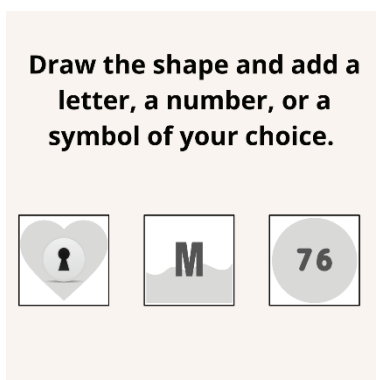
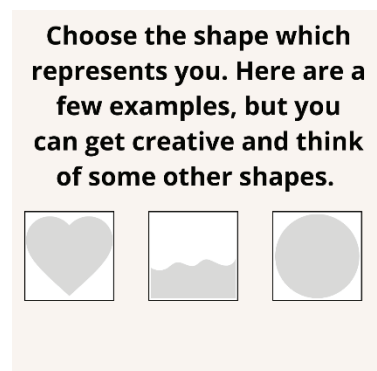
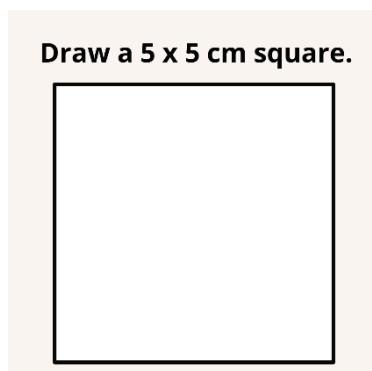
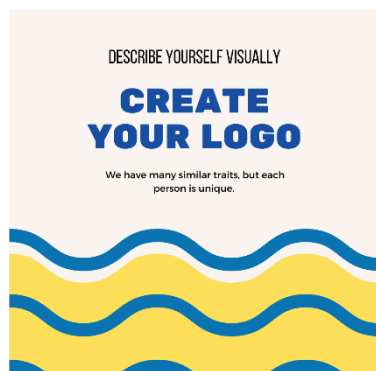
As a follow-up, you may create a list of rules on the etiquette they must follow when chatting with their classmates in Viber or WhatsApp groups.



## VISUAL LITERACY

1 Create your logo. Colours are said to be symbolic, and the symbolism of colours varies across cultures. This activity will leave your students understanding the symbolism

of colours and using character-related vocabulary. As a follow-up, motivate your students to research the symbolism of colours in different cultures (e.g., Do all brides dress in white?)



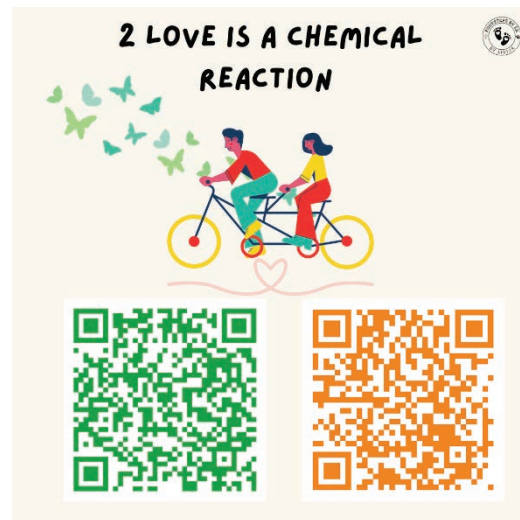
## AVOIDING THE EPISTEMIC BUBBLES

According to Nguyen (2020), our online behaviour might lead to living in the so-called *epistemic bubbles* – social structures in which we are exposed to opinions and beliefs similar to our own. Our tendency to like and follow particular content on the internet can reveal our preferences, which in turn enables online algorithms to recommend comparable content. As a result, we may not often encounter divergent viewpoints, failing to challenge our convictions and instead erroneously considering them as

actual knowledge. To foster critical thinking among our students, we can incorporate exercises that emphasise the variety of sources available to gather information on specific subjects.

**1 Love is all you need.** This activity is aimed at helping students make informed decisions. It is not good to be opinionated without arguments supporting your opinions. Also, it is always good to hear what different people say about a topic, not to get stuck with just one point of view.





**2 What would they say?** Use this activity to encourage students to take different points of view in thinking about a situation. Establish an environment where there are no “winners,” and every argument is regarded as an individ-

ual’s perspective. We should weigh all arguments before making decisions on what behaviour is optimal for ourselves and others.



WHAT WOULD THEY SAY



What would different people say about the same topic?

Model your sentences like this:

A doctor **would say** that eating meat, fruit and vegetables is important for our health.

HER GRANNY

HER TEACHERS

Sarah is wearing a cute crop top.

HER BESTIE

HER BROTHER

HER VIOLIN TEACHER

HER PARENTS

Martha plays violin for 2 hours every afternoon.

HER NEIGHBOURS

HER BEST FRIENDS

HIS WIFE

HIS CHILDREN

Will rides a motorcycle. He is 50 years old.

GRETA THUNBERG

A PSYCHOLOGIST

HER DOCTOR

HER GRANDCHILDREN

Brenda sings in a choir. She is 75 and not very musical.

A PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN

HER HUSBAND

HIS FRIENDS

ANIMAL WELFARE SOCIETY


Aron is keeping a monkey as a pet.

A PET-SHOP OWNER

HIS NEIGHBOURS


**3 Sides to a story.** Conflicts are a regular part of children's school experience. This activity develops reading and

speaking skills and teaches children to listen to others and understand their emotions and the resulting behaviour.




**Sides of a story**

There was a fight at school. Sarah jumped on Owen's back, knocked him down and started punching him in the face and calling him names. Owen fought back and kicked her in the knee really hard. When teacher came, they were both bruised and on the edge of tears.




**Make a dialogue**

Form groups of three.  
Each person will take one role - Sarah, Owen, or teacher.  
Read about your character.




**Owen**

I meant nothing wrong. I like Sarah, I mean, I like her maybe too much. She just seemed uninterested last few days and I wanted to make fun or tell a joke. We usually joke about how pain in the neck our parents can be. I thought her parents must've made her miserable, because she wasn't her usual self. So I said something bad about her mum and she went bonkers.



**Sarah**

It has been a tough week for me. Mum is at hospital, dad is nervous all the time and my baby sister is cranky and annoying. I don't talk about it at school, but I am fed up with everybody cracking bad jokes and stressing over things that are so irrelevant. Teachers think their subjects are the most important, my friends are spoiled and childish. When Owen mentioned my mum, I flipped.



**teacher**

I was in the principal's office talking about problems in my class. It seems that my students are causing problems all the time. Some parents called me a few days ago because of cyber bullying. How can I control what my students are doing online? Everybody expects me to react, but how? I was told they do not deserve to go on the school trip and I shouldn't take them. But I've already made the arrangements. And I promised to take them all. And now this.

## WELL-BEING

Maintaining a healthy self-image through self-care is an essential aspect of modern life, and taking a break from the digital world is sometimes necessary and well-deserved. Consider introducing activities that promote emo-

tional understanding and well-being among students.


**1 Well-being.** The activity encourages students to discuss various emotions in a non-intrusive manner. As a follow-up, prompt your students to explain the use of emojis to you and whether it differs from how adults use them. You may as well learn a lot yourself.



**well-being**

Talk about feelings with your students. Give each student a piece of paper and ask them to do the following:

THIS TASK CAN BE MADE DIGITAL.



**EMOTION**

Think about your current emotions. Choose one and write it down. Then pass the sheet to one person in your class.



**SONG**

Think about the emotion on the sheet you got and write the title of a song that goes along with it. Pass the sheet on.



**COLOUR(S)**

Think about the song from the sheet you got. What are the colours that come to your mind? Write them down and pass the sheet on.

SCAN THE QR CODE OR CLICK HERE FOR IDEAS.



**EMOJI**

Now look at everything there is on the new sheet. Create an emoji to go with it. Present the sheet to your class. Listen to the song, make remarks, look for reactions. Make it fun!

For more similar activities, please visit our Facebook or Instagram page by scanning the QR codes below.



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# International summer schools and holiday language courses- all the things you may want to know

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At this time of the year, international summer schools and holiday language courses are extremely popular. Here is some information about these language-learning programs. Most of the programs are designed to immerse students in English language and culture. The primary goal of such language summer courses is to provide opportunities for students to use the language as much as possible.

Here are some characteristics of international summer schools:

- a visit to Britain or Ireland gives students the opportunity to practise English in real-life situations
- students gain more confidence in speaking the language, as well as learning more about the culture
- students really bond with each other and make new friends regardless of their country of origin

Besides English lessons, there are daily field trips and recreational activities under the guidance of English teachers, who ensure that students continue to practise their English outside of the classroom. English lessons usually take place on weekday mornings and the students are divided into small groups according to age and language level. This allows teachers to tailor to student's needs and provide plenty of feedback. Teachers, who have been carefully selected according to their qualifications and experience in teaching English, take great care of the stu-

dents. They are usually accommodated on the campus where the course takes place. The entire school usually has one Director of Studies (DoS), his or her Assistant (ADoS), activity managers and activity leaders. All of them are responsible for children's safety because safeguarding objectives are taken seriously. These rules are based on key acts and government guideline documents (The Children Act 1989 & 2004, Local Government Act 2000, Protection of Freedom Act 2012, Counter-Terrorism & Security Act 2015). Safeguarding Key Points are displayed on noticeboards around the centre and the teacher's role is very clear. However lively and caring their personalities are, there are clear objectives when it comes to safeguarding children.

Besides learning the language, there is also a cultural element when we discuss international summer schools. Students are exposed to the traditions and social norms which also improve their communication skills. Whether it is the greetings, punctuality, or my personal favourite, **respecting the queue**, there are many forms that may not be covered in language books but when experienced first-hand, become a core memory for some students.

After the completion of the course, there is typically a certificate ceremony preceded by tests, or finished projects of some sort, all relying on CEFR. In conclusion, summer schools and holiday language courses are a brilliant way to use the language whether you are a student or a teacher.



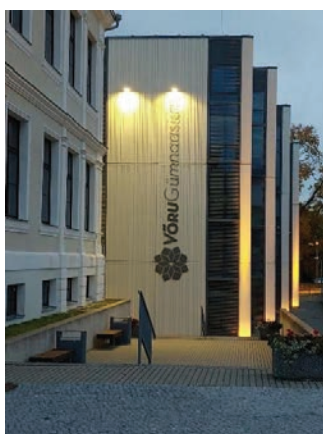
# Job shadowing in Estonia

Dajana Jelavić

teacher mentor at Jure Kaštelan high school, Omiš

Job shadowing is a valuable professional development program that offers teachers the opportunity to gain new insights and concepts through observing European peers at work for a set period of time, usually for a few days to a few weeks.

Last October my Estonian colleague, EFL teacher Ruth Nommik, hosted me at Võru Gymnasium, which was declared the best in 2020.



*Newly constructed extension and the refurbished manor building / View from the staff room/ Interior*

During a five-day stay, I observed the work of my mentor Ruth Nommik and some other teachers.

As a part of the activity, I also had the opportunity to deliver two lessons as a replacement for a colleague who tested positive for Covid. However, this was a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the most significant events

in the history of Estonia and the city of Võru via direct communication with the students and from their presentations. Substitutions are not required at this school because students stay in class and learn the material independently in such cases.

The working day begins with breakfast in the school canteen, which is provided for 220 students coming from different parts of Võru region. 75-minute classes begin at 8:30 a.m. and last until 3:55 p.m. with 10-minute breaks after each one. After the second lesson, there is a forty-minute break for lunch, which is served to teachers and students in the school canteen. Once a month, a quiz is organised during the lunch break for all students and staff. Happy hour occurs every Friday for those who did not write the test or simply want to correct a negative grade, but they have to report their intention to repeat the test by Thursday.



*3-minute break during the lesson to stretch, move around or do an exercise*

Learning is valued in this high school and 'can be encountered' at every corner. The school layout promotes students' collaboration, while flexible and comfortable furniture allows them to work in groups on project tasks. Students unwind in hammocks and lounge chairs between classes, playing chess, pool, or the traditional Estonian board game korona.

The school celebrated its eighth birthday on October 5th, World Teacher's Day. The graduates took on the role of teachers and taught their younger peers and teachers that day. It would not be a proper celebration without the school's mascot, the cat Johannes II, who is taken care of by the German language teacher.

In the first lesson, the teachers had the Estonian language. Their assignment was to use the given vocabulary to create a poem about a graduating class. The second lesson was Art, where they were given a colleague's name and



an activity that they had to draw. In the third lesson, they had P.E. and an aerobics instructor taught them dance choreography. The fourth lesson was Homeroom, when I gave a presentation on my school, Omiš, Croatia, and our Erasmus+ KA122 project „I.D.I. keep pace with change“ in which framework the aforementioned activity of job shadowing took place.



*Giving a presentation to my Estonian colleagues*

Furthermore, the headteacher Karmo Kurvits had a surprise for his staff and students by inviting a famous Estonian singer who performed in the school hall. After the joint activities with the students, the teachers dined at a charming, traditional restaurant outside the city that served regional specialties. The celebration ended in the evening with awards being given in the city concert hall to the best teachers in Võru. The mayor presented the awards and used the occasion to personally toast each teacher with a glass of champagne. It was a whole-day, solemn celebration of World Teachers' Day in a country with one of the best education systems in Europe.

Estonia's educational model, which is based on the autonomy of schools and teachers, competition, and evaluation, is one of the key factors of their success. The fact that evaluation results are made public fosters a competitive environment that ultimately encourages parents to enroll their kids at schools with the best ratings, thus putting headteachers and teachers under pressure to perform to the highest standard. The more students the school draws in with its excellent work, the more money it will get from the state.

Subject	Number of courses (GREECE) national curriculum	Number of courses (VG) Võru High School	10	11	12
Estonian	6	6	2	2	2
Literature	5	6	2	2	2
Foreign language at B2 level (English)	5	11	4	4	3
Foreign language at B1 level (German/Russian)	5	7	3	3	1
Mathematics	8 or 14	15	5	5	5
Geography	3	3	3	-	-
Biology	4	4	1	2	1
Chemistry	3	3	2	1	-
Physics	5	5	2	2	1
History	6	6	6	6	6
Human studies	1	1	-	-	1
Social Studies	2	2	-	-	2
Music	3	3	1	1	1
Art	2	2	1	1	-
Physical education	5	5	1	2	2
The basics of research		1	-	1	-
ICT		1	1	-	-
<i>The Academy of Johannes*</i>	<i>*study skills improvement</i>	1*	1		
Research or practical work		1	-	1	-
<b>In total</b>	<b>63 or 69</b>	<b>82*</b>			

Humanities	Courses	Natural sciences	Courses	Science	Courses
Estonian language and literature	2	Biology	3	Physics	2
Study of religions	1	Chemistry	2	Economy	1
Philosophy	1	Physics	1	Mathematics	1
History	1	Geography	1	Technical drawing	1
Foreign language at B1 level	2			Programming	2
<b>In total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>7</b>

For eight years, Võru Gymnasium has provided a variety of learning opportunities, broadening horizons, and fostering development in its three areas of study: sciences, natural sciences, and humanities. The academic year is divided into three cycles, with an optional week following each cycle when students can enjoy learning about things of their interest.

Additionally, a wide range of opportunities are presented to them in about 50 elective courses, ranging from yoga and street art to urban ecology, robotics, national defence, marketing, rhetoric, programming, calligraphy, and entrepreneurship.

<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE CURRICULUM</b>			
	<b>10th grade</b>	<b>11th grade</b>	<b>12th grade</b>
1st course	Active, Passive, Nouns, Articles	Cultural Environment	Healthy Eating; Health and Medicine
2nd course	Questions, Reported Speech, Letter Writing, Conditionals	Natural Environment	Estonia (counties, culture...)
3rd course	Education	Economics and Technical Environment	Estonia and the world (different partnerships with UK/EU...)
4th course	Work	Social Media and Law	

Regarding English teaching, there are significant differences between the educational systems in Croatia and Estonia. Estonian students take a placement test at the start of the 10th grade, which divides them into two groups based on their language proficiency (B2/C1). Two groups of about 15 students follow different curricula in four courses of 20 English lessons. As a result, students advance much more quickly in their language acquisition because the teaching is shaped by their needs and abilities. In the 10th grade, grammar is covered in the first 40 language lessons. There is only one textbook in use (Grammarway 4, Express Publishing) while all other materials are chosen or created by the teachers according to the topics covered in the course. Graduates who successfully complete the Cambridge Advanced exam are exempt from the English language portion of the state matriculation exam.

Reading is a key component of education, so students are required to read and keep a reading diary. Every week, after reading the assigned number of pages, they have to turn in a handwritten summary with unfamiliar words. The reading portfolio contains copies of every summary. Group work, project-based learning, and independent research are also popular teaching strategies in Estonia.

At the end of each academic year, students and teachers select ***The Event of the Year***, a noteworthy event that somehow defined the previous year. They preserve significant achievements by making decorative clay plates and display them on the school grounds as visual reminders of school successes.



Visual reminders

Reading the school newspaper **Dictum Factum**, you can discover all the news about classes, study trips, optional subjects and school events. 11th graders do research and write for the newspaper which gives them an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills acquired in media culture classes.

Another interesting feature of Võru High School is the **Productivity Calculator**, a system designed to enhance collaboration and community while fostering an optimistic and entrepreneurial school climate. E.g. On Style Day, students dress up in clothes from a predetermined style period (the 90s, sports style, Christmassy...). Each dressed

student provides one point to his class, and points are awarded not only individually but also in proportion to how many students in the class participated in a particular activity and how well they placed in a competition. The first three places win a cash prize, mainly used for a trip at the end of the year, which is entirely designed and organised by the students. Moreover, from October to March, the Student Council plans entertaining contests and events that are announced in advance. The first three places share a total of 600 euros in the ratio of 50% for first, 30% for second and 20% for third place.

Along with the state matriculation exam, Estonian students must complete some practical work, conduct a research project, or start a company as part of their graduation requirements. The student company is a component of the high school program for entrepreneurial education aiming at learning through business activity. It operates for 9 months and is run by three to five students during one school year. The members of the students' companies, under the teacher's supervision, choose the product, assign jobs and tasks, earn salaries, keep financial records and compile an annual work report. They participate in students' company fairs and other events where communication and marketing skills are learned while teamwork and planning are also developed. The most beautiful sales stands and the most interesting products and services are selected at the mentioned fairs.

To conclude, the benefits of carrying out international mobility are numerous and far-reaching, therefore participation in activities such as job shadowing should be encouraged in all educational institutions. Erasmus provides teachers with an opportunity to gain new knowledge and skills in their subject area and teaching methods; allows them to experience different cultures and languages; enables teachers to connect with colleagues which can lead to new collaborations, partnerships and professional opportunities.

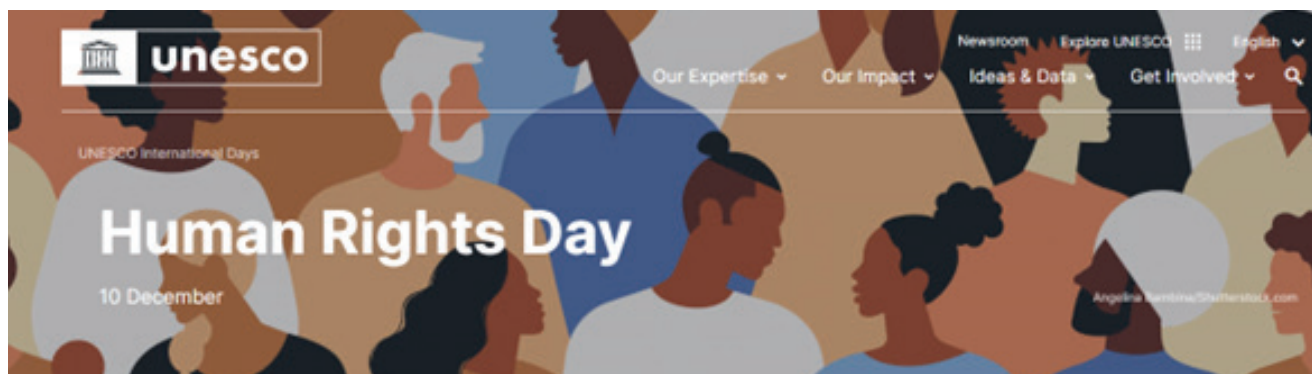
Overall, participating in Erasmus is a rewarding and enriching experience, providing me with valuable professional and personal growth opportunities.

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# LET THEM SPEAK!

Barbara Bošnjak



Even though speaking skills in classrooms might be considered neglected when compared to the frequency of implementation of the other skills, every teacher regardless of the language taught, is aware of the fact that speaking is actually the most valuable of the language skills and oftentimes quite challenging to successfully apply in classrooms. If there is one thing my experience has taught me so far, is that when organizing speaking activities, it is always best to choose those that are straightforward while at the same time thought-provoking and motivating for the learners. Whenever possible I tend to blend the speaking assignments within a lesson so that at first glance it is not obvious that the task at hand aims to result in speaking skill development or perhaps even assessment. Since such opportunities do not present themselves as frequently as one would hope, the following examples aim to demonstrate their importance and value.

## LET THEM SPEAK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS!

Human Rights Day is celebrated every December 10 to commemorate the day when the General Assembly of the UN adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The date seemed perfect for inclusion in regular English lessons since it fits the description of commemorating various important dates and as such, is adequate for the planned lesson schedule with the main learning objective being raising students' awareness about human rights. The main outcomes of the lessons included the raising of students' awareness regarding the fact that human rights belong to everyone and are a key factor for personal growth and development. Having set the desired outcomes, the overall idea of the lesson was a

rather simple one - to make the students start speaking.

In the initial part of the 90-minute-long lesson, students were divided in groups with the purpose of researching and gathering information about Human Rights Day according to the instructions provided by the teacher. These mostly included its origin, importance and impact on society as well as determining basic human needs to allow both physical and mental growth. The groups shared their discoveries while highlighting the most important information.

After having done the research, the second stage was to present the activity which would take up the majority of the lesson – the marketplace activity. Namely, we are all familiar with the concept of selling produce and items at a marketplace. This time, however, the concept of a traditional marketplace was abandoned, and students were presented with an alternative - they could either choose to be *human beings* (people walking around, browsing and purchasing) or *human right owners* (people selling different human rights at the marketplace). Both groups were given particular instructions on how to perform their roles. *Human beings* were presented with a certain amount of money to be spent and instructed to make a shopping list according to their wishes, browse around and negotiate prices before deciding to buy a human right, whereas *human right owners* were encouraged to create promotional materials, advertise their products and of course to try and sell at the highest price possible. The aim of the activity was not to make money of course, but rather to think about which of the rights people are not able to live without, which are essential, the most beneficial ones and finally at what cost would people be will-



**Marketplace activity**

- Today you are going to be working in a marketplace.
- Some students will be 'human beings' buying human rights.
- Some students will be 'human rights owners' selling human rights.



ing to give up those rights. Upon the completion of the activity, both groups were asked to think about a set of questions and thereby reflect on their assignments. Some of these were to name the most and the least popular human rights, to present the advertising campaigns, to list the purchased rights along with the explanations for their choice and similar activities.

From what I observed, students were highly motivated to participate in this unusual simulation. In addition to it being a bit competitive, it enabled them to think for themselves, to make their own choices based on their own judgement and assessment. It allowed them to think and SPEAK for themselves. The conclusion drawn from the entire lesson was that we as people do not ever have to choose our rights – we are all equally entitled to each and every one of these human rights. So, you see, thanks to this activity not only did my students start thinking for themselves, but they also started talking for themselves.

The idea for the activity, even though a bit modified and adapted, was found on the following web page:

- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/secondary-education-resources/lesson-plan-ideas/lesson-8-what-are-human-rights>

An additional source of information regarding the topic was found here:

- <https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/human-rights-day-2023/>
- <https://www.unesco.org/en/days/human-rights>

## LET THEM SPEAK ABOUT EDUCATION!

Another, equally interesting, however slightly different speaking activity resulted from, yet another, important date, January 24 - International Day of Education. Initially, the activity was perceived as a natural continuation of the previously described lessons, although it can be performed independently as well. In addition, it does not have to relate to celebrating the International Day of Education but can instead be applied whenever the topic of conversation is related to education. The overall aim of the lesson was to raise awareness about the importance of

education, equality and freedom of choice when talking about education.

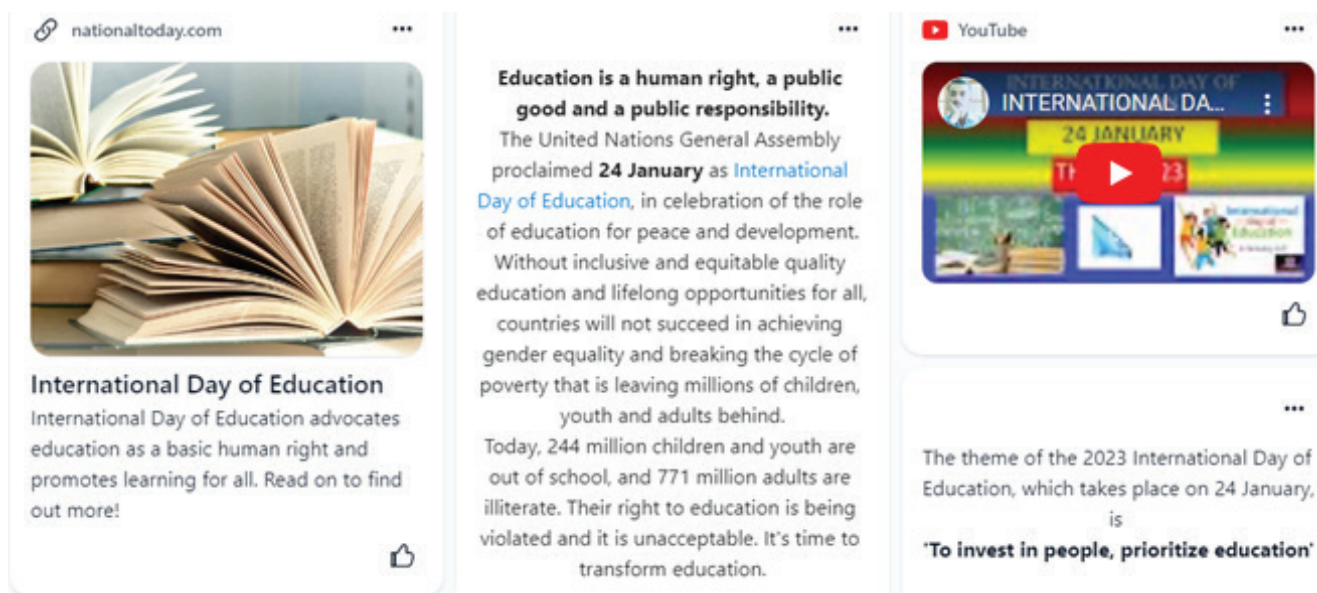
To start with, students were presented with a link to digital material created in Wakelet which they were asked to go through on their own. It is always a good idea to leave room for various preferences when it comes to the choice of working style, so whenever possible, I leave it up to my students to decide whether they wish to collaborate with someone or work individually. After having revised and analysed the materials, students were asked to participate in a short quiz which was also a part of the digital Wakelet collection with the purpose of checking how successful they were in discovering details about the International Day of Education.



The following activity was completed in pairs or smaller groups with the first step being to choose a famous person whose education should be researched and presented. My students were encouraged to choose someone on their own, however, you can always prepare a list of people you wish the students to investigate depending on the topic you are currently covering. Apart from presenting the education and career path of a chosen person, students were invited to speculate about how things might have been if that person had chosen a different path. From what I have experienced so far, students usually react positively to such activities, since they enable them to express themselves creatively.

The final part of the lesson demanded individual work in which students were offered a series of photos of different, randomly chosen people. The task was to choose a person from one of the presented photos and tell their story or in other words to put themselves in the picture. Students were led by a series of questions regarding the country of residence, current location, age, future plans, hopes and dreams etc. Of course, the activity itself can be modified to suit your own needs referring to time restrictions and level of learners. Each student was invited to tell the chosen person's story while following the list of previously set questions. Through this activity, students were encouraged to think creatively, listen to each other's stories, compare them, but first and foremost to SPEAK freely.





The Wakelet collection is available on the following link:

- <https://wakelet.com/wake/jYsW5Ejy1xlwltEFjjLoL>

The idea for the activity, even though adapted, was found on this webpage:

- <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-adults/activities/advanced-c1/put-yourself-picture>

Conclusively, I would like to say that regardless of the topic, students should always be given the opportunity to speak up openly and freely, to express themselves

along with their opinions. Learning a foreign language is a long-lasting and rather demanding process in which the learners need to seize every chance to progress and develop their skills whereby the speaking skill might be considered amongst the most demanding ones. The examples of the provided activities will hopefully prove student-friendly and easily applicable in everyday classes, allowing growth and development by simply letting the students SPEAK. Therefore, the most suitable way to finish the article would undoubtedly be Nelson Mandela's quote about education in which it is defined as: "The most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

# THE POWER OF MINDFULNESS IN SCHOOLS: CULTIVATING WELL-BEING FOR TEACHERS AND CHILDREN

Anita Žepina

OŠ Benkovac



In our modern, busy world, stress and distractions have become prevalent, impacting teachers and students in educational settings. Mindfulness, which involves focusing one's attention on the present moment, has gained recognition for its potential to improve well-being and create a positive learning atmosphere. This article examines the advantages of mindfulness for teachers and children, providing practical approaches that schools can adopt to promote well-being. Supported by scientific research and expert insights, mindfulness has the power to establish an educational environment that nurtures the growth and success of all individuals.

The Erasmus program in Florence, Italy, from 18th to 23rd July 2022, offered a life-changing experience for teachers from around the world. Titled "Mindfulness for Teachers:

A Hands-on Approach," this course provided valuable lessons for the classroom and personal well-being. The teachers received practical materials, including quick exercises and worksheets, to use as warm-up or closure activities. People from various countries came together to explore the advantages of mindfulness. So, what are the advantages for the teachers?



Teachers play a crucial role in shaping their students' lives, yet their own well-being is often neglected. Introducing mindfulness practices in schools can bring numerous benefits to teachers, including stress reduction, enhanced focus and attention, and improved emotional regulation. Teaching can be demanding, leading to burnout and heightened stress levels. However, mindfulness techniques such as deep breathing exercises and meditation can support teachers in managing stress and improving their overall well-being. Moreover, mindfulness cultivates the ability to stay present and focused, enabling teachers to engage more effectively with their students and foster a positive classroom environment. By practicing mindfulness, teachers also develop emotional intelligence and gain the ability to regulate their emotions, empowering them to respond calmly to challenging situations rather than reacting impulsively.

On the other hand, the well-being of children is influenced by various challenges they encounter, such as academic



pressure, social interactions, and emotional development. Integrating mindfulness practices into the school curriculum can have profound positive impacts on children's well-being, including enhanced mental health, improved focus and attention, and better emotional regulation and self-awareness. Research has shown that mindfulness can effectively reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression in children, promoting emotional resilience and overall mental well-being. Mindfulness exercises, such as mindful breathing or body scans, can also aid children in developing their ability to concentrate, leading to improved academic performance. Furthermore, practicing mindfulness enables children to recognize and manage their emotions, fostering self-awareness, empathy, and healthier relationships with their peers. By incorporating mindfulness into schools, we empower children with valuable tools to navigate their challenges and promote their overall well-being.



Introducing mindfulness into schools can be done in simple yet effective ways. Here are some practical strategies for incorporating mindfulness practices into the classroom. First, teachers can allocate a few minutes each day for students to engage in deep breathing exercises, encouraging them to focus on their breath, inhaling deeply and exhaling slowly, which helps cultivate a sense of calm and relaxation. Second, during classroom activities, teachers can guide students to practice mindful listening, where they pay attention to sounds in the environment without judgment, fostering awareness and focus. Third, gratitude exercises can be incorporated by encouraging students to express appreciation for things or people in their lives, fostering positivity and building resilience. Lastly, integrating short movement breaks into the school day, such as stretching or mindful walking, can help students release tension and improve their focus. In conclusion, mindfulness offers a powerful tool for teachers and students to navigate the challenges of the school environment. By incorporating simple mindfulness practices into daily routines, educators can support their own well-being while cultivating a positive atmosphere in the classroom. The benefits extend to students, helping them develop essential life skills, regulate their emotions, and



improve their overall well-being. By embracing mindfulness in schools, we can create nurturing environments that promote learning, resilience, and a sense of connection.

In conclusion, mindfulness offers a powerful tool for both teachers and students to navigate the challenges of the school environment. By incorporating simple mindfulness practices into daily routines, educators can support their own well-being while fostering a positive atmosphere in the classroom. The benefits of mindfulness extend to students, promoting the development of essential life skills, emotional regulation, and overall well-being. By embracing mindfulness in schools, we can create nurturing environments that encourage learning, resilience, and a sense of connection. The Erasmus program in Florence provided teachers with an unforgettable adventure, offering opportunities for growth, development, and cultural exchange. The Mindfulness for Teachers course in Florence equipped educators with practical techniques and resources to enhance their classrooms. Through embracing mindfulness, teachers discovered the transformative power of well-being for both themselves and their students. The experiences and connections forged during the program will have a lasting impact on classrooms, fostering positivity, mindfulness, and student empowerment. Inspired and motivated, these teachers are now equipped with new knowledge to make a meaningful difference in their students' lives. Florence will forever hold cherished memories, symbolizing the transformative journey of this exceptional Erasmus experience.

## eTwinning project

# Our well-being

Tajana Bundara  
Lidija Šaravanja

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“The key to a healthy life is having a healthy mind.”

Richard Davidson, Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and the Founder and Director of the Center for Healthy Minds

“Your talent determines what you can do. Your motivation determines how much you’re willing to do. Your attitude determines how well you do it.”

Lou Holtz, American Football Player

Our primary agenda was to work on the mental health of our pupils since, in these hard coronavirus times, it is a vital element which we need to provide for our pupils. We were all launched into the space of distance learning, and not all coped with it well. So, we decided to show our pupils how to use IT tools to energize, develop, and nourish well-being in this new hybrid educational situation.

The authors of the eTwinning project Our Well-being are Tajana Bundara and her Italian colleague Natalia Caracci, an English and French teacher from ICS ‘E. Armaforte’ di Altotofonte Palermo, Sicily. Project partners are Lidija Šaravanja, an English and German teacher from Vladimir Nazor Elementary School in Čepin, Marina Kopilović, an English teacher from Stevan Sremac Elementary School in Belgrade, Tijana Nesić-Ristić, an English teacher from Savremena Primary and Secondary School in Belgrade, Katarina Mladenović, a psychologist from Savremena Primary and Secondary School in Belgrade, Ivana Vlastelica, a Biology and Chemistry teacher from Manuš Elementary School in Split and Mirjana Janković, a PE teacher from Manuš Elementary School in Split. We all wanted to entwine the humane and digital component of our new teaching contexts (hybrid, blended, online) and spotlight the mental health and well-being of the future citizens of the world, our pupils. The focus was for our students to be able to recognize the state of their well-being and the state of the well-being of their close ones.

The highlight was on gearing them with the skills and knowledge to choose specific activities to improve their well-being and the well-being of their close ones, explaining the meaning and importance of the well-being, recognizing and choosing healthy habits, using gained knowledge in their lives, using new IT tools, implementing skills for preserving a positive mindset and attitude and developing the attitude to give a helping hand to those who need it.

The topics our students researched were things that make them happy, the influence of sleep, sports, hobbies, pets, colours, food, sun and vitamin D on our well-being, how to have fun during the lockdown and why friendship is important. All project partners had complete freedom in the choice of strategies regarding the implementation of the topics respecting the project steps and chronology.

Apropos the chronology of the project activities, first we had a kick-off conference, where pupils got to know each other. One of the project partners presented the topics we covered. In the first part of the project, pupils researched these topics and created videos, presentations, and posters. They displayed their products at the next video-conference entitled *International Exhibition of Happiness*. Pupils watched their peers’ work; some got inspired, while others got admired and voted for the best work. We used the Zoom platform to execute video-conferences. The evaluation was executed during the video-conference by using Mentimeter. Students embarked on another research adventure in the second part of the project. The best work was chosen during the last video-conference based on peer evaluation using Mentimeter.

Tajana created unique worksheets for each project question. The worksheets contained research pages accessible via QR codes and exact instructions for pupils on what their work should have. Pupils worked in pairs, presented their work in front of the class and, in the end, made a quiz for the audience where they checked their gained knowledge; pupils used mostly Wordwall to create quizzes and PowerPoint for presentations.

## Nature and our well-being

### How does nature benefit our well-being?

Do the research.

10-reasons-why-being-in-nature-is-good-for-you



zasto-je-toliko-vazno-boraviti-u-prirodi



how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing



List of adjectives



Online rječnik



Prepare a video, poster, flyer, pamphlet answering the question –

How does nature benefit our well-being?

Use IT-tools (Word doc, powerpoint, Postermywall, Canva...any tool you feel comfortable with).

Prepare a speech to present your product.

Your speech should last 1,5 – 2 min.

The outline of your work

Title

Facts

Advice

Conclusion

Prepare an online quiz for the audience.

Instructions:

- Follow the rubric criteria
- Use IT-tools
- Use short and clear sentences
- Use 4-6 images
- Write your speech, practice it and make sure it lasts 1,5 – 2 min.

0:37

## Taking a ... helps you calm down

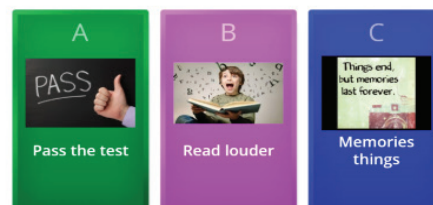


◀ 4 of 8 ▶



✓ 0 0:08

## Studying while walking in the forest helps us...



◀ 2 of 8 ▶

✓ 0

Based on this rubric, Tajana conducted summative assessments of their work.



## Oral Presentation Rubric : eTwinning - Our well-being

Teacher Name: **Mrs. Bundara**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Speaks Clearly</b>	Speaks clearly all (100-95%) the time, and mispronounces no words.	Speaks clearly all (100-95%) the time, but mispronounces one word.	Speaks clearly most ( 94-85%) of the time. Mispronounces one - two words.	Often mumbles or can not be understood OR mispronounces more than one word.
<b>Enthusiasm</b>	Facial expressions and body language show a strong interest and enthusiasm.	Facial expressions and body language sometimes show a strong interest and enthusiasm.	Facial expressions and body language are used to try to show enthusiasm.	Very little use of facial expressions or body language.
<b>Posture and Eye Contact</b>	Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident. Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Stands up straight and establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation.	Sometimes stands up straight and establishes eye contact.	Slouches and/or does not look at people during the presentation.
<b>Listens to Other Presentations</b>	Listens intently. Does not make distracting noises or movements.	Listens intently but has one distracting noise or movement.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening but is not distracting.	Sometimes does not appear to be listening and has distracting noises or movements.
<b>Content</b>	Shows a full understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of the topic.	Shows a good understanding of parts of the topic.	Does not seem to understand the topic very well.
<b>Product</b>	The product is original, creative, interesting and 95-100% correct (grammar and punctuation).	The product is interesting and almost correct (1-2 grammar and punctuation mistakes).	The product has more than 2 grammar and punctuation mistakes and/or looks only ok.	The product is not correct. It looks messy.

The primary educational objective focuses on efficiently promoting students learning with all pedagogical approaches. We implemented a student-centered methodology enabling the 4 Cs (creativity, collaboration, communication, and critical thinking) to foster 21st-century skills. Pupils played an active role in the learning process. They used prior knowledge and new experiences to acquire something new. We, the teachers, were facilitators and moderators creating and structuring the conditions for learning. Pupils explored the topics, developed a deeper understanding of the ideas. They collaborated, coordinated, integrated, and exchanged ideas and perspectives. We encouraged teamwork and the pupils enjoyed it; they were content and filled with pleasure, which led to wonderful products and a positive learning environment. Observing our students, we can say this effective pedagogy serves as an excellent path to academic achievement, social and emotional development, the achievement of 21st-century skills and general ability to contribute to society. The pedagogical approaches and teaching methodologies we implemented were: working in small groups, pair work, collaborative learning, positive attitude towards pupils and belief in their capacity to learn, peer evaluation, independent research by pupils, analysis and research of different materials, project-based learning, task-based learning, peer-to-peer learning, crossover learning (learning in informal settings), context-based learning, the usage of ICT accompanied all the project tasks, active listening and video-conferencing.

Many things that our students presented during the project show either their talents or skills, sometimes instant pleasures and sometimes the result of hard work and discipline. Very often in life, we discover that the harder we reach something, the greater the pleasure that comes out of it. It proved to be true with people we invited as guests into our classrooms. One of them is a very successful football player from Čepin. His name is Borna Barišić and he plays for the Glasgow Rangers. Borna is one of the people invited to talk to Čepin eighth-graders about his job. It was a series of successful people who love their jobs and who work hard for great results. Borna turned out to be a great interlocutor and inspiration. He talked about his sports beginnings and his injury, after which he had to work harder than any of his co-players. He said that he went through a typical teenage phase and then had to catch up, that talent is dominant at early stages, and after that, hard work is what distinguishes good from excellent players. He also said that it is good to have role models, but you can choose more than one, each for some characteristics you admire. And the thing that he said, and every English teacher can easily relate to is 'Learn English! Learn it at school, take a course, watch videos, seize every chance to become better because whatever you do, if you want to be successful, you will definitely need it.'



Another activity we would like to emphasize was meeting laido sensei/teacher Petar Ursić Glavanović and introducing a different hobby to our pupils. The aim was to show them that there is a hobby for everyone; it does not have to be only the standard sports pupils usually choose. The message conveyed to pupils was that being different means being unique, and that makes our lives rich and fun. Due to the pandemic, sensei Petar was not allowed to come to school, so they watched short videos about laido during homeschool and prepared questions for sensei Petar. The meeting with sensei Petar was implemented online, and the face-to-face laido demonstration this school year as soon as the epidemiological measures allowed it. Pupils were excited and thrilled about trying out a new hobby. Well-being achieved through a hobby!

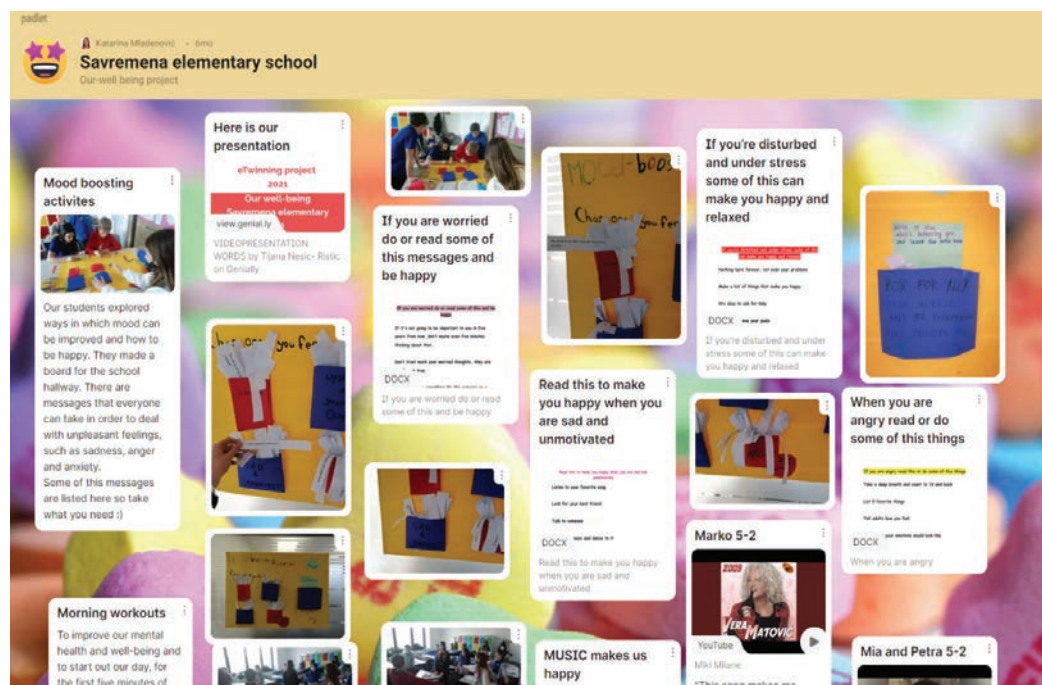
When it comes to project results, we can divide them into tangible and intangible results. The former are students' works on given topics in the form of videos, presentations, posters, e-collection/e-books on how to be happy, students' publications on the schools' webpages and the local newspaper, and there is also an educational trail in a recreational park in Čepin named Slavonian Forests made by pupils in the project. The latter include improving English language skills, ICT competences, social and emotional competences, intercultural communicative competences, strengthening introspective skills, taking responsibility for personal well-being, cultivating and nourishing empathy and sympathy, developing creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills.

At the end of the project, we were really pleased with everything we did, and we wanted to get feedback from our students. So, we made an evaluation form to ask about students' experience and the impact project activities have had on them. In a way, this evaluation showed what



has changed in their minds regarding the way they think about themselves and about people close to them. The answers show that they have learned how to use digital tools to express their happiness, they have learned how to recognize its presence or absence, how to give advice on how to be happy and how to enhance their own happiness. Some of the comments on what they liked the most

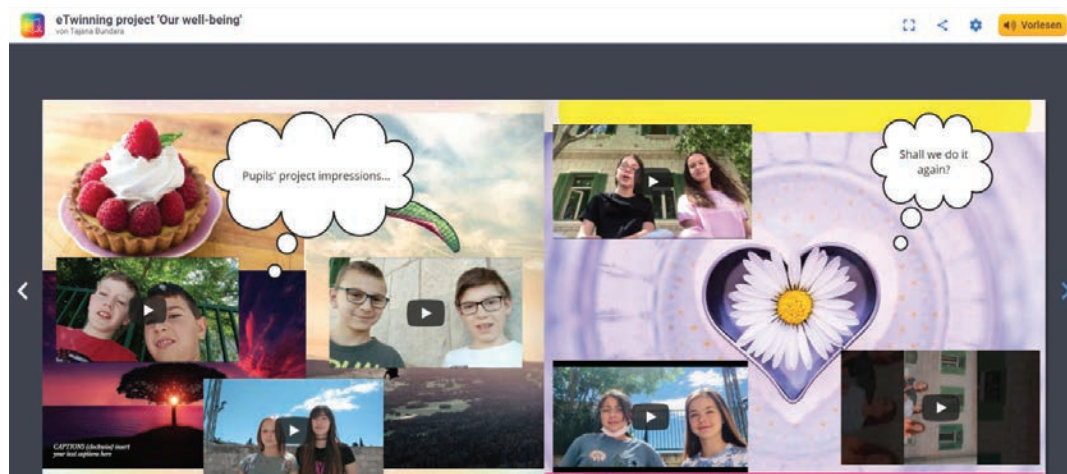
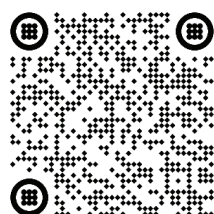
about the project are: positive attitudes students from other schools have, the fact that we all have something in common, videos about sports and pets. Things students said they have learned are: there are always things that can make us happy, how to use digital tools better, you can be happy in many ways, why it is important to be happy etc.



Padlet as a collaborative tool

This padlet has a lot of content concerning emotions and how to deal with them. It was a valuable part of our activities.

Reflection – Book Creator



The project was awarded the eTwinning Quality Label in October 2021.

Everything considered, it is our duty as educators to empower our students with awareness, knowledge of mental health, to raise the curtain on self-care and responsibility for one's own mental health and well-being. Mental

health education should be imperative at schools as it impacts on the lives of our children, the future citizens of the world.

‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.’

Nelson Mandela

# Tailor-made e-learning

Tajana Bundara  
Ksenija Rumora

'The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires.' -William A. Ward

Teachers are role models influencing students' lives, always striving to reach their full potential. Sometimes, an urge arises to create tailor-made materials that perfectly fit students' needs and contemporary e-teaching context. Video lessons can be such a tailor-made option that can help students reach their full potential.

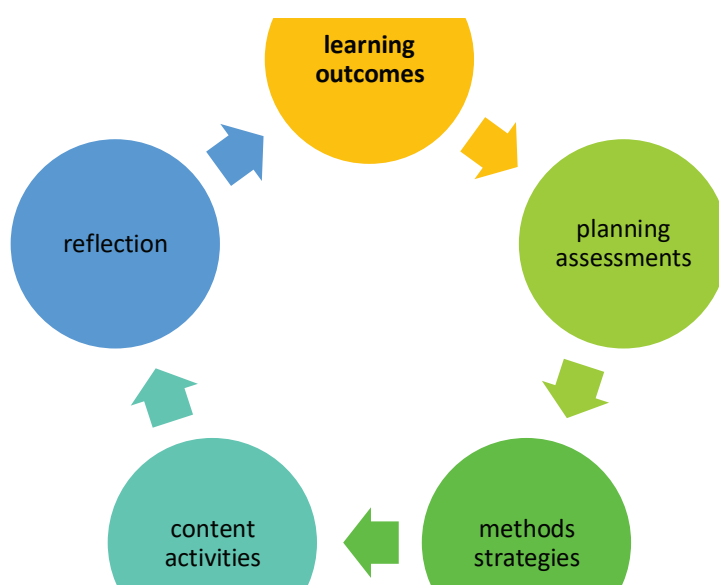
This activity requires a 3D-visualization, i.e., one must picture students on the other side of the screen, sense their needs and even catch their dreams. It seems like a challenge, but all the teachers are equipped with this 3D sensory visualization or at least they should be.

## What are the advantages of video lessons?

Video lessons offer full-time availability to learners. Their asynchronous character respects the learner's pace and creates a more engaging sensory experience opening the possibility of blended learning or flipped classroom. Students can learn from any device, at any time and their own pace. If students are absent, they can always keep up with the learning process via the link to a video lesson. Videos engage students instantly, make distance learning fun and increase students'/teachers' digital literacy. Video lessons should be 100% student-centered.

## Following the curriculum planning cycle

This is a representation of a circular flow of ideas teachers should keep in mind before designing a video lesson.





## Setting the learning outcomes

Before starting with the design of a video lesson, the first question should be: What do I want my students to be able to learn? In other words, the teacher sets the learning outcomes.

The learning outcomes should combine knowledge, skills, and values that students should gain by the end of a video lesson. They should be clear and measurable, i.e., it should be possible to test if the student has achieved the learning outcome by the end of the lesson. In case he/she has failed to achieve the learning outcome, the video lesson can always be rewound and watched as many times as the student needs it to achieve the set learning outcome. So, the learning outcomes focus on what the student should know by the end of the lesson.

The next crucial point is choosing the appropriate assessment method to test the accomplishment of the learning outcomes. Practical options include rubrics, checklists, questions/answers, online quizzes, exit cards, worksheets, and games that offer instant feedback.

Designing engaging video lessons includes thinking about methods and strategies to be employed. It is essential to keep in mind our students' proficiency level and age. Methods and strategies should play with all the students' senses, awakening their curiosity, prior knowledge, fascination, imagination, and fostering their creativity,

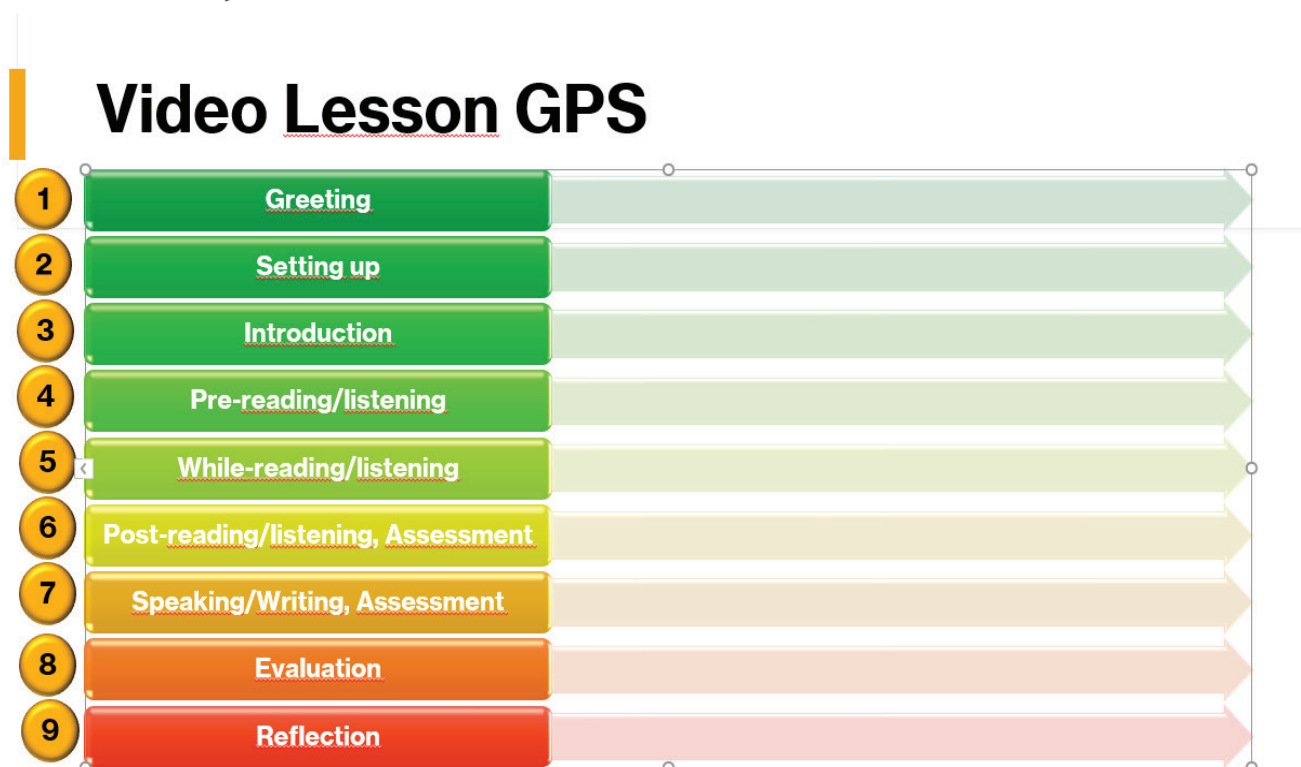
critical thinking and, if possible, collaboration and communication.

Content and activities focus on specific skills and serve the purpose of scaffolding and assessing the students' knowledge. IT tools in the video lesson intended for the students should be easily approachable, practical, and alluring. Finding a good video for the video lesson might be challenging, but it provides the students with real-life situations and makes online learning more enjoyable. Authenticity is the key to learning foreign languages. The chosen videos can be adopted by using different tools (Reclipped, Flipgrid, Edpuzzle). It is imperative to mind the copyright of the materials the teacher wishes to use in the video lesson.

Another possibility is writing authentic texts. In this case, it is essential to keep in mind the number of words, grammar, and language patterns employed. A text can be a powerful steppingstone for conveying grammar and language patterns and a specific eye-opener for thought-provoking ideas resting on different topics like civic citizenship, mental health, and entrepreneurship.

In the end, students should reflect on what they have learned through several types of exit tickets, checklists, emojis, and reflection tasks. Reflection is the last stage of a video lesson, and it helps students make sense of what they have learned and should help them grow from their learning experience.

## The anatomy of a video lesson



## Greeting/Explaining the learning outcome

As in the classroom situation, the teacher greets the students and explains the video lesson's learning outcome(s). However, it is essential to emphasize that the teacher's tone and facial expressions are the hooks that catch students' attention and focus. Talking heads throughout the entire video lesson are an option, or one can use only the microphone option.

## Setting up

In the next step, the teacher helps students set up for the video lesson. Students are asked to prepare everything they will need for the specific video lesson, i.e., a PC, a laptop, a tablet, or a mobile phone, a notebook, a pencil, and a QR code scanner. QR codes help deliver students different web pages, texts, videos, online games and other teaching materials and resources. It is vital to lead students step-by-step throughout the video lesson to keep their focus, attention and motivation level high.

## Introduction

To nurture the students' intrinsic motivation, the teacher uses various techniques and warm-up activities, from brainstorming, predicting to using some elements of games. A gaming element in online teaching is always more than welcome since it makes teaching and learning more exciting and compelling. The communication method the teacher uses should be practical and engaging. The narration should be clear, concise, and coupled with imagery aids to build a relationship with students. A *sticky* video lesson must make the audience agree/disagree, believe, care, learn, assess/evaluate, or reflect. Possible introduction methods would be using quotes, questions, music/sound, pictures, puzzles, vocabulary, or 3D animation.

## An integrated approach to language learning

Teachers should combine skills in a single activity to create situations like those students encounter in real-life situations. The usual combinations include receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). Through various and numerous activities such as choral repetition, using flashcards, pair matching, synonyms, antonyms, and challenging interactive games, all four skills (listening, reading, speaking, and writing) are being drilled. The tendency is also to foster soft skills and the sense of belonging to a community to break down isolation.

**Reading & listening** require these steps: pre-reading/listening, while-reading/while-listening, post-reading/listening. If we wish to ensure the success of our readers, it is important to undertake steps before we start with the reading task. So, it is important to activate their prior knowledge, build word and background knowledge. Relating the text to their lives is always motivating and helps them understand the text better, and of course, vocabu-

lary should always be pre-taught. The focus should not only be on the reading itself but the feeling of joy while reading, the excitement and using that knowledge, if possible, in other areas of their lives. Pre-reading strategies aim to support students in their reading.

**Pre-reading/listening tasks** are very beneficial for understanding the text. This preparation work helps students connect the new information to what they already know. To increase students' comprehension, possible strategies would be – vocabulary tasks, predictions, visualizations, prioritizing, asking questions, and, if possible, combining all these strategies.

In pre-reading/listening tasks, students are encouraged to find the keywords in a Wordcloud (synonyms/antonyms), answer questions related to their lives, connect the key vocabulary with definitions/pictures. Another option would be showing students text extracts and triggering their imagination, using a KWL chart (triggering prior knowledge), pre-teaching concepts, discussing questions, assigning them to read the first/last paragraph/sentence, playing a sound.

**While-reading/listening activities** help learners become more effective readers/listeners. So, in this stage, they confirm their predictions or skim/scan the text for specific information, find answers to previously asked questions, read/listen for gist, match paragraphs with headings, sum up a story in four sentences, fill in the gaps, answer open-ended questions, or multiple choice questions. AI text-to-speech tools, videos or people willing to lend their voices are possible options when creating a listening task.

**Post-reading/listening tasks** would be placing pictures/paragraphs in the correct order, deciding on T/F sentences, creating/playing a quiz, finishing sentences, correcting sentences, gap filling, finding appropriate quotes.

**Speaking/Writing** activities we employ are call/contact your classmate and ask him something, answer the questions by recording your voice, debate: explain pros and cons in a video and send it to your teachers, create a video story by recording your voice, give your opinion by making a recording, create a quiz and post it in your virtual classroom. It is always advisable to give examples of the assigned tasks to make instructions clearer.

Assessment is always formative, and alternatives are numerous: online tools like Wordwall offer instant feedback, PowerPoint with its animation and shapes options, or rubrics. Since the point is to build a growth mindset, negative or competitive labels are better avoided, and praising the invisible students after specific tasks is always welcome.

## Evaluation and Reflection

In the end, students should reflect on what they have learned through several types of exit tickets, checklists,

emojis, and reflection tasks. Reflection is the last stage of a video lesson, and it helps students make sense of what they have learned and grow from their learning experience. Self-check helps learners determine what they have mastered or need improvement in. They provide feedback to learners and teachers. Self-checklists also provide students with a feeling of satisfaction about the knowledge gained. Self-evaluation is implemented through *Can-do* statements, rubrics, *I know how* rubrics, and self-evaluation checklists.

### Digital tools

These are the IT tools that have proved to assist successfully in executing learning outcomes: Microsoft Office 365/ PowerPoint, Wordcloud, Wordwall, Learningapps, Adobe Spark, Rubistar4teachers, Edpuzzle, Flipgrid, PowerPoint, Reclipped, QR code Monkey. We use Microsoft Office 365/ PowerPoint to create video lessons.

### Soft skills

Today's working environment has become more competent and complex. Therefore, it is imperative to integrate soft skills in our teaching context. Most employers seek dependable, resourceful, ethical individuals who have practical communication skills, are willing to work and learn, and have a positive attitude. In addition to knowl-

edge and know-how, soft skills play/should play an essential role in the business market. We all like to work with individuals who possess these skills, hopefully.

## Conclusion

Creating video lessons has proven to be an emotional and professional stimulus and challenge. It has enriched us both personally and professionally, providing us with the opportunity to create something completely different from our previous teaching experience. The whole process can be challenging and exhausting since the video lessons need to be educational, student-centered, content-based, methodologically well planned, and at the same time intriguing, fun, and engaging. Nevertheless, the whole process invites tailor-made learning opportunities. It opens the gate of our imagination as teachers, allowing our teaching beliefs and values to touch and approach students' minds and souls – a genuine feeling of teaching.

'Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.'

William Butler Yeats

# Teaching and learning through stories and poetry

**Marinela Boras, prof. mentor**

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As students of Trade and Commercial School "Davor Milas" Osijek participated in the "HUPE in Storyland" competition and achieved great results, they decided to present their work at the Open Day that was held on 19th May 2023. There were numerous workshops in various subjects such as Marketing and Entrepreneurship, and one of the foreign language workshops was "Storyland".

Gabrijela Levačić wrote "A little moment of eternity" and was in the top 5 in the category of secondary schools and Ante Vekić wrote "A geek and a gal". They decided to read their stories to their peers, students, parents and other interested public. The audience could listen to the most interesting parts of their stories, but they could also visit the book corner. Books in English were all over the classroom and the students could take one, sit comfortably in the book corner and enjoy reading.

After the reading of the stories, the audience could ask the authors questions about the stories so both students talked about their passion for reading, motivation for writing stories and topics of their presented stories. The discussion served not just to motivate students for writing their own stories, but also to motivate them to read books as new generations unfortunately read less and less.

In the school year 2022/2023, students of different classes of Trade and Commercial School "Davor Milas" Osijek learned how to write a story. They had writing workshops during their English lessons. They wrote not only stories, but they also tried writing poetry. As this was their first time writing poems in English, the topics were love and spring. The results were wonderful poems that were presented on World Poetry Day 2023.

Writing stories and poetry can be used in teaching English as a foreign language so that the students go out of their comfort zone. They actively learn by trying out something new to them, and the topics can be adapted to every level of English learner.

This is also a good way for shy students to shine as they are usually not fond of presenting, but they can write interesting stories and beautiful poems. As English teachers already use stories in their lessons, I would recommend using poetry. It produces not just great results in learning the English language, but the students can be creative and develop their imagination.



# To SOL or not to SOL – is it really a question? To SOL or not to SOL – is it really a question?

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Those teachers who are lucky enough to attend the 31st HUPE Conference in Poreč will have the opportunity to hear the experience of attending this wonderful course. Teachers who have been at HUPE conferences for years already know everything about SOL. According to their official page, Sharing One Language has existed as an educational charity for over 30 years. It grew into an international school and training center. SOL provides support for those teaching and learning English in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe through courses for teachers and students in England and abroad.

The teacher course "Good practice in the English Teaching Classroom" lasted from 2nd to 13th July 2023. The founder and CEO of SOL, Grenville Yeo welcomed the teachers in London. Teachers from thirteen different countries attended this twelve-day course led by Fiona Mauchlin. After living almost 30 years in Spain and teaching English there, this writer, teacher, speaker and consultant is now teaching at the University of Oxford. She is also successfully training teachers in England and abroad.

Teachers learned about contemporary approaches that share good practices. They spent time in a classroom at Bridge Chambers, but also around beautiful Devon. On the way from London to Barnstaple they made a few stops – at Stonehenge, Windsor and Salisbury. They had a guided tour of Barnstaple, a lovely town where the whole classroom course was held. They had different tasks in Saunton Sands, Croyde, Clovelly, Ilfracombe, Woolacombe, Lynton, Lynmouth, Tintagel, Hartland Quay and a place of their choice – Exeter, Torquay, Appledore...

Teachers learned about eight main principles of good practice:

1. Students as teachers: the student-led classroom
2. The safe, rich learning environment
3. "The Learning Tree" – from input to output
4. Incorporating transferable skills
5. Authenticity
6. Active learning
7. Collaboration
8. "Whole learning"

Teachers learned that the students learn best not by discussing or practicing, but by teaching others. They had to brainstorm and plan activities for students, create tasks that incorporate the principles of good practice and present them on the last day of the course. All teachers had wonderful ideas like making a mini museum for primary school students or going on a scavenger hunt for secondary school students.

Other tasks during the course included micro-teaching, active learning, doing collaborative projects, creating quizzes, making videos, using cinema in the classroom, using senses to enhance learning, as well as writing short stories and poetry which will be published as the Course Proceedings. All of these activities can be applied in the English language classroom.

The SOL courses are highly recommended for all teachers and students who would like to deepen their knowledge, practice their English language skills, learn more about the British culture, meet peers from different European countries and make English teaching and learning fun.