PROFESSIONAL ELT MAGAZINE ONLINE

Contents

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

8 December 2020 marks the 3rd anniversary of TESOL Turkey, our national association of ELT professionals, which is deeply committed to advancing the quality of English language teaching in Turkey. We are so happy to commemorate and cherish that special day. TESOL Turkey has the unique feature of being the "oldest young" association as it was transformed into a formal national association from an informal professional organization called T-PLUS, which was established in 2012. We are happy to be able to continue the T-PLUS spirit in TESOL Turkey.

Since its inception, TESOL Turkey has flourished upon its members' existence. Thanks to the wonderful ELT professionals in Turkey, we have grown to be a big family consisting of around 200 members now. In our past three years, we organized many national and international events and conducted many significant professional projects; we also witnessed the birth of two Special Interest Groups, namely, the Leadership and Management SIG (LAMSIG) and the Testing and Assessment SIG (METASIG).

In the year 2020, as part of our three-year journey, we had to go through a rough patch as the COVID-19 pandemic posed an obstacle in carrying out our plans completely; however, despite the challenging times caused by the pandemic, the TESOL Turkey Board of Directors, Professional Councils and the Task Forces continued to work diligently without ever backing down. I am immensely grateful to these wonderful people for their faith and hard work for a better future of our association.

In my last year as the President of TESOL Turkey, I look back and I can't help but think there is genuinely nothing more beautiful than creating something great, and watching it bloom into something more beautiful. Today I am here, feeling very proud and happy celebrating the three years of TESOL Turkey's commencement. As I celebrate these fantastic 3 years gone by, I am turning eagerly to the years that lie ahead. I am confident that TESOL Turkey will continue to grow in leaps and bounds over the years to come, helping and supporting the fantastic ELT community in this country.

I feel that I am truly lucky for being surrounded by the amazing friendships and bonds created through this association. TESOL Turkey and all the people involved in it are like a second family to me. Thank you, all the fantastic team of dedicated and loyal members, for your constant support that has made this journey possible.

Many happy returns TESOL Turkey!

Bahar Gün

A. From Tesol Sigs

Assoc. Prof. Evrim Üstünlüoğlu has extensive experience as a teacher, director, and researcher with publications in international/national journals. She is the member of IATEFL LAMSIG, TESOL Turkey LAMSIG, DEDAK, and she serves as a CEA reviewer. Her expertise and interests are quality in education, program development, methodology and new approaches in teaching.

Ian Collins is the Academic Assistant Director of the School of Foreign Languages at Yaşar University and currently the program coordinator for Yaşar's EAP and Modern Languages courses. Ian's Master's in Education degree focused on educational change management and accreditation and he has presented and published regularly on language program management and accreditation issues in Turkey and internationally. Ian led the self-study process for the Yaşar IEP's initial and then re-accreditation by the CEA. Ian is also an experienced, trained CEA site reviewer, a current CEA Commissioner and Chair of the CEA Standards Compliance Committee. He is a member of TESOL Turkey.

THE BIRTH OF THE TESOL TURKEY LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP
BY IAN COLLINS AND EVRİM ÜSTÜNLÜOĞLU

Leadership and management play critical roles in any endeavour involving more than a handful of people. If you want to achieve something that involves groups of individuals, at some stage there will be both leadership and management issues. Questions such as, 'What do we really want to achieve? How are we going to get there? How will we know we have? What happens after we do?' all necessitate some sense of overall leadership and management to help ensure goals are met. Education, filled as it is with many individuals jealously guarding their autonomy in the classroom, attracts many who have no desire for 'corporate' style work. This undoubtedly adds to the leadership and management challenge in our field. Moreover, the difficulty of establishing or even measuring quality in education is the stuff of potential nightmares. Finally, if you accept the premise that educational leadership and management are of crucial importance, the context in which we in Turkey find ourselves only increases the scale of the challenge. After all, English language education in Turkey is dominated by huge university preparatory programs, private language schools and K-12 English programs, employing thousands of teachers trying to help millions of students.

This was the context in which the TESOL Turkey Leadership and Management Special Interest Group (TESOL Turkey LAMSIG) was born. With the establishment of the professional organization TESOL Turkey in 2017, there was quickly talk of what Special Interests Groups (SIGs) should be established. SIGs are, after all, where much the most productive work in a professional body takes place. Some of the TESOL Turkey founders and early adopters, having had previous experience of leadership and management groups in other organizations, believed that a TESOL Turkey LAMSIG could provide help to many colleagues in the field who had limited access to training and support in leadership and management. Many in the field in Turkey have experienced similar career paths. Successful and committed teachers, exceptionally well-qualified and experienced, they are promoted into leadership roles and expected to shine. Yet few have the opportunity to gain formal management training, and it is very much a question of sink or swim. Turkey has good networking opportunities for some (for example, the IEP program directors group) but that is not the case for hundreds of other professionals with educational management responsibilities. The TESOL Turkey LAMSIG founders believed there was a hole they could help fill.

Setting up the TESOL Turkey LAMSIG was itself a leadership and management challenge. The founders were keen to ensure the group started off on the right foot. It was critical to establish a clear *raison d'être* for the group. Who are we? Where do we want to go? How can we get there? Who do we represent? What are our values? These questions were all intensely debated by the original organizers. It was sometimes hard to agree and there is always the danger in such work that finding a consensus is a prelude to mediocrity. Moreover, in addition to these animated big picture debates, there were also the more mundane aspects of setting up the group. Drafting a byelaw, allocating administrative roles, working out a social media policy, trying to ensure that we had a tangible product to offer potential members (e.g. podcasts, webinars, and blog posts). This was a significant undertaking and meant already busy people taking on additional responsibilities.

Yet underlying all the hard work was the sense amongst the founders that it was important and worthwhile (and if nothing else a PD opportunity in itself). And if you believe in something, it is amazing how much you can put into it. After months of planning, a formal application was made to TESOL Turkey for recognition as a SIG. This was received in the summer of 2020 and a LAMSIG page was added to the TESOL Turkey webpage. We are currently rather İzmir-centric. This helped in the initial setup but is something that we want to correct as soon as possible. This means all our efforts are now focused on attracting members and getting over our message: promoting quality in foreign language education through supporting effective leadership and management. The next few

months will be spent publishing as much material as we can, organizing webinars, and suchlike as a way of supporting our colleagues in their efforts to do a better job leading and managing.

2020 has been a salutary lesson in how effective leadership and management matters. Everyone in our field has had to adapt and cope with an incredible number of problems. At the same time, it has provided umpteen opportunities to grow and everyone in the TESOL Turkey LAMSIG feels this is a good time in which to show how effective we can be. If you are interested in our work, please visit our website (https://www.tesolturkey.net/sigs-page.php?id=3) or contact us directly. We look forward to collaborating with you all.

Asst. Prof. Esin Çağlayan is the Director of Teaching and Learning Research and Application Center at Izmir University of Economics. She holds a BA in ELT from Boğaziçi University and an MA and a PhD in Educational Administration. Her academic interests are assessment literacy, language assessment, instructional technologies, instructional design and learning analytics.

Berna Arslan, the Director of English Language Center, Koç University, received her BA in Foreign Language Education from Middle East Technical University and MA in Management in Education from Bilkent University. She did COTE and DELTA. She has been involved in teaching, management, curriculum and assessment for over twenty years.

Currently working at Koç University, **Mehtap İnce** received her BA in ELT from Boğaziçi University. After completing DELTA and ICELT, she took her MA from NILE. She has worked as instructor, assessment coordinator, test developer, and level coordinator at schools of languages for thirteen years. She is also the Events Coordinator on the IATEFL TEASIG committee.

METASIG: A JOURNEY BEYOND OUR HORIZON OF ASSESSMENT
BY ESİN ÇAĞLAYAN, BERNA ARSLAN AND MEHTAP İNCE

Meta: of Greek origin

Meaning: 1. after, behind; among, between 2. changed, altered, 3. higher, beyond

https://www.etymonline.com

Greetings to the TESOL TURKEY members! We are very pleased to introduce METASIG, the Measurement, Evaluation, Testing and Assessment Special Interest Group, which was founded in October 2020.

As professionals interested in language testing and assessment, we believe in the power of collaboration with colleagues sharing the same passion and goals. We owe this enthusiasm and dynamism to the Forum on Assessment Issues (FOAI), which provided an opportunity for the assessment teams of university preparatory programs to come together to discuss and share

practices, experiences, ideas, and challenges faced relevant to testing, evaluation, and assessment related issues. While maintaining the mission of this organization, we have also allowed it to grow and evolve into a platform where participants can work on their own professional development as well as contributing to their colleagues'. FOAI has been a success with thirteen productive and engaging events over the past seven years. We would like to thank each and every participant for their contribution to FOAI's success.

Having drawn our motivation and enthusiasm from this success, and upon the invitation by the TESOL TURKEY executive board, we decided to establish a special interest group affiliated with TESOL TURKEY to extend our boundaries, reach more colleagues from a greater variety of backgrounds, and make more contributions to the field of language testing and assessment in both national and international platforms. With this goal in mind, we, the former FOAI Organization Committee members, started to collaborate with some of the active participants of the FOAI events to lay the foundations for the METASIG, which has led us to the "journey beyond our horizon of assessment".

We would like to take this opportunity to share our goals with you and invite you all to be an active member of this dynamic group that wishes to play a leading role in the field of language assessment and testing at both national and international levels. We mainly aim to create a platform where members who share interest in the field of language assessment and testing work together, disseminate information, and exchange opinions as well as expertise through organizing workshops, seminars, and discussion forums, training events and working groups for research and development. Among our further aims are facilitating networking among assessment teams, managers, and coordinators in different institutions through digital and face to face platforms; taking part in national and international language assessment events; providing guidance, consultancy, mentoring and coaching through professional development activities and training; affiliating and conducting joint studies or cooperating with foreign associations/agencies.

We are well aware of the importance of measurement and evaluation in education and believe that the primary aim of language assessment is to improve student learning and performance and if you cannot accurately measure learning, you cannot manage or improve it. With this belief in mind, we would like to bring together foreign language teaching professionals who have experience and/or a special interest in the field of language assessment and testing. We are aware that there are few opportunities to gain expertise and experience in language assessment and testing and therefore,

we believe that METASIG will play an important role to assist foreign language teaching professionals in their efforts to maximize their language assessment knowledge and skills, and improve learning and teaching processes in their institutions.

As TESOL TURKEY METASIG executive committee and former FOAI organization committee members, *Esin Çağlayan, Berna Arslan,* and *Mehtap İnce*, we feel privileged to work with our founding members: *Pınar Gündüz, Şükran Saygı, Mehmet Türk, Elif Çilli, Merve Selçuk* and *Yiğit Savuran***.** The executive committee and the founding members all represent various private and state university language programs and have considerable experience in assessment. If you would like to get to know more about us, you are invited to visit METASIG social media accounts on Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn. Come and join this enthusiastic and dynamic team and help achieve the mission of METASIG, or just be an active member who would enjoy the benefits, you will certainly feel welcome. Please help us spread the word and grow together. No journey is a joy without good company!

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B. Beliefs And Values

Deniz Özbeyli teaches English at Yaşar University. He worked as an Instructor of English in the army until 2014. He earned his B.A. in English Linguistics at Hacettepe University; M.A. in ELT and PhD in History at Dokuz Eylül University; M.A. in Human Resources Management and Development at Marmara University. Özbeyli finished the Advanced Language Proficiency Skills Course at Defense Language Institute in Texas and took Managerial Communications classes at Wayland University in the U.S.A. He is into many topics from ELT workshops to juggling. He has a YouTube channel and he has more than 100 short   stories, essays, and travel notes published in literature and art magazines.

FOCUS ON WHAT YOU HAVE
OR
OPTIMIZATION OF ONLINE TEACHING
BY DENİZ ÖZBEYLİ

Speaking about pros and cons of an activity, a system or even a recent phenomenon like pandemics is the usual and regular way. Analyzing both aspects is like writing an essay to pass an exam. It is like trying to finish a writing or speaking task given by your teacher. Stop spending energy for considering both sides! The truth, in fact, lays in the very simple notion of the saying "A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush." All the world is experiencing a new era; we all are obliged to be a part of online education. Like it or not, this is the present situation and the reality. Talking about the difficulties, failures and unpleasant aspect of online teaching will lead to minimum benefit in teaching activity. Focus on what you have! Whining and finding excuses about the technology or claiming that online teaching is unpleasant, impractical and even useless will not help the learning process. Instead, we should try to understand the new educational concept, adapt to that, develop it and get the maximum benefit. As there are prerequisites for some classes and levels when you are learning a subject, there are also some minimum, basic, must-have standards for online education.

Basic standards for teachers:

The teachers should make sure that they have the right program/app with its proper edition downloaded to their computers. They must also make sure that the settings are done in the proper way. The teachers should be given the basic orientation about how to handle the possible minor problems. There may be IT personnel in charge of some technical issues in some institutions and

schools, however, it will not always be practical or even possible to get help from them immediately in case of a possible failure in the system or settings.

After getting equipped with the programs that are going to be used, teachers should learn how to go through the educational material smoothly and meticulously. Sometimes, you assume that things might go on somehow in case of technical or know-how problems. However, to be able to access and use the necessary teaching material at the right time will not be possible in such cases and that will naturally distract the flow of teaching activity. Therefore, compared to face to face teaching activity, it is crucial that teachers have extra rehearsal prior to their teaching activity.

Once your settings, material and basic know-how about the whole online teaching process are arranged then come the necessary standards of using the computer efficiently. You should make sure that your microphone, camera and headphones are working properly. There may be some common and probable minor issues like having sound control problems when you switch from the loudspeaker to the headsets, which, however, might immediately distract the teaching activity. When all the above mentioned items are checked one by one, the next important thing would be the physical conditions of your positioning before the computer. In order to begin effective and efficient teaching, your proximity to the camera and the microphone is another indispensable standard as well as the right angle of the light coming to your face. There are probably other similar items that can take place in your checklist. For all those items, too, all you have to do is to get involved in the whole process with the right equipment and enough know-how.

Basic standards for students:

Almost all of those mentioned above are also valid for students. The best policy would be benefiting from the volunteer responsibility of the teacher. Teachers can contact all students one by one before the beginning of a semester/track/level and conduct a kind of checklist control together with the students. They must do that at least during the very first lesson. Above all, the students have to develop a positive and participatory attitude, which could again be achieved by the right and enough teacher support.

These all might look simple steps and most of us might assume that we've already known those, however, that's not the case! You cannot imagine how both teachers and students have suffered from minor or sometimes, great problems stemming from those simple checklist items! Or, maybe, "you can imagine," I must say, after almost all of us have experienced various distracting factors,

system and know-how failures, technical problems like poor video and sound quality inhibiting teaching, and so forth during the past months in online education. You cannot ignore or underestimate a minor problem like malfunctioning sound control. A simple thing may ruin the whole day.

Just like the very useful motto **Managing by Objectives (MBO)** in teaching and in some other sectors like business administration, I'd like to suggest another meaningful motto (which belongs to me!) here: **Focus on What You Have (FWYH)**. As I've mentioned earlier, whining and finding excuses will not help the betterment of learning process. A good learner (and a teacher as a learner, too) should try to understand the new educational concept, adapt to that, develop and optimize it and get the maximum benefit.

Consequently, all that online teaching experience has taught us two major things. Firstly, as the buzzword of the past months, online education has been "a part of our lives" due to the pandemics; however, even when the pandemics vanishes, the future will not be much different from now in terms of online/distant teaching activity. Secondly, we've learnt that we, students and teachers all together, must always be open to new understandings, concepts and paradigm and be ready to learn those. After all, even the evil virus itself has taught us to be always open to and ready for learning new things.

Nazan Gelbal *is an EAP instructor at School of Languages at Sabancı University and she has been teaching English at tertiary level for ten years. Her main interests include personal and professional development, online teaching and academic writing.*

CLASSROOM DYNAMICS IN ONLINE TEACHING
BY NAZAN GELBAL

Do you think the dynamics of an online group of learners are different from those of a face-to-face group? The digital environment may change group dynamics, which have an important role in the success of a class. Therefore, teachers should see this as a new challenge, and employ techniques that will help learners create a bond with their classmates and their teacher. This bond, and learners' need to feel it is now more important than ever as there is very limited social contact nowadays.

First of all, teachers should start their course with get-to-know activities. We should give learners the opportunity to get-to-know each other. A bond will develop between students and the teacher through these get to know activities. Remember building good rapport will help learners be more attentive, productive and enjoy their lessons. Let your students know more about you. We see each other through screens every day, we even open the doors of our houses. How could we keep ourselves aloof (unknown), even if we wanted to?

In addition, teachers should show interest in students' lives. Start your lessons by asking how they feel, how they spent their weekend or how they are doing these days. We may have students who are Covid-19 positive. Offer them make-up lessons. Let them know if they do not feel well and miss some lessons, they can have make up lessons. This will reduce their stress and it will be great emotional support. If you show them you care about them as people, they will learn that health and the human touch are the most important things in life. Remember, we are teachers and teaching English is not our only mission.

We should set routines that will help students feel more secure. They should know the online world around them better. It should be like seeing the same faces during the breaks, doing similar things on campus. That's why I start with a five-minute chat every day. Students enjoy being in the breakout room together with their classmates without any restrictions. They can talk about anything

as in break times before the Covid-19 pandemic. It also builds confidence in students as they realize they can talk about different topics not just the ones given by the teacher.

How about organizing gatherings at the weekends? Try it! Ask students to wear their best clothes, put on some make up. Do your best to make them feel like face-to-face gatherings. We all need that feeling these days. Send off your students into breakout rooms, give them some fun topics that they can talk about. Hey, it can be in their own mother tongue. It's not a regular class.

C. TESOL RELATED REFLECTIONS

Hüseyin Koç completed his undergraduate education in ELT at Akdeniz University in 2012. He started his career as an instructor at Ankara University and TÖMER. In 2013, he started to work at Harran University. He served as the Head of the Departments of Modern Languages and Preparatory Program. In 2017, he completed his master's degree in ELT at Çağ University. He continues to serve as the assistant director of School of Foreign Languages and Children's University at HRU. He is also a teacher trainer with a TESOL certificate and the responsible instructor for the CPD Unit in his school.

A DREAM THAT CAME TRUE THROUGH TESOL
BY HÜSEYİN KOÇ

It was the year 2007 when I met the greatest teacher trainer ever in my learning life at Akdeniz University. He was one of our prep-class instructors who taught listening and speaking skills; however, he also worked as a teacher trainer. I learnt this later on, when I moved on to the department of English Language Teaching (ELT) and had classes with him on pronunciation. His name was Philip Glover, Dear Mr. Glover.

The reason I led in to my say through this commemorable background information is to reflect that I still remember his teachings just like the very first day I got to know them, which is a clear proof that he worked much more like "*an idol*" than simply as "*an instructor.*" And since the very first day I met him and his way of teaching as a teacher trainer, I have been madly fond of training teachers. I can doubtlessly state that becoming a teacher trainer and delivering what I have just like he did, became my dream that year; and since then, I have been expending my energy on developing myself in terms of my profession: teaching.

So… Years passed, and I became an English Language Instructor in the year 2012 at Ankara University and TÖMER Ankara. Although it was my first year in professional teaching, I was aware that I could still utilize those teaching methods given by Mr. Glover in an effective way. That year, upon seeing the effectivity of his teachings even after years, I resolved and began my teacher training journey. I had my first workshops on teaching speaking, listening, and writing skills. The following year, in 2013, I started a new life in Şanlıurfa, at the School of Foreign Languages of Harran University. Because our school was a newly established one, I had lots of great opportunities to develop myself in terms of academic and administrative issues. What contributed to me the most was that I established the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Unit at our school in 2015 and have been working there as the responsible instructor since then. During these five years, I tried to make use of each and every opportunity to arrange training sessions for my colleagues. I utilized my contacts in different publisher companies, invited as many teacher trainers as possible to our school for sessions, and carried out a few short training sessions myself. In the year 2017, with the invaluable contributions of United States of America Embassy Scholarship, I arranged a Quality & Accreditation Workshop in our school for our instructors. The following year, in 2018, I met TESOL

Turkey in İzmir. I was honoured to meet Ms. Bahar Gün and her team there for the first time. So, since then, I am in touch with TESOL Turkey and the team. Last year, our school was chosen by TESOL Turkey to be one of the foreign language schools to have Road Show Events. Well, this is an amazing opportunity for us, our instructors.

In 2018, I got my first TESOL Training of Trainers course with the United States of America Embassy Scholarship in İzmir. Although it was not officially certificated, the course contributed to me a lot on my way to my dream of becoming a teacher trainer. I also worked as a cascade instructor in my school and delivered the information I gathered in İzmir to my colleagues.

Finally, in November of 2020, I got my international TESOL Training of Trainers course, successfully completed it, and deserved to get certificated officially. So, I am an official teacher trainer right now, waiting impatiently for the Covid-19 period to be over so that I can organize professional development events for my colleagues and contribute to their life-long learning journeys. Just like Mr. Glover did for me, I also want to inspire my ELT prep-class students, who will all become English Language Teachers one day.

Thank you TESOL Turkey for the invaluable contributions to our learning/teaching. Thank you for inspiring us.

D. ELT Related Reflections

Sema Turan has graduated from METU Department of ELT. She completed her M.A. studies at the same department in 2008, and received Cambridge DELTA in 2015. She has been teaching at higher education for over 15 years. Currently, she is a PhD candidate in ELT at METU and works as a teacher trainer at Department of Basic English at METU.

ONLINE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT COVID-19 HAS BROUGHT ALONG
BY SEMA TURAN

There is no doubt that the COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped the way many educators approach pedagogy. It has resulted in a change not only in the mindset of educators but also in their practices. Online and blended learning approaches have been adopted by many educational institutions. Although many educators and parents are worried that the pandemic is creating risks for children's education, it is definitely creating new opportunities for managing challenges related to the integration of technology into education. Educators all over the world, including English Language teachers, have learned a lot about connecting with their students digitally. Due to the pandemic, we have also moved all professional development activities to the online environments, which has definitely created a great deal of challenge for teacher trainers.

As a teacher trainer working with English Language instructors in higher education, I have also faced a lot of challenges during this period. Although observing teachers in the online platform, handling long post-observation meetings and discussing pedagogical concepts online were far from easy, I have also found myself sharing ideas to support the teachers in managing their digital lessons in the best possible way.

In my opinion, one of the biggest challenges the COVID-19 pandemic presented for teacher trainers was the fact that it was so abrupt. All of a sudden, I found myself motivating and enabling teachers to adapt to this rapid shift in approach and practice while not being sure whether I was ready for it. Especially at the beginning of the academic year, teachers were not feeling confident. They lacked experience in online teaching, and they were not sure about what the results of this process would have been for them and for their students. Therefore, my duties as a teacher trainer started to

involve teaching teachers how to use digital tools, platforms, and materials for their lessons; how to manage exams online; how to grade students' work and give feedback without actually 'marking' papers and how to communicate with their students and build rapport although they will never meet them in person. In this situation, I felt that I was facing two main challenges. The first was that all of these concerns were new to me as well, so I had to read, study and research while, at the same time, learning to convey this knowledge to the teachers. The second challenge, honestly, was motivating teachers to help them believe that these are actually doable! Many teachers were of the opinion that they wouldn't be able to do what was expected from them as well as they did when teaching face-to-face. They were worried that they wouldn't be able to build that emotional connection with their students or to carry out lessons in a productive way. However, as in many personal and professional challenges, collaboration and dedication has helped solve problems. Now, as we are approaching the end of the first semester, having taught online for almost three months, I am glad to observe that the teachers I have been working with have started to feel more and more confident about online teaching and many of the challenges that both they and I felt at the beginning have been overcome thanks to collaboration and hard work.

Another point that the COVID-19 pandemic helped us realize, I believe, is the importance of continuous professional development. This period has shown us that no matter how educated or experienced a teacher is, professional needs may change due to an unexpected and unprecedented factor, and they may find themselves in need of training and collaboration. This is further proof that the idea of being a 'complete' teacher is technically impossible as professional development is a lifelong, ongoing process. I think in this sense, the pandemic is an opportunity in that it has helped teachers to realize this and to become more open-minded about professional development activities, such as workshops, sessions and seminars. From this aspect, the pandemic might have assisted teacher trainers to help teachers gain some intrinsic motivation for professional development.

In brief, 2020 has been a tough year and a fairly difficult one for many people in the field of education regardless of their role. COVID-19 has created challenges for learners, teachers and teacher trainers in different ways. However, my observations as a teacher trainer show me that the pandemic has also created opportunities for teachers to change their views on teaching and to be more open to professional development activities. I am probably not alone in feeling that more structured changes in the field of education are on the way and in hoping that 2021 will bring along changes for the better.

E. Troubleshooting / Challenges and Solutions

Amir Hamidi *is a teacher trainer at Unlimited Educational Services (UES) in Istanbul. He completed his BA and MA in TESOL specializing in learner-centered approaches to teaching English. He has taught ESL-EFL and trained teachers in the past 12 years. His research interests include teacher education, reflective teaching, and teacher autonomy.*

THE LITTLE RED-BUTTON: A NEW REFLECTION TOOL FOR ONLINE TEACHERS
BY AMIR HAMIDI

The world was drastically changed just over a few months. None of us expected to be observers of such strangeness and as educators, we knew very little about the challenges of the huge transition. At first our contribution to the transformation process was very limited but soon, educational experts began to introduce a vast number of tools that could be used to enhance lessons online. There was a noticeable shift toward learner-centeredness thanks to all technologies and suddenly, online education began to make sense.

But as always, it seems for everything we gain, we lose something else. The constant battle of deciding what tools to use and how to use them took a lot of valuable time from teachers, and thus, for some that meant no time was left to perform reflective teaching practice. Reflection has always been a centerpiece in recent educational domains and almost every teacher education program, publication, and event have an element of reflection. With our move toward online education though, it seems we were not completely prepared to implement it into our new educational reform.

In this article, we will be looking at how teachers can perform reflection on their online lessons and how they can use it to enhance their lessons. The article will include ideas to reflect upon the learner, tasks and activities, and language use in an online class.

Given the rather disorganized nature of teachers' schedules during the pandemic, they may find it difficult to spare extra time to collect data for reflection. Thus, the primary goal of this article is to offer an easy solution. Almost all online teaching platforms include a little red "*record*" button that enables teachers to record their lessons and save them for further reflection. Recorded videos of

lessons, if watched again, can provide the teachers with very valuable information on how successful a lesson was, how interactions were, and what could have been done differently.

The little red button would enable teachers capture true moments of their lessons and watch them again and again until personal reflective objectives are met. The matter of dealing with institutional regulations regarding recording online lessons will not be dealt with here.

Focus on the learner:

Watching recorded lessons, the teacher can focus on individual learners and evaluate their performance. Here are the questions the teacher can ask:

a) Was the learner listening attentively?

b) What was the ratio of the learner's participation?

c) In which type of activities was the learner more/less active?

d) Was the learner's setting appropriate for learning?

e) Was the learner motivated?

f) Was the learner in mood?

g) Was the learner struggling?

Focusing on individual learners while watching the recorded video can help the teacher find answers to these questions and come up with enhancing strategies.

Tasks and activities in the Online Classroom

Teachers use tasks to ensure that earners practice language in various ways. However, while teaching, it is not always easy to assess how successful these tasks are. Thus, watching the recorded sessions would help teachers understand the effectiveness of their tasks. To help teachers better evaluate the recordings, the following questions are suggested.

a) How many learners came up with the final answer/solution?

b) Did they have enough time to work on the task?

c) Did they use the expected amount of language?

d) Was the target language used to complete the activity?

e) Were they engaged and having fun while working?

f) Did they have a chance to reflect on their work?

g) Could they work together and/or share answers?

h) Did they receive any feedback on form?

Language use in the online lesson

An online classroom is a pool of language samples. All participants, including the teacher and all/most learners are actively talking in classroom. Due to the nature of interactions online, it is sometimes too difficult to follow what everyone is saying, and in that case, recorded videos can always play a significant role in helping teachers transcribe the interactions, study the patterns, and work on creating a better sharing environment. Some of the questions I would recommend teachers ask themselves while watching the recorded videos include the following.

a) Who was talking more, me or the learners?

b) Was I echoing?

c) Was I listening to my learners attentively?

d) Was I, or any of the learners using L1?

e) How simple/complicated was my language?

f) Was I using the target language in my sentences when teaching it?

g) Were learners taking turns?

h) Was I in control of learners' talking time?

Conclusion

Answering all the questions above will help teachers gain a better understanding of how their classes look and feel. Obviously, depending on the teaching context, a more sophisticated list of questions can be complied and help teachers better reflect on their teaching practice.

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"FROM FEEDBACK TO FEEDFORWARD":
CHANGING THE MINDSET TO ACHIEVE YOUR PERSONAL BEST
BY GEORGIA GEORGOGIANNI

As teachers, educators, managers and people in general we tend to give feedback quite often as we consider this an essential part for growth and development. Feedback and assessment are two concepts closely related aiming at a retrospective review of performance and a vital component of effective learning. We give our learners feedback on their assignments, class performance, behaviour and progress. We receive feedback from students, parents, managers, colleagues and principles and most of the times we end up in a long feedback session. According to Joe Hirsch, managing director at Seneca Partners, TEDx speaker, and author of "The Feedback Fix", "Feedback has become an instrument of fear, and not joy".

Does feedback always work in a positive way? What happens when someone gets feedback? Definitely it depends on the way it is given and the truth is that people get defensive, their threat awareness goes up, many times feelings are hurt and they find themselves in a state of mental paralysis. Especially when we deal with students, although our aim is to guide them towards improvement many times we don't get the desired results as they fail to engage with the teacher's comments and they are overwhelmed by a feeling of helplessness. They don't always collect or read their feedback. They just focus on the overall mark without realising how important feedback is. It could be our mistake as many times feedback arrives late or we don't want to spend much time on it and create a meaningful dialogue or even because students think that this is one of our roles and they just remain passive recipients of feedback.

Shifting the focus from the past to the future, from "what progress has been made" to "what future improvements need to be made", from "where I am now" to "where next" can been achieved through feedforward. The concept which was originally developed by Marshall Goldsmith, a management expert can replace the way a positive or negative feedback is given and make a huge

impact on how both teachers and learners grow and develop. Instead of judging what has been done, we can focus on the future progress.

How does feedforward work? Well, first of all, it is important to create a non-judgemental, learning environment where all students can feel safe and participate. Feedforward can be empowering and help all students work towards improvement and autonomous development. By being respectful, we reinforce positive attitudes and pave the way for future progress and critical thinking. Learners are no longer passive recipients. They are active and become part of the whole learning process, they can build upon their mistakes, reflect on them and solve potentially repetitious and negative attitudes. Feedforward can be a supportive coaching discussion that emphasises problem solving and opens doors for growth and opportunities.

After all, feedforward helps us move forward in every aspect, it is future-oriented and this can have multiplying effects both in personal and professional development. As educators, it should be our mission to offer our students a combination of positive feedback and feedforward and refine the group dynamics. Contributions from peers can play an important role and bring very positive results. Or we can simply give feedback which acts as feedforward.

In the end, it's all about trust that is based on a mind-set which can help people reach their full potential.

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BLOG-ID 19: CAN IT BE THE MAGICAL PANACEA IN TEACHING AND LEARNING DURING COVID TIMES?
BY PETEK ŞİRİN

Covid-19 has dramatically affected the trajectory of teaching and learning. In a matter of weeks, traditional in-person classroom was expected to leave its place to new learning modalities. But, was it that easy?

Rising to the debilitating effects of a crisis is nothing new to teachers. Forcing us to look for innovative solutions in a relatively short period of time, this pandemic has acted as a catalyst for many educational settings. As there was no use lamenting the inevitable move towards an orchestrated teacher-centered approach in zoom sessions, I considered new possibilities and decided to knock on the door of my old friend, blogging.

First date with blogging

Back in 2010, when I was desperately looking for alternative ways to enhance students' writing performance and motivation, I realized that blogging could possess a great potential to do so. At the very beginning, as it was a brand new toy, students relished the idea of sending posts about themselves and leaving comments on other people's posts. They seemed to interact with each other and benefit from it. However, this misleading start did not last very long and I had to face the plummeting trend in blog entries.

The low blogging frequency, sadly, disclosed that students lacked the necessary intrinsic motivation to enhance writing skills using blogs. Instead of facilitating learning and fostering motivation, the peer feedback they received in blog posts resulted in negative feelings, and thus a bunch of anxious bloggers. Once the course was over, students never engaged in any further blog posts. When there is no real motivation to pursue a goal or when a new approach is unnaturally nudged and pushed, consequences are potentially dire and plans fall by the wayside. Having looked at this stark picture, I also questioned whether blogging was all worth the effort and time given its workload intensive nature. The next thing to do was waving goodbye to it.

Everything deserves a second chance: Blogging in the time of a pandemic

The sudden shift to online teaching in the midst of the spring semester was anxiety provoking. Although most students continued studying regularly and completed their tasks in asynchronous

sessions, it was difficult to understand whether they really grasped the content or simply enjoyed learning it. Additionally, it was also painful to manage the group projects which entailed progressive writing, editing, discussions, knowledge building and, most notably, endless meetings. Having noted these issues aside, I decided to opt for a change and planned the modus operandi for blog use despite the earlier disappointment.

The EAP course I teach focuses on writing an academic research paper in groups. Students should, initially, understand the dimensions of sustainable development and evaluate the role of different solution methods in eliminating national and global problems. The bedrock problem is that while some students contribute actively to group work, some others cannot follow what is being discussed as they have not digested the required content to shape their ideas.

With the purpose of helping learners navigate the content and eliminate the problems in group work, I asked students to post their reflections on each solution player every three weeks after covering argumentative texts which helped them have a critical perception. When learners were encouraged to reflect on what they had learned and to strengthen their understanding with further reading and research, this gave them the due confidence and motivation to stay active in the course and more importantly to construct a personal stance towards the efficiency of contemporary solution methods. This, additionally, fostered an impetus to interact with other group members and comfortably discuss the weaknesses and strengths of each method/player while writing the evaluation section of the research paper. This also meant almost zero tension & arguments in the groups and, no wonder, not feeling the need to find an excuse to escape meetings

Going back to my initial question (whether blogging could be the magic panacea we need now), I would like to stay impartial and honestly say that overly magnifying the positive results or presenting inflated views about blogging could be misleading. Yet, my assumption is that when learners see the short term benefits of a new approach, they treasure it. The success of an intervention tool, despite many other factors at play, primarily depends on these quickly attainable results.

We, as solution providers, have an array of options to recover and thrive in this new normal. The actions that we take during this turbulent period also influence how quickly we recover. So, why not embracing new opportunities or giving a second chance to an old friend that once disappointed you?

F. RESOURCE CENTER

Adam Simpson now does volunteer work with refugees and immigrants in the Netherlands, after 20 years of living and working as an English teacher at universities in Istanbul.

A THREE-STEP GUIDE TO WRITING EFFECTIVE LESSON OBJECTIVES
PART 3: GETTING STARTED ON WRITING EFFECTIVE LESSON PLANS
BY ADAM SIMPSON

(Editor's Note: Please refer to the 4th & 5th issues of the magazine to read Part 1& 2)

If you Google the term '*lesson plan template*' you'll find a million and one examples, none of which are entirely suited to what you need. Nevertheless, having a template that suits your needs is going to help you immensely, especially in the early years of your teaching career. Given that no one else's design is going to be right for you, I strongly suggest developing your own template. With this in mind, today's post merely acts as a guide to how you should make your template what I think you need to include.

1. Things to include in your template

Detail your objectives

Objectives are both a guiding hand and the springboard from which your lesson will evolve. While I suggest being flexible with your template design, I would advise leaving space to write down your objective at the top of the page, for easy referral.

Say exactly what materials and resources you'll need

Will you be using a course book? How about a photocopied handout? Will you need a laptop to show a PowerPoint presentation? It's very easy to arrive at class with one of these vital components missing, so write down exactly what you need!

Make room for the 'meta-data'

I use the term '*meta-data*' to describe stuff such as the time of the lesson, the room, the number of chairs, whether the room has windows, a projector, etc. It' very easy to forget how these things can affect lessons!

How will the lesson proceed?

How many activities will you do in the lesson? How long will these take? How will you set each activity up? Will learners work individually, in pairs or in a group? Most consider this the main part of any plan and with good reason.

How will you assess learning?

Look at the activities you've listed: how are you going to assess performance and give feedback? Will learners hand in a worksheet, or will they be corrected orally?

Time to reflect

One thing that can easily be overlooked is the opportunity to reflect that a lesson plan gives you. Consider features of the lesson that went well, or things that need to be changed. This gives you a great chance to look back at the procedure, the timing of activities, the way you grouped learners together and the physical materials they used. Use the hard work you've put in to your advantage if you have to teach a similar lesson in the future.

2. General advice on how to make your template

Store your plan template as a soft copy

Personally, I like having a hard copy of what I plan to do, but that doesn't mean I don't have the template stored as a word document. This will mean that your plan is easy to access and also that you can update the design as and when you feel the need.

Don't assume you'll get it right first time

Start out with what seems logical, but change things around if you need to. For example, when I first started doing this I left too little space to detail how my activities would work and no space at all for reflection. The best way to see what changes you need to make is to look back and make note of the parts of the template that needed more room, or those that weren't turning out to be useful at all, for instance.

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ENHANCING PRODUCTIVE SKILLS IN VIDEO LESSONS
BY MERVE BASMAZ

It is widely accepted that digital tools and videos take a great place in 21st-century classrooms. Adapting them into our curriculum has become a necessity rather than a choice, as they are in every part of our lives. In this article, I would like to focus on the productive skills activities that can be done following a video lesson.

1. Speaking Activities

 After watching a digital source, it's crucial for students to express what they've learned in their own words. In this sense, a retelling activity can be performed both for comprehension assessment and speaking practice. Acting out is especially motivating in primary and secondary classes. It also enables improvisation whose effect is described by Zafeririadou (2009) as such; ''to become truly communicatively competent, learners should have opportunities to become autonomous language users through activities that support their desire to interact with peers and allow them to use their imagination, creativity and playfulness.'' Additionally, asking students' reflection with simple questions like: 'What would you do in this situation?' helps them personalize the information which is necessary to transfer it to the long-term memory.

2. Writing Activities:

When it comes to writing, students often experience a lack of motivation, so the given writing tasks should be object-oriented yet fun for them. Almost all students are eager to express what they think, so asking their reflections is a good start. This can be done in a variety of writings; if the video revolves around a debatable issue, students can be asked to write a comment about the video, as they do in video-sharing platforms in their personal lives. As it is claimed by Mayora (2009): ''Certain features of videos-sharing platforms, including the written comments and the possibility for students to express their ideas by constructing

meaning through videos, can improve students' writing skills through authentic interaction.'' We should also let students build up the knowledge they collect from the video in their writings. For instance, the video content could be continued with the same characters in a short story; a poem or song lyrics can be written after watching about a songwriter or a poet. By all manner of means, students should bring what they gain from the source and their creativity together in a suitable writing format.

3. Dictogloss: Bringing Different Skills in One Task

Dictogloss is an effective classroom activity that practices both listening and note-taking skills. It's described by Smith, Karen (2012) thusly: ''Dictogloss, where listening is the input, speaking is the communication tool, and writing is the input and the output, is a collaborative task that promotes communicative competence through the use of four skills while shining a light on grammar.'' This activity has been done with the teacher's dictation, so there is no reason why it can't be adapted to digital sources.

The fact that Dictogloss can be modified according to the class' needs makes it quite advantageous. In one version, the students are asked to listen and note down only the keywords. It aims to practice effective notetaking as well as drawing attention to the target vocabulary. The teacher may also prefer to point out a specific language by giving an instruction as such: ''Listen to the audio and note down the weekend plans of the speaker.'' Or, the teacher can dictate the excerpt from the script which allows him to adapt the pace, slower or faster. While noting down, the students have the chance to comprehend the meaning and form of the target language, which, in this case, is the future tense. In the following stages, they can tell or write about their own weekend plans. Another variation can be students' paraphrasing the content using their notes which is beneficial not only for writing but also for vocabulary and grammar use. Apart from that, Dictogloss is also a way to start a discussion activity. Dave Spencer suggests an activity where students take a piece of paper and divide it into three columns as: 'I agree', 'I disagree', and 'It depends'. Then, the teacher dictates several statements for instance: 'People used to read more when there was no social media' and students write down the statement on one of the columns they chose. In the second part of the activity, students pair up, compare their columns, and discuss. This is a great way to wrap-up the video lesson with the statements related to the content.

As the world goes digital, we must keep up and adopt digital sources as our new main materials. There is no doubt these sources will increase the skill-building and efficiency in classrooms when they're supported with suitable activities.

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G. Article Review

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AN ARTICLE REVIEW OF "ERKEN ÇOCUKLUK ORTAMINDA SINIF KÜLTÜRÜ VE KATILIM YETKINLIĞI ÜZERINE NITEL BIR ANALIZ" BY ZEKİYE YAHŞİ: INCREASING LEARNING COMPETENCE IN DIFFERENT CULTURAL SETTINGS
BY PERİHAN CEYDA ORHAN

As teachers, we have experienced divergent perspectives of our students. Sometimes, it might have been difficult for us to communicate with some, sometimes it might have been easy. Sometimes, we had the full joy and pleasure with them, but sometimes we felt our heels drag before the class. We consider them diamonds to shine up our future, however this is not always the case. In our professional lives, there possibly have been some students that made us struggle. Maybe we have felt there would be no shimmer of success. In such cases, those students are even considered as unresponsive and they are labelled as failures or uneducable. But what might make those unresponsive students responsive and how can we support them through the path of self-realization? According to Zekiye Yahşi (2007) the quality of interaction with students and results acquired from them mostly depend on the cultural context we offer them, instead of the personalities of each student.

In her article, she mentions the concept of 'modern student'. The modern student is a student who is used to the interactions of socio-cultural environments of a more Westerner mind. The modern student will be able to join the lesson actively, express her/his thoughts and feelings appropriately and show her/his skills in a decent way. What if the students was raised with different cultural patterns and accepted, inspected the things s/he comes across according to those patterns? Yahşi (2007) gives examples of such research done about this. Susan Philips (1972) did a research on Native-American students' synchronization with the lessons, and noticed that those students misunderstand the interactional signals and hence, were not fully engaged. Kathyrn Au (1980) showed us that indigenous Hawaiian students had a worse rate

of reading skills because of the gap between harmony of the educational system provided and their cultural concepts. After the changes were made in educational performances to adapt the content to their cultural perspectives, the rates of their reading skills rose. In the light of this information, Yahşi suggests that one can say, the modern approaches might not be useful for all student types all the time, and we should always observe and pay attention to these niche cultural notions.

Yahşi's research was done in a town in Southern Turkey, with second graders and she used an ethnographical design. The town was the place she spent her childhood in and she was acquainted with the most of the locals. She recorded the lessons, had interviews with the classroom teacher and the parents.

In her research, she just mentions one example that will summarize her point. In that example, the classroom teacher wanted to use a vicarious learning technique to achieve the outcome, which was being able to introduce oneself to the others. So, the teacher called out for a student to stand in front of the class and then asked him his name. The student seemed startled at this point, looked around and could not answer. The teacher asked the question one more time, but no answer from the student again. The student looked at his classmates, searching for an answer from them, but they just giggled and he started to giggle too. However, the teacher got angry at this point and told him to go back to his seat and scolded him for not even being able to say his name. Okay, in this instance, can we assume that an eight- year-old student did not know how to say his name? No. Did he just want to be funny and naughty? Not exactly. At this point, Yahşi realized that the student did not answer the question because the question did not make sense to him. There was his teacher, he knew his name, so why would he ask him his name again? That was confusing for him. In the context he grew up, people do not do that to each other, so in his point of view that was not normal. Even though we use vicarious learning as a technique in our classrooms from time to time and it is proved to be a very beneficial one to use, in this situation, it did not work out well.

Yahşi suggests that we need to be able to analyze the students' cultural background and guide them through the lessons with methods and interactions specifically. Every child has the right to be educated and the responsibility for that is left to preservice and in-service training institutions and naturally to us, active teachers. This is an essential point to consider when we

have problematic cases. Let us remind ourselves, we are the ones that can touch our students' souls and minds and there is no limit for us when we want to achieve it.

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H. Learner Voices: "Being a young adult Learner In The Time Of COVID 19: Challenges and Opportunities"

POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?
BY SEZİN ALPON & BEGÜM ERSOY
WITH A NOTE FROM THEIR INSTRUCTOR DENİZ ÖZBEYLİ, PREP CLASS INSTRUCTOR, YASAR UNIVERSITY

On the first day of this semester I felt a little bit more excited, anxious rather to say, than the previous first days. I was going to meet my new students-- but on the screen this time. Through the wires and bytes; keyboards and earphones; mikes and likes; buttons and cameras forgotten... I sensed that the students also had the same anxiety. And "my traditional first day meeting ritual" is to talk to every one of my new students, look at their faces, into their eyes, to shake their hands and repeat my magic words to start the enthusiasm on the very first day of each semester. Poor me, I was about to say to myself... Then I gave up... Stand up and fight! Reaction, proactive moments, a new challenge! I tried to convey my own affirmative and constructive viewpoint to the students. And yes! It worked. I knew that once you contact the new coming students genuinely and sincerely and more importantly, try to get them involved in classes, it'd work even in such unusual evil viral conditions. There are other students in my classes who would be pleased to express their mostly positive feelings here in this magazine, however, due to the limitations of these pages, I'd like to introduce you two of them, Sezin and Begüm with their short texts about their feelings related to the online education process and our digital days.

Sezin Alpon -YAŞAR UNIVERSITY Prep Class Student-Interior Architecture and Environmental Design

POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE?
BY SEZİN ALPON & BEGÜM ERSOY

This is my first year at Yaşar University. I am a student in the department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design. But now I am a prep class student. I like my teachers and enjoy the lessons. I think there are many positive and negative aspects of *COVID-19*. For example, we cannot see the people we love these days. We can only see them by video call. This is a bad thing. We cannot go out freely, we are fighting a virus we do not know. And *COVID-19* has affected the economy of every major country in a bad way… there are many downsides like these. But it's up to us to turn some negative aspects into an advantage. In the *COVID* days, we can improve ourselves; we can focus on our lessons and be very successful. Seeing the good sides is important. Online education can also be a useful method for learning and practicing English.

Begüm Ersoy- YAŞAR UNIVERSITY Prep Class Student---- *Logistic Management*

After high school days, I've started Yaşar University this year. I am going to study in the Logistic Management Department and I am a prep class student now. I started this university to get a good education. In the prep class I enjoy the lessons. We enjoy learning English here. Sure, you are trying to give the best education that can be given in this process. Face-to-face training is of course very different but I don't find online education insufficient, either.

As our teachers, you take care of all of us. I hope we can return to education on campus as soon as possible and we can benefit more from you and the school's facilities.