Inclusive Practices & SEN

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INCLUSIVE PRACTICES & SEN SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

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Message from the Coordinator

Dear IP&SEN SIG members,

Welcome to IP&SEN SIG. I am very pleased to share with you our first newsletter.
First of all, I'd like to thank those of you who have already joined the SIG. Your support is incredibly important and I hope that we can work together to help each other and teachers across the world to become more aware of Inclusive Practices and SENs.
It is our mission to:

- raise awareness of the challenges facing learners with cognitive differences, sensory impairments and physical disabilities in the language classroom.
- share best practice and experience in accurately identifying language learners' additional needs.
- disseminate information about inclusive teaching methods, materials and resources for working with learners who experience barriers in accessing education.
- promote positive contributions that all teachers and learners can make in promoting a more inclusive learning environment.

The last year has been very busy for the committee since we were approved by IATEFL back in May 2016, and we have been working very hard to get everything in place. We have a website, Facebook page and are on twitter now. We organised both a PCE day and a SIG day at IATEFL at the beginning of April which were very successful. We are now planning our PCE in Brighton on 9 April, 2018. Further information will be available soon! To register for the 2018 IATEFL conference please visit conference.iatefl.org.
The SIG also collaborated with the Global Issues SIG and presented workshops and talks at the APPI conference in Lisbon, Portugal in late April. We are interested in collaborating with organisations across the globe, and your help in doing this would be most welcome, so please contact us if you know of any organisations that would be interested in working with us.
With the help of this newsletter we hope to keep you updated on all matters concerned with IP&SEN SIG and provide you with some interesting articles on a range of topics to support you. If you would like to write for the newsletter then take a look at the call for articles in this edition or contact our editing team at **ipsensig@iatefl.org.**
Finally, we hope your 2017 has got off to a great start and we look forward to hearing from our members with news and views.

With best wishes

Varinder Unlu
Coordinator of the IP&SEN SIG

Welcome from the IP&SEN SIG Newsletter Team

It gives us great pleasure to present you with our first ever newsletter. This first edition mirrors the eclectic and inclusive nature of our SIG with a variety of registers ranging from research papers (**Agnieszka Kaldonek-Crnjakovic**) to first-hand experience (**Stephen Bell**) and including a variety of articles that we hope will give you practical tips to help you include more inclusive practices in your classroom, such as those by **Phil Dexter.**

Anne Margaret Smith reminds us that learning differences don't disappear with age and **Naomi Gagin Epstein** shares her experiences on teaching Deaf students. Many of you, and not only teachers of students with ADHD, will find **Rachael Roberts'** and **Rom Neves'** articles particularly useful.

Finally, it would be rude not to introduce ourselves so we will be including a "Meet the team" section in our first few editions, if you would like to be part of this team, even if you have only a couple of hours a month free, then don't hesitate to get in touch!

Meet the Team!

When joining any new organisation it's important to get to know the people involved so in the next few editions we'll be presenting ourselves. Let's start with Phil Dexter and Anette Igel.

Phil Dexter

1. Who are you and where are you based?
I'm Phil Dexter – I live in Faversham near Canterbury, in the UK, and work is based in London, home and anywhere I travel for work. I'm joint Events Coordinator but we are a pretty flexible group who all undertake various tasks for the SIG.

2. What do you do for a living?
I work for the British Council in our English Teacher Development team but a main focus and passion is my work on special educational needs and inclusive learning.

3. Why did you become involved in IP&SEN SIG?
I became involved because of my passion for this topic, in fact earlier I supported an initial set up as part of the Young Learners and Teens SIG and then the IP&SEN SIG since the beginning at IATEFL 2016 in Birmingham.

4. What do you see as the role of the SIG?
For me this SIG is a means of promoting ways to support all learners in learning in ways that are meaningful for them.

5. What do you hope to bring to the SIG?
I believe in the celebration of diversity in learning and approaches to learning differences rather than difficulties and disorders. In fact, I have a strong view that SEN is less about individuals and much more about our systems and these systems need to change in order to support everyone. That's where the 'problems' lie – and not with individuals. People are fine. I hope I can enthuse teachers in the positivity in embracing learning differences and through this we all gain something quite special.

6. Do you have any other "hats" you'd like to tell us about?
I work on a myriad of different projects – primary, secondary, support for refugees and displaced people and I'm very much involved in the development and implementation of the British Council CPD framework approach. I am a British Council accredited equality, diversity and inclusion facilitator, which means lots of things!

Anette Igel

1. Who are you and where are you based?
My name is Anette Igel and I am at the moment based in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. I'm joint Events Coordinator with Phil Dexter.

2. What do you do for a living?
At the moment I am mostly involved with running a private language school (not my own), but do some teacher training and teaching on the side.

3. Why did you become involved in IP&SEN SIG?
It was actually Varinder Unlu, Anne Margret Smith and myself who thought that there was something missing in IATEFL. We were not happy with having SEN simply attached to the YLTSIG as learning differences are not something that affect only young people. So we decided to start a new IATEFL SIG and that is the beginning of the story.

4. What do you see as the role of the SIG?
My personal view on this is that we need to raise awareness on the one hand but also be there to support teachers and educators who work with learners with Specific Learning Differences. Teacher education is still very traditional although there are attempts in more and more countries to introduce Inclusive Practice in teacher education.
Still, there is a lot to be done and if we can help by promoting a better approach to inclusive practices which would enhance teachers' knowledge that would be excellent.

5. What do you hope to bring to the SIG?
Years of experience in using drama and improvisation to teach learners inclusively, a lot of enthusiasm and curiosity, and a personal background that relates to the SIG.
I also have good organisational skills, which will be useful in my role as one of the event co-ordinators.

6. Do you have any other "hats" you'd like to tell us about?
I'm a teacher trainer for teachers of young learners and quite involved with the IH (International House) network, which keeps me quite busy as well.

In the next editions we will be meeting more members of the committee.

Stephen and the Internet

Today my son Stephen, born in 1963, has overcome the most debilitating aspects of autism. He lives independently, has lots of activities, both sporting and cultural, a job that he loves in a restaurant, and he plays the violin in an orchestra. All these have contributed to his self-confidence and success. That he is autistic is not immediately evident. However, in conversation with him one realises that he is different because of his manner of explaining things; he has difficulty in expressing himself succinctly and communicates in a rather long-winded manner, offering unnecessary or irrelevant details! Discovering the internet at the age of 45 was the most life-changing event for Stephen. Suddenly he discovered that he could find information about things that interested him for himself.

Stephen's behaviour started troubling me when he was about a year old. It was difficult to put a finger on exactly where the problem lay. He spoke very clearly but did not seem to understand questions. He would have a tantrum if I offered him a choice, e.g. Coca Cola or lemonade? A walk in the woods or playing on the swing? After his sister Kate was born in 1967 he almost stopped speaking unless he heard the word "car" when he would perk up and say "Ferrari? Maserati? Porsche?" Even when he gradually started speaking again he did not ask questions.

Our paediatrician did not seem to see a problem and I had to insist that he recommend a child psychiatrist. When I first consulted the most eminent child psychiatrist in Geneva in 1968 she had evidently never heard about autism and attributed his behaviour to the fact that I had too strong a personality, which apparently confused Stephen. The word autism was never mentioned.

We eventually consulted a Harley Street paediatrician. He put us in touch with a very experienced psychiatric social worker who spent some time with Stephen. At the end of the day she told us that although he was not severely autistic he nevertheless had very strong autistic characteristics. "What's autism" I said, "a problem with hearing?" When she explained I was devastated.

By 1971 Stephen was in an English-speaking primary school where he was behaving like an animated object, speaking very little, making animal noises and waving his arms around, being aggressive with his classmates, living in his own little world. If I spoke to Stephen or touched him he would scream "Don't touch me, I hate you". On the other hand, when a new French teacher wanted to test the pupils' knowledge of French she asked them to write the days of the week, Stephen was the only child in the class who could do this. Eventually the school told me that they could no longer keep Stephen and I had to find a different solution.

A child with "different needs" puts a heavy strain on a couple and Stephen's father and I eventually split up. When Stephen was 11 I consulted a different child psychiatrist who recommended that I send him to Perceval in St-Prex, a Rudolf Steiner school for remedial teaching – as it was known at the time. This school was structured in family groups, each in its own house, with house parents and their own children, as well as the boarders and trainee educators. The children attended classes where they learnt the usual subjects, including German and English and there was much emphasis on music and eurhythmics and Stephen started learning the violin. He spontaneously lent a helping hand to children less able than himself and got a reputation for being helpful.

When Stephen was 16 I began to consider solutions for his future. I went to the UK to look at various Rudolf Steiner residential institutions with a view to finding a solution for him for when he would have to leave Perceval because I thought that he would always have to live in a sheltered environment. Switzerland at that time did not offer many possibilities. I remember when he was 20, a beautiful young Scandinavian student came to do a gap year at the institution in order to work with handicapped children and learn French before going on to study medicine. Stephen fell madly in love with her and she handled the relationship with tact and affection. She returned to her country at the end of the school year and I thought Stephen would come down to earth with a crash when he went back to school after the summer holidays! But no, he seemed happy and contented, living on a little cloud! After a few weeks Stephen informed me that he "felt good and was opening up inside" and no longer wished to be in an institution. He wanted to live at home and be free to go to concerts! This was a breakthrough for me and when I asked him why he felt that way he said "I realised that if you want to be acceptable to a lovely girl you have got to behave like an intelligent boy, talk to her about things that interest her and *"surtout pas faire l'imbécile (not behave like a fool)*"!

So Stephen left Perceval and came back to live at home. For the first few years he worked in a sheltered workshop in Geneva and subsequently had the opportunity to take a two-year training course as a cook in a nearby restaurant that had been acquired by a foundation in Geneva so that handicapped people had a pleasant place for outings and excursions. It also offered two-year hospitality training to 8 mildly handicapped people, taking on 4 newcomers each year. Stephen had a wonderful time. Fridays were devoted to lessons, French language, comprehension, theory of cookery, and maths. Every Thursday evening I used to go up to the *auberge* and give an English conversation class, of which we spent the last half hour singing, they loved it! If I was unable to go Stephen would take the class. He told me that he was really happy to have the opportunity to learn again. He said that he had heard lots of interesting things when he was in school but could not really take them in. I asked him why and he just answered "Oh Mum, you know what I was like!"

Just before ending his two-year training course he told me that in the future, when filling out a form for any purpose, when asked what his occupation was, he would not have to leave it blank. This had obviously bothered him but he had never mentioned it, and to be honest it hadn't occurred to me.

When he finished his course the *auberge* put him in contact with a Geneva foundation that places people with special needs in jobs suited to their ability, follows their progress and resolves any problems that may arise. They also offer various extra-curricular activities such as singing lessons, art lessons, cookery classes and computer courses. This group found him a job with a small caterer who gave him a lot of responsibility and he enjoyed the contact with the locals. He also used to deliver meals and run errands for elderly clients who appreciated his kindness and courtesy.

Stephen took a course to learn how to use a computer, particularly word processing and using the internet. He got his own email address and a computer. A few years ago Stephen went on a trip to Portugal with Cap Loisirs, a Geneva foundation that offers quality leisure time activities to children, adolescents and adults with special needs. Knowing that there is Portuguese ancestry in our family, he looked up the names on Internet and discovered that they had been seafarers who first colonised parts of India. When we went to see an opera based on "Le Malade Imaginaire" he went to a website to check out Molière and his works because he remembered acting in "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" while in Perceval.

A common trait of people with ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition) is list making and Stephen was no exception. He used to make lists of Geneva bus stops! Recently I asked him to explain to me how to get somewhere by bus, which he did very efficiently. So I asked him if he still made lists of bus-stops and he burst out laughing, put his hand on my arm and said "No Mum, I look them up on the internet"! Stephen is very keen to be "normal". I told him that he must listen to the news to know what is going on in the world and ask questions if he does not understand. Now, when he hears something that he does not quite understand he looks it up on the internet.

Inclusion and computers have been major elements in his evolution. The use of computers in education for people with special needs offers unlimited possibilities for people like Stephen to acquire knowledge and advancement.

Patricia Bell

was educated in India, the UK and Switzerland. After working as a P.A. and an events organiser she has taught English since her CELTA in 2001 and also volunteers for a Geneva foundation – CAP Loisirs. She is on the committee of HOPE (Himalayan Organisation for People and Education), an association giving scholarships to students from remote areas in the Himalayas to enable them to attend Indian universities.

Stephen Bell

was born in 1963. He lives independently in his own flat and has a job that he loves as a cook's assistant in a restaurant owned by a foundation providing residential care for people with physical and mental handicaps. Stephen has been selected for the Swiss team in the Handisport World Winter Games, Austria 2017 taking place in March 2017. He also plays the violin in an amateur orchestra.

Contribute to our Wider Membership Scheme (WMS)

Established over ten years ago, the IATEFL WMS helps the international ELT community reach out to teachers in parts of the world who need additional financial support. It provides teachers with professional development that would otherwise be beyond their means.

Each year IATEFL Associates are invited to apply for a limited number of places on the scheme. An Advisory Committee looks at all the bids and the money available and puts forward suggestions to our Trustees for allocation of the memberships via the WMS. Decisions are based on the position of each country on the HDI list, together with estimated earnings of teachers in that country. Successful Associations are then awarded WMS memberships at a significantly reduced rate which they can allocate to individual teachers. This has led to tangible improvements in English language teaching and learning in parts of the world that need support the most.

The IATEFL Head Office contacts our Associates each year to invite them to put in a bid. If you need more information on how to apply, our criteria and what we can do for your Association please contact membership@ iatefl.org.

To donate funds to this scheme please visit the donations section on our website at https://secure.iatefl.org/onl/donate.php

Giving adult learners another chance to learn English

Most of my teaching over the last 20 years has been with adult learners, in language schools, workplaces, colleges, universities and now teaching privately. Some of my students have been in education most of their lives; they are well used to the conventions of the EFL classroom and most have found their own effective ways of studying. Most recently, though, I have been working with adults who have returned to formal education after a long break. They are often people who did not enjoy school or thrive in the education systems of their own countries, but who, later in life, realise that English proficiency is the key to a successful and fulfilling career. In some cases, they have tried several times to learn English without (sufficient) success, and possibly some of these learners may also have (un)identified learning differences, such as dyslexic or autistic characteristics. However, all of them deserve special consideration if we are to include them in the ELT community.

> “Firstly, we should work on building up self-esteem and confidence; secondly, we can explore natural ways of learning; and thirdly, it is important to develop equitable adult relationships.”

Since the goal of these learners is to develop better competence in using the English language, the material content of the lessons is very similar to most other lessons that we teach. That is, we will be aiming to broaden vocabulary, and extend the repertoire of grammatical structures that the students can use to express their needs and ideas. However, the ways and the environment in which we do that may need to be quite different, and so here I will discuss three main aspects of teaching that we may need to adjust for these learners. Firstly, we should work on building up self-esteem and confidence; secondly, we can explore natural ways of learning; and thirdly, it is important to develop equitable adult relationships.

Self-esteem and learning confidence

Students who return to education in order to learn more English usually have quite clear reasons for doing so. It may be that they will be working, studying or living in an English-speaking country, or that they need a wider range of communication skills for the work they do in their own country. Often there are high stakes for these learners – lack of ability in English may hold them back from fulfilling their potential in their chosen field, even if they are highly competent in other aspects of the work. Motivation, per se, is not usually lacking, but the belief that they can succeed in language learning may have been eroded over the years, and this is something that needs to be nurtured.

Students who have experienced repeated or long-term failure in learning English may well be – understandably – reluctant to expose themselves to those negative situations again. Memories of disappointing or even humiliating experiences do not fade easily, and can be stirred up by a return to the classroom. It is vital that we enable these students to experience success early on and often, even if it is only in a minor way, such as responding positively to their self-introductions. In my classes I sometimes

deliberately set a task that I know will be well within the capability of the students, to allow them to feel what it is like to complete something accurately and without stress. Over time the difficulty of tasks can be increased, to allow a sense of challenge, too, but in the early days it is important to facilitate success.

Another important aspect of teaching adult returners is to find out how they prefer to learn, and to take time to understand where their strengths are. If, for example, we discover that the use of colour or images is helpful, then we can incorporate more of that type of activity into our lessons. At the same time, we can help them to develop better auditory strategies, to strengthen the weaker areas of their cognitive profile. It may be helpful to talk about study skills, too, and to help the students to develop their own effective ways of recording new vocabulary, and reviewing it between lessons. This might involve making sound files of the new words you want them to focus on, so that they can listen as well as read the words, or encouraging them to incorporate the new structures into sentences that relate to their own lives and experiences. Again, it is important not to overload learners with too much new material, especially at the beginning, until they develop their own techniques for dealing with more language items.

Natural ways of learning

Some more mature students learn best in less formal contexts, especially if they have been out of the classroom for a while, and it is useful to remind ourselves of how we learn our first language: through listening to others and then trying out what we have acquired in real situations. Of course, as very young children we had not yet learnt that it is embarrassing to make mistakes, but this acquired fear of ridicule may make some older learners reluctant to experiment with the language. To counter this, I try to engineer 'natural' situations where my students will be compelled to listen to English and respond as well as they can. I realise that I am at an advantage in this respect, as I live in the UK and there are English speakers all around. However, even where English is not the majority language it is usually possible to collect a few people together occasionally to have a coffee and a chat – perhaps even setting up a virtual café via Skype. Other learners of the target language are sometimes easier to understand, and the more proficient users of English may provide good role models, as well as being able to explain any subtle differences between the languages. I also believe that it is important for adult learners to use their developing language resources in activities that they are genuinely interested in, whether that be pursuing a hobby, researching a topic they care about, or preparing for an important event (such as a job interview, a professional presentation, or a family event). Here in Lancaster, I often invite my students to cook and eat with me and my family. I have to admit that I am *not* a great cook, but I have found that by taking the focus off the language and putting it onto the practical activity, even reluctant students become more confident in giving me instructions and expressing opinions – especially if our dinner is at stake! As well as allowing students to feel that they can communicate effectively, and thereby boosting their self-esteem, this also makes for a more equal relationship.

"Another important aspect of teaching adult returners is to find out how they prefer to learn, and to take time to understand where their strengths are."

Adult relationships

For some returning students, their relationships with their teachers in the past may not have been very comfortable. They were probably not the best students in their classes, and may have felt like the 'ugly duckling': that they did not fit in and would never be able to accomplish what their classmates could do easily. This feeling of being somehow inferior may persist when they return to learning, but is not helpful or healthy in any classroom. I believe it is important to recognise that every member of my class has talents and skills that I do not – in my case they all speak another language that I do not (or at least not as well) and usually as we get to know each other we discover what everybody can do, and what personal attributes each member of the group has. I am truly impressed by some of the achievements of the people I work with, and I make sure that I let them know this. I also find opportunities to consult them about things I genuinely need or want to know more about (for example, car maintenance, travel arrangements in their countries, household repairs, or cooking – as mentioned above) and I let them help me (and each other) in practical ways, if they are willing. This serves to establish us as a community of competent adults, each with a different set of skills, who can help and support each other towards our common goals of a) improving English proficiency and b) managing our increasingly complicated daily lives.

There are of course many challenges in working with learners who were not successful in learning English the first time around, not least countering the often deeply-ingrained lack of self-belief and reversing the erosion of self-esteem that may make them reluctant to leave their linguistic comfort zones. As teachers, we must see our mature students as individual adults with their own unique life experiences and areas of competence, and acknowledge how much we can learn from them. When we recognise their talents and make use of their skills we are able to support them in learning in the way that is most comfortable for them. Empowering the 'ugly ducklings' amongst our students and seeing them turning into successful swans is surely the greatest reward that any teacher could have.

Anne Margaret Smith

runs **ELT well,** offering bespoke language courses for adults, as well as training and materials for language teachers who want to work more inclusively. She is the Treasurer of the IP&SEN SIG.

Supporting students with Asperger's

It is estimated that about 1 in a 100 people are on the autistic spectrum so the chances are pretty high that some of your students are, whether you, or even they know it or not. In fact, because it's a spectrum we are actually ALL on the autistic spectrum, it's just a question of how pronounced certain features are.

If you work with people with more severe forms of autism you probably already know plenty about how to support them, but many, often highly intelligent, people have traits of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) without ever realising it. What they do realise is that life, and by extension learning in a classroom setting, sometimes seems a bit harder for them than for others.

> "Being very literal means they may have difficulty in understanding jokes, metaphor or sarcasm."

I'm by no means an expert on all of this, but since my son was diagnosed a few years back, my awareness has grown significantly and I realise how under-prepared/informed I think many language teachers are (myself included). Looking back, I can remember quite a few students that I would now recognise as probably having been on the autistic spectrum, and I now know that there are a lot of things I could have handled differently and more successfully. There are three main areas where people with Asperger's or high functioning autism (not the same thing, technically, but similar) have difficulty:

Social communication

Being very literal means they may have difficulty in understanding jokes, metaphor or sarcasm. Generally speaking, these are things that most foreign language learners have problems with in a second language, but if you have Asperger's, you may also feel like that in your first language. It can be hard for them to tell if someone is affectionately teasing, or being nasty, partly because they tend to take things literally, but also because they may find it hard to read facial expressions or tone of voice. Turn-taking and spotting when someone has lost interest can also cause difficulties.

So, if you have a student who easily takes offence or often gets upset for example, it might be worth considering whether what was said might have been misinterpreted in this way. You could also try being more careful in your use of metaphor or your jokes. Turn-taking skills can be taught and practised – and most students can benefit from this, so no need to single anyone out. You could try some of the ideas in Jill Hadfield's excellent book, Classroom Dynamics. For example, passing round a ball of wool so that you can see the pattern of interaction in wool at the end of a conversation, or allowing the person to simply listen and take notes before giving feedback to the whole class at the end of a session.

Social interaction

Many people with Asperger's have difficulty in starting conversations with others, or in sustaining interaction by asking questions. They may find others unpredictable and confusing, leading to them withdrawing and preferring to work alone. I think as a language teacher, we need to respect that some students, whether with ASD or not, may sometimes prefer to work alone. People on the spectrum can often be very sensitive to noise as well, and this combined with the unpredictability of others' behaviour can be absolutely exhausting. So, despite what you may have learned on your CELTA course, don't ever force people to work with others.

When you do ask students to work in pairs or groups, think about how you can structure the task to make it more predictable and less overwhelming. For example, getting the group to make a list of five points, or ranking things in order of preference makes the task more concrete and manageable. It's also good for everyone else, as having a clear outcome tends to produce a better quality of interaction.

Make sure that your instructions are absolutely crystal clear, and only give one instruction at a time. Again, this is useful for everyone, but people with ASD can find it particularly difficult to hold more than one instruction in their head at a time.

Because the world can be confusing and overwhelming, people with ASD often like to stick to routines. Again, this is generally good practice with all classes, especially young learners, so you might like to remember that changing the routine radically might have a negative impact on someone on the spectrum.

Social imagination

This is sometimes characterised as lack of empathy, but I think that's not a very useful definition as, in my limited experience, people with Asperger's definitely do feel for others, they're just not always very good at imagining how others might feel.

"Make sure that your instructions are absolutely crystal clear, and only give one instruction at a time."

So role-play type activities might cause problems for some students, as this involves imagining yourself in another person's position. This certainly isn't true of everyone with Asperger's, but it's worth keeping an eye out for such difficulties, and having an alternative up your sleeve.

A couple of other points

People with Asperger's often have special interests – subjects they are fascinated by and love to talk about. While you need to set up a clear structure (otherwise they may find it hard to judge when they have lost their classmate's interest), allowing a bit of space for them to talk about these subjects can also be rewarding, and gives these students a chance to show off their knowledge on the area.

And last but not least, as I mentioned, people with Asperger's may find a noisy atmosphere difficult, so a calm atmosphere really helps. They may also have other sensory difficulties with things such as bright lights. Obviously, you don't want to make the whole class work in silence, but it's worth being aware that a student might be finding the atmosphere stressful so that you can change it or give them options such as wearing headphones.

Obviously if any of this is ringing bells with you in regard to a particular student I am NOT suggesting that you should be rushing in to offer a diagnosis! But you could try some of the tips and see if they have a positive effect. If nothing else, it might help you to empathise more with the student.

In the UK, drop out rates for university students with Asperger's or high-functioning autism are around 50% higher than for other students (according to the Guardian, 2014: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/sep/09/students-aspergers-ready-university-life), which tells us how much more of a challenge education is likely to be for them. The more we as teachers understand about these challenges, the more we can support them at every stage of their education.

Hadfield, J. (1992) *Classroom Dynamics*. Oxford: OUP

Rachel Roberts

Since 1989 Rachel has worked as a teacher, teacher trainer and materials writer in both ELT and ESOL contexts. Among other titles I am joint author on two levels of the new OUP adult series, Navigate as well as the new edition of Total English Intermediate (Pearson) and IELTS Foundation (Macmillan) Currently she spends most of her time writing, but still teaches on an ad-hoc basis. She also spends rather too much time on twitter **(@teflerinha)** and on her website, writing posts on different aspects of materials writing and teaching at **www.elt-resourceful.com** where a version of this article was originally published.

Do you know what the IATEFL Associates do?

IATEFL has over 115 Associate members. Our Associates are Teacher Associations from around the world, affiliated with IATEFL. On the IATEFL website you can find information about all the upcoming Associate events allowing you further opportunities to network with other ELT educators from all over the world, with a range of diverse backgrounds and nationalities.

Don't forget to also check out the back pages of the *IATEFL Voices* bi-monthly magazine to connect with them.
Go to http://www.iatefl.org/associates/introduction for more details.

Multisensory, structured, metacognitive method in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to dyslexic learners: the learner's perspective (a case study from Croatia)

This paper discusses the learning experience of two Croatian learners with dyslexia who were taught spelling and vocabulary in English as a foreign language (EFL) using a teaching method based on a multisensory, structured and metacognitive approach. The data presented were obtained in a longitudinal case study that aimed at investigating the efficacy of the multisensory, structured, metacognitive method in teaching EFL to dyslexic learners in different ages.

Introduction

Developmental dyslexia is a specific learning difficulty, which mainly affects learning to read and write (British Dyslexia Association, 2016). Consequently, this difficulty can affect the acquisition of a foreign language (FL) in many ways. Dyslexic learners often find phonology, orthography, syntax and structural aspects of an FL problematic (Crombie, 2000).

It is believed that dyslexic learners learn best when the teaching method is based on an explicit and structured approach, and includes multisensory techniques, raising metalinguistic awareness (Schneider and Crombie, 2003). A number of studies have suggested a beneficial effect of the above-mentioned approaches in teaching English (e.g. Nijakowska, 2008; Sarkadi, 2008), German (e.g. Schneider, 1999), and Spanish (e.g. Sparks and Ganschow, 1993) as a foreign language.

The explicit instruction is based on an analytical and synthetic approach to language. This, for example, involves comparing the language patterns of the foreign language to the mother tongue of the learner and storing information by categories (Schneider, 1999). The structured approach

requires the material to be introduced in sequence, i.e., a topic that is more complex is built on an easier one, and the teacher should present the material in a logical way and refer to the information that was previously taught (Schneider and Crombie, 2003).

Multisensory techniques entail a simultaneous use of all sensory channels – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile. An example of multisensory teaching in an FL classroom is the use of flashcards to teach or revise vocabulary, when the learner sees the word, says the word aloud, and practises spelling, e.g. by tracing the spelling pattern on the card or with their finger on the table.

Metalinguistic awareness, which is conscious thinking about the patterns and rules of the language, can be attained by thought-provoking questions, non-verbal gestures, and the use of the learner's native language (Schneider and Crombie, 2003). The teacher also should constantly encourage their students to explore how language patterns work and how they can control their learning in order to ensure progress.

Participants

The participants were two dyslexic Croatian male EFL learners. Participant 1 (P1) was 10 years and 8 months old and Participant 2 (P2) was 21 years and 8 months old when they started attending the lessons, and 11 years and 11 months old and 22 years and 11 months old when the project finished. Both participants learned English in primary and secondary school, where traditional foreign language teaching methods were used. Both participants were diagnosed with dyslexia in their mother tongue by a speech and language specialist and a psychologist.

P1's level of English was assessed against the Croatian National Curriculum for primary schools of 2006. A self-invented test battery was used to assess skills that were taught in the first four grades of primary school.

The results of the assessment showed that P1 had acquired some English skills taught in grade one, which suggested a three-year delay in reference to curriculum requirements. P1 learned the meaning of some vocabulary items but could not use them in a sentence and he tended to spell them phonetically, which suggested that he did not recognise the difference between the spelling systems of his mother tongue and English.

"Multisensory techniques entail a simultaneous use of all sensory channels – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile."

P2's level of English was assessed using the academic version of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). His overall competence in English was at the level of strong intermediate, but the scoring of the listening and writing parts of the test was significantly affected by misspellings. In the listening part, 63% of the incorrect answers were incorrect due to misspellings, whereas in the writing part 23% of the words were spelt incorrectly.

Additional information about the participants was collected through the motivation questionnaire designed by Mihaljevic Djigunovic (1998: 98-99), the learning styles questionnaire VARK, the multiple intelligence questionnaire by Gardner (1983), and a self-invented questionnaire that investigated the learners' learning strategies.

Both participants said that they would like to have a good level of English because it was important for their future. P2 said he would like to go abroad to study but he believed that he could not apply for a scholarship within a student-exchange programme because his knowledge of English was not good enough and he did not feel confident in using it when talking to foreigners. He was

> Regarding learning strategies, both learners learned vocabulary by reading the words out from the notebook and looking at them and trying to memorise their meaning and spelling.

worried about making mistakes when talking or writing in English. However, P2 did not find English difficult to learn and he thought that his reading and listening skills were good enough to read academic papers for his studies and watch TV or films in English. On the other hand, P1 said that English had 'many complicated words', which made the language very difficult to learn. He added that this was one of the reasons why he did not like English and preferred German, another foreign language that he was learning at school at the time.

Both participants said that a low quality of teaching and a discouraging attitude of the teacher contributed to their lack of success in learning English in school. They also claimed that their motivation for learning English would have been higher if the lessons and learning materials used by the teachers in school had been more interesting.

Regarding learning strategies, both learners learned vocabulary by reading the words out from the notebook and looking at them and trying to memorise their meaning and spelling. P1 claimed that this strategy was successful as he had so far managed to obtain a passing grade in English in school, whereas P2 found this strategy ineffective and wanted to know a strategy that would help him to learn more vocabulary.

In terms of the learning style, P1 relied on the visual and kinaesthetic mode, whereas P2 preferred learning through listening and speaking.

Method

The data were collected through the teacher's observation and conversations with the participants during the lessons and in the post-instruction interview. The data were collected between April 2011 and August 2012 (18 months).

Both participants attended one lesson per week. In every lesson, the participants learned between two to five new words. The content of the lessons was adjusted to the learner's knowledge and needs. The items were presented in a meaningful context derived from the learner to make the instruction learner-oriented and more interesting.

Findings

In the beginning, both learners acted without confidence when spelling a word. It seemed that they did not rely on any strategy or rule, which resulted in phonetic and random spelling in most cases. In the course of the instruction, the participants gradually increased their knowledge about spelling rules and used a range of strategies to apply the correct spelling patterns. As a result, they seemed to be more confident in using English and more involved in the learning process as they asked questions about the learned material and were less worried to attempt more challenging tasks.

P1 mostly liked activities of a kinaesthetic and visual nature, for example, drawing (e.g. he liked depicting the spelling of new words in the form of graffiti), touching the items that represented the new word, playing games of a competitive nature, and using the English dictionary to check whether the spelling he used was correct. During the whole period of the instruction, P1 kept a vocabulary box, which he used for revision. He created vocabulary flashcards, where he identified difficult spelling patterns by writing them with a red pen or highlighting and drew a picture that represented the meaning of the word on the reverse side of the card. He also liked using laminated letters to recreate the spelling of the new word and for spelling revision. He said that this helped him remember the sequence of the letters and that it was 'less boring than writing'.

> "(...) when he did not know the word in English, he asked for translation and then asked to repeat the question so that he could use the newly learned word."

P1 found the spelling of vowel sounds particularly difficult. On many occasions, he stated that English spelling was 'strange' because he never knew which vowel to apply. He added that all vowels in English sounded the same to him. Perhaps, for this reason, stressing the sound of vowels in minimal pairs such as in the words *bus* and *sun* as a teaching strategy was not successful. It is, however, worth noting that in regard to consonants, the learner applied successfully the rules in different contexts, for example, the sound of *c* pronounced /k/. This may suggest that the learner started recognising the difference between the spelling systems of his mother tongue and English.

In terms of the overall communicative competence in English, P1 improved his listening and speaking skills. When interacting with the teacher, he imitated the English accent and tried to avoid using his mother tongue. P1 also started controlling his learning process. For example, when he did not know the word in English, he asked for translation and then asked to repeat the question so that he could use the newly learned word. The gained knowledge of vocabulary and spelling changed his attitude to English as in the post-instruction interview, he admitted that he started liking English and that he would like to continue learning it.

P2 claimed that the instruction expanded his knowledge of spelling rules in English, which helped him avoid random spelling patterns and gain an overall confidence in writing. He said he could control the spelling of most of the words when writing longer texts in English and was also more willing to attempt to spell longer words. P2 found particularly useful learning about the typical endings of nouns, verbs and adjectives, the difference in pronunciation of certain vowels and how they affect spelling (e.g., *e* and *i*), the

> "Apart from identifying difficult spelling patterns, he also wrote the definition and an exemplary sentence on the reverse side of the card."

> “(...) he found it difficult to interact with people and usually could not, as he said, find ‘a common language’ with his peers.”

spelling of certain sounds (e.g. /nju:/), and the spelling of words of similar or the same pronunciation (e.g., *could/would*). Similarly to P1, P2 made vocabulary flashcards to remember the meaning of the words and problematic spelling patterns. Apart from identifying difficult spelling patterns, he also wrote the definition and an exemplary sentence on the reverse side of the card.

P2 frequently used the electronic version of an English dictionary to eliminate the wrong spelling version of the word (e.g. he spelt the word *was* either with the vowel *o* or *a*; the dictionary helped him to eliminate the incorrect spelling as he realised that the word *wos* did not exist in the English dictionary) and to find information about the pronunciation of words and their etymology.

P2 was also taught speaking strategies since the structure of his oral expression was incoherent. One of the techniques that he found particularly useful was *focusing on the purpose* strategy. Whenever P2 lost track when performing a speaking activity, he used the sentence *The thing I want to tell you...*. This helped him restore his focus on the purpose of the message he wanted to convey. P2 also started using this strategy in his mother tongue and Italian, another foreign language he was learning at the time, as reported by the learner and his Italian teacher. This strategy had a positive effect on his communication skills in all the languages he spoke and consequently on his social skills. On one occasion, P2 stated that he found it difficult to interact with people and usually could not, as he said, find ‘a common language’ with his peers. In the post-instruction interview, he said that the lessons ‘changed his life’ because not only was he more confident to use English in writing but also he had better social and communication skills.

Conclusion

The participants learned and used a range of strategies to extend their vocabulary and alleviate their spelling difficulties in English. They also learned and used a number of spelling rules that allowed them to control the spelling of the words with similar patterns. The younger learner (P1) started recognising the difference between the spelling systems of his mother tongue and English as, for example, he controlled the spelling of consonants in English, whereas in the case of the older participant (P2), the improved spelling positively affected his overall written competence.

> “The positive effect of the instruction was observed beyond the spelling and vocabulary acquisition.”

The positive effect of the instruction was observed beyond the spelling and vocabulary acquisition. Both learners were more willing to use English during lessons, P1 had a more positive attitude to the language, and P2 pursued with his plans of studying abroad. He successfully applied for and received a scholarship to study abroad within a programme taught in English. ■

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Dr Agnieszka Kaldonek-Crnjakovic

lives in London, UK, where she works in an all-through school as SENCo and EAL Lead. She also acts as a teaching and learning advisor in a school of foreign languages in Zagreb, Croatia. Her research interests include specific learning difficulties of multilingual learners, reading and spelling strategies in ESL, and EFL teacher education. You can contact her at agnieszka.kaldonek@gmail.com.

Neurodiversity: It's not what we think but how we think!

> "We need all hands on deck as we sail into an uncertain future and need every form of intelligence on the planet to tackle the challenges we face as a society. We can't afford to waste a brain..."
>
> *Steve Silberman*

Classroom learning – good for some – a challenge for others

For many learners classrooms are a great place for engaging in learning and although every learner needs some kind of support, successful learners usually 'get it' as they:

- Can focus on the content of a lesson;
- Can effectively get on task, work through and complete tasks;
- Can follow instructions and the sequence of instructions;
- Have good concentration, focus and organisation skills;
- Understand that much of classroom learning is abstract and can create meaning from the abstraction themselves;
- Have a good memory and can use it effectively in the classroom;
- Have had good positive learning experiences;

There may be lots of reasons why some learners do not have positive learning experiences or may struggle with some of the above and the term **neurodiversity** can help us to understand the challenges that *some* of our learners have with classroom learning.

Understanding neurodiversity and Special Educational Needs (SEN)

People who may be considered as neurodiverse may have been identified as having special educational needs such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, Attention Deficit and hyperactive differences, are on an autism spectrum, have emotional, social and behavioural challenges and other learning needs. These learning needs are often co-occurring across the different SEN labels and described often as cognitive differences – which means their brains function differently.

For most of our learners with special educational needs (perhaps about 20-25% of any school population) the challenges they have with classroom learning is nothing to do with intelligence or ability but there is a significant performance gap. The term 'neurodiversity' acknowledges that some learners have different ways of processing and responding to information than the majority – often referred to as the 'neuro typical'. We refer to these as learning *differences* rather than *difficulties*.

Let's focus on what our learners can do

In understanding neuro-diversity we recognize these cognitive differences as part of a natural spectrum of 'ways of thinking' that are unique, equally valid and should be educationally and socially celebrated.

Our neurodiverse learners, while they may struggle with some aspects of classroom learning and, in particular, text based approaches, will all have strengths mainly in imagination, big picture thinking, strong intuition, and creativity. These strengths are important contributions to any learning context.

We often say 'in order to teach them we first need to reach them' and this is so important in understanding our learners. Perhaps it would be better to talk about 'Special Talents' rather than 'Special Needs'. This doesn't mean we're trying to turn our learners into 'super humans' but it is about supporting them in working to their strengths. Redefining our understanding of some of our learners' needs through the concept of neurodiversity can help us understand all our learners' needs.

"We often say 'in order to teach them we first need to reach them' and this is so important in understanding our learners."

Ok – so what does this mean in term of classroom teaching and learning?

We don't want to create more labels trying to identify who is and who isn't a 'neurodiverse learner'. And it isn't about 'boxing in' our learners to particular so-called learning styles. However, we can notice how our learners react. For example:

- Does the work involve a lot of writing and text work?
- Are there difficulties with attention and focus?
- Is copying from the board difficult?
- Does the learner have trouble following instructions?
- What kind of remembering difficulties does the child have?
- What specific behavioural problems are there?
- Is there a difficulty with specific language – expressive and receptive?
- Are there difficulties starting, staying on task and with completion of tasks?
- Is there a problem with sequencing?
- How successful is the learner in standardised tests?
- It's relatively easy to be over-focused on problems. While there are no 'magic solutions' a better approach is to start looking at what someone is doing well.
- Do they engage more effectively with speaking and listening rather than reading and writing?
- Do they like to engage in group work?
- Are there particular subjects and interests that engage the learner?
- Do they respond better with integrated skills rather than individual skill tasks?
- Do they respond well to visual, kinaesthetic/tactile and auditory stimulus?
- Do they have imaginative and creative ideas?
- Do they respond well when given options in tasks or tests where they can decide the format in presenting ideas – through text, visually, drawing, role play, designing/modelling something, using music, video or some other chosen approach?

Notice what is working and do more of that. This might help to create an atmosphere for positive learning rather than a 'fear of failure'.

Aren't these approaches good for all learners?

Yes, that is exactly the point. Good practice is likely to be engaging and good for all learners. That would be an example of a good Inclusive Practices Approach. However, ensuring we cater for learners who have a variety of different needs (and for some these alternative approaches will 'teach them in ways they learn') is a route to supporting their learning. In this way we will ensure we meet most of our neurodiverse learners' needs.

All of this links strongly with good practice in professional development. It's important to try out different ideas. Sometimes you need to try things more than once to see what works or what might work in different ways. Other teachers in your school will teach the same group of learners – probably in different subjects. Share your ideas together on what is working well. Above all, ask your learners what is working for them. That will be the key to both understanding their learning needs and how to meet those needs. The main point is recognising that our learners do have different needs and will respond in different ways that make sense to them. When assessing our learners, we want to assess and measure their skills, knowledge and understanding – not lock them into a 'one size fits all' way of responding. ■

> "(...) ensuring we cater for learners who have a variety of different needs (and for some these alternative approaches will 'teach them in ways they learn') is a route to supporting their learning."

Phil Dexter

is the English language Teacher Development Adviser for the British Council. Phil is currently responsible for development of the workshop modules for the British Council Teaching for Success CPD framework approach and, in particular, on special educational needs and inclusive learning. Phil is joint Events Coordinator for IP&SEN SIG.

ADHD in the classroom… I'll certainly manage!

> "Our classes at regular schools are becoming more and more diverse"

Teaching children with special educational needs is demanding and challenging. Yet, it is also very rewarding when these students achieve their goals and move on in the learning process.

Our classes at regular schools are becoming more and more diverse and we, as teachers, have to get used to it and adapt ourselves and our teaching methods to this new audience.

This article shares our everyday experience of learners with specific needs, by concentrating on real examples and successful strategies. To start with, we decided to focus on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder as it easily drives a teacher crazy. Instead of focusing on the problems that ADHD may cause during your classes, we will give you hints to cope with it!

> "As far as inattention is concerned, students with ADHD are dreamers!"

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is a neurological disorder that is characterized by serious and persistent difficulties in the following specific areas: inattention; impulsivity and hyperactivity.

As far as inattention is concerned, students with ADHD are dreamers! They can be easily distracted, miss details, forget things, and they frequently switch from one activity to another if they are allowed. They also struggle to focus on only one task as they simply become bored with it after a few minutes, no matter how interesting that task is. It may seem that they are not listening when they are spoken to and they can have difficulty in following instructions and in processing information as quickly and accurately as others.

Regarding impulsivity, children with ADHD are impatient and it is hard for them to wait for things or for their turn in games. They fidget and squirm in their seats and they frequently blurt out inappropriate comments during the class. They show their emotions without restraint and usually act without regard for consequences.

Concerning hyperactivity, these pupils are always in motion! They have trouble sitting still, they dash around, touching or playing with anything and everything in their sight. At the same time, they can talk for hours and have difficulty doing tasks or activities in silence.

As a consequence, learning is a hard process for students with ADHD as they commonly:

- show frequent distractibility (everything is interesting around them, including pens and pencils in their pencil case);
- have poor organisation (yes, they struggle to copy information down from the board and when they succeed it is hard to understand due to their handwriting and lack of organisation);
- lose things (true, they never know where their exercise book is);
- make careless mistakes (and we insisted so much on spelling...);
- fail to complete tasks (even though we spend a full lesson on that worksheet...);
- talk excessively (how can they have so many things to say?!);
- are constantly fidgeting (do they have an on/off button?);
- are cyclically on the go as if being driven by a motor (when will they understand that no-one leaves the classroom before I say so?);
- display bad handwriting (can they understand what they write?).

In addition, it is important to mention that not every single student with ADHD matches all the characteristics listed previously. It is the teacher's job to analyze the student and to develop comprehensive lesson plans, create stimulating thematic units and assess these individuals and the class as a whole. To give you a hand, we present a list of some teaching strategies that we frequently apply in the classroom.

> "(...) a communication notebook so that the student can register his own behaviour and commitment after each class (...)"

Teaching strategies:

- Use a communication notebook so that the student can register his own behaviour and commitment after each class so it can be assessed by himself and his parents/tutor at the end of the week.
- Use individual mini white boards when you ask questions to the class so students have to write down the answers instead of answering orally.
- Place these students up front with their backs to the rest of the class to keep other students out of view.
- Surround students with good role models (therefore learners with ADHD should be integrated in selected classes).
- Encourage peer tutoring and cooperative/collaborative learning.
- Avoid distracting stimulus, such as lots of colour, information on walls, etc.
- Try not to place students near doors or windows.
- Maintain eye contact during verbal instructions.
- Make directions clear and concise and ask the student to read them aloud before starting a task.
- Simplify complex directions.
- Avoid multiple commands.
- Make sure students understand the instructions before beginning the task.

> Modify one behaviour at a time

- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner.
- Help the student to self-evaluate his behaviour, his learning style and his mistakes in a constructive way.
- Pay less attention to bad behaviour than to good.
- Avoid competition between students in the classroom.
- Always keep the students busy and keep the board well organized.
- Suggest an extra-curricular activity like music or martial arts as it helps their concentration.
- Play calm music or sounds of nature when you ask students to work individually.
- Modify one behaviour at a time (for example: ask the student to finish the task on the given time; then ask him to improve his handwriting and finally ask him to check and improve his answer).
- Use the *Time Out* strategy when the student isn't coping (this is the procedure before a more serious sanction due to students' behaviour and basically it consists of asking the student to move to the back of the classroom and stand up, looking at the class until he feels calmer and ready to be engaged in the learning process again. The student is the one who decides when it is time to return to his own seat).
- Play kahoot (kahoot.it) as a fun exercise when you teach grammar.

Undoubtedly the secret to teaching a student diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is to understand his or her behaviour and define, with the student, strategies to self-recognize it. With consistent and positive work it can get easier to engage this learner.

All in all, I believe that the most unequal thing is to treat equally, unequal students. So, let's take the opportunity to rethink our teaching practice, and our teaching experience, so that inclusion really happens in our own classroom.

See you all at the next IATEFL Conference!

For further information:

Thomlinson, C. A. (1999) "The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of all Learners"
www.childrensdisabilities.info
www.adhd.com
www.apdch.net
www.britishcouncil.org

> (...) the most unequal thing is to treat equally, unequal students.

Rom Neves

is a teacher and team member of an inclusion unit at a mainstream Secondary School in Madeira Portugal. He is also a teacher trainer on inclusion and SEN. He is the Madeira Coordinator of the Portuguese Association of English Teachers (APPI) and works with Oxford International Education Group in junior programmes. Rom is the IP&SEN SIG Secretary and can be contacted at romulosoton@hotmail.com.

I'd rather you DIDN'T translate that for ME, teacher!

> "(...) pupils have "holes" in their command of their mother tongue."

When working on reading comprehension tasks, one of the most instinctive reactions teachers have is to translate difficult words into L1. However, when you teach Deaf and hard of hearing students, even simple translation may not be helpful at all. Why is this so?

Learning a language when your hearing is impaired is a difficult task, especially due to the fact that visual input (lip-reading) cannot take the place of auditory input. Thus, the pupils have "holes" in their command of their mother tongue. As the examples below endeavour to show, these gaps in the pupil's knowledge of their L1 often interfere with their reading comprehension in L2.

Example one
Has the word "ashtray" become obsolete?

In an article about an invention fair one of the inventions mentioned is an ashtray that shouts "smoking is bad for you". The teacher has translated the word ashtray into L1 yet the student continues to look at the teacher blankly. The L1 translation is every bit as unfamiliar as the English word "ashtray". The student comes from a family who doesn't smoke, so she wasn't exposed repeatedly to the phrase "pass the ashtray". In the school curriculum the word "ashtray" hardly appears, if it all, even when studying a unit on "the dangers of smoking" you might not come across this word. There was no repeated exposure to the word or direct instruction of it. The student has seen people use ashtrays, she knows "the concept" of what an ashtray is, but it's something she knows without having a word for or perhaps thinks of it as something called "cigarette bowl".

> "(...) no repeated exposure to the word or direct instruction of it."

Example Two
The trickiness of multiple "addictions"...

The teacher has written the title of the new story on the board: "Addicted to Computers" in English, and then in L1. When asked to predict what the story might be about the student looks puzzled and responds: "its about someone who gets drugs from the Internet". The pupil DOES know the word addicted (at least in L1) but she is only familiar with one use of it "addicted to drugs". This is something that is taught in school and discussed. But how can one be

> “(...) student with a hearing loss has translated the word “investors” as “inventors” despite what is clearly written on the board.”

addicted to computers when they can't be inhaled or injected? And thus the student tries to make sense of this contradiction by including the Internet which helps her validate her original assumption.

Example Three – Those pesky look-alikes!

The teacher has translated difficult words for the new text that the class will begin studying on the board, including the word “investor”. As students work individually in class the teacher discovers that the student with a hearing loss has translated the word “investors” as “inventors” despite what is clearly written on the board. As a result the student has misunderstood an important part of the reading passage. The previous year the class had done a unit and a mini project on “famous inventors”. The student had been exposed to the word “inventors” many times in a meaningful way and remembers the word well. Since English classes often seem to be a situation of endlessly puzzling out words for the Deaf student, seeing the familiar letters on the board automatically brought to mind, with a sense of relief, the familiar word “inventor’ and the pupil literally did not see the different translation until it was pointed out to her.

In conclusion, translating difficult words into the students' mother tongue is not always helpful for Deaf and hard of hearing students. Giving examples and explaining concepts is vital in order to ensure understanding. ■

> “(...) translating difficult words into the students' mother tongue is not always helpful (...)”

Naomi Ganin Epstein

For the past 30 years Naomi has specialized in teaching EFL to Deaf & hard of hearing pupils in Israel. She began her career as an elementary school teacher but then switched to high-school. She has also taught struggling adult learners striving to be accepted to college. She has a B.A. in Deaf Education, a B.E.D. in EFL and an M.A. in Curriculum Development. Naomi is also the author of two textbooks and works both a teacher and a teaching coach. She lives in Kiryat-Ono, Israel, with her husband and two sons and you can follow her on her blog -**Visualising Ideas** (where a version of this article first appeared) and on twitter **@naomishema.**

Book Review

Marie Delaney (2016) *Special Educational Needs.* Oxford : Oxford University Press
into the classroom series ; 104 pages

A practical all-round book that contains both theory and practical ideas, this book is aimed at primary and secondary teachers of English, especially those who feel they lack sufficient training to deal with the students with Special Educational Needs that they are bound to face in the language classroom.

The book is divided into three sections: the first deals with general principles and talks about identifying SEN and also problem areas that can crop up in a variety of cases such as low self-esteem and working memory difficulties.

Secondly, the book suggests various ways of developing both differentiation and inclusive teaching using support and technology. This section also includes a useful chapter on how a language teacher can best work with colleagues and parents to ensure the best learning conditions for our students.

The final section is made up of chapters devoted to various learning difficulties, including dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity order), SEBD (social, emotional and behavioural difficulties), ASC (autism spectrum condition), SLD (speech and language difficulties) and gifted and talented students. Each chapter includes a definition and practical strategies to deal with these SEN in the classroom.

The most obvious advantage of these strategies is their inclusive nature. Activities such as having students represent actions or verbs and having them stand in a physical timeline will be enjoyed by all the students in a class.

The problem with this kind of book is the scope and depth of the information provided, we worry that we won't learn anything new, or on the contrary that it will be too detailed for our novice state. In my opinion Marie Delaney does an excellent job of pleasing all the people a lot of the time. The definitions and descriptions of SEN are simple enough for "beginners" to understand, but include details that the most experienced teacher will be pleased to learn, such as encouraging students to share learning strategies amongst the class, rather than using the teacher as the only strategy resource.

Teachers who work outside the UK or Europe will particularly appreciate up to date definitions, it is useful to know that we refer to SEN as AEN – Additional Educational Needs, and ASD is called ASC – Autistic Spectrum Condition, and the chapter on how a whole school plan is developed is valuable to those who work in institutions that lack these tools.

The only reproach that could be made about this book is the lack of information concerning physical disabilities such as Deaf or sight impairment, and the fact that adult learners are not specifically mentioned even though many of the activities could easily be adapted. However such criticisms would indeed be churlish when the introduction clearly states the audience that this book is aimed at.

Finally a word on the section that most caught my attention: teacher self-care. This essential aspect of teaching and therefore learning is rarely mentioned, yet the stress for a teacher in a classroom filled with different students all with different learning needs can be immense, and Marie Delaney does a great job in reminding us that you can't pour from an empty cup.

Delaney, M. (2016) *Special Educational Needs*. Oxford: Oxford University Press

If you would like to review a book, article, webinar, app or other then please contact us ipsensig@iatefl.org

CALL FOR ARTICLES

The IATEFL IP&SEN SIG invites the submission of original articles on various aspects of inclusive practice in English language teaching of both young learners and adults, including, but not restricted to research, methodology, lesson ideas, teaching materials and other resources. Reviews of books, webinars, courses etc. on this theme are also welcome.

Please check the website for details (http://ipsen.iatefl.org/write-for-us) and send submissions, including a short biodata (50 words) and photo and mailing address, as a Word document by email attachment to the attention of the Newsletter Editor at ipsensig@iatefl.org.

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Teacher Development – tdsig@iatefl.org
Teacher Training & Education – ttedsig@iatefl.org
Young Learners & Teenagers – yltsig@iatefl.org

We now have a **FAQ's section for our SIG's** – find out more here:
http://www.iatefl.org/special-interest-groups/special-interest-group-faqs

What does IATEFL membership offer you?

- IATEFL Voices magazine, six times a year and access to the archives
- IATEFL Conference Selections publication
- Discounted attendance fees at any IATEFL conference or event
- Discounted periodicals
- Annual web conference
- Join one, or more, of our 16 Special Interest Groups (SIGs)
- Free monthly webinars from leading ELT professionals & exclusive access to the archives
- Monthly eBulletin packed with information and updates from the Association
- Great opportunities to network with other ELT professionals and continue to develop

And much, much more!

What is IATEFL?

IATEFL is the **I**nternational **A**ssociation of **T**eachers of **E**nglish as a **F**oreign **L**anguage.
The Association aims to link English Language teachers and professionals from around the world and help provide opportunities for personal and professional development.

Why join IATEFL?

IATEFL is a vibrant teachers' association that aims to connect and support teachers throughout the world. Being able to network with other professionals from around the globe can add a new dimension to your teaching and your own development.

Who are the members?

IATEFL has more than 4000 members from over 100 countries worldwide. There are also over 100 Teachers' Associations affiliated with IATEFL

Join IATEFL

If you enjoy reading this newsletter and would like to subscribe and/or join us at future events, don't forget to renew your membership of IATEFL or become a new member of IATEFL. You can do both online at: www.iatefl.org
IATEFL, 2-3 The Foundry, Seager Road, Faversham ME13 7FD, UK,
E: membership@iatefl.org T: +44 (0) 1795 591414 F: +44 (0) 1795 538951

For more information about the IP&SEN SIG please visit our website: http://ipsen.iatefl.org/

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