

ELT



Ireland bulletin

IN THIS EDITION

Real(ly useful) News

by Richy Neylon (Page 6)

The Benefits of Using Extended Tasks

by Ian Brangan (Page 8)

Study Skills in the EFL Classroom

by Roisin Keane (Page 10)

Irlen Syndrome: How to lift the hidden barrier to learning

by Marianne Jordan (Page 13)

Tailor your feedback

by Roomana Khan (Page 16)

Feel the fear but do it anyway

by Anna Morris (page 18)

Mentoring: Moving from Trainee to Teacher

by Chris Farrell (Page 18)

7 things I learned about my teaching from the Cambridge Delta

by Aileen Donegan (Page 23)

Developing a personal learning network can ensure ongoing professional development: My journey

by Laura O'Grady (Page 25)

Modality: Less Can, more Can Do

by Gerard O'Hanlon (Page 28)

Using the Lexical Approach to outline & develop areas of pronunciation

by Brian Duignan (Page 29)

Business English as the language of leadership

by Ben Dobbs (Page 31)

No. 4

18th February 2018

ELT Ireland features (Pages 2-5)

Welcome to our Fourth Bulletin

by Dr. Lou McLaughlin

Keeping you up to Date by Ben Dobbs

ELTChinwag by Jane Seely

Letter from the Editor by Laura O'Grady

IATEFL Report by Tom Le Seilleur

Email us to write for the next ELT Ireland Bulletin!

info.eltireland@gmail.com @ELTIreland

elt-ireland.com

IATEFL Report Glasgow 2017

by Tom Le Seelleur (ELT Ireland Grant Holder 2017)

It came as a complete surprise to be told by Lou McLaughlin, President of ELT Ireland, that I was going to be part sponsored to attend IATEFL 2017. Being a new member of ELT Ireland I did not think I would be given such an opportunity. I was not able to attend the first day of the conference (Tuesday) as I was teaching all day at my college in Lisburn (SERC). However, I was able to get a cheap flight over and stay in a reasonable B & B in Paisley, about 10 minutes from the airport by bus and direct by train to the conference centre in central Glasgow. When I submitted my application for a travel grant I indicated that I would be attending workshops and talks on 'reading' as this is my particular passion. I am also very aware of the needs of members especially those who teach academic English,



Tom Le Seelleur at IATEFL 2017 in Glasgow

Pic by ELT Ireland

prepare students for IELTS, are involved in management or co-ordination and for those of us who teach English in general whether it is ESOL, ELT, ESP or EAP young or older. When you attend IATEFL you are faced with difficult choices about which session to attend as there are often many you would like to attend but they often happen in the same slot. In addition, I attended each of the plenary sessions at the beginning of the day. Hence my report today will reflect the sessions I was able to attend, people I was able to network with and the experiences I gained. I hope this report will be of interest and use to you.

Plenary Sessions

Sarah Mercer, a leading expert on Psychology and language learning touched upon the links between methodology, learners, teachers and how the relationship between them can impact the level and intensity of learning especially in terms of how emotion and people's belief systems can work in harmony and so produce a far greater level of mutual understanding and respect. (even if learners and teachers have very different views/opinions or politics). Trust can be almost unbreakable if teachers can create an emotional, cognitive bond with their learners.

On Thursday, JJ Wilson teacher, trainer, author and blogger spoke about our role as moderators between often conflicting and supportive views expressed in our classrooms from a variety of people and nationalities who have different perspectives, values, outlooks, communicative skills and cultural influences. He asked whether it is our role to change minds, steer students towards some common beliefs upheld by the majority in the world. Should we impose our moral compass on a class – can we avoid it? We all hold a variety of political, social and moral attitudes and values which we sometimes suspend if we are teaching in a country or classroom that may not share a similar status quo. Should a teacher try to navigate the students and class towards a mindset or should we remain as impartial as we can. Is it our duty through different methodology to discuss social justice, inequalities and taboo topics. These are moral questions that may need to be

considered on a case by case, classroom by classroom, school by school and country by country basis. Is it possible to discuss social justice in a classroom in Saudi Arabia as easily as it is in Holland? Should we only teach language or do we have other roles?

On Friday, there were two plenaries. One in the morning by Jane Setter and in the afternoon to close the ceremony by Imtiaz Dharker. Jane Setter, Professor of Phonetics posed the question about the scone. How do different people in the UK and Ireland pronounce words differently? Friday's plenary was packed to hear Imtiaz Dharker, born in Pakistan and raised in Scotland reading some of her poetry which can be about issues including shelter, education, health, poverty, love, language and celebration.

IELTS

As an experienced IELTS teacher and because many of us in the island of Ireland have to prepare our students to pass IELTS – I often teach adults who are nurses or doctors, engineers or professionals who want to study further or wish to emigrate to Australia, New Zealand and Canada. I went to see two presenters who spoke about 'Managing student confidence and expectations in mixed level IELTS classes'. It was a sponsored event by Pearson that launched recently their 'Experts IELTS' series. The two speakers only had 30 minutes to share and get audience participation. It transpired

that many of the audience were experienced IELTS teachers looking for more content. They focused also on the Collins 'Get Ready for IELTS' books which have recently been published. Whether you are preparing students to get an IELTS 5 or an 8, we all face the dilemma of trying to cover all four skills and more and at the same time keep our students on track and making meaningful progress despite differences in class when you have weaker students alongside stronger ones and how you can cater for them all.

Extensive Reading and Storytelling: Tatia Gruenbaum is a Dutch teacher and parent who set up a not for profit project to establish the Little English Library (TLEL) English. She set up a social enterprise to create book corners in libraries, Dutch nurseries and primary schools. These books were to be in English to help Dutch people learn more English. These corners have mushroomed in recent years and Tatia has been able to find like-minded people to help out. It was very interesting to find out how easy it can be to set something up and find many of these people. Similar projects could quite easily be replicated in other countries but it needs someone who is thick skinned, can give the time, commitment and have plenty of perseverance. Another great speaker was David Heathfield who has been giving talks and presentations for many years and how storytelling can lead young and old into a creative world of mysticism, fantasy, reality and adventure. He had the audience in the palm of his hand when he got us to role play an old man with his life on the line and the Chinese Emperor. Every Chinese story passed down has a moral story to tell and we were not disappointed. David's booming voice carries across the room with his quiet energy and world stories from Serbia to Peru. Peter Grundy gave a practical workshop on using extensive reading in translation with a rather elaborate jigsaw type activity involving all 60 participants. I wish my German had been better! Robert Hill, former editor of Black Cat readers gave a passionate talk about the value of letter writing and journals based around characters from classics and how these letters can inspire readers to rewrite or continue stories that have remained favourites over time. Rob is difficult to catch on film. The last person I saw involved in reading was Karen Saxby who is an author, teacher and trainer for young learners. She too loves to talk about storytelling and how engaging stories can lead to children creating their own stories based on creativity or dreams or life experiences. Stories are also about visual literacy with picture books or storyboards alongside text based books. In the evening, I helped with many others to make the ERF Awards Ceremony an evening not to forget.

I Swear by Vulgar Profanities in Coarse Books: Swearing in English/Taboo Language: There were two sessions during the conference that tackled the delicate matter of swearing – not the legal oath but rather the f-ing and blinding that we tend to ignore, duck or avoid when teaching. Chris Walklett looked at how we try to avoid swearing in different parts of the UK by using words that replace the F's, the C's, the B's and the P's with sound alike words like feck (Northern Ireland), Sugar, Fudge and so on. In fact, Chris pointed out the use of the F word and how its meaning can differ according to emotions and regions. It reminded me of the film starring Robert De Niro and a scene from the film 'The Family' where his son is explaining to his sister how his father can be so expressive with one word. Likewise should we teach our students slang words for practical every day understanding whether they are giving or receiving. The second session led by Simon Dunston at IH in London touched upon sensitive language – blasphemy, offensive insults and words considered taboo that coursebooks rarely if ever include. What should we do then – teach students how NOT to swear and discourage or encourage them. It really depends on who you are teaching, for what and why, how old they are, where they come from and what they want from their courses. It can be a minefield.

“When you attend IATEFL you are faced with difficult choices about which session to attend”

CPD and Training

How do teachers keep up their interest in teaching? How can schools ensure that they play their part in ensuring teachers keep reinventing themselves, staying fresh with ideas? As teachers how much homework if any should we give and how? I wanted also to find out about CPD so the first person on the list was George Pickering, IATEFL Trustee and Professional coach gave us insights into the needs of students and how we fail students if we do not take into account their expectations of courses we offer and how this directly impacts how we conduct CPD at our schools. Another inspirational speaker was Doris Suchet, Principal at Regent School Oxford, gave the audience a lesson in how to run a successful school with 100% buy in from the teachers and staff through a 360 degree business culture model which encourages teachers to fail as well as succeed. We learn from our mistakes – try out new ideas and projects and some of them do not succeed at first so we pick ourselves up, look at what went wrong and try again. Graham Skerritt, who teaches in Japan, talked about the benefits of homework especially using online resources one of which is Touchstone Online (CUP). Graham spoke of the importance of making sure homework is needed, objective, gradable, interesting and relevant.

One final session I attended was that given by Amadeu Marin from Spain. He encouraged using whispers to improve pronunciation especially with letter sounds particularly those of difficulty for Spanish speakers with B and V or German speakers with V and W. Amadeu then went on to encourage teachers to use improvisation with every day objects. He chose a 'coffee bean' inviting the audience to tell a story involving coffee beans. There were many examples given by members of the audience including Mr Bean, Ivor Gone and Coffee Anan.

IATEFL is an excellent opportunity to make friends, meet future colleagues, hear some excellent workshops and network. As I am keen on extensive reading I was able to meet up with the main publishers like CUP, OUP, Macmillan, Pearson, National Geographic, Ladybird along with lesson known Graded Reader publishers like Hebling, ELI, Black Cat, Yellow Door, Collins and Express. I will go again next year.

ELT
Ireland
bulletin

