

Hrvatsko udruženje profesora engleskog jezika Croatian Association of Teachers of English

Croatian Association of leacners of English

HUPE Newsletter No. 25 • December 2020





HUPE 29th International Conference

Valamar Poreč April 23-25 2021



Editor's Note

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the autumn issue of our HUPE Newsletter. We hope it will inspire you with new ideas to make your teaching practice even more successful and enjoyable.

As you already know, the new HUPE Executive Board started the Short Story Competition. You can go through the details in our Newsletter as well. You are all invited to joint the competition and win one of the prizes including a free live conference fee.

Our Annual HUPE Conference is in progress and even though we enjoy seeing you in Zoom, we invite you all to join us in Poreč next year. The live Conference is planned to take place in April.

Our branches have been very busy and, in this issue, you can read more about the workshops they have organised during the last school year. The rest of the meetings will take place online and we'll make sure to announce their schedule on time.

Most articles that you are about to read in this issue have been written by English teachers who have been awarded by the Ministry of Education this year, and it is our turn to congratulate them and to thank them for sharing their ideas with the rest of the ELT Community.

If you would like to contribute to the Newsletter on a more regular basis, please contact us. We would like to have you on board!

We are also pleased to announce that HUPE is issuing a call for article submissions for the next HUPEzine.

We invite you to send your stories, comments, or reviews to hupe.newsletter@gmail.com.

Do not forget to write your name, surname, affiliation/institution and address at the beginning of the text. Photographs are also welcomed, but make sure you send them separately from the text.

Have fun reading your Newsletter.

Anita Žepina, HUPE editor



SHORT STORY COMPETITION

- compete in one of the two categories (primary and

secondary)

- apply until 31 January, 2021

- win prizes



MENTORS WILL BE
ABLE TO WIN:
HUPE live
HUPE rence fee to membership

All participants will be asked to apply anonymously through Google Forms.

ABLE TO WIN:

- a set of wireless

over - ear

headphones

-online dictionary

-licences

You will reveal your identities on Valentine's Day when the winners will be announced!



Alenka Taslak

THE ADVANTAGES OF MICROSOFT EDUCATION COMMUNITY

Once upon a time, in 2018, my fairy tale began. I heard about Skype in the Classroom at one of our professional development meetings and I thought it would be a great idea for my students to communicate with native speakers of English. So I joined the Facebook groups Skype in the Classroom and Skype in the Classroom Enthusiasts. I immediately started searching for partners. My classes collaborated with the classes from Pennsylvania and New York. There were teachers from other countries who offered collaboration as well. So, the magic began. Why magic? Because this way of worldwide collaboration inspires both teachers and students in many ways. First of all, students communicate in English. They have to express themselves and they have to understand both native and non-native speakers of English, which is not always an easy task. In addition to that they learn about other cultures and traditions first-hand. And the most important thing is that they realize that technology and all the great digital tools are only a means to achieve certain goals like creating a classroom without boundaries.

Little by little I got involved in different collaborative projects and became a member of the Microsoft Educator Community where you really make lifelong connections. The steps are simple. First you create a **profile** at **Microsoft Educator Center**. You earn a minimum of 1000 points through a minimum of two hours of courses. That is how you earn your **Certified MIE** (Microsoft Innovative Expert). You must be a Certified MIE to be able to self-nominate yourself as a **MIE Expert** each year from April to June. In order to do that you should create a 2-minute video or Sway that answers certain questions about your qualities as a MIE Expert. In year 2019/2020 there were 23 MIE Experts in Croatia. There are 43 MIE Experts this year. **MIE Trainers** are MIE Experts who train or educate 100 educators per year while **MIE Master Trainers** train or educate 400 educators per year about using technology in teaching and learning. They both record their sessions in **Microsoft Education Training Tracker**. **MIE Fellows** demonstrate leadership and excellence in the MIE Expert program through coaching, mentoring and delivering presentations at conferences.

In August 2019, I was selected as a MIE Expert for the first time. I joined a group of the most amazing educators. This group is a role model for teaching methods, knowledge, ideas, creativity, collaboration, support and much more. This driving force of excellent professionals gives you the impetus to carry out your work as an educator with great enthusiasm. Microsoft gives us great digital tools, but the teachers are real professionals who know how to use them. I quote the Microsoft Team on that: "At Microsoft, we believe that technology alone cannot build 21st century skills for students. It is an accelerator, but the power of change lies within educators."

There is also a Facebook group for MIE Experts where you can connect with the other MIEE's over the world who are an excellent and very supportive PLN. There is an opportunity for you to participate in different events as a guest speaker or other similar roles. On 31 October 2020, I was invited to be a judge at a competition where students from Suncity School in Gurgaon (India) created Sway presentations and Scratch animations about their 11th president and aerospace scientist Dr APJ Abdul Kalam. (*Picture 1:Inter House Tech competition "TECHTONIK 2020"*)

Your students can also become part of a worldwide educational community where they can not only expand their knowledge and skills but also broaden their minds. English teachers have the ability to dig into any subject matter to create wonderful projects. So, my students have used Flipgrid to introduce themselves to other countries and to find out more about students and traditions in other countries. (Picture 2: Students from India, Picture 3: Celebrating Holi, Easter and Christmas, Picture 4: Christmas Cards).

They have also used Sway to present our country to the students worldwide. This year they are discovering all the possibilities of Buncee(*Picture 5: Buncee presentation tool*) and Wakelet(*Picture 6: Wakelet: students add Bitmoji to Wakelet*). One of the advantages of these tools is that Microsoft Immersive Reader as one of the Accessibility Tools is built into Flipgrid, Buncee and Wakelet to help students with dyslexia.

On November 10-11 we took part in Microsoft Global Learning Connection and travelled 52000 virtual kilometers via Flipgrid and Microsoft Teams to the USA, Argentina, India, Portugal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Tunisia, Vietnam, Pakistan, Korea and Mongolia. (Picture 7: Microsoft Global Learning Connection) At the end of a perfect day I had the opportunity to exchange ideas with Eda Gimenez from the Buncee Team and Ana Kozma from the Flipgrid Team. (Picture 8: Exchanging ideas with Eda Gimenez and Ana Kozma)

This year I tend to use Minecraft: Education Edition for students' collaboration. Another tool I will use more frequently when reading students' essays is Similarity Checker. It is a tool that checks for similarities in online sources and it is also a Microsoft tool built into MS Word in MS Office 365.

There are many digital tools at our disposal nowadays so what are the benefits of Microsoft tools? There are many advantages: you can have great support from experts around the globe, you can become a member of an inspiring community, you can take part in numerous collaborative projects, test new products while in beta form, participate in pre-release programs for certain education-related tools and expand your knowledge. Besides, if there is a digital tool that isn't a Microsoft tool there will probably be a Microsoft tool built into it, because Microsoft collaborates with other companies and constantly upgrades its tools to improve the way they function. Last but not least, Microsoft invests in teachers' development and, in this way, in students' development as well.

Goran Podunavac

There is no health without mental health

Each year, on October the 10th, the World Federation for Mental Health (WFHM) celebrates World Mental Health Day with the aim of promoting and protecting mental health. This year's slogan is,, Mental health for everyone, everywhere: Greater Investment-Greater Access" emphasising the importance of mental health accessibility to everyone, regardless of their material status or place of residence.

The past few months have brought many challenges and the need for mental health and psychosocial support is expected to increase considerably in the upcoming months and years.

Given the fact that numerous schools have joined the international eTwinning project "Me, Myself & I", one of the introductory activities has been to mark World Mental Health Day. During the entire week preceding October, the 10th, around 200 teachers from 8 European countries (Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Turkey) conducted different activities with their students in order to promote the importance of carrying for mental health.





"The fact that mental health is so much more than the simple absence of mental illness is being emphasised through different activities. Mental health is the state of well-being by which people can meet their study potential, deal with different stressors and connect with people and community. Mental health in children and youth contributes to easier schooling, builds resilience to stress and gives self-confidence to seek help individually and is therefore an important factor in child's performance but also later in life" as has been stated by Marija Jurić, a school psychologist at Drenje primary school, which, alongside Goran Podunavac, a Computer Science teacher from Popovac primary school, has started this praiseworthy project at these times, when our everyday life has changed significantly due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

IN CASE NO ONE TOLD YOU TODAY GOOD MORNING YOU BELONG HERE YOU'RE DOING GREAT I BELIEVE IN YOU

With this project, students are encouraged to recognize their own emotional states, quality communication with fellow-people, cooperation and seeking for support within their own community. Students learn about mental health through different, interesting activities and topics, applying their current experience. Project activities are being published regularly on the TwinSpace page of the project "Me, Myself & I".

Many students continue to collaborate with peers from other schools and countries, showing each other how they care for themselves, what they do in their free time, how they relax, how and with whom do they talk about their feelings and problems.

The planned activities will be good not just for the children but also for their teachers and for the rest of the employees at schools. We must never forget that there is no health without mental health.





Lana Duka Zupanc

HUPE Zagreb

HUPE ZAGREB FIRST BRANCH MEETING

Our first branch meeting took place on Friday 18 October 2019 in Čarobna riječ.

Thank you, teachers, at Čarobna for hosting us.

The guest speakers were two well – known teachers: Marina Hadžiomerović and Sanja Rašković.

Marina took us around Dublin and the Cliffs of Moher sharing colourful snapshots and stories behind them. She took part in a course in Dublin and this was part of dissemination. We enjoyed sharing her experience spiced with songs and witty remarks.

Sanja introduced the magic of storytelling. In her workshop she demonstrated some exercises of how easily we can create stories with our students using the grammar and vocabulary they already know.

As we all know, stories have always been told and loved by children, so why not use it more often with our students. The workshop was both entertaining and educational.

The elections for branch president were held - I was chosen for the third time and this is my most precious volunteer function. Thank you all for vote of confidence.

Nearly forty teachers on a Friday night, it's joy to be part of it.

If you wish to join us, do so at hupe.zagreb@gmail.com.









Lana Duka Zupanc

HUPE Zagreb

What HUPE means to me

My name is Lana Duka Zupanc. I was born in Zagreb 47 years ago. I work in a primary school in Sesvete and HUPE is my most precious volunteer role. This is year 5 of my presidential role of HUPE Zagreb.

My first conference was in Dubrovnik in 2005. It was unbelievable. The scenery, the workshops, the people I met... I loved it and I knew I would return. Since then, I discovered that in Zagreb there are branch meetings where people meet, attend talks or workshops, connect with other colleagues and have fun. There were not many of us in the beginning, but our number has grown significantly. I remember Kristina Serdoz and Ana Galac who were branch presidents and how enthusiastic and nice they were. I just wanted to hang around and naturally I made new friends. Some people have retired, many are still around and the vibe is great. People come to our meetings because they want to and not because they must. I haven't missed our conferences in the past decade because if my school could not take care of the expenses, I paid myself. I came to realise that life is too short to wait, so I had to be there for the best weekend an English teacher in Croatia can participate in.

In 2011, at the HUPE Conference I won the main prize-a teacher training course in Devon, organised by SOL. It was a life changing experience. Devon was love at first sight and made me realize that I wanted to be more engaged in bringing people and education together.

Friday nights are great for teachers meeting in Zagreb because they are never too late, you always learn something, you greet your friends and usually go for a drink afterwards. It is nice to be surrounded by people who share your ideas and inspire you. I have enjoyed being the branch president because I can choose who to invite to our meetings as a







speaker and that is just great! So many great workshops in the past five years and after this pandemic ends, I am looking forward to some more face to face learning from my peers.

Apart from organising workshops, I am also in charge of organising coaches from Zagreb to wherever our conference takes place. There are usually two coaches and 110 people, so many emails are exchanged, but I don't mind. It is part of what I do.

HUPE means connection. Before this madness with the coronavirus started, I used to travel and visit nearby conferences. Many wonderful people became part of



my life and I have HUPE to thank for that. I love learning from others, taking photos and observing. There is the whole new world I discovered apart from my everyday job. Being part of this fulfills me. I hope it never stops.

I have held workshop in Athens, Nikšić and Budapest. I have also attended conferences and teacher training courses in Belgrade, Tuzla, Struga twice, Sremski Karlovci, Bosanska Krupa, and visited and brought students to all three SOL centres in Devon. Last summer my colleague and I brought 28 students from Zagreb to London and Bideford, and it was fabulous.

Do join us. There is always a new path to discover and our 10 branches can help you find them.

Lana Duka Zupanc

HUPE Zagreb

HUPE ZAGREB SECOND BRANCH MEETING

Our second branch meeting was in Svijet jezika in Vodnikova. Our dear colleague Dubravka Blažić has been hosting us for many years now and we are grateful for that. Thank you Duda!

The workshop we attended was about games in the classroom run by Melinda Tupek.

Melinda works in Sesvetska Sopnica Primary School and has been our guest several times. This time we had a chance to participate in a very joyful workshop in which many games, both old and new, were played. We spoke about what constitutes games, why use them in English class, how and when they can be used and so on. A wide variety of traditional classroom games were provided and some serious competition took place.

After that was time for a relaxation technique that I often use called The Weather Report. I believe we all enjoyed it a lot.

The final topic of the evening was introducing the 28th Annual HUPE International Conference which will take place in Poreč in April. We discussed questions about transport to the Conference, membership renewal , accommodation and the social events that will take place. It was previously agreed that every branch will be introduced by some of the members , so we all get a









chance to know each other better. The Conference is the best thing that we share every year because not only do we attend brilliant workshops but we also meet old friends and make new ones.

Looking forward to seeing you all in beautiful Poreč!

Maja Labaš Horvat

Srednja škola Prelog

Distance learning and teaching in a vocational school

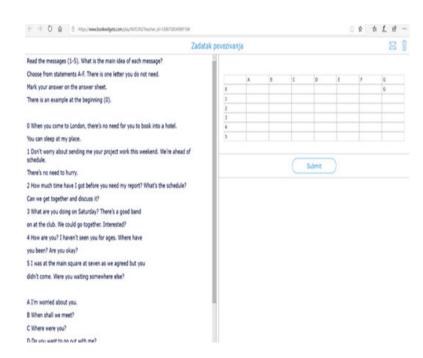
Since I work in a small vocational school with around 300 students, my experience of distance teaching and learning is probably very different from the experience of teachers in grammar schools, but I believe that it can show the usage of different teaching and learning materials and digital tools during distance teaching and learning.

Srednja škola Prelog was an experimental school for two years and it was a very valuable experience which, in a way gave us a certain advantage, especially when it comes to new equipment for students and teachers, as well as chances for additional training for teachers. We started using a Moodle platform Loomen for flipped classroom learning in many subjects at the beginning of 2019 and most of the teachers have used it to work with students online, as well as in school. The school was also given financial support in order to purchase licenses for digital tools which we, both teachers and students, used to create interactive digital learning materials.

All of that was very useful when we had to, practically overnight, go online and close our school. But, there were also some problems with students' attendance during the lockdown because some of them work better in the classroom and some of them had some practical problems with equipment, but class teachers and the principal helped those students to do their work and to successfully finish the school year.

We all know that the main task of a language teacher is to develop learners' communication competencies and we need to continuously assess our students' communication skills, so I have tried to do that in distance teaching/learning in order to get my students involved as much as possible. We worked on developing their reading, listening, writing and speaking skills.

Firstly, we did a lot of reading comprehension exercises and since I teach future waiters, chefs and hotel staff, I tried to make the materials as appealing to them as I could. Exercises were mostly based on learning and revising vocabulary, phrases and sentences in their field of work and checking their comprehension. I have used various digital tools like Liveworksheets, Bookwidgets, Wizer.me, but I also made them do some exercises in their notebooks to move them away from the screens.









CHECKLIST

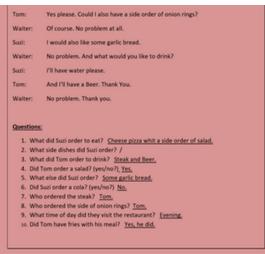
I can talk about the type of film, director, setting and actors.

I can talk about the plot and the main events.

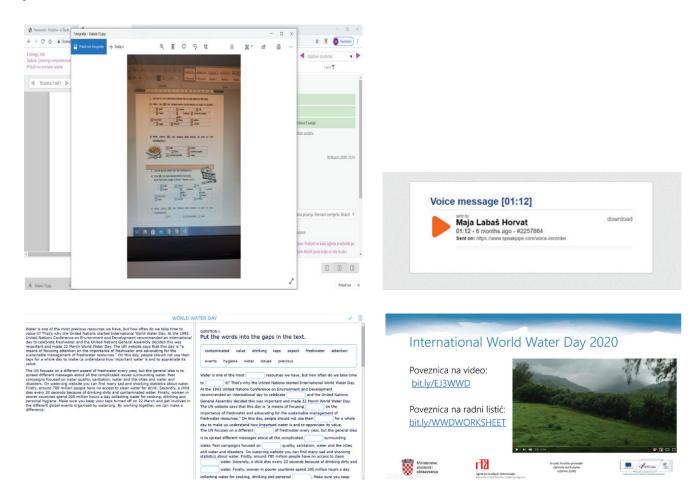
I can talk about the main actors and comment on their performance.

I can recommend a film.

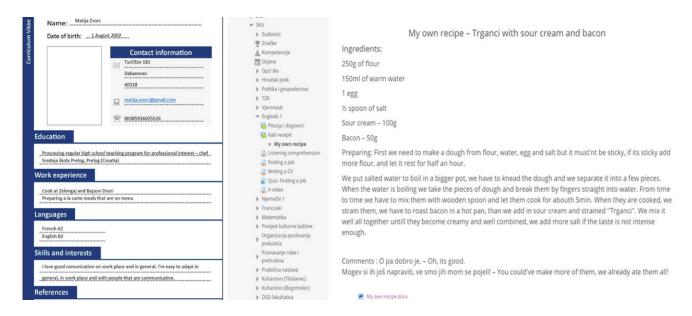
I use different verb tenses while talking (Past Simple, Past Continuous, Present Perfect, Present Simple)



When it comes to listening comprehension, I have recorded some texts and created worksheets, but I have also used video lessons, youtube videos and materials from British Council's Learnenglishteens webpage. I wanted them to listen to both native speakers and people from non-English speaking countries because they will mostly communicate with tourists from those countries in their future jobs.



Although reading and listening comprehension were practiced a lot, more emphasis was put on productive skills, writing and especially speaking. Once again, it was very important to think about the topics that might be of interest to different students, so my seniors, which are all working now, had to write a CV and a covering letter (Europass version), had to prepare and act out dialogues at a job interview and also prepared some videos connected to their future job (CLIL at its best). They wrote recipes and had to prepare a meal for their families and in the end write their impressions and comments.



During our Zoom classes we also discussed the topics which were making the headlines at the time so they had to write about their thoughts and opinions on lockdown or write a letter to the editor about the things that were important to them.

Is it better to stay at home during the time of pandemics or to live a normal life?

Here we are; shocked at how quickly life can change and now we're awake. And all that we've ever taken for granted — our economy, education system, health-case system, freedom to travel, jobs and lives — is at risk. This virus, it seams, is waking us up to a few universal truths and making us think about life. The most recent question we've all been asking ourselves is if it's better to stay at home during the time of pandemics or to live a normal life.

The best way you can help retail employees is to stay home. The best way you can help health care professionals is to stay home. The best way you can help elderly neighbors is to stay home. Until the end of March, we need to worry less about just ourselves and more about each other's lives. So, stay at home.

In this situation you won't help anyone by living a normal life or even going extreme like some people. And most importantly you won't help anyone by raiding the store shelves. Think about others and remember that for all the things you bought, someone was working hard and that someone was in need. No work, no pay. Not everyone can afford having everything and so basic stuff is important to them. Just take it slow and don't panie. It won't do you or anyone else any good.

It is better to stay at home. I can still remember watching Parasite movie, where you can clearly see the thin line between the rich and the poor. Remember the scene when it rained hard? It was a blessing for the rich because the yard has been watered, while poor people were struggling to save their homes and things from a heavy flood. As the current situation occurred, I've been asking myself: "Do movies reflect what is happening in society? Are we living through a movie scenario right now?" Whatever the answer may be, always remember to practice safety measures. Keep safe.

To the Editor

It was quite enjoyable reading the article "Eeen toxing" and I must say I agree with the points You have stard in your article. As a teenager whose friends sometimes have the same ideas and beliefs I totally support your opinion and the idea that teens do care too much about what celebrities have to say.

First of all, I do believe we all should have a self-esteem that <u>can not</u> be crushed under the impressions of others and beliefs and ideas of celebrities. Furthermore, there is already too many bullying and even deaths caused by the very same bullying in the world and teen <u>toxing</u> is some sort of a bad response to the bullying. Plastic surgery can so to say "fix" someone's self-esteem, nevertheless, plastic surgery can also cause severe damage to an individual and ergo must be taken seriously.

Providing raw facts and information will probably not have any major impact on beliefs and goals of teenagers so they must be shown the other side, the not so pretty side of excessive plastic surgery and botos. To elucidate, if teenagers were more often shown prime examples and sonequences of failed plastic surgery and botos injections, I believe they would show much more consideration about the topic which would ultimately lead to a drop in the rate of plastic surgery <u>preformed</u> on teens. If the celebrities, which teens praise so much, showed their natural side with pride and not shame, if they were <u>emphasising</u> the natural over the "fake" plastic look, teenagers would again probably follow then in terms.

In conclusion, teen toxing is a real issue which must be dealth with not just for the sake of the problem itself, but for the teens and their health and self-esteem. Despite being told it's not healthy nor good for them, some teens still have not enough strong self-esteem which can crack under pressure and that will lead to them possibly destroying their lives just because someone said they weren't good enough. Ultimately, the teenagers are a valuable part of our society and we must make sure they can live their lives without ever feeling a need for botto, or plastic surgery.

Yours faithfully

A lot of them complained about gaining wights during lockdown so we discussed healthy eating habits and they prepared a presentation about it. Although we couldn't be in the same room, we discussed the topic on Zoom and then they worked online in virtual groups using our class Linoit bord to prepare the joint presentation.

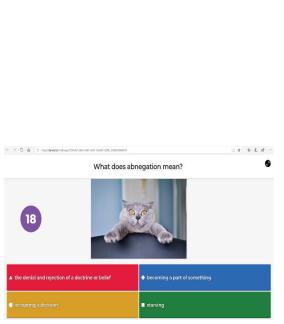


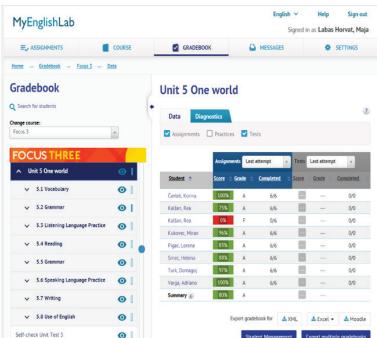
While creating presentations, we talked about copyrights and licences and about the need to respect other people's work and to include literature and references they used while creating their own work.





I also wanted them to learn new vocabulary, so they all had to create different quizzes and all the students had to play them and give feedback on the difficulty and then write their own sentences using new word. In the end, they needed to use the new vocabulary in our Zoom meetings. We used a lot of formative assessment, especially peer assessment, which gave them the opportunity to learn without the pressure of being graded. We have also used a digital platform for additional exercises and it was great for me because I could get instant feedback into the quality of their work.





Although we were not able to visit primary schools in our region to invite the primary school students to choose our school in autumn, the students created posters and promotional videos which we shared on our school's webpage and social media sites.

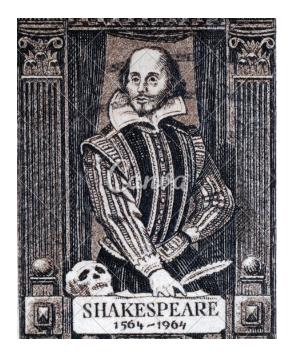


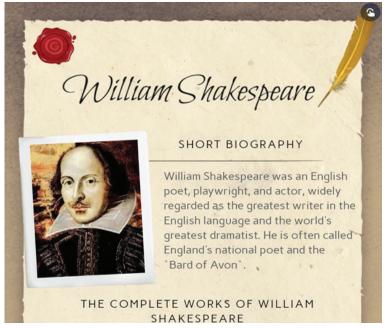


I have mentioned Linoit and its usage as a class board, so my hotel and tourism students did research into different hotels and facilities and the services they offer, as well as the prices, payment methods and other similar things and presented their findings, together with photos, on the board.



For me it was also very important to include culture into our classes, so they created posters and quizzes using Genially, Canva, Kahoot and Quizlet to create quizzes about Shakespear's birthday. This task also included peer assessment using rubrics.





When it comes to speaking, we also had a variety of topics and they used different digital tools to record their talk. They prepared cocktails, cooked lunch and talked about the ingredients and the procedure, baked cookies and cakes, wrote and retold a crime story, talked about their school, future job and the world of work and so much more.





A FEW TIPS IN THE END for all the exhausted teachers out there: don't go overboard with digital tools/ apps, one tool for a specific purpose is just fine. Choose the ones that are free and easy to use and stick to them, and of course, explain them to your students before they need to do some work using those tools/apps.

My recommendation for CLASS BORD is LINOIT (because it's free), for

WORKSHEETS/TESTS/QUIZZES are BOOKWIDGETS/ WIZER.ME/LIVEWORKSHEETS (Wizer.me and Liveworsheets are free, our school bought a license for Bookwidgets so I haven't done research into payment). For POSTERS/BROCHURES I recommend CANVA/PIKTOCHART because they have a free option and are very easy to use.

Miranda Barac

Obrtnička škola

HOW WE STEAMED UP OUR SCHOOL



The project logo made by Croatian students

"EUse science to STEAM up your school" is a twoyear Erasmus+ KA2 project that ended on 31 August 2020. In this project, six secondary schools from the Netherlands (Insula College), Germany (WoBoGe), Denmark (Kildegaardskolen), Spain (Liceo Monjardin) and Croatia (Obrtnička škola), partners in earlier European projects, and a new partner school from Sweden (Fridagymnasiet)

established the need to address an alarmingly large and growing shortage of employees with STEM skills. Priorities were promoting the acquisition of skills, competencies, entrepreneurship in education, and social entrepreneurship among young people at their schools, focusing on STEM, involving both secondary and primary students. They needed to become more actively involved and take charge of their STEM education. Erasmus+ topics in this project were natural sciences, teaching and learning foreign languages and gender equality. Six exchanges were included in this project. During these exchanges, the schools organized a science week with transversal topics, e.g. integration, women in science and sustainability. In each country, regional and national science centers and universities were involved to give the participants a new impulse in STEM. Before each exchange, participants used eTwinning to meet and prepare STEM topics and transversal topics. Also, they did an English test online to determine their CEFR level of English before and after the exchange. During the exchange, science and language skills were practiced in an authentic learning environment. Secondary pupils passed on their newly gained impulse in STEM to primary school pupils, teaching them, using their own custom-made activating lessons. Our students participated in three exchanges, in Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden.







Energy Lab in Gelsenkirchen

During the exchange in Germany, Recklinghausen, 24 students from three partner schools in Croatia, Denmark and Spain visited WoBoGe school in Recklinghausen. The main topics of the project week were sustainable sources of energy and integration. The goals of the exchange were to increase the students' interest in science and different cultures and to gain language experience. All groups of the participating countries arrived on Sunday afternoon/evening and the students spent the first evening in their host families. On Monday we all met in the school building and the programme started. After being welcomed by the headmaster the group went to the school department where the refugee students have lessons and are mainly taught German to prepare them for the regular classes. We did some ice-breaking games to help the students to get to know each other. After that, they had the opportunity to watch a lesson in the refugee classes. After the lesson, the group had a warm lunch which had been prepared by the German pupils. In the afternoon the students did a city-rally and visited the Christmas market. On Tuesday after the language assessment test, the students worked in teams of mixed nationalities on an introduction to their topic. The topics were "wind energy", "fuel cells" and "photovoltaics". Each group presented their results to the other groups. After a lunch break (a national buffet prepared by the students), we all went bowling. On Wednesday and Thursday, the students were divided into two groups (groups A and B). On Wednesday group A went to the energy lab in Gelsenkirchen where the students ran experiments related to the topics "photovoltaics" and "wind energy". Group B stayed at school and worked on their pitches for Friday. On Thursday group B went to the energy lab and group A worked at school. On Friday the groups presented their results to younger pupils. The pitches consisted of short presentations and activities like guizzes and experiments. The younger pupils voted for the best presentation. The best team won a prize and eternal fame.







Discovery bus in Dordrecht

During the science week in Dordrecht in February 2019 the students were working on the theme of renewable energy. The foundation of the week was the research conducted in groups into a form of renewable energy that is used in the Dordrecht area. The result of this research was presented on the last day via pitches to the pupils of two local primary schools. During the introduction day (the first day of the project), the different groups could choose which topic they wanted to work on that week. Topics included wind power, solar power, hydrogen fuel, energy transition, and zero energy building. Documentation on the subject was provided. Also, for each group, there was a company or organization in the neighborhood that matched the topic, to be visited and interviewed. To be

better prepared for an interview, students followed a workshop about interviewing at school. They also gained research experience in the Discovery bus of the University of Groningen which stood on the school grounds during the science week. With all the information gathered, pitches were created in groups. Each pitch lasted 8 minutes. During the pitch, there was an educational part and an activity to do. It had to be made attractive to keep primary school pupils captivated. The pitches were assessed by the pupils of the primary schools. After the presentations, we finished the project week with an international buffet at school which was prepared by the students in their host families. During the science week in Dordrecht, there were students and teachers from Germany, Sweden and Croatia. All these students were guests of Dutch host families. Various activities were organized during the week so that each student could be involved in the project.







Olidan - recycle and power station



Innovatum – science center

Fridagymnasiet was the partner school from Sweden that hosted 24 pupils from Spain, Croatia and the Netherlands. The topic of the science week in Vänersborg was sustainability. In addition to the scientific content, the aim was to give the students a taste of the different cultures involved in the exchange, to improve cooperation in international teams during the project, and to support making friendships across borders and a greater international focus in their future education and life. During the science week, there were plenty of activities. The pupils worked on different topics and presented their work to 5th graders on Friday. Apart from this, there was a field trip to Göteborg and a visit to the University of Göteborg where we learned more about sustainability. We also had an excursion to the recycle and power station in Trollhättan and we visited the science center. Back at school, the students had time to work on their projects in international groups. They prepared their presentations which were quite interesting and diverse. The programme in Sweden also included lectures and a workshop for teachers and students held by an expert in sustainable development. Furthermore, there were some team building activities and physical outdoor activities for pupils and teachers. The week ended on Friday with the presentations for the younger pupils. After the presentations, the primary-school students voted for the best presentations and the three best groups received a prize each. The official program ended with clean-up, evaluation, a science fair for the school and an international dinner for all teachers.

Unfortunately, for the last exchange, Germany, Denmark and Sweden were unable to travel to Croatia in April 2020 with their pupils due to safety concerns, official travel advice, lockdowns,

consent of parents and the social distancing measures in the countries involved. Therefore, due to the Force Majeur of the Covid-19 crisis, the exchange in Croatia was cancelled and the partner schools proceeded to finish the project within the original timeframe. We are sorry that we could not return the hospitality to our partners but we hope to do so in some future project collaboration.

This project meant a lot to our students because they improved their social and foreign language skills. Furthermore, they developed an interest in science. Our teachers improved their knowledge and experience in coaching and monitoring entrepreneurial projects. At the foundation of this project lies the strong belief that working together on a common goal is the best kind of interaction a person can experience, and it is the best environment for people to grow, personally and professionally. The science week has created a setting in which an international seedbed for this growth is optimized. Pupils have learnt about topics related to their curriculum in-depth, in an international setting. Pupils have seen how different cultures in Europe tackle subject matter in a different way, on a student level and on a teacher level. The use of English throughout has not only created an immediate bond, but also an urgency to improve English language skills. Pupils have visited different companies and institutions such as universities and science centres during their stay, and have discovered opportunities to add a European angle to their future career plans. Pupils have learnt to negotiate different approaches within their international team, and have developed and grown as they translate the knowledge they have gained into teaching material for younger pupils, taking on a new role, the role of teacher, adapting vocabulary and phrasing and presenting for their (younger) audience. Furthermore, teachers and other staff have been given the opportunity to interact with peers from all over Europe during these exchanges, sharing best practices, drawing inspiration from the development that they have seen in their pupils and have experienced themselves. The science weeks have brought home a sense of Europe that breathes cooperation, common goals and common grounds in the true spirit of what Europe should be all about, and have stimulated an interest in science for all.



Petra Blajić

Something about everything and nothing...

When our dear editor first asked me to write an opinion piece a few weeks ago, I said yes. Reluctantly, but yes none the less. At that moment in time, it seemed to me like a thing I needed to do. One of those nice things one does because they want to help out a colleague. She needed an opinion piece, I was free and available. Easy does it! No problem there, right?!

Except for the fact I had no idea what to write about. She never gave me any restrictions, just a simple: write about whatever you want. When she first uttered this sentence (ok, let's be honest, when she first DM me this sentence) I felt relieved. Wow! I can write about whatever. This left me with endless possibilities. So many topics I could choose and write about. I could, for example, write about the American elections...but who wants to read about that, right! I could write about my students and online classes except that just thinking about that topic makes me feel nauseous. And so, one by one, the pool of never-ending possibilities started drying out. In a bat of an eye, I was left with the initial question: what the heck am I going to write about?

This made me think about all those times I wanted to make things easier for my students and told them something along the lines: 'If you want to do something for a better grade, then write an essay about something or make a presentation about something. Anything you want!' Of course, the reason I did it was because I wanted to be helpful; not too restrictive, I didn't want to give them a topic they didn't like and so on. So, I'd give them no topic at all. A sea of options! Write about anything you want...And, what usually happened was that those students would come back in a couple of days begging for a topic because they had no idea what to write about, or present. Up until now, I had thought they were 'the new generation', children who had less imagination or creativity than we used to have. Now I know better, someone might give you endless possibilities, they give it all to you, but you still need to know how to use them. Otherwise, it is all for nothing. Having the possibility to write about anything, I found myself drawing a blank...

However, after some serious pondering, one thing did come to mind. What do we, teachers, love most? Materials, ready-made, hands on materials you can print, copy and take to your classroom. Or these days upload onto a server. So, here goes a list of maybe good, maybe not so great ideas some might find useful in a classroom.

1. Learning about the culture...

This is a very broad topic, one that expands into so many different fields. In my opinion, the culture we teach our students needs to be contemporary. It needs to depict the reality they live in, to present the people they like and follow. I mean, don't get me wrong, I LOVE Shakespeare and Jane Austen and they should be read about and taught, just not all the time.

Sometimes the best way to approach our students is to give them a web page on which they can find interesting information on various topics. A page, I am sure you've heard about, is 'Humans of New York'. It's a page with so many different everyday stories written or recorded by ordinary people about some things that have or haven't happened to them. Some stories are heart-breaking others are lovely and heart-warming but most can be used as a base for discussion or a title for an essay they can write afterwards for homework.

Being a feminist, I have a feminist kind of page called 'A Mighty girl'. It is delightfully simple, accurate, brings us stories about women through history and today, stories you've probably never even heard of because they're 'women'. The best part of this page is that it usually comes with additional links leading you to texts/videos about the topic. Sometimes they even give you different suggestions for primary school learners and for high schoolers.

Not all materials need to be in English. The page simply named Medijska pismenost constantly uploads things that can help our students (and sometimes ourselves) to became better critical thinkers, to not take things at face value but to actually question each and every piece of information that comes our way. Even though the page is in the Croatian language, I still use it in class. Sometimes I translate the text, other times I just 'steal' their idea about a great video to watch or an interesting topic to discuss.

2. Using the talk shows

Everyone knows that talk shows are big in the States. Ranging from day ones to late, late night ones, talk shows give us a glimpse into the American way of life more than anything else. I love watching clips from them with my students. The Ellen DeGeneres show is great if you find yourself in a rut and feel like you've already used up all your games and tricks. Ellen has a section of her show which is called 'Ellen's game of games' where she and her team regularly come up with new games to play with people. I normally find a student in my class who is an eager beaver and assign him/her with the task of researching games to be used in class or word games. The task is as simple as any: find me five of the most interesting word games you can find. And voila! In a couple of days' time, they will surely come back with a list of games you can use in class. In the next step, divide the class in groups and give each group a unit to revise or a list of vocabulary items and one game. They have to come up with a way to play the game and revise that particular vocabulary and/or unit. Obviously, they already have the rules of the game, sometimes they just might need to adjust some of the rules (like, the 5 second word game – after five seconds the *bomb goes off* and another person plays – this might be too short a time for some students, you might want to make it longer). Anyways, I love this kind of stuff because the students do all the heavy lifting and I do the monitoring.

With my senior students I love using clips from the John Olivers' show. His clips are somewhat long (usually about 20 minutes) but they are always about a burning issue and vey illustrative. However, he does use vocabulary that might be too difficult for lower-level students. Third or fourth grade of high school is probably the best age to use this. What I do is show them a video which I pause every couple of minutes to check for understanding. After the whole clip is done, we discuss the topic a bit more and then I give them a topic for an essay they need to write. Of course, the essay is about the topic and it is an argumentative one, because they can always use some extra practice for the state matura essay.

Another good talk show one can use for inspiration in class is the Jimmy Fallon show. Not my favourite to watch, but definitely one that has different games one can adapt and use in a classroom. Obviously, you'll need to adapt the games, but as inspiration goes, this is gold. My favourite ones are 'Sentence sneak', 'Three-word stories', 'Catchphrase' and 'Mad-lib theatre'. The reason I like using these games so much is that they are designed so that students need to speak, so even the most reluctant speakers end up saying at least a few sentences because they want their team to win. Plus, it's not really English, is it?! It is just playing a game, so there's no need to feel shy and/or embarrassed, right?! By the way, I haven't explained the games here because Jimmy does it in each clip.

3. Her majesty the 'DIGITALIJA'

A few days ago, we had a ŽSV meeting over Zoom. In this meeting our Savjetnik said one very true thing: 'English teachers usually bring change and novelty into the classroom whereas some of the other teachers often try and stop the innovation thus dragging school work back into the past'. I believe this is even more so true when it comes to these challenging times. While some of the other teachers are struggling for the first time with things such as digital tools, the average English teacher already knows a whole bunch of stuff one can use in class. This is why I won't write about different tools you can use or about adapting your materials to suit the new digital needs. What I will write about is **Edutorij**. This is Carnet's web page on which you can find different digital things you might like. The first thing is under the section 'Scenariji poučavanja', you click on that and then click on Engleski jezik, you choose OŠ or SŠ and you will get to some ready-made materials you can forward to your students either for extra practice or perhaps while they are in self-isolation. All the topics are digital and free for use.

Another part is the section 'Digitalni obrazovni sadržaji' where you follow the same procedure as above. The activities are again digital and free to use in any classroom.

And, new stuff is being added every couple of months. I've decided to write about Edutorij because not many of my colleagues know about the existence of these materials. And why not make things easier for yourself, if you can?! Instead of spending your Sunday making your own materials, maybe one Sunday or two you can spend with whomever you like, doing whatever you want and use the materials someone else has made for you! ©

HUPE 24 October 2020

Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture

By: Tajana Bundara

Having finished the Online Professional English Network (OPEN) Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, the ideas of what to do with everything I have learned just keep coming. I hope I will successfully present one of many in this article and truly hope this will help you with your work and motivate you to participate in one of these online courses.

The first step would be explaining the term culture. According to the anthropologist John H.Bodley culture is defined as - 'What people think, make and do' (1994, p.22). This short definition has been elaborated, and now we can talk about the 3P model (Frank, 2014) - perspectives, practices and products.

So, to make a long story short, elements of culture include beliefs, values, customs, products and the communication styles of a given culture or a society.

The second term that calls for further elaboration would be critical thinking - 'A systematic form of analytical thought



that reduces bias by taking into account multiple factors related to the object of analysis and considering these from multiple perspectives'*.

I integrated these two terms in my lesson plan - Should zoos exist (grade 8, primary school). The teaching method: debate. This is a pupil-centred method and teachers play the role of moderators, an effective and engaging way for pupils to develop critical thinking and speaking skills. I use a very simple debate format - small groups of 4-5, so they also polish up their collaborative skills. The debate work process: preparation and research (I offer research web pages, pupils use mobile phones and QR-codes), and presentation. They receive a rubric, a set of criteria for assessment consisting of categories and rating scales. Pupils use the rubric as framework criterion to prepare themselves for the public speech (group presenter presents the group's opinion before the class) and the rest of the class evaluates each speaker based on the rubric criteria (peer-assessment). Inside their small debate groups pupils have different roles: presenter, note-taker, volume-controller, time-keeper, reader, IT person, depending on the psychological-pedagogical diagnostics of each group. Their minds sharpen, the lesson is dynamic and we all have fun!

*definition is taken from the online course Online Professional English Network (OPEN) Program -Winter 2020

Resource:

AAE E-Teacher Program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and administered by FHI 360, delivered by World Learning Lesson plan - Should zoos exit

