



PROFESSIONAL ELT MAGAZINE ONLINE



Published by TESOL TURKEY Promotion Council

Contents:

A. CHANGING BELIEFS AND VALUES	3
UNPRECEDENTED TIMES: CHANGING TEACHING BELIEFS AND IDENTITY OF ELT PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS IN THE TIME OF COVID -19 by Burcu Gündoğdu	3
VIDEO WATCHING SPEEDS, RECORDINGS & WHAT WE ALL LEARN FROM EACH OTHER by Deniz Özbeyli ...	6
B. TESOL RELATED REFLECTIONS	10
SUCH AN AFTER-BEFORE STORY! by Elif Atalı.....	10
TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE PROMPT 'ONLINE EDUCATION IS LIKE...': A METAPHOR ANALYSIS by Heather Austin and Mary Jane Özkurkudis	13
TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK! by Hüseyin Koç.....	17
REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES DURING ONLINE EDUCATION by Mutlu Bosson & Pınar Gündüz.....	20
C. ELT RELATED REFLECTIONS	30
PEDAGOGICAL DILEMMAS, AFFECTIVE SUBJECTIVITIES AND IDENTITY IN SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE CLASSROOMS by L. Alp Akarçay.....	30
THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN ELT by Çisem Arda.....	34
WHY TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY & CRITICAL THINKING BELONG TOGETHER by Elizabeth S. Coleman	37
CAN WE REALLY INTERACT? by Ezgi Kıryançipek.....	40
LEARNING ABOUT TEACHING ONLINE by İlksen Büyükdurmuş Selçuk	43
D. TROUBLESHOOTING/ CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS	46
CAN YOU SEE YOUR STUDENTS? by Arif Yıldızlı.....	46
CHANGE. CHALLENGE. DEVELOPMENT by Georgia Georgogianni.	52
SOCRATIC SEMINARS by Seher Balbay and Buket Tarakçıoğlu	55
E. RESOURCE CENTER	60
TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PEER REVIEW OF WRITING AMONGST STUDENTS by Richard Giles Smith.....	60
F. LEARNER VOICES	62
REFLECTIONS by Buse Merter	62
COVID-19 DAYS FROM A YOUNG ADULT LEARNER'S PERSPECTIVE by Ege Konca	66
BEING A YOUNG ADULT LEARNER IN COVID DAYS by İrem Nisa Moğulkoç.....	68
WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE A DIGITAL LEARNER? by Melisa Kaptan	70
IS QUARANTINE A PUNISHMENT OR A REWARD? by Nilüfer Kuru	72
REFLECTIONS by Selim Selçuk Kahraman.....	74
WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A DIGITAL LEARNER? by Ümit Erkut Çolak	76

A. CHANGING BELIEFS AND VALUES



Burcu Gündoğdu studied B.A. in English Language and Literature at İstanbul Kültür University. Later, she pursued M.A. in English Language and Literature at İstanbul University. Currently, she is studying for PhD. in English Language and Teaching at Anadolu University since 2016 and working as a research assistant at İstanbul Kültür University since 2015.

UNPRECEDENTED TIMES: CHANGING TEACHING BELIEFS AND IDENTITY OF ELT PRE-SERVICE

TEACHERS IN THE TIME OF COVID -19

by *Burcu Gündoğdu*

In these unprecedented times during Covid-19, education has to undergo several changes and new adaptations during the Covid-19 pandemic and will presumably keep using them even after post-pandemic days. The change was such abrupt that a lot of teachers had to keep pace with the zeitgeist of the Covid-19 pandemic and shift to online education during locked-down to better fit with the current times. Nothing remains unaffected by this sudden enforced shift of the outbreak. Just like for in-service teachers, it would not be wrong to say that, for pre-service teachers, this pandemic produces a window of time that wakes new teaching beliefs and brings change to their initial teacher identity that informs their future practices.

Covid-19 has drastically influenced pre-service teachers' teaching beliefs and initial teacher identity because, during this time, they have ample opportunities to observe the teaching and learning process from multiple angles of a learner, of an observer, and with hands-on experience during teaching practicum. Being the first as well as third-person narrator to the learning and teaching process, their insights are richer and more inclusive. My students from school observation and

teaching practicum come up with some conclusions that manifest their changing teaching beliefs and values during online education. Here are some of them that emerge as a result of the analysis of the individual essays they submitted for their school experience course. They are in the opinion that,

1. Covid-19 affected their teaching process and beliefs. They stated that a teacher has a variety of identities such as input provider, facilitator, or observer. But now, they consider, a teacher firstly acts as a mentor; to be aware of how well students are progressing with their task by supervising. To be able to do this, as a prerequisite, a teacher should have reflective thinking and self-awareness about their teaching practices.
2. In distance teaching, different from face-to-face classes, teachers must be working on cognitive and psychological approaches because behavioral measures are not easy to apply from distance. And, it is all the more important to motivate the learners and keep them cognitively engaged.
3. The more diverse the materials, the more the student's interest in the lesson increases, and hence, the lesson is managed efficiently. But, the materials used in the class seem to be the same in the face to face classes, and therefore; it is high time that teachers adapt the materials to fit with online education needs by paying attention to materials to be interactive, interesting, and authentic materials suitable for students' needs. Thus, they hold the idea that teachers can foster content and learner engagement.
4. The fact that students do not turn on their cameras or participate in voice does not diminish the authority of the teacher. On the contrary, students respect the teacher when they pay attention to the privacy and expectations of their students.
5. Distant education teaching has changed the definition of making contact and we need to use the tools of technology to our benefit. In the virtual classroom, sending an emoji, using chat,

or playing an online game with the whole class matters. If teachers want to make contact with students. But, some students have developed negative apprehension towards online teacher identity. They consider even though the current tools employed for online education are effective, nothing can replace the way a teacher moves, talks, and uses all the tools by themselves. And, they feel concerned about teacher authority and student autonomy that change during Covid-19 online education.

Some of the teaching beliefs and values they come up with significantly change from one another showing that they have different experiences concerning online education as a learner and as a student-teacher. But, they agree on some of the issues: (1) teachers' role expands and gets diversified, and (2) the existing concepts that are used in face-to-face classrooms cannot be readily applied to online education if educators want to manage a lesson efficiently. They are both anxious and willing to use their experiences based on the online education during Covid-19. In other words, they are both overwhelmed by struggling teachers and successful models for their future teaching careers.



Deniz Özbeyli teaches English at Yaşar University. He worked as an Instructor of English in the army before. He earned his B.A. in English Linguistics at Hacettepe University; M.A. in ELT and **Ph.D.** 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 has more than 100 short stories, essays, and travel notes published in literature and art magazines.

VIDEO WATCHING SPEEDS, RECORDINGS AND WHAT WE ALL LEARN FROM EACH OTHER

by Deniz Özbeyli

In our classroom, we are a team rather than a group of students and an instructor working in a hierarchical structure. It would be getting away from the core of education otherwise. In an ideal classroom, everyone respects each other, and more importantly, all learn from each other. When different age groups and generations are mentioned, various definitions and classifications can be heard in the terminology. Generation Z, generation gap, lost generation, and so forth. When it comes to education; to the noble efforts of teaching and learning, it would be the best approach to believe in, care, and expect the possibility and opportunity of learning from every member of the class. It is an ongoing, endless and dynamic flow of knowledge from everyone to others. Students learn from their instructors. That's the nature of education. And as instructors, we are there to teach them. However, we should not underestimate our students and should see the whole picture. Students also may give us endless opportunities for insights, thinking ways, and trying new concepts. "Video watching speed preference" is just one right example in this sense.

During the pandemic and lockdown times, online education has brought with itself its tools, concepts, and understandings. Although it does not take place in a physical classroom, we still follow the particular and required steps and teach. However, there is a crucial point to consider here; may be beneficial, I'd rather say: The lessons are recorded. Therefore, we have a great deal of students who watch the recordings; even the students who attend the lessons at the actual time, too. At this

point, we need some clarification: Most students think that the duration for the lessons in the recordings is actually unnecessarily long. They believe that the essence of the subject taught, the gist that they focus on is usually a shorter period of the duration of the whole recording. Consequently, they watch the recordings 1.5, 1.8, or 2 times faster. Before these lockdown years, maybe some of us might have raised an eyebrow at this with a kind of disapproving manner. However, when you consider that the natural flow of a lesson consists of lots of introductory parts, warm-ups, ending and closing remarks, interjection, and some figures of speech conversations, chats to grasp the student's attention, today you realize that these all really take a lot of time. All of the mentioned things increase the time spent when teaching a topic. Also, if you include the personal differences in speaking and writing speeds of instructors, which might seem mostly very slow, say, to the so-called Generation Z students, you can understand much better why students watch recordings at faster-watching speeds. Alright, what then, after we've learned this fact, are we going to do? What role will this awareness play in our teaching habits? What are we supposed to do now?

The first point we should once again realize is that everyone learns from each other. You cannot neglect the new developments around you. As a matter of fact, teachers themselves must be open to lifetime learning. As the watchers of recordings, students have triggered the idea and, in a way, got their instructors' attention to the timing and efficiency matters.

Secondly, self-reflection plays an important role here. Instructors must realize what their strengths and weaknesses are. They must evaluate themselves and make the next plans accordingly. So, recordings are good opportunities since instructors can watch and observe their own lessons afterwards. This watching includes not only the topic, vocabulary, and grammar taught but also the instructors' manners, body language, use of language, posture, mimes, gestures, voice tone, and

speed. To this end, of course, not every single recording but some selected recordings can be watched again.

Thirdly, the recordings can give instructors the opportunity of benchmarking. Observing what other instructors are doing in the class will be much easier if you arrange the necessary conditions to participate in other virtual classes or when you share the recordings with another colleague, a supervisor, or your coordinator.

Fourthly, as new concepts have entered the teaching environment, more and more instructors are adapting themselves to the optimum speed and duration of a recording. For instance, some instructors are not recording the warm-up and closing remarks parts if there is no specific and particular information re the subjects taught in that hour. Some other instructors do not record the period while they are preparing or switching between their files or documents before sharing them on the screen.

And finally, we must be aware of the fact that the new “trend” of fast-forwarding and speed watching has already been pushing the limits. You can find examples of 3, 4, 5 times faster video watching experience. There are even some extreme examples of people who watch some films 7 times faster than the normal speed.

Consequently, the recordings of lessons and faster video watching habits have a two-sided effect on us. It is like a win-win phenomenon. While students are choosing the optimum watching speeds for themselves, instructors might have the chance of trying to prepare their next lessons in more efficient and effective ways. No matter how dizzying and incomprehensible they are in the beginning, the emerging phenomena in education sooner or later will take their place in our lives for sure. Just like the ubiquity of the concept of recorded lessons and students’ faster video watching speeds. Therefore, no frowning at watching videos at faster speeds please, if you were to.

Instead, contrarily, maybe we should praise this situation and adapt ourselves to it. Wouldn't we do that when people developed the skills of their speed reading? And the question of how the students with faster watching habits would react to regular, face-to-face education when normal times come is now left hanging in the air.

B. TESOL RELATED REFLECTIONS



Elif Atali has been teaching English to learners at various proficiency levels and school grades since 2015. She holds a bachelor's degree in English Language Teaching (ELT), and she is currently pursuing a master's degree in ELT. Her teaching and research interests are mainly associated with materials development in foreign language teaching, teacher reflection, and instructional technology.

SUCH AN AFTER-BEFORE STORY!

by Elif Atali

I would be such a desperate teacher now if I hadn't met TESOL and had experienced such an after-before story. It was the period of my career when I started to think our discipline was not dynamic and everything remained the same over years as all the conferences, seminars, training, and workshops began to seem to convey the same messages and contents over and over again. Moreover, the research studies seemed to me that they were just changing some spices but cooking the same meal. That state of mind together with the stress of writing an MA thesis made me terrified to have been caught by the teacher burn-out in the very early years of my profession because a life-long learner part of mine knew that there was always something new and interesting to learn; however, I didn't know where and how to reach it. I was almost a total loss. Then, thanks to social media I came across an open call for contributions to a brand new TESOL book called "New Ways in Teaching with Games". That was a turning point in my career which I wasn't aware of then. I submitted a few game ideas in English language teaching to the book editors and following a long revision process, I was notified with a very positive email that said one of my chapters was accepted. It motivated me on the fact that the field was still growing and I could be a part of it. We worked hard for the details of my chapter and now the book is out inspiring other English teachers all over the world as the idea of it did for me once by introducing TESOL to me.

Later in the same year, as I was involved in so many social media groups related to TESOL activities, I saw another offer for a TESOL teacher certificate program scholarship provided by the RELO (Regional English Language Office) in Turkey. I applied and luckily got into the program. The program was very intensive and fruitful. I had a chance to keep up with the new trends in teaching English and revise and retain my knowledge in the scope of my profession. While the program was going on, I attended the TESOL Turkey annual conference and saw that the conferences were not actually repeating the same things, but I just couldn't meet TESOL before. At that conference, I heard about another scholarship for the biggest academic gathering in our specific field: TESOL International Convention 2021 which was the actual milestone. Without any doubt, I applied and I got a chance to be one of the participants with the help of a scholarship called "Professional Development Scholarship". It was literally and genuinely amazing to be able to listen to those inspirational talks and learn about very effective-in-class practices and scholarly research studies. During the convention, I had the idea of being able to present at that beautiful event. While I was searching about how to do so, I realized that there was a kind of competition concerning participants' sharing their first TESOL experiences on a blog and the winners would be presenting those experiences with a small speech at one of the sessions of the convention. I thought that it would be a nice preparation for my presentation I was planning for the following year and I sent an entry for the competition. Guess what? It was approved and I had a 4-minute speech at the convention. It was extremely exciting. I had a chance to network with so many of my colleagues from different countries. I gained great insights to reflect on my MA thesis I am currently writing. My TESOL journey was not over with that. In the meantime, I saw another call to be a TESOL blog writer. Obviously, I have sent my application and I am waiting for it to be hopefully approved. Also, lately, I have completed the teacher certification program and I am a TESOL certified teacher who is far from burn-out and looking for new opportunities every passing day. I wanted to share all these to give a kind of hope

for the teachers who might be feeling like me before TESOL and inspire them not to lose their life-long learner souls.



Heather Austin is an English instructor and course coordinator in the Undergraduate English Department at Izmir University of Economics. She holds an MA in Applied Linguistics and has taught in Turkey for nearly a decade. Her professional interests include materials development, educational technology, SLA Theory, and discourse analysis.



Mary Jane Özkurkudis is an instructor and the Head of the Curriculum and Material Development Unit in the preparatory programme at Izmir University of Economics. She holds an MA in Curriculum and Instruction. She is interested in curriculum design and development, educational technology and professional development.

TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO THE PROMPT 'ONLINE EDUCATION IS LIKE...': A METAPHOR ANALYSIS

by Heather Austin and Mary Jane Özkurkudis

Education has drastically changed in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, as this and other studies highlighted at the 3rd TESOL Turkey International ELT Conference. Whereas online programs were once optional or not even offered, they have become the main – and in some institutions, the only – mode of delivering lessons at the time of writing. This has sparked a myriad of questions, a common one being, “How do teachers and students feel about being forced to have classes online?” In addition to interviews and quantitative data analysis, this research attempts to answer that question through a more creative methodology: metaphor analysis. However, due to time constraints, this article only discusses teachers' responses.

While the essence of metaphor is understanding and experiencing one thing in terms of another (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980), it is also a mode by which we conceptualize our world and behavior (Gibbs, 2008). In metaphor analysis, participants complete a metaphor prompt with a brief explanation, and responses are analyzed and categorized. “The premise behind this methodology is that by examining the metaphors that human beings use in describing their experiences and beliefs,

people can begin to uncover meanings beneath [those metaphors] directly and consciously...” (Zheng and Song, 2010, p. 42). Moreover, this research was conducted in the Fall 2020 term – the first planned fully-online semester at a university during COVID-19 – so timing was a core factor in our attempt to learn how teachers and students were coping. Therefore, metaphor analysis, as an alternative, experiential qualitative research method, was well-suited for this context to both identify current perceptions of and issues in teaching and learning online and consider potential underlying assumptions, which could lead to viable solutions to these issues.

Over 50 instructors from the School of Foreign Languages at a university in Turkey (specifically the Undergraduate English Program, Second Foreign Languages Department, and B1 and B2-level classes in the English Preparatory Program) were surveyed to complete the prompt ‘Online education is like...’ with a brief explanation in the form of a “because” sentence. Survey findings revealed a range of emerging images, many semantically related, which led to the creation of five categories – ‘Chaos’, ‘Challenge’, ‘Tool’, ‘Savior’, or ‘Opportunity’, with ‘Savior’ being a uniquely pandemic-specific category. Notable findings showed that the ‘Challenge’ category, with the most responses (27%), was followed by ‘Opportunity’ (24%), and most participants (82%) had never taught online before. While the analysis of the quantitative data indicated no significant relationship between the categories and the diagnostic variables (gender, years of teaching experience, and having taught online or not before COVID-19), the metaphor analysis was quite revealing. Prominent themes included notions of survival, one-way transmission, and performance, along with the metaphorical nature of the five designated categories themselves. In addition, the qualities and strength of some images that emerged was a rather striking finding, particularly online education as *a black hole, unraveling a tangled mess of yarn, using a candle instead of a light bulb to light up a room, and a Russian matryoshka doll*. The 15 participant interviews were also insightful, with many recognizing the duality of online education while clarifying their stance and justifying their

metaphor. Based on this triangulation and our findings, we conclude online education is more of a challenge at present. Teachers are frantically coping and feel a sense of inadequacy, anxiety, or uncertainty – which may be reflected in their teaching or attitude in class (Thornbury, 1991; McGrath, 2006; Zheng and Song, 2010) – despite initial training and preparation. This research of course has its limitations, as metaphors inherently encompass biases or selective knowledge that can be a way of “not seeing” (Morgan, 1997), as well as the risk of assuming people “metaphorize” in the same way (Case et al., 2017).

Future implications include potentially more novel approaches to teacher development, especially when reflecting on assumptions, beliefs, and teaching practices, with such activities as teachers analyzing students’ responses to the same survey and comparing them with their own (Thornbury, 1991; McGrath, 2006). Moreover, online programs likely becoming a standard when things “return to normal,” particularly at universities which only offered face-to-face courses, will trigger an undeniable need for an infrastructural and technological overhaul, in addition to structured teacher education programs for pre- and in-service teachers that seriously incorporate the likes of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge (TPACK) training (Özcurkudis, 2017).

Furthermore, analyzing students’ responses as a follow-up to this article will hopefully further inform this topic upon its completion.

The teacher and student participants of this research are the experimental guinea pigs in the shifting dynamics of education and how it could or should look in the future. Their lived experiences and realities of distance learning due to COVID-19 will contribute to developing an online education that is implemented through effective educational technology, proper training and support from institutions, and best teacher practices, regarding topics from student engagement, motivation, and well-being to assessment, teacher education, and infrastructure. Though it often feels we are just

trying to survive the digital classroom, in truth we are undergoing the preliminary stages of a monumental change in education that will go down in history.

References

- Case, Peter, Gaggiotti, Hugo, Gosling, Jonathan, and Caicedo, Mikael Holmgren (2017) *Of tropes, totems and taboos: reflections on Morgan's images from a cross-cultural perspective*. In: Örtenblad, Anders, Trehan, Kiran, and Putnam, Linda L., (eds.) *Exploring Morgan's Metaphors: theory, research, and practice in organizational studies*. Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA, USA, pp. 226-245.
- Gibbs, R. W., Jr. (Ed.). (2008). *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought*. Cambridge University Press.
- Lakoff, G. and M. Johnson. (1980). *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- McGrath, I. (2006). Teachers' and learners' images for coursebooks. *ELT Journal*, 60(2), 171-180.
- Morgan, G. (1997). *Images of organization*. Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.
- Özcurkudis, M.J. (2017). Integrating Technology into Teaching: Technological Pedagogical Content Model (TPACK), and Its Implications . *Humanising Language Teaching*, 19 (3). ISSN 1755-9715. Available at <http://old.hltmag.co.uk/jun17/sart03.htm>
- Thornbury, S. (1991). 'Metaphors we work by: EFL and its metaphors'. *ELT Journal* 45/3: 193–200.
- Zheng, H., & Song, W. (2010). Metaphor Analysis in the Educational Discourse: A Critical Review. *Us-China Foreign Language*, 8, 42-49.



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 the 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.

TEAMWORK MAKES THE DREAM WORK!

by Hüseyin Koç

As would be widely accepted, one of the most banalistic features of conferences is the fact that they provide myriad meaningful academic and educational attainments together with ample tasty food for thought that would, later on, be altered into wonderful ideas to be utilized in one's teaching. The 3rd TESOL Turkey International ELT Conference was not an exception in this regard. With the noteworthy title going "*Pedagogical Shifts in Times of Turmoil*", the conference successfully touched upon and briefly summarized the radical changes we (as language instructors) have been through for the last one and a half year, and the well-beloved presenters provided bags of insightful shares for the participants from all over the world.

Amongst the workshops and seminars that I took part in during the three days one more fruitful than the other, Melis Akdoğan Gündoğdu's "*Children Books While in Need of Hope*" was actually the *diamond* in my bag, and I got inspired by it to design a project-based learning implement for my students. Thanks to my dear daughter Elif Duru, I have known children/picture books for around five years, and we have read more than 2,000 books up to now. However, I had never considered utilizing these marvelous sources in my teaching as tools to promote and reinforce the collaborative skills of my learners.

Taking the saying “*a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*” as the benchmark, and getting inspired by dear Melis, I aspired to implement a Children Books project with my learners, and designed a four-week-long task for them. The title for the project is “*Children Books Podcast*”; and here, in this article, I am going to describe the project in general terms, and share a step-by-step weekly-based guide for the dear readers of the *TESOL Turkey Professional ELT Magazine Online*.

Children Books Podcast is a project that inherently requires students to create their children-stories and publish them both as books and podcasts in four weeks. During these four weeks, students are expected to perform both collaborative and cooperative workloads in between their groups and come up with a genuine children-story to be published in colour and recorded as a podcast. As is known, projects are one of the most influential agencies for learners to find authentic means for their language development, and they could be utilized both to teach and review certain target language themes. I personally prefer using this specific project with the purpose of reviewing the *Simple Present Tense* and teaching new vocabulary to my learners. As the group project inherently requires teamwork, students, during and at the end of the processes, come to know that “*teamwork makes the dream work*”, too. Another utility of the abovementioned project in my context is that since I teach ELT Department prep-class students, they do not only learn for themselves but they also learn for their would-be students, which naturally brings about *cascading*.

Accordingly, in **Week 1** of the project, I bring several different children's books treating various topics like friendship, sharing, happiness, change, courage; and introduce these to my students on different days. Together with the students, we analyze the plots, characters, times, settings, and endings of the books. I also ask them to elaborate on the use of these books in language teaching and elicit their ideas. In the same week, I explain the project and divide the students into groups of four or five, and apply the random selection technique in this phase since my learners are all around the same language proficiency level. I also deliver weekly-based to-do lists and checklists to the

students so that they can know what to do each week. From the beginning of **Week 2**, they start creating their characters, stories, and endings. They choose images for their characters, and background pictures for their stories. They write the first drafts of their books this week. In **Week 3**, we examine the first drafts created, and give feedback to each group's work. Once we are over with the collection and application of feedbacks, they finalize their work to be printed in color. In **Week 4**, which is the last week of the project, groups choose their narrators and record their stories taking into consideration the intonation, stress, and fluency themes. This way, they reach the final step in their project with two different final products in their hands: a children's book and a children's book podcast.

To conclude, the 3rd TESOL Turkey International ELT Conference contributed to me a lot regarding my continuous professional development. By this means, I would love to express my deepest appreciation and gratitude to the board and organizing members of TESOL Turkey for their wholehearted commitment to the noble cause: teacher professional development in Turkey.



Pinar Gündüz has been working in ELT at the tertiary level for over 20 years. She has been working at Sabancı University since 2006, and she is currently working as the Program Coordinator. She is mainly interested in assessment for learning, material development, and lifelong learning.



Mutlu Bosson has taught languages at secondary and tertiary levels in Turkey and the U.K. for over 20 years. She has been teaching at Sabancı University since 2014. Her interests include the use of technology in education, material development, and academic writing.

REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICES DURING ONLINE EDUCATION

by Mutlu Bosson & Pinar Gündüz

Formative feedback tools shared at TESOL TURKEY 3rd International ELT Conference 27.02.2021

In our presentation at TESOL Turkey 3rd International ELT Conference, our main aim was to share our experiences of using formative feedback tools in our classrooms as we believe both instructors and learners benefit tremendously from the practice of classroom research. In our session, we also shared a variety of formative feedback tools that can be used in face-to-face and online classes and practical suggestions in the hope that these would either encourage teachers to take up classroom research for the first time, allow current classroom researchers to share their experiences and views with us or offer new tools to teachers who are searching for a new direction in their classroom research. Below is a list of formative feedback tools that we compiled as we were preparing for our presentation, some of which we discussed during our session.

1. Using GIF images to get feedback

Our students are digital natives. They can skilfully and easily use web-based resources and are

motivated to use them. We can use this to our advantage while asking for feedback. One way of doing this is using GIF images. Students can be asked to use GIF images to express their thoughts on the course and learning materials. Sentence starters can be given to help learners get started with a clear direction. Please see *Appendix 1* for a sample task.

A similar idea could be used with Twitter templates, which are abundant online. The students can be given tweet templates on paper during face-to-face education, and be provided 'trend topics'. During online education, a template can be copied on a Padlet wall, and students can type their tweets on post-its instead. To encourage students to be more descriptive and to make it more fun, encourage them to use hashtags in their responses.

TRENDING

#1: Things that worked well in today's class

#2: Things that can be improved in today's class

#3: Something I found confusing today

#4: A general comment I'd like to make about our course



2. Letter to the teacher

When the feedback document is prepared in the form of a letter, it may look more sincere and genuine, and it may help build a closer relationship between the teacher and the students. During face-to-face education, students can be given a letter with gaps to fill in (see Appendix 2). During

online teaching, students can fill these in on a Word document, and then copy-paste their responses on an online suggestion box platform, such as <https://freesuggestionbox.com/>. This platform enables free anonymous feedback so that students can express their honest opinions.

3. Feedback walls

Students can be given the opportunity to write down a piece of feedback they might want to share with their teachers whenever they would like to, rather than having to wait until they are asked to. Although we may be very open to feedback, our students may be too shy to come upfront. They may be worried that their feedback can upset the teacher. Therefore, giving them a chance to express their opinions anonymously may help them make their voices heard. In class, this can be a blank paper/cardboard pinned on the wall. During online teaching, this can be in the form of a Padlet wall whose link is shared with the students at the very beginning of a course. The students can be reminded of the platform and be invited to share their opinion whenever they would like to. As teachers, we can check this wall at regular intervals, such as every Friday. The wall can be organized as a blank page, or it can be guided. To make it more guided, one option is to add headings, as in the example illustrated below. Giving guidance to students can help them to think more deeply about their suggestions and encourages them to offer suggestions rather than noting down what they might be unhappy about.

What What should I add /change?	How How should I change this? In what way would it be more useful for you?	When When or how often should I do it?	Why Why do you think it is important/helpful to do this?

4. **Fist to five**

Fist to five offers a Likert-scale-like research tool that is quick, silent, and effective. It can be used for various purposes, such as to check understanding, the mood of the students, etc. The teacher asks a question, and students respond by indicating a response on a scale of 0-5. Examples could vary, and you can make it sound serious, or fun and intimate to encourage contribution.

- How much did you like this new game? Tell me how enjoyable it was on a scale of fist to five. Five: it was so enjoyable, I want us to play this game every single day until the end of the course. Fist: I dozed off 10 minutes ago."
- How well did you understand this concept? Fist to five. Five: I understood it very well and do not need further explanations. Fist: I feel completely lost and would like us to go back to the beginning.

When the tool is used a few times, students will get used to it, and it will not be necessary to explain what 5 or 0 could refer to. All the teacher would have to do would be to ask the question, and say "fist to five? What do you think?" "Fist to five, how are you feeling today?"

5. **Pulse surveys**

Pulse surveys are quick and brief questions to take 'the learners' pulse'. They can be used at any stage of a lesson or the course. These surveys work well with open and closed-ended questions. As pulse surveys are intended to be brief tasks, limiting the number of questions to 2-3 may be practical. Some examples of pulse survey questions and their purpose are listed below.

- How are you feeling today? (as a warm-up question at the beginning of class)
- How is the Passive Voice formed? (for concept checking at the end of class or an introduction of a language topic)
- Are the instructions I give in class clear? (to collect feedback on an area you feel you are good at or you may need to improve in)
- Write down three things you have learned in today's class. (as an exit ticket at the end of class)

- Did you enjoy the activity we did today? (to receive feedback on a new activity, task, or teaching technique recently introduced). This question can have slightly different variations:
 - . The questions ‘why?/why not?’ can be added to the initial question to encourage students to elaborate on their feedback.
 - . In a way similarly constructed to the fist to five tool, ‘How much did you enjoy the activity?’ can be asked along with a Likert scale to receive written feedback.

Thanks to their brevity and simplicity, pulse surveys can be used multiple times during a semester or an academic year. They are also a good way to interact with learners during the pandemic to find out about their anxieties, distractions, and other factors that may hinder learning. An example of such survey questions can be seen at <https://www.questionpro.com/survey-templates/remote-learning-pulse-survey/>.

Google forms, Mentimeter, and Socrative are among the online tools that can be used for delivering pulse surveys. Zoom polls can also be used for closed questions.

6. SGIF: Small Group Instructional Feedback

SGIF involves having a facilitator visit your class to gather information from students about their learning experience in your course while you step out. Instructors can pair up and visit each other’s classes to gather feedback. Compared to surveys or other written formative feedback tools, SGIF processes ensure that the feedback is clear, includes enough details, and indicates the number of students giving a specific piece of feedback, which can be quite useful especially when student opinions seem to contradict one another.

The role of the facilitator is to lead a group discussion and take anonymous notes: what students see as valuable and what concrete suggestions they would like to offer for improving the course.

The suggested stages for an SGIF session could be as follows:

- Design your research questions or make a short and general list of aspects of the course to get feedback on.

Example research questions:

- ❖ What about this course has been most helpful to your learning?
- ❖ What specific changes could the instructor, my classmates, and I make to improve our learning in this course?
- ❖ What specific changes can be introduced to this course in the coming weeks / when this course is run again?

Example aspects of the course (instead of giving specific questions):

- Course delivery
 - Classroom atmosphere
 - Instructional materials
- The instructor and the facilitator meet briefly to go over the procedures.
 - On the day of the SGIF session, the instructor welcomes the facilitator and introduces the facilitator and the activity. The instructor steps out for the rest of the lesson.
 - The facilitator shares the research questions/areas and gives instructions.
 - Students individual free write (5 mins): initially all students reflect on the course on their own and make notes.
 - Small group discussion (15 mins): In groups of 3-4, students discuss their opinions and make notes.
 - Whole group discussion & preparation of the debrief report (~30 mins): The facilitator invites all groups to present their views and makes notes using a tool that enables students to see the feedback.

At this stage, it is important that the facilitator asks students questions to get them to clarify any

ambiguities, or expand and elaborate certain ideas, especially the suggestions.

Students follow all the points that the facilitator is making a note of and make corrections if there has been a mistake/misunderstanding.

- The facilitator has a brief post-discussion with the instructor, where the two go over the notes and the suggestions.

7. Start Stop Continue



Please refer to the [QR code](#) here for a detailed account of how this tool can be used. This article was also published in the December 2018 issue of TESOL Turkey magazine.

8. Learners as observers

Peer observations are commonly used among language teachers. However, learners can also provide very useful feedback if they are actively involved in classroom research. While our peers have the necessary professional knowledge and experience that enables them to make relevant and useful comments and suggestions, they view the classroom environment, teaching and learning practices from similar lenses as we do. Learners, on the other hand, can provide valuable data as they observe an activity or a lesson through their own lenses, and bring in perceptions and perspectives unique to them. Therefore, they may be able to point to our blindspots, and offer practical suggestions. Moreover, making learners part of our classroom research communicates the value placed on their opinions and them as individuals.

Suggested steps are listed below:

- Select the observer: the student observer can be a student in your own class, a student from another class you are teaching, or a student who is now in faculty.
- While selecting which student to approach as an observer, you may think of it as a reward to an enthusiastic learner or use the process to include less involved learners.
- After designing your observation tool, briefly meet the student before the observation to go over the purpose of the observation, what you expect the student to do (and not do), and introduce the observation tool.
- After the observation, meet with the student to go over their observations and suggestions.

Here are some example areas students can easily observe and comment on:

- tracking range of interaction patterns in class (S-S; S-T; T-S)
- time-keeping teacher talk time during one lesson hour
- time-keeping the allocated duration for a task versus student actual time on task
- tallying how often students use L1
- tallying how many times each student in the class speaks/makes an active contribution to

Needless to say, tools student observers use must be simple so that they can use them comfortably.

For instance, to track which students contribute the most/least during the observed lesson or activity, the student observer can be given a copy of the class register with space next to each student to keep a tally and make comments when appropriate.

Please see the following resources for more information on learner observations:

<https://allaboutppdsl.files.wordpress.com/2018/01/learnerobservations.pdf>

Kurtoğlu Eken, D. 1999. Through the eyes of the learner: Learner observations of teaching and learning. In ELTJ Vol. 53/4, pp.240-248

APPENDIX 1: USING GIF IMAGES

Use GIF images to complete the sentences below to give feedback on our course:

1. When I am in class, I feel like:
2. I think the assignments we complete are like:
3. When we work in groups, I feel like this:
4. The pacing of our lessons to me is like:
5. The instructional materials we use in class are like:

Considering the reflections you have done above, note down your suggestions to further improve the course and our learning environment:

Here is an example for end-of-course feedback designed using GIF images:



<https://legsohottufryanegg.tumblr.com/post/103444964057/the-final-goodbye>

APPENDIX 2: LETTER TO THE TEACHER¹

(The sections in bold are provided by the teacher.)

Dear Teacher,

Here is my feedback on your lessons so far:

In the lessons, please continue to..... *have vocabulary games in the morning and write new words on the board*.....

These are very useful and/or enjoyable for us.

However, if possible, please stop *writing activities in class – it’s better if we do writing tasks at home after class*.....

I don’t find these things very useful/enjoyable.

In your future lessons, can you please be/do more *skimming practice – I have great difficulty with skimming and need more practice. Also, could we do more group work?*

.....

Thanks,

A section M student 😊

¹ A Practical Guide to English Language Teacher Development in an Academic Context: Approaches, Explorations and Practices (2017) Editors: Andrew Bosson and Deniz Kurtoğlu Eken Blackswan Publishing House.

C. ELT RELATED REFLECTIONS



L. Alp Akarçay holds an MA in TESOL and is currently teaching at Sabancı University. His research interests include sociocultural aspects of language and identity construction, gender and sexuality inclusion in education, queer and transgender studies.

PEDAGOGICAL DILEMMAS, AFFECTIVE SUBJECTIVITIES AND IDENTITY IN SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE CLASSROOMS

by L. Alp Akarçay

It was one of my students' blunt yet rather a matter-of-fact response to a discussion question that left me momentarily direly devoid of a pedagogical compass as a host of affective responses gushed through my body. The student acutely and casually dropped the words "I am homophobic" among other words that echoed the sentiment further to the center of the online classroom discussion. An array of questions swirled through my mind in massive waves: Did the student just utter these words? Do they know what this word means? Is this a moment of linguistic incompetence? Could they have declared this claim by capriciously uttering it in front of their classmates? Did I perhaps mishear? Did an unstable internet connection or the digital nature of the screen and sound alter and distort the student's words as it projected through the micro window of our COVID online university classroom and synchronous lesson? I wondered whether I was ready to tackle this moment of tension within myself and then be able to intervene with the problematic nature of this statement next. On top of all this, this troubling utterance took place during a lesson that focused on interrupting normative discourses on gender and the brain. The lesson topic was a listening text on gendered (male-female differences) brain research. A few days prior to class, I decided to

approach the topic through an inquiry-based framework (Nelson, 1999) and the lens of gender stereotypes in order to replace the problematic content which reinforced gender stereotypes. The lesson aimed to provide pedagogical space to create dialogue and raise awareness on the dominant cultural constructions of gender that shape and restrict thinking and to critically examine these constructs that structure gender and systemic inequities, create other forms of oppression and limit the imagination or the possibilities of creating forms of resistance. This unexpected classroom moment made me then think about the relationship between the provinces of language, affect, identity, cultural and cross-cultural exchange.

Classrooms are social spaces where a group of bodies comes together for a given period of time. The individuals over time grow a sense of community and may develop different levels of belonging to the embodied context as the continual construction and reconstruction of identities shape a unique cultural and social understanding established through classroom members' personalities, discourse, and shared academic goals. The cultural theory of affect differentiates affect from emotion. In broad terms, affect describes how bodies respond and connect to each other and includes an "irreducible bodily condition that resides in each individual person" (Langston, 2006). In a face-to-face classroom, individuals may respond and connect to the physical presence of other bodies resulting from "social practice" (2016, Loveday), acts that are practiced within certain limits. How do bodies then respond to and connect with other bodies when they do not share physical space but are limited to mostly seeing each other's faces on screens in a virtual synchronous lesson environment? In what ways does the virtual synchronous classroom environment shift language learners' identities and their social practices and consequently impact their investment (Norton, 2013) in learning the target language and fostering an online community of inquiry? How do we as educators cultivate in our students the critical examination of heteronormative pedagogies,

curriculum, and dominant discourses and find ways to address the pedagogical dilemmas, affective subjectivities, and issues of identity that may arise in synchronous online learning environments?

It is important for both instructors and students to consider the social and political discursive powers that operate within societies influencing how individuals negotiate their identities and navigate their social world. Because the university where I teach attracts students from different countries, there are a handful of students from nearby countries that may be attending classes in the language program. In this specific classroom, the majority of students that attend the online synchronous lessons are from various regions in Turkey and the student that made the assertion is the only student from Azerbaijan. Although a deeper analysis is necessary to conceptualize the specific role the student's cultural context plays in the awareness of how heteronormativity configures identities within social systems, it could be said that both cultures share some similarities in the politics regarding non-normative social identities. My response was to confront the moment, ask questions to first clarify any misunderstanding, explain the problematic and harmful impact such homophobic articulations could have, and suggest that the student explore and research social identities. However, it is vital to take into account the ways in which affective intensities may embody discourses and inform the negotiation of social identity. Therefore, to take Langston's (2006) advice, a wider investigation of the different layers of effect that a lesson content might carry could provide the teacher with broader and multiple perspectives in navigating discourses. As Langston (2006) rightfully contends, it is necessary to widen the concept of effect in education in order to explore the cultural and social forces that determine "how individuals mold identity through a sense of belonging and difference that their investments in the popular generate". To focus on the affective intensities illustrated in the student's affirmation of their investment in a norm is as important to focus on the borders and spaces of how thought is constituted by the production of culture and knowledge. Utilizing the cultural theory of effect and considering how effect may function in the

lesson content is one way that educational practitioners could provide students with opportunities for deeper investigation by analyzing how the effect is portrayed in all aspects of the lesson content and material (Langston, 2006).

References:

- Langston, R. (2006). Feels Like Teen Spirit: Teaching Cultural Difference Through Bodies, Gender, and Affect. *Women in German Yearbook*, 22, 94-118.
- Loveday, V. (2016). Embodying Deficiency Through 'Affective Practice': Shame, Relationality, and the Lived Experience of Social Class and Gender in Higher Education. *Sociology* 50(6), 1140-1155.
- Nelson, C. (1999). Sexual identities in ESL: Queer Theory and classroom inquiry. *TESOL Quarterly*, 33(3), 371-391.
- Norton, B. (2013). *Identity and Language Learning: Extending the Conversation* (2nd ed.). Multilingual Matters.



Çisem Arda is a senior student in the Department of Foreign Language Education at Middle East Technical University. Her areas of interest are intercultural communication, critical pedagogy, and using literature in ELT.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION IN ELT

by Çisem Arda

There is no doubt that we live in a globalized world, in which intercultural communication among the citizens of the world gains importance constantly. Thus, developing Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC) might be helpful to be able to engage in more effective dialogues across cultures. According to Michael Byram, ICC is “the ability to navigate intercultural differences to communicate successfully and could be defined as a set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are considered essential for successful intercultural communication” (Byram, 1997).

My interest in interculturality goes back to my very first visit to National Sovereignty and Children's Day celebrations. There I have realized the children coming from all around the world – thanks to Atatürk – who had different traditional clothes and danced much unlike ours, which was so tempting for me. Then, in the 4th grade, I met with the English language, which thrilled me so much as I became aware that I can communicate with people from all over the world once I master my language skills. Thus, throughout my life, I kept an eye on the ways of exposing myself to the intercultural contexts to enhance my English skills because I believe language aptitude blossoms once you use it for communication purposes.

Last March, as one of the Erasmus+ Flipped Impact Project members, I participated in virtual exchange events with our project partners for a week. One day of this program was dedicated to the students aged 13-16, and as pre-service teachers, we were responsible for spending the day

doing plenty of activities that emphasized interculturality, with the students coming from Lithuania, Spain, Turkey, and The Netherlands. I knew the two Turkish students since I have been conducting flipped lessons for them throughout the school term; however, the rest of the students were new to me. I was well prepared for the activities that I was responsible for doing with the students; nonetheless, there is always something beyond your apprehension that might occur anytime in a classroom. I consider these moments as opportunities to progress for the better. This event not only gave me a chance to see myself teaching in an international classroom but also exposed me to a moment, which I will not easily forget. I would like to explain this instant so that I can build on the importance of intercultural communication.

That event started in the morning even though each country had a different time zone. After welcoming the students, to demonstrate I respect each and every student regardless of their nationality, and I am open to learning from all of them, I decided to ask them to teach me how to say good morning in their mother tongue. Firstly Spanish pupils taught me how to say that (*buenos días*), and secondly, I learned -actually remembered- because I have already learned that saying during my trip to Lithuania- the Lithuanian version (*labas rytas*). Then, I asked the question to a boy called Lamar, one of the Dutch school students. My question was: Dear Lamar, could you please tell us how to say good morning in your own language ... (I stopped for two seconds and then completed my question with the following phrase) in Dutch? He has already begun answering while I was finishing the last part of my question. After hearing the complete version of my question, he said, "in my mother tongue, we say "*bon dia mòro*," but in Dutch, "*goedemorgen*." Then, enthusiastically I asked him the name of his language, and today that is how I happen to know about the Portuguese-based creole language, Papiamentu.

As a prospective English teacher, I have understood the importance of ICC for teacher education one more time after spending a day with children coming from different countries and cultures. We

definitely have so much to learn from one another. There is no doubt that future generations will be involved in intercultural communication every day just more because the rise of globalization necessitates worldwide interaction among people for various reasons. Competency in ICC is essential, especially in language classes, because culture is the spokesperson of the languages. Thus, it is high time to include ICC in teacher education -which is a global concept itself- curriculum to raise competent teacher candidates in terms of ICC so that they can dwell on activities that allow their prospective students to be more respectful and accept different perspectives in the world. Once they become respectful to the difference and accept that being culturally different is not being culturally wrong, I believe the peace between human beings will make our planet a much happier place to live in for all of us.

Reference:

Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*. Multilingual Matters Ltd.



Elizabeth S. Coleman is currently employed at Istanbul Medipol University where she is the CPD lead in addition to teaching academic English and ESP. Elizabeth's research interests lie at the intersection of political sociology and language learning and she employs an intersectional approach through both her research and teaching practice.

WHY TRANSFORMATIVE PEDAGOGY AND CRITICAL THINKING BELONG TOGETHER

by Elizabeth S. Coleman

If we think back on the ways we may have been taught during our school days, there's a fair chance we will have experienced induction into a system of right and wrong answers. In this system, the explicit conferring of facts dominates and there is little room for individual thought. This is traditional didactic pedagogy, the first solid pedagogy in mass education. As education developed and the 20th century dawned, we began to see a shift toward authentic pedagogy. This move away from passive learning aimed to include authentic learning opportunities for students. This system allows for real-life experiences and hands-on learning, which would mirror situations students would encounter outside of the classroom. It is, overall, a more student-centred and enquiry-based system. Both of these systems continue to be commonly observed pedagogies in the modern classroom. But what if we could go further?

Transformative pedagogy does exactly what it says on the tin. It allows the possibility for transformation both of educational experience and of learners themselves. Transformative pedagogy has been referred to as an activist pedagogy (Ukpokodu, 2009) and it seeks to change the social conditions of those who meet it. It draws on concepts not traditionally seen as relevant to the language teaching sphere such as intersectionality. This approach looks at students as a whole and sees them as part of the wider world. The focus of this method on ideas such as Paulo Freire's concept of moving away from a 'banking' education to an education model based on content and

problem solving should speak to anyone interested in education as justice. Students are not empty vessels; they are human beings who instead of needing to be filled need to be encouraged to develop and flourish. In this model, they are situated in communities and the experiences they bring with them are considered valuable. Simultaneously, it looks to build further communities and understanding. Transformative learning allows for knowledge development through lateral learning – knowledge sharing amongst peers – and positions educators as facilitators rather than orators in the knowledge transfer.

If we consider the key components of critical thinking and reflection, those also often attributed to active listening, we may see that adopting these principles in the classroom allows students to lean on each other for knowledge development and learn more about the world around them. Asking critical questions will allow students to find their own answers and begin to understand their place in the world. What, then, are these critical thinking components that we should be applying to foster transformative learning?

1. Give your full attention to what you are being told
2. Reflect before responding
3. Be sure you understood what the other person said
4. Recognize the emotional side
5. Offer alternatives
6. Request more information
7. Ask questions the other party hasn't thought of
8. Share your point of view and knowledge
9. Take an objective stance
10. Offer a different way of seeing things
11. Get the other part to think about the future – extrapolate

12. Be respectful

If we follow these guidelines, we can engage in meaningful dialogue and avoid a lot of misunderstandings. Undoubtedly that's why these principles overlap heavily with the concept of active listening. Yet, when we think about applying these steps within a classroom, we can see that it is possible for them to blend with our transformative pedagogy to work on the social and emotional side of learning.

The social and emotional needs of learners play an important role in their educational lives. Difficulties in these areas can lead to the development of affective filters and withdrawal from the learning sphere. By utilising these principles to develop a community of practice within our classrooms we allow students to take ownership of their learning – the responsibility about how to engage is with them – and provide them a way to share their knowledge – offering their point of view and alternative perspectives.

At a time when the world is experiencing a dramatic slide to the right, attacks on minority populations are on the rise and social movements are sweeping nations, it would be ill-advised for educators to pretend that there are no effective factors and intersections impacting on learners' education. But by looking to transformative pedagogy and applying the principles for critical thinking and enquiry we are able to foster supportive communities of knowledge that allow for the full development of students and provide supportive classrooms for all those who pass through them.

Reference:

Ukpokodu, O. (2009) The Practice of Transformative Pedagogy. *Journal on Excellence in College Teaching*, Vol. 20, No. 2
p. 43-67



Ezgi Kıyanççek graduated from the English Language Teaching Department of İstanbul University in 2011. She has been teaching English to young adults in private and public universities since then. She is currently working as a language instructor in the School of Foreign Languages at İstanbul University. She is also doing her master's degree in English Language Teaching at Uludağ University. Integration of technology in language teaching, linguistics, and teaching pragmatics are among her interests.

CAN WE REALLY INTERACT?

by Ezgi Kıyanççek

As teachers, we have long been integrating internet technologies into language teaching and learning through gamification, virtual classrooms, online discussion platforms, etc. However, was the shift to fully online teaching and learning because of the Covid-19 outbreak in 2020 something we were accustomed to or ready for? I guess we all know the answer, and that's why it has arisen some fundamental concerns. Since the first day, we started integrating into the online teaching platforms, I have taken some opportunities to share experiences with my colleagues and my students. In this short paper, I will present one of the biggest challenges that the students and the instructors have been experiencing: the lack of interaction.

Interaction plays a vital role in learning, especially in language learning, since it creates chances to produce the language and prove to yourself that you have progressed. However, do we, as language teachers, really think that we can interact with our students? Or do we believe that there is strong communication and rapport among students? Some students state that their motivation for in-class learning was higher than now since they feel the deficiency of interaction in the online learning process. One of my students believes that school would normally provide chances for the students to improve themselves and create learning opportunities. It would be the place where they could learn from friends apart from the teacher. Unfortunately, she believes these are not possible in the current learning context, and this is demotivating. Additionally, online education has been

demoralizing for the extrovert students who tend to learn by interacting with others and who depend on their social skills a lot. For example, one student who defines himself as extrovert comments on the issue by stating that online education is demotivating for him as he misses interacting with people in person.

Another issue that has attracted my attention during online education is related to poor friendships or connections among students. In general, prep classes are the places where students start creating long-term friendships before they start their departments. Most of my students also claim that they do not know their classmates very well as not many of them attend the classes regularly; therefore, they just keep in touch with few peers. At one point, one student stated that she didn't feel like having real friends in online education.

Unfortunately, this lack of interaction is also observable when it comes to productive activities, which require collaboration and communication among group members or peers. For example, it is possible to observe long silence periods in discussions or no interaction at all, which is not very common in face-to-face classrooms. Therefore, it becomes more challenging for the teacher to plan an effective lesson plan for speaking. Some of my colleagues state that students do not chat with each other if the teacher is not present in the discussion. Similarly, some students say that they avoid turning on their microphones in group discussions as nobody does.

So, is it impossible to come over these problems? Is there not a solution? One solution can be encouraging personal interactions with the students as a group and individually within the online world. The teacher can organize some short webinars or discussions where students chat freely with their peers about any topic of their interest. Also, using social media creates bonds among students. Students should feel that they have friends that they can contact and have a teacher they can reach. To overcome possible problems that hinder speaking in the classroom, the teachers

should first give students some time and let them get familiar with the online learning context, which is very new to most of them. Students should also feel secure in the online classroom. Utilizing the online tools and features of the online platform can create a classroom atmosphere where interaction occurs between students, and it is student-centered rather than being teacher-controlled. For example, students can be encouraged to use chat-box until they feel ready to communicate through their microphone. Or students can be encouraged to write on the virtual board anonymously, or teachers can use some online platforms where students can write comments on sticky notes or share their recordings. Additionally, students can be inspired to record themselves talking about a topic in the first place, and then some pair work and small group work activities can be introduced. Some out-of-class activities that require group collaboration can be helpful for students to interact with each other. Finally, teachers should provide various activities in which students will feel motivated to speak in L2 and interact with each other.



***İlksen Büyükdurmuş Selçuk** is an instructor in the School of Foreign Languages at Hacettepe University who has worked as an English teacher and an administrator for 20 years. She worked as the department head in Modern Languages and Basic English Departments. She also worked in the Curriculum Unit. She has an MA on TEFL.*

LEARNING ABOUT TEACHING ONLINE

by İlksen Büyükdurmuş Selçuk

In March 2020, all of a sudden, everything changed. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, we had to change our lifestyles and this also affected the way we teach. We shifted from face-to-face teaching to online delivery. Most teachers in the world, including me, had no idea about how to teach online. It was a life-changing shift in our professions but we only had three weeks to get prepared for it. It was really challenging; however, we overcame all the difficulties and got used to the new way of teaching in no time.

I have had very different experiences in distance education since I worked as part of the management last year as the department head in the prep school and as an instructor teaching online for the past six months. My two experiences are totally different, each one having its challenges and advantages. With the experiences I have gained and the question “How can I be a better online teacher?” in my mind, I decided to learn more about teaching languages online.

I have been a trainee in the “Advanced Practitioner” program of the TESOL International Association since October 2020. I chose “Teaching Speaking Skills Online” as my professional development topic in this training course. Teaching the speaking skill was already challenging in an actual classroom. Therefore, I wanted to learn how to teach speaking better to my students in the virtual classroom. As online education has been the hottest topic for the past year, I could find several webinars and an online course about the topic. The resources I found were mainly about teaching English online

in a variety of virtual teaching platforms and the best practices and strategies to become a successful online teacher. Online teaching is not very different from face-to-face teaching so I was familiar with the concepts in the online course I finished and the webinars I watched. However, people's experiences with distance teaching and information about different digital platforms were an addition to my knowledge and experience. Learning about other teachers' and learners' experiences was the most valuable learning for me. I felt that I am not alone in this new world of teaching English which motivated me a lot. I was also happy to hear that mostly I was doing things in the same way the sources suggest. It is always nice to know that you are on track and doing things right. That is why I wanted to share my reflections on being an online teacher with my colleagues.

In the 2020-2021 spring term, I am teaching three classes, each with a different level of English and diverse student profiles. In all of my classes, I make use of breakout rooms for pair and group work, especially in speaking activities. I have observed that all the students in my classes love working in breakout rooms regardless of their level of English, their ages, their professions, their interests, or the type of activity. I also realized that the students, who are not very active in the whole class sessions, participate willingly in group work activities in breakout rooms. Working in breakout rooms helps introverted students to express themselves without any concerns.

In face-to-face classes, most of the students do not want to change their places and their usual partners when they are asked to work together. One of the best things about breakout rooms is that the virtual teaching platforms can assign groups randomly and our students have to change their groupmates in each activity. It is also good that you can arrange the groups yourself if you see a need such as grouping low achievers with high achievers. It is easier to listen to your students in breakout rooms because most of the time, they do not understand you are in the room and speak freely whereas in an actual classroom they stop talking and look at you when you go near their group. Therefore, as a teacher, I feel comfortable in breakout rooms. Another advantage of using

breakout rooms is that it helps to lower the students' affective filters. In distance education, students cannot meet with their classmates and socialize with them. Normally, in prep schools, students get used to being university students and learn about university education and campus life with the help of their classmates. In distance education in the pandemic, they have not had this chance. I see doing activities in breakout rooms as an opportunity for my students not only to practice their language skills but also to know each other, socialize with classmates, and feel more positive about the learning environment.

I am a lover of breakout rooms. I think they are the best tool for student-to-student interaction and real communication in virtual classrooms. Seeing my students' positive reactions to working in breakout rooms and the development in their language skills motivate me to use them more.

D. TROUBLESHOOTING/ CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS



Arif Yıldızlı graduated from Hacettepe University, Department of English Linguistics as a top student. He completed his master's degree at Hacettepe University, Department of English Linguistics between 2014-2017. He continues his Ph.D. studies at Ankara University, Department of Linguistics. He has been working as a lecturer at Ufuk University for 6 years.

CAN YOU SEE YOUR STUDENTS?

by Arif Yıldızlı

The learning of a second language is a complex process, involving a seemingly infinite number of variables (Brown, 1994).

The people who start the profession understand this complex process in no time. Not only they understand the problems, but also, they do their best to get to the heart of the matter and find solutions. Before solving this puzzle, we, as dedicated teachers, have faced a bigger problem. Due to the pandemic, the intricate teaching process has become much more difficult with online/distance education.

Educators have been trying for a year to find the best way to teach during online education. Teachers have spent a considerable period to know what sort of entity they are dealing with. They first adapted their way of teaching to this new situation. However, problems followed the adaptation phase. Connection problems, students' unwillingness to turn their camera on, group activities, authenticity are some of the problems teachers have been experiencing. It has become evident that the way you handle these issues, will determine to a large extent how you effectively teach.

I would like to touch on one specific problem mentioned above and how I tried to tackle it in my classes. More than perhaps anything else, students' unwillingness to turn their cameras on has been one of the biggest problems during online education. For one thing, you cannot create a learning atmosphere if you don't feel students' presence. Moreover, it becomes more difficult to navigate your delivery if you cannot follow student reaction to the input you provide. Secondly, authenticity, one of the most important notions in teaching, cannot be maintained when students don't show themselves. In day-to-day conversations, we see some people who interact in one way or another, but when nobody sees one another, the authenticity is undermined. Last but not least, you have to make sure that students are literally in front of their computer. If we aim to teach our students to communicate genuinely and spontaneously, which is already the greatest challenge in face-to-face education we have to ensure that students turn their cameras on.

As we already know, telling students to do something explicitly doesn't work in most situations. Thus, you have to try different things to make your students do what you tell them to do. It is better if students don't understand what you are up to. Gamification is a remedy to most of the difficulties in teaching. One day I started my online lesson to see that everybody turned their cameras off. I suddenly decided to play a game. I used my favorite tool, *wheel decide*, to pick one of the students. Then I gave this instruction "*show me your favorite object in your room!*". Guess what? The student had to turn his camera on and showed me his favorite object. I kept giving instructions such as "*show me something red in your room!*" or "*show me your coursebook!*". They showed themselves one by one and luckily, they kept their camera on during the whole lesson.

Another way to have students their camera on is designing tasks which require students to show themselves. In one of my lessons, I tailored a speaking activity in the book in order to make my students show their faces. In the speaking activity, they were asked to roleplay a conversation. Instead of choosing two students and let them do the activity (you can only hear them if you do

this), I created a simple rubric which students can use to evaluate their performance. In the rubric, there was a criterion about facial expressions and gestures and this naturally weighted more than other criteria. I sent this rubric beforehand and asked them to read the rubric carefully. When the time for the activity came, I asked a student to watch her friends who roleplayed and evaluate them by using the rubric. If the students who did the activity, didn't turn their camera on, they lost a point. This was also made clear by the student who evaluated while she was giving her feedback. Once students realized the importance of showing themselves to get high points, they started to turn their cameras on.

Affective strategies may also prove themselves useful in the lesson. If nothing works, I ask students how they would feel if they were a teacher and I were a student who doesn't turn his camera on. I generally ask such questions by using online platforms so that everybody can see the responses on my screen. In the end, some students show empathy and decide to show their faces.

Even though you apply different strategies to make your students turn their cameras on, they may not work. However, this shouldn't deter us from trying. The burden on the teacher, after all, is to find the best solution for the problems according to his/her context.

Reference:

Brown, H.D. (1994). *Principles of Language Learning and Teaching* (3rd ed.). Prentice-Hall Regents.



Cemile Doğan graduated from Foreign Languages Education (METU) in 1997. She holds her MA and Ph.D. in ELT. She currently works in the ELT department at a state university. Her professional interests are teacher research, language teacher professional development, and measurement and evaluation in language teaching.

A SMOOTH SEA NEVER MADE A SKILLED SAILOR

by Cemile Doğan

From the beginning of the 21st century, several meanings have been attributed to teacher professionalism, most of which centered on teachers' ability to adopt changes according to contemporary educational demands. Although technological advancements have affected educational practices from the beginning of the millennium, it is the COVID-19 crisis that brought about an abrupt shift from face-to-face contexts to hybrid or online educational contexts. Since the beginning of the pandemic, a wide array of new responsibilities added to the regular workload has become a routine for academics in higher education. It was not only the daily practices that were affected by the sudden changes but also the previously made plans which had to be revised to accommodate the new normal.

Before the transition to the online period, I participated in a training program delivered by the Erasmus+ to collaborate on a 'Virtual Exchange Project' with academics at a university in Europe. It was a program that aimed to expand the reach and scope of the Erasmus+ program via Virtual Exchange, which included technology-enabled people-to-people dialogues on new media platforms. Although the project required online participation of the students from both sides, all the plans regarding the course contents in the home universities were designed for face-to-face instruction. The participants' classroom instruction was planned to establish the core to base the synchronous and asynchronous sessions. The virtual collaboration was a partial component of the program.

Besides, unlike the European participants, the project's Turkish participants were freshmen students who did not have any idea of what a departmental course was, who had never been to university before and participated in a project neither in a national nor international context. With all these newly introduced challenges before the start of the project, I had to rethink, revise and replan all the content and adapt it to the online instruction mode while considering students' affective factors. This short article will give a thumbnail sketch of what factors helped both sides overcome the challenges and complete the project.

The first and most significant one was brainstorming on all phases of the project collaboratively to transform a face-to-face instruction into an online version, which restricted instruction time, delivery style, and classroom interaction. Both parties came together in synchronous meetings more frequently than it was already planned. Each participant exchanged information on what ways the plans regarding the course content would be reduced without diverging from the core plan. Next, the first detailed announcement concerning voluntary participation and its requirements was made. After selecting the participants, more digital tools than the ones in the original plan were investigated and classified according to weekly schedules. Utmost attention was paid to keep the number of digital tools to a moderate level.

The second factor which brought success in the completion of the project was to stick by the plan regarding the use of digital tools, predetermined materials, and making minor adjustments before they become more complicated. The constant follow-up of the work and tracking students' performance, whether they completed the task or not, became the most demanding work. What is more, it was difficult to sustain student motivation, persuade them to keep up challenging students' pace in the other university when they were behind the plan or vice versa. Despite long hours of exposure to computer screens or mobile phones, following the program successfully reduced the stress caused by extra workload for both sides.

Another challenge faced was keeping students engaged and motivated during the study. Although it is one of the concerns that bear importance during any study, establishing rapport with the students that you never met face to face required effort. The students participated in a series of activities in three small mixed groups during the first four weeks. As the coordinators and lecturers of the project, we felt the need to motivate the students by providing samples of videos or visuals, especially for the hesitant and shy students. We selected materials and uploaded them to the system to set an example of the activities we expected the participants to do. It was not only uploading videos or visuals or texts but also reflecting on those, one by one. After the second week, the flow was smooth without intervention.

In a nutshell, despite the crisis that brought about unprecedented challenges to education at all levels, it was still possible to make ends meet for a virtual exchange project designed as a continuation of the face-to-face course content. Students created a great number of valuable materials and shared them on the online platform. Some of the students took this opportunity to a higher level and prepared surveys, personal videos that they were not instructed to do. Finally, all the participants were awarded the digital badges due to their completion of all the required criteria.



Georgia Georgogianni holds a BA in English Language and Literature and an M.Ed. in TESOL. She is also TEFL certified. Georgia has been teaching English for more than 15 years in various teaching contexts in Greece and the UK both in the private and public sector. Her main interests lie in assessment, teaching with technology, and finding new, engaging ways for language learning. She is driven by creative passion and a desire to leave her mark and have a positive impact on the education industry.

CHANGE. CHALLENGE. DEVELOPMENT.

by Georgia Georgogianni

“If it doesn’t challenge you, it doesn’t change you”. In the field of education, though, the necessary change imposed by the pandemic has been a challenge that has hopefully in many cases led to experimenting and development. Getting out of the comfort zone can be a tough battle and people are not always willing to swim in uncharted waters. When the pandemic hit, the whole educational system needed to swerve and adapt to the new conditions very quickly. What one would imagine as a procedure of years, suddenly happened almost overnight and many teachers had the opportunity to embrace this challenge and change to the new normal. Change, challenge, and development have been buzzwords.

The change was more or less the immediate and urgent need to continue teaching. The so-called “we’ve always done it this way” had to give place to methods and techniques that would serve the one and only purpose of teaching. So many educators, parents, and students were afraid of this change as they had to face another reality. That was absolutely normal but what lessons can we glean from this experience and how can we better understand the impact of this change on educators, students, and families? It is obvious that so many things such as lesson plans, curriculums, practices, materials used, assessment methods just to name a few had to change. Pedagogical adaptations were pivotal as remote learning is quite different and the role of teachers

has become more difficult. This change can be a call to renew our commitment as parents and educators and head towards a more resilient society.

Challenge came as a necessary consequence of the imposed change. One thing that is for sure is that the pandemic has given a lot of educators wings to fly and made them flexible and creative at the same time. So many of us have experienced quite traditional environments, especially in the public sector where any attempt to bring some kind of change faced a lot of obstacles and in the end failed. It seems that the new normal let teachers reshape themselves, restart in a way, roll up their sleeves and look at the endless possibilities ahead. A different kind of communication emerged and developed as students have the chance to communicate easier with their teachers. Different tools have been used, tools that were there for us but we hadn't made any use of them. Children had to adapt quite quickly. And in most of the cases, they did it successfully. And that was a big challenge. Undoubtedly, the challenges to overcome were many from no or poor access to the internet to digital skills, lack of space at home while everyone was struggling to participate in digital learning. Passing hurdles upon hurdles and ensuring learning among all students is a great challenge to celebrate.

Development appeared in many facets as the new normal required innovation, creativity, and quick decisions in order to make the whole learning procedure more inclusive and resilient. Innovations and new approaches have emerged and real opportunities to transform education worldwide are present. Teachers and students were able to explore different learning options and use a variety of learning tools and platforms. The traditional pen and paper assessment took another dimension and students have been more excited to explore new ways by developing their digital skills at the same time.

We have all given at least a glimpse of potential opportunities for improvement in the whole educational setting. It takes adaptability and synergy in order to give place to broader possibilities. No one can deny that online learning and traditional learning can go hand in hand. After all, **“the only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it and join the dance”**.



Seher Balbay has been teaching at Middle East Technical University since 1997. She holds a Ph.D. degree in ELT. She teaches academic English courses at the Modern Languages Department. Her interest areas include discourse analysis, critical pedagogy, media and culture studies, and application of information and communication technologies in language teaching.



Buket Tarakçioğlu is an instructor of English in the Department of Modern Languages at Middle East Technical University. She graduated from Middle East Technical University, FLE program and pursued her master's degree at Bilkent University MATEFL program. She currently gives academic reading, writing, and speaking courses at Middle East Technical University. Her academic interests include teaching academic writing, speaking and business English and critical thinking.

SOCRATIC SEMINARS

by Seher Balbay and Buket Tarakçioğlu

Online teaching is infamous for low student motivation and the difficulty of developing speaking skills (Aksal, 2011; Baker, 2020; Garrison, 2000; Hartshorn & McMurry, 2020; Tichavsky et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2020). We would like to introduce a task that is designed to overcome this challenge not only in online education but also in face-to-face education as well. As most of the language teachers have already experienced first-hand, speaking-oriented courses or sessions in courses resort to presentations and debates, both of which are anxiety-creating activities. When presenting, the students are under the spotlight and still have to deliver their messages concisely considering the time constraints, pay attention to their gestures, intonation, and pronunciation all at the same time. Presentations are valuable and much needed in real life however, they do not develop nor help assess spontaneous speaking skills. Debates, on the other hand, though they possess the potential to raise the tension and bring a game-like competitive atmosphere to the English classroom, are not the most popular speaking activity for reticent students since there is rivalry, and this causes even more stress on students trying to produce language in L2.

Socratic Seminars, which will be outlined first in a face to face environment and then in an online one here, are the panacea in that they are peaceful round table discussions where the ultimate aim is not to lecture a much rehearsed and probably memorized content, nor is it to engage in a verbal fight with others in an atmosphere where the speakers' sided and subjective opinion is supported assertively. The ultimate aim in Socratic Seminars is to adopt a Socratic attitude and engage in a genuine discussion with the intention to understand others better. Thus, it requires training beforehand as students are most probably unfamiliar with the format, and may tend to turn the discussion into a debate or a rehearsed speech rather than engaging in a meaningful dialogue with group members. To this end, students should be trained in referring to the other students in the seminar with their names and maintain eye contact with them sitting in a circle. The teacher is outside this discussion neither moderating nor leading the discussion. Indeed, the teacher stays away from the discussion as much as possible and reduces their presence to a minimum acting like a *fly on the wall* to give students responsibility for the discussion, but at the same time listening, watching, and taking notes carefully. This also necessitates students to speak without raising their hands but taking turns, instead. These physical aspects also differentiate seminars from presentations and debates where the seating is positioned so that the speakers face a constantly scrutinizing audience.

Apart from these physical aspects that students need to practice, they also need to be trained in working towards a shared understanding, and they need to listen to find common points among the arguments instead of focusing on the differences. Hence, collaborative learning by nature takes place. This is why Socratic seminars are very effective tools for community building and thus, it should be made clear that an effective communicator searches for strengths in others and not weaknesses, for the greater good of the community. The power of community can be utilized by learning from the areas in which others are good at. We cannot possibly know everything and that

is where the community gets in to fill in the gaps in our knowledge. In this way, the desired outcome is *change* in a Socratic seminar. We enlarge and potentially change our point of view by listening to others to understand, rather than criticize. The assumption here is that each member of the group holds a different part of a puzzle and only when we come together, we can complete the puzzle and see the big picture. Therefore, the piece that each participant has is precious and equal to other pieces. Given all that, it should also be noted that students may disagree with one another, but the idea is to think together and not argue a position.

Students should also be trained in incivility. As in any civil dialogue and the absence of a moderator/leader, it is of utmost importance to not be monopolizing the discussion and develop a sense of sharing air time equally with others and letting everyone in the group talk. They should also be reminded to make notes of the ideas they want to bring up later in order for the group to be able to stick to the point under discussion. It is crucial that students are trained in this as otherwise might lead the discussion into a chaotic disorder. Students are also encouraged to invite their less extroverted friends to join, with the idea that the members of a community help each other when they are in need.

Questions constitute a very important part in a Socratic seminar. As seminars are usually conducted in order to understand a text, video, podcast, article, or book better, the teacher prepares a set of open-ended questions ahead of time that students will discuss. It is important that the questions do not have definite right or wrong answers, or that they have more than one answer to have a more fruitful discussion. Students are expected to read and refer to the input material while answering the questions. They might be also encouraged to do some research while studying for the questions so that they have sufficient background information to develop ideas on and to voice in the seminar, and not to repeat each other. Students, themselves, also ask each other questions when in need, such as inquiring questions about the reasons why others think what they suggest, or questions

about alternatives, benefits, weaknesses, and it is important that they do this with the aim of learning together. They might relate the topic to what has been discussed before and refer to future implications still by formulating questions. These follow-up or new questions whenever possible are, as well, important to take the discussion to a deeper level. Besides, a list of [questions devised](#)



[by Socrates](#) might be given to students during training, and prior to discussions, so students can utilize them to delve deeper into the material. It is important to emphasize that every question asked within the discussion should be responded to.

Thanks to all these aspects of Socratic seminars, they can perfectly be adapted to online environments. As the teacher is no longer the authority figure, nor the leader of the discussion, discussing an issue online with the given questions is not difficult or very different from a face-to-face environment for students. When the teacher leaves the floor to the students, turning off the camera, students immediately feel responsible for the seminar, perhaps even better than they do in a face to face environments- as they see and feel the presence of a teacher in the class even if he/she sits aside passively.

References:

- Aksal, F. A. (2011). Action Plan on Communication Practices: Roles of Tutors at EMU Distance Education Institute to Overcome Social Barriers in Constructing Knowledge. *The Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology*, 8(2), 33–47.
- Baker, C. (2010). The Impact of instructor immediacy and presence for online students affective learning, cognition, and motivation. *Journal of Educators Online*, 7(1), 1-30. *Education*, 2(2-3), 1-19
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2000). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2-3), 1-19
- Hartshorn, K. J., & McMurry, B. L. (2020). The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on ESL learners AND TESOL practitioners in the United States. *International Journal of TESOL Studies*, 2(2), 140-156. doi:10.46451/ijts.2020.09.11
- Tichavsky, L. P., Hunt, A., Driscoll, A., & Jicha, K. (2015). “It’s just nice having a real teacher”: Student perceptions of online versus face-to-face instruction. *International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 9(2). doi:10.20429/ijstl.2015.090202
- Wang, C., Pan, R., Wan, X., Tan, Y., Xu, L., Ho, C. S., & Ho, R. C. (2020). Immediate psychological responses and associated factors during the initial stage of the 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) epidemic among the general population in China. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(5), 17-29.

E. RESOURCE CENTER



Richard's career in education started in the outdoor classroom, with 10 years of experience in environmental education. For the last 6 six years, he has been teaching English to students at Izmir University of Economics, both in the preparation programme and to undergraduates. Ongoing learning as a member of TESOL Turkey has been a personal highlight of teaching in Turkey.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PEER REVIEW OF WRITING AMONGST STUDENTS.

by Richard Giles Smith

Audience: University, ESP, Intermediate, Advanced

Peer review is feedback given by another student from the same class or cohort. These are points to consider when incorporating peer review from students as part of teaching writing.

- Approach writing as a process including analysis, planning, drafting, reviewing, and revision. Peer review can be used at the reviewing stage, and also to give feedback on planning.
- Peer review brings the important benefits of increased discussion and negotiation into online learning (Ertmer, et al., 2007). Online tools such as small groups, discussion boards, blogs, and collaborative documents can be used to implement peer review.
- Students value timely and relevant reviews from their peers (Best, Jones-Katz, Smolarek, Stolzenburg, & Williamson, 2015).
- Students need training to give relevant reviews. Allocate time to train peer reviewers using example reviews and monitored trial review exercises (Bhowmik, Hilman, & Roy, 2019).
- Students also need a clear structure in order to give relevant reviews. Use a rubric or guiding questions to prompt feedback on areas such as language accuracy, structure, content, and ease of reading. Writers can also give questions to their peer reviewers (Berg, 2011).

- The peer review should be carried out in a timely manner i.e. within one week, or by the next class.
- Once a peer review has been given and read, time should be allocated for the writers to ask clarification questions of the reviewers about the given reviews.
- After peer review feedback is clearly understood, students should reflect on the feedback given by their peers and decide on the areas where the writing will be revised.
- Instructor monitoring of each stage of peer review is important for encouraging quality feedback. The giving of relevant peer reviews can be included in the course learning objectives and assessments, again to emphasize value and encourage quality reviews.

References:

- Berg, E. C. (2011). Preparing ESL Students for Peer Response. *TESOL Journal*, 8: 20-25. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1949-3533.1999.tb00171.x>
- Best, K., Jones-Katz, L., Smolarek, B., Stolzenburg, M., & Williamson, D. (2015, June). Listening to Our Students: An Exploratory Practice Study of ESL Writing Students' Views of Feedback. *TESOL Journal*, 332-367.
- Bhowmik, S., Hilman, B., & Roy, S. P. (2019). Peer collaborative writing in the EAP classroom: Insights from a Canadian postsecondary context. *TESOL Journal*, 10:e393. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1002/tesj.393>
- Ertmer, P. A., Richardson, J. C., Belland, B., Camin, D., Connolly, P., Coulthard, G., . . . Mong, C. (2007). Using Peer Feedback to Enhance the Quality of Student Online Postings: An Exploratory Study. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12: 412-433. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00331.x>

F. LEARNER VOICES:

“BEING A YOUNG ADULT LEARNER IN THE TIME OF COVID 19: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES”



***Buse Merter** is eighteen years old. She lives in Istanbul. She has graduated from Haydarpaşa High school. Now, she is studying at Route Four Intensive level in her preparation year at Sabancı University.*

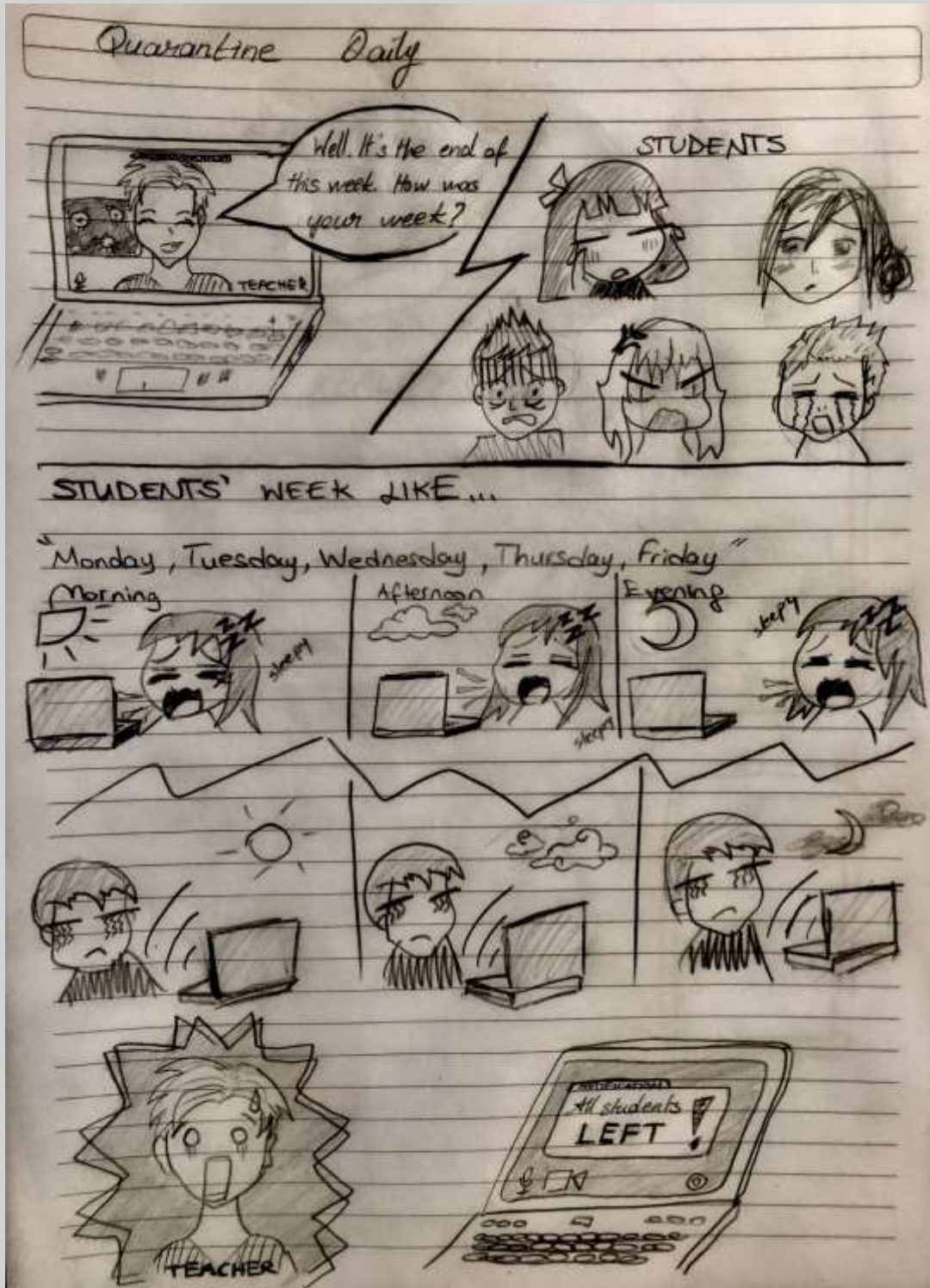
REFLECTIONS

by Buse Merter

How can the time pass for a young learner in the time of COVID 19 who has always made dreams about university life? I can easily illustrate this for you. My time passes in a very small room by just looking at the screen to learn English for 4-6 hours in a day, while I am willing to get my education from my university which has always been my dream to study at. Moreover, I could not see my new friends and my new teachers; instead, I can see them in a small window that is on the computer screen. Therefore, I cannot even know their appearance let alone knowing their likes and dislikes so that if I come across them by coincidence, I will probably see them as strangers. Isn't it bad? In my opinion, this is terrible. Consequently, my physiology is affected terribly by this disappointment. However, if I want to look at this situation's good side, it gives me some opportunities. I have a lot of time to study my lessons. In addition to this, I have more spare time to do things that I enjoy at home. For example, I can spend much more time with my mother, and I can watch movies. Moreover, I can eat food that is prepared by my mother. Therefore, being at home leads to a healthy diet since if I were at college, I would eat more unhealthy food. To sum up, although I get used to online education, I do not want to be at home anymore as I am a person who won the university of my dreams but could not go there due to COVID 19.



Ecem Akin was born on August 28, 2002, in Istanbul. She is a student at Sabanci University. She has been interested in painting since she was a baby. She has never given up drawing. Although they are contradictory to each other, her favorite techniques are surrealism and realism. Therefore, she uses these techniques in most of her drawings. The comics here are her first attempts.









***Ege Konca** was born in 2005. He was raised in Sivas, which is a pleasant city with many cultural spots. He is now studying at Sivas Science High School, which is a great place in terms of its education. He is planning to study business administration in the future and he wants to specialize in marketing. Playing electric guitar is his biggest passion.*

COVID-19 DAYS FROM A YOUNG ADULT LEARNER'S PERSPECTIVE

by Ege Konca

As we all know, Covid-19 has brought so many differences into our lives such as wearing masks, online education, etc. At first, most people had trouble getting used to this new lifestyle. The shock wave of covid-19 affected every single person in the world but in my opinion, we - students- had the biggest shock of all. None of us was expecting something that serious. At first, we were all happy to have some time away from school. But as time passed, we realized how serious this situation is getting and started to worry about our future, our health, and our education. Beyond getting sick, the disease affected our lives socially and mentally. It caused lots of stress and as everybody knows, stress is the biggest enemy of the human brain. Having too much free time, led us to think more than usual. However, it's a well-known fact that overthinking usually triggers anxiety and stress levels above average.

We saw that the Covid-19 lifestyle can affect our physical health indirectly, too. Without making exercises and actively moving, our bodies became lazier. So did our brains. Since physical activity has a big role in our immune system, we can say that most of us feel a little weak. On school days, all students were walking at least 5000 steps on average and most students were doing sports actively; so this major change of lifestyles made most of us put on weight and decreased our life energy. And as I mentioned earlier, being inactive rusted our minds as well. So it's pretty clear that living a sedentary life, affected our learning capacity badly in a similar way.

Students could use these days very effectively or they could just waste their time. Those who turned this crisis into an opportunity for self-improvement are the smartest ones. We had lots of time to study but we couldn't manage to learn as well as we did at school. Because without a school atmosphere where students can ask each other questions and raise their hands in class it's not quite possible to feel concentrated enough. I think that was the biggest challenge of Covid-19 on education for students. At home, students can easily be distracted. But for those who managed to keep themselves away from getting distracted, I don't see any reasons to fail the learning process.

On the other hand, there is no equality between students. Some students were not quite as comfortable as the others were. Researches are showing that nearly 10 million children don't have access to the internet. The fact that a great many students don't have access to online education is a very unfortunate consequence of Covid-19 as well.

As a young adult learner, I can say that each of us has been wounded, more or less. But what really matters is our health. The best thing we could do would be to try to minimize the harmful effects of the disease on us both mentally and physically. Once we have started to be optimistic, we can see that Covid-19 has helped most of us to find ourselves. We all had plenty of time to think which helped us to find what we really want in the future. We have taken up some new hobbies and most importantly, we all once again realized how important being healthy is.



İrem Nisa Mođulkoç is a tenth-grade student at Sivas Science High School. In fifth grade, she earned a scholarship. She started studying in Bahçeşehir Private High School in sixth grade. She got accepted into Sivas Science High School thanks to her LGS score. She studies for the university admission exam.

BEING A YOUNG ADULT LEARNER IN COVID DAYS

by İrem Nisa Mođulkoç

Since Covid 19 was included in our lives, it caused terrible things. Some of the people who caught Covid have survived but some of them weren't very lucky. People have lost their family, friends, etc. Countries were in lockdown. Among big effects like these, there were a lot of effects that can damage us in the future.

We all know that Covid harms people's health. But young adult learners –us- are the most damaged ones when it comes to little problems that could appear in the future. We have to sit on our chairs nearly all day. We slouch and suffer from low back pain. We have to use electronic devices to do anything included get an education. Being on the computer all day makes our eyes hurt. We have a headache. By the reason of being under conditions of lockdown, we can't go out and it gets hard to stay dynamic. People have a sedentary lifestyle. These are some of the problems that could appear.

Due to being at home, people can't see each other. We can only see our neighbors. Students can't see their classmates. People are lonely and we can't say that it makes things better. Seeing the same people and doing everything with them makes people nervous. Some people dispute with their family every day. It harms the family relationship.

Students fail to understand the lessons. It's hard to stay motivated while listening to the teacher on the computer at home. Most students even don't attend online lessons. Studying without a teacher is

hard, too. Students couldn't learn well in Covid times. That's a huge problem for the future. To make the world better, we need hard-working people.

We should have been living the prime of our lives. Instead of having fun with friends, we stay at home.

We couldn't save that many memories. I think we are all going to remember these years with grief.

Despite all the bad sides, some people used the opportunity. They did all the things that they want to do but couldn't find any time before. But the people who miss the opportunity can still make their days productive. After all, Covid will stay with us.



Melisa Kaptan was born on June 1, 2001 in Bodrum. She has graduated from Ted Bodrum High School and is currently studying at Sabancı University preparatory class. She also studies sociology and philosophy at the open education faculties of two other universities. Her plan is to choose industrial engineering as her major at Sabancı University. She loves reading, learning, and discovering new things. Also, playing volleyball and surfing are among her hobbies.

WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE A DIGITAL LEARNER?

by Melisa Kaptan

All the difficulties experienced today are preparing people to become digital learners. As a young person who has just started university, I have taken the first steps to the university in a digital way. Unfortunately, the pandemic processes are putting us all through a great test and we have to get used to our new normal. Therefore, the biggest change in our lives is that our lives are being digitalized. We all go to our offices or schools online, do our lessons online, complete our assignments on different platforms, and hold our meetings online. Although it does not force us to adapt to this technology, which my generation was born into, everything has changed so suddenly, and being exposed to such restrictions caused unexpected problems for all of us. Personally, I am very unhappy with not being able to go to our schools, meet our friends and our teachers face to face, walk around our campus, use our school's library, study together, join clubs, and dance or sing. This has been the most difficult situation for me and all my peers, I guess, during this adaptation process. It has disappointed us not to be able to go to our universities, where we all worked really hard to enter by passing a difficult entrance exam, in person. In spite of all these, I think our future advantages will be great for us to adapt to technology, which will be needed more in the future. Moreover, we can easily learn to do everything from our computer and phone and to try to operate this system without any problems because our era is a digital era and is in constant change and transformation. We know that people who can adapt to these changes as fast as possible will

continue their lives successfully, and be always in front of others. That is why I think this period will add good competencies to us in this way. Although being a digital learner is both difficult and beautiful, I think we have overcome this process in the best way and I think we all have been doing good things on the way to becoming digital learners.



Nilüfer Korum is 24 and lives in Urla with her family. She is a senior student at the psychology department of İzmir University of Economics. She is interested in human behavior, and she is a curious learner.

IS QUARANTINE A PUNISHMENT OR A REWARD?

by Nilüfer Korum

At the beginning of 2020, we entered a chaotic period with the whole world that we did not know what was happening and we could not predict. We have been living in quarantine for about 1 year. This is the third term we receive online education. There are both positive and negative sides to the distance education process.

Firstly, there are many negative sides to online education. Considering that universities are not just courses like other educational institutions, it is safe to say that we are deprived of both socialization and learning opportunities. I miss studying in the library and having a coffee and chatting with my friends during my breaks. Additionally, we lost our ease of reaching the lecturers whenever we wanted. We communicate by e-mail in the online education process, and this is a factor that prolongs communication. Furthermore, staying away from home for 1 year has psychological effects as well as social effects. Since most of us live in crowded city centers, our living spaces have been completely disconnected from nature. Unfortunately, because we cannot leave the house, we do not have the opportunity to breathe by the sea or take a walk in nature. Likewise, it can be physically demanding. On some days when I have 8 classes in a row, sitting at a desk is not good for my back and waist health. I have to stand up and walk through the house between classes. However, I think the most negative factor that affects us all is uncertainty. At the beginning of each semester, we wonder whether we will go to school this semester or not. Students in other cities are struggling

with problems such as transportation and accommodation. The feeling of uncertainty can also be psychologically challenging.

On the other hand, the positive aspects of online education should also be considered. First of all, in this process, I think we have saved a lot of time on the things we need to do. We can now use the time and energy we lost in transportation or preparation more efficiently. At the same time, since time management is entirely up to us, we have an opportunity for what we always want to do. For example, I started doing Pilates regularly at the beginning of the quarantine, and when I planned my day in a disciplined way, I also found that I was able to get a lot of work done. This also increased my motivation. Besides, the quality of education has increased homework instead of sit-down exams. The education process, which continued in the form of preparing for the exam from a single book and forgetting all the information after the exam, suddenly turned into more research, assignment preparation, reporting, more source scanning. Therefore, the contributions of preparing assignments to the students increased. Also, I think one of the most important positive aspects of online education is that it removes the distance barriers. The opportunities to take lessons from professors who are very successful in their fields from anywhere in the world are increasing.

Consequently, despite all the difficulties of the online education process, I think it is also an incredible opportunity. The whole world is at your computer, regardless of where you live and who you are. I recommend myself and all students to take the fullest advantage. In this process, more work falls on the student. But I think it is a process where those who are enthusiastic can benefit as much as possible. All things considered, I think it is a very valuable chance to get to know ourselves, manage our time and increase our awareness. I am sure that we will describe these days in the future with amazement.



Selim Selçuk graduated from Izmir Karşıyaka Atatürk Anatolian High School. He is currently a prep student at Sabancı University.

REFLECTIONS

by Selim Selçuk Kahraman

Being a digital learner is a new experience for me. The internet has been convenient and with online education and the importance of it increased because all the things I do, learn, see are possible with the internet nowadays. One advantage of digital learning is online life is adapting us to the future due to today's inventions' focus. Because most of the innovations which are developing today are about reducing the physical contacts. Moreover, companies try to apply online work styles in their workplaces. Thanks to digital learning, we are adapting rapidly to this trend. The second advantage is the distinction of reliable sources. For example, in this process, I learn the differences between reliable and unreliable sources. Therefore, I am more confident about the sources which I found. Thirdly, being a digital learner is helpful owing to my hobbies. As a teenager, most of my hobbies on my computer and do not have to go to physical places helps me about improving myself in my hobbies.

Nonetheless, it has so many disadvantages too. The first and the most common one is screen time. For instance, before I became a digital learner, I would see my friends more and even my family, because the homework types changed, and adapting them takes time, so my free time decreased. Furthermore, expansion in screen time disrupts my eyes as well as my sleep pattern. Likewise, as a social creature, I cannot contact my friends physically. This situation leads to not being able to enjoy life and decreasing my motivation for life. The other reason which can be counted as a disadvantage

is distractive things such as social media or games. Since I like to play games sometimes it prevents me from doing my responsibilities. Also, notifications coming from applications contribute to distractibility. As a result of both advantages and disadvantages, I prefer being a hybrid learner after the lockdown.



Ümit Erkut Çolak is eighteen years old. He lives in Bursa. He has graduated from Özel Farklı Kalite Modern Fen Lisesi. Now, he is studying at Route Four in his preparation year at Sabancı University.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A DIGITAL LEARNER?

by Ümit Erkut Çolak

Digital learning is a type of learning, which is done by using technology that helps being educated in online classes and courses effectively. As a digital learner, at the first stage of transition to digital learning, I struggled to adapt it because I had never experienced digital learning; therefore, neither the teachers nor I were ready to experience it. Besides, before the pandemic of Covid-19, digital learning was not at such an advanced level as it is now, so instead of concentrating on the lectures, we were dealing with technical problems during the online classes. Also, it was hard to study for long hours in front of the computer because I was not used to it.

Before the pandemic, I would study in school, and then, sometimes revise the topics which I learned that day after I got back home. Therefore, it was hard to make a study program to which I had to follow at home. Even if I could succeed in preparing a study program, it was hard to follow it under house circumstances, such as noise, the desire to lie down upon because of the sigh of the bed, being away from friends and others. After I got used to digital learning a bit, I could concentrate on being in front of the computer longer and easily follow my schedule.

Despite the difficulties of digital learning, every cloud has a silver lining. Digital learning makes it possible to save some time for us because there is no need to commute every day. We can use this time for reading books, enjoying ourselves with our families, obtaining new hobbies, and especially

and most importantly, exercising so that we can prevent our backs from being hurt because of long hours of sitting. The other effect from which we can benefit is that digital learning is at an advanced level now. There are very many sources, classes, and websites from which students can benefit. In my opinion, after the pandemic ends, digital learning will be at the right level to use to keep students educated when such things happen and prevent students from going to their schools.

TESOL

TURKEY

TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES