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***From a more creative and enlightened teacher to a  
more forceful and cultivated student***

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*Our Journal has reached its 4<sup>th</sup> edition.*

*Many thanks to the participants and editorial board for their invaluable input and insights.*

*We are looking forward to our next conference...*

*Editor-in-chief*

## Using creativity and (classroom) innovations in teaching language skills

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### *Abstract*

Because of the fact that we have previously written a paper on a similar topic, in this paper we will only be further on deepening our research and ideas in this field of classroom innovations and creativity. The thesis of this paper is focused on enhancing the learning and teaching process, through new and creative technological methods, tools and strategies. Accordingly, the reader can find detailed explanations and examples of (Educational softwares, flipped classroom, MIE – Microsoft Innovative Educator, Skype and pen-palls in class) and how they could be used and implemented in teaching the four language skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking.

**Key words:** *Creative teaching methods, classroom innovations, language skills, technological tools and strategies, learning and teaching process.*

### **Introduction**

Improvement of the four language skills is one of the main focuses in education of language students. Because education and technology are so closely connected with one another, the development that technology goes through directly effects the development of education as well. With the use of technology in the classroom and in education all together, teachers have another way to help students improve their four main language skills. Classroom creativity is one of the main reasons for incorporating technology in the classroom. Because it provides an abundance of information, resources and inspiration for a creative language class. Today, there are a lot of different technologically advanced programs available on the internet which teachers can use in their lessons. Furthermore, it can be said that technology provides modern-day suggestions and ideas for already existing educational methods. Because, a teacher

is a very creative person by nature, there are many programs which offer creative freedom for the teacher to independently plan or create their classroom tools or instruments. Which then consequently creates a creative environment for teacher and student alike. As it was previously mentioned, there are a lot of programs today which can be used to enhance classroom creativity, for that reason this paper focuses on the following four creative programs/ideas: Educational Softwares (Kahoot), Flipped Classroom, MIE (Microsoft Innovative Educator), Skype and pen-palls in class. In the paper the reader will be able to grasp one way of combining these programs/ideas, also to look through our ideas of how to adapt them to their class needs, and gain an insight on how to incorporate them into their classroom. The practical segment of our paper is based on active implementation in education as well as in depth analysis of the previously mentioned programs/ideas. In addition to the theoretical background the reader can find our practical experiences and personal ideas of how to use creativity and technology to enhance the language skills.

### **Merging the educational process with the technological innovations.**

The impact that technological innovations have on today's education, brought various types of techniques that contribute to motivate and develop classroom creativity. However, it should be acknowledged that the used techniques are not actually new. The four technological tools affect the educational process by presenting it from a new aspect in which it develops and opens up a different perspective which allows further adaptations on the teachers' well-known traditional methods and techniques. By doing so, students become more attentive in the process of education and are improving their language skills.

For successfully merging the educational process with the technological innovation it is crucial for the teachers to achieve technological literacy. Therefore, prior to insisting on the use of technological innovations in the classroom and to avoid further problems and refusal of cooperation from any side of the participants in the educational process, a procedure for developing technological literacy should be carried out.

The goal of developing the technological literacy is to prepare the teachers, as well as their students to successfully use the opportunities provided by the technological innovations. First of all, the previous knowledge of the teachers and the students should be determined, then the basic rules for using technology in the classroom should be acquired. Follows a specialized training for using the basic tools and after the process of introduction is completed it is necessary to organize the standard teaching process so that the teacher ultimately achieves professional technological literacy. Achieving technological literacy will be of great benefit to

the teacher so that he can adjust and merge teaching with the technological innovation in a proper way.

- **Traditional teaching methods:**

Effective teaching is essential for the development of any nation. The educational system is characterized with a carefully organized curriculum and our formal educational system is controlled by the state and the local government. This means that the use of the traditional teaching methods is still used in today's classroom. Traditional teaching methods rely mainly in textbooks, where the presentation of the materials is divided into several parts. With the traditional teaching methods the improvement of the basic skills is emphasized.

The increased usage of technology brings changes to every aspect of our society. Meaning there are challenges that are facing education itself. To keep up with these changes in the educational system, the traditional teaching methods should be modified to fit the modern age needs. Modification and modernization of the teaching methods are implied in the traditional way of teaching in such manner that teachers can create more precise activities and tools which allow for more effective teaching to take place.

- **The beginnings of incorporating technological innovation in the classroom:**

Observing the evolution of technologies in the educational process is of a great significance, not only will it determine the beginnings and the roots of modern technology, but it can provide a closer look at how it would develop in the future. It is essential to understand that the connection between technology and teaching has always existed. This can be proved by determining the fact that technology itself is constantly under a process of changes and adaptations, therefore what once constituted a top innovation in technology, from today's point of view is likely to lose its relevance.

Teachers as well as students are able to choose appropriate tools and use them as a learning opportunity in the process of education. This is used in order to improve the flexibility and creativity in the classroom. As previously stated, the boundaries of traditional teaching are expanding. Students are now at the center of the teaching process, which requires teachers to have another, more creative teaching approach. Meaning, teachers need to carefully construct a lesson plan which corresponds to the creative and innovative classroom and to design those classroom innovations according to the educational process where in the following subsection can be found an in-depth analysis.

- **Designing the classroom innovations according to the educational process:**

Accordingly designed lessons made to fit the students' needs can only be beneficial in the development of their language skills. Achieving flexibility is important when it comes to implementing technological innovations in the classroom.

The educational process is known for being carefully organized and conducted according to a specific curriculum, which requires the realization of certain goals through certain activities. Teaching throughout the school year is detailed and teachers have to keep documentation of the activities that students fulfill.

The curriculum is designed in such way that it gives a detailed description of each goal, so that writers and educational textbook publishers can produce materials that correspond to certain standards.

Because using the traditional curriculum, teachers are usually limited on how and with what materials will use in class to teach their students. When the standard way encounters a change brought by the implementation of technological innovations, it is a matter which is disturbing the previous course of things. This means that teachers encounter difficulties when implementing the technological innovations. A simple solution to overcome these difficulties is by achieving flexibility in the educational process, and this is done by developing a separate ICT curriculum.

The ICT development model functions as a framework in which the relationships between different components of the educational process are presented. As the most ideal solution for the development of an ICT curriculum, the model of time that was previously described is divided into two parts:

- In the first part, the development of ICT is presented as a continuity of the approach by which the educational process or individual school has the opportunity to choose different approaches using ICT in teaching.
- In the second part, the development of ICT is presented at different stages. Participants in the educational process will have the right to choose which stages they will use. This approach is called the learning and teaching phases with or through ICT.

The merging of the two parts makes the framework for modeling the teaching according to the ICT curriculum.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A. Petreska, 2018, "ИКТ во наставата по англиски јазик".

## **Creativity and innovations in education with the use of technology**

”Regarding to the changes provided by the digital age a lot of software companies have started developing educational software to fill the need of a more interactive and personalized studying experience for students. The implementation of online educational software has become an essential teaching tool, it is a part of daily lessons and shown a great improvement in performance, both for the teachers and students alike.”<sup>2</sup>

- **Educational Software (Kahoot)**

Today educational softwares are very common, and touch on a wide variety of topics connected to a students’ education. For instance, they can be used for any subject math, geography, history etc. Consequently, for the purpose of this paper the educational software Kahoot has been chosen. Kahoot is an online game that has its own community of teachers joining every day. This site definitely brings out a creative side of a teacher with all that Kahoot has to offer. The software consists of two sites Kahoot.com and Kahoot.it, where the latter is the one used by students to participate in a game, by connecting through their phones. Whereas Kahoot.com is used by teachers to create and share materials (games). The community that has formed around Kahoot provides a very wide variety of materials that have been pre-made by another teacher, and can be used for our own purposes. Pre-made Kahoots (games in kahoot) are also changeable, so a teacher can always adapt them to their own materials. Even tough, Kahoot is a materials-sharing friendly community, there is also the chance to create your own Kahoots. Even the process of creating a Kahoot is made very easy for the teachers. There are also video tutorials provided from the site on how to use it. Though, a big part in this paper are the games it provides. Kahoot provides 4 types of different games to be used in class, this variety of games allows for different types of materials and information to be practiced from the students, and it also helps the teachers to assess positive transfer. The four types of games that it offers are: Quiz, Jumble, Discussion, Survey. From the names of these, it is easy to see that Kahoot has a wide range. Firstly, with Quiz a teacher can easily assess students’ knowledge on a subject, Jumble can be used in the same way, the only difference is that students have to put the answers in order. Discussion can be used to entice a discussion through a game, see student opinion, and

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<sup>2</sup> Л. Белакапоска, А. Петреска, Х. Стојмирова, *English Language Teaching Opportunities Provided by the Digital Age*, Висока школа струковних студија за васпитаче Михајло Павлов – Вршац, Зборник радова. 2017. p 46

further on talk about it in class. Lastly, Survey allows for the students to have a say into their classes of what they like and what they don't like.

- **Flipped classroom**

The Flipped classroom method is not a very new method in classes, especially when it is used without the implementation of technology. A teacher would assign their students a topic for reading or researching before class and they would discuss or further explain it during class. Because of this, this method takes away a part of teacher's creativity, while connecting it with technology opens up more uses and creativity for both teacher and student.

“It is described as a kind of reverse traditional teaching, where students research new material outside of class, on their own, and then in class they present what they have found through debates and discussion. This time, instead of doing the research in the library reading tons of books in order to get in touch with information, students do the research online. It is more effective, they can access twice as more material. They can go through different web pages, YouTube videos, lots of different blogs etc. After that, in class, they can present their information however they like.”<sup>3</sup>

- **MIE (Microsoft Innovative Educator) and Skype**

Microsoft, inspired by teachers who incorporated technology into their classroom on their own, created Microsoft Innovative Educator. MIE is an online platform created to connect teachers from all over the globe. Since its creation it has continued to grow with a lot of different in class opportunities for teachers of different subjects. “...MIE offers a lot of educational teacher courses, resources, webinars and even quick tip videos. It has a lot of tools and even instructions for the teachers regarding them.”<sup>4</sup> When considering the question what exactly can a teacher do with MIE in their class? There are some points to be mentioned. Firstly, because today's students are very interested by the use of technology in the classroom teachers can create a student friendly class lesson and connect their lesson to online materials, this allows teacher to use real life materials and to also produce fun and interesting classes for the students. Secondly there are a lot of projects that a teacher can make for their students, but also incorporate the students into the making process of their class project. Lastly, there are a lot of ways that skype could be used in the classroom, to motivate the students, and to change up the class pace. For

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<sup>3</sup> Л. Белакапоска, А. Петреска, Х. Стојмирова, *English Language Teaching Opportunities Provided by the Digital Age*, Висока школа струковних студија за васпитаче Михајло Павлов – Вршац, Зборник радова. 2017. p 46

<sup>4</sup> Л. Белакапоска, А. Петреска, Х. Стојмирова, *English Language Teaching Opportunities Provided by the Digital Age*, Висока школа струковних студија за васпитаче Михајло Павлов – Вршац, Зборник радова. 2017. p 47

example, MIE offers Skype quest speakers, skype virtual field trips and skype collaborations all to enhance the educational experience for the student and the teacher.

- **Pen-palls**

The use of pen-palls in the classroom can be considered as an older method of inspiring students to use the target language they are learning, by connecting two students through letters. Yet, today writing letters is dying out, and everyone is talking and connecting through their technology, so the only logical reason is to use the resources given by technology for a teacher's higher purpose. This means that a teacher can online connect to colleagues from different sides of the world and arrange for their students to be pen-palls. When this is adapted for our time, the students firstly will have to write their letters in their notebooks for homework or in class writing assignment for the teacher to check before they are sent. But, when time comes for the letters to be sent, they are sent as emails between teachers for a quicker connection.

- **Practical examples of use – Kahoot**

Considering that this paper is based on enhancing language classrooms, the practical work is an explanation and analysis of our practical use with educational softwares during classes. Previously mentioned where all of the types of uses offered from the educational software Kahoot, where in reality it can be used in a lot of different ways, with different combinations of techniques and types of classes. For example, in practice Kahoot is a very good platform to use when checking positive transfer with students, and to have a fun pre-test practice, where the students have fun during the class and they are also more focused on the task at hand. When using Kahoot for a practice or discussion tool it can be combined with the flipped classroom technique. The teacher would previously assign the students a topic for researching online, and they could go through the new vocabulary that students might come across. Choosing a topic for the students depends on the teacher and their students, because every teacher knows what their students are interested in. To ease the students into the task, it is preferred to pick a topic that is more interesting for the students. This way they are more motivated to prepare for the next class. The second part of this flipped classroom method enhanced with Kahoot, we have found is best used one of two ways. The first type, is for the teacher to previously prepare a Kahoot for the whole class. The second involves dividing the class into two halves, having each side do a short research, and their own Kahoot for the other team. The Kahoots can be uploaded by the teacher, and in this way teachers have different insights into the students' mind about the material they are studying in school. Obviously, if the class is divided into two teams there must be a winner, the winning team is the one with most questions right.

- **New inspirations-MIE, skype, pen-palls**

Exposure to new ideas, platforms, and techniques brings out the creative side of a teacher. Especially when a platform like MIE brings so many different aspects and uses for one teacher or one class. Consequently, from our inspiration of incorporating technology into the classroom for a better outcome for the students, follows an idea of incorporating multiple parts for one complex idea that will benefit teacher and students. From the different components from MIE, a teacher can start with finding a partner that is on the same pace, example: A teacher with the same level students. Or a teacher that wants to find pen-pals for their students. From here, the teachers plan out classes leading to their pen-pals goal. Teachers could make MIE-Skype collaborations and share class information from students to students. Then, they could assign the students to learn something about their new skype class, so students would ask question about the country, history or everyday life. After, a couple of classes of learning about each other, the students can be informed that their online friends are going to be their new pen-pals, and their current assignment is to hand write a short letter, there are previously checked by the teachers. Lastly, to save money and time, teaches share these letters via email between them, which allows for the students to have quick responses, which can motivate them to use the language more in their everyday lives.

### **The impact that creativity and classroom innovations have on the four language skills**

A language teacher is well aware of the four language skills which their classes are focused around. These four language skills are reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Whereas the school curricula has many different sides of impact in the education of its students: cultural knowledge, historical knowledge, language knowledge (grammar and vocabulary), and the skills students achieve with studying language. The main way to better our language skills is to practice them, and students do not always practice their language skills, especially if they are not interested by the classes, material, and teacher. Students require motivation to achieve the goals education has set for them. One way of motivating the students to practice their language skills in class is with the use of technology and innovations, which are popular with a lot of teachers and students.

Technology allows for teacher to have free classroom innovations that are attractive to the students. When technology is used class, students are motivated and interested to participate. In addition, with the use of technology students do not overthink the education, they are more willing to participate and they accomplish better results.

When considering the four language skills, every technological tool has different forms of use to satisfy a teacher's needs. They can be used for practicing grammar and writing, or to motivate

the students for a debate topic. Because of this, no language skill can go unaltered with the active participation of students and implementation of technology.

Through the platforms and programs given in this paper, teachers can easily find ways of practicing more skills through technology. They can use Kahoot or MIE to begin a discussion about a topic. Another way of practicing listening and speaking is with a guest speaker, or a skype collaboration with another class. The reading and writing skills can be achieved through technology as-well, with the incorporation of pen-palls in class. This way of incorporating pen-palls, guest speakers, Skype collaborations etc. has a much higher chance of motivating the students to focus on their language studies.

Technology's impact on language education is only as a form of helping tool, with a greatly positive impact on the teacher and the student. Meanwhile, allowing creative freedom and connecting teachers in an atmosphere of sharing knowledge and experiences with one another. And in order to get better results in the wholesome process of education using creativity and classroom innovations should be embraced.

### **Conclusion**

The role of creativity and classroom innovations should be understood as aids that complement and support the learning process and as an integral part of the curriculum will contribute to the development of students' language skills.

The purpose of this paper was to study and research the modified teaching methods which can be used by teachers in the teaching process and how to take advantage of the opportunities that are offered. Since there is an abundance of techniques, methods and technologies available for implementation in the traditional process of teaching, this paper focuses on the following four main techniques: *educational software (Kahoot); flipped classroom; Microsoft Innovative Educator and Skype* and *pen-palls*.

By expanding the boundaries of the teaching process, a flexible space is opened where the readers are allowed to adapt these four techniques independently or apply our strategies and approaches regarding combining them in a way that we strive to incorporate them in our educational system.

With this approach, teachers are allowed to modify their teaching according to the individual needs of their students, thus providing them with a more creative and innovative way to develop their language skills. This paper opens up many perspectives for future research and detailed studies on the subject of how to successfully teach and develop the language skills.

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Михајло Павлов – Вршац, Зборник радова. 2017

## **Useful tips and activities for teaching Reading in a Young Learners' class**

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### *Abstract*

*'Do not teach children to learn by force and harshness, but direct them to it by what amuses their minds, so that you may be better able to discover with accuracy the peculiar bent of the genius'*

*Plato*

Reading is an interactive process between the reader and the writer in authentic or authentic-like texts. Learning to read in either a first or a second language is one of the most difficult tasks a learner encounters. Learning to read well is a hard and lengthy process, and can induce anxiety and frustration in many young learners. In most countries young learners come into contact with the printed world from a very early age. Little by little, they are engaged in reading texts. But how can teachers select appropriate approaches, texts and activities in order to attract young learners' interest and keep them motivated? Useful tips and activities for developing reading skills will be discussed in this article.

People read for different purposes and in various ways. Young learners usually start with topics concerning the environment around them. They start interpreting labels and symbols, then they listen to stories or they read them various times. Pictures and illustrations of books also contribute to a better acquisition of reading. As the story the learners deal with becomes more familiar, they focus more on the structures of the sentences, the vocabulary and the grammatical aspects. The introduction to reading texts should happen gradually. From the practice with word cards, young learners can play with sentences and phrases. Teachers can chop up sentences from various texts, stories, songs and ask learners to put them back in the correct order. In order to become independent readers, young learners use all language skills at the same time, provided they learn in a well-managed and controlled classroom environment. Young learners' teachers should start teaching letter-sound correspondence patterns (phonics) to all children. This can be easily achieved through songs, rhymes and rhyming pairs. For young learners various approaches can be implemented in class such as the Phonic approach, the 'Whole

Words approach', the 'Look and Say', and the 'Language Experience approach' which focus on different text levels. Also 'a balanced reading programme' and carefully chosen reading activities such as predicting, guessing, reviewing, colouring etc. which encourage young learners to read and understand texts. Young learners' teachers should be aware of useful and encouraging tips in order to help with the initial reading speed which later process longer, unfamiliar words and lead to reading and understanding of the texts. When a native language is properly introduced to young learners, it paves the way for a smooth second language acquisition.

**Keywords:** *Encouragement, positive attitude, useful tips, approaches/activities, reading acquisition.*

Teaching young learners is not the same as teaching adolescents or adults and that is because children have diverse characteristics that make the teaching experience unique and special (Symeonidou, 2015). As Lobo (2003) mentions, young learners are very receptive, curious and motivated. Sometimes it is not easy to surprise and engage an adult in an activity; however, with children this is a very simple task. They are always ready to meet new challenge and it is easy to motivate them and to call their attention. Lobo (ibid) also comments that children are spontaneous and willing to participate, something completely different with older learners who often feel afraid to make mistakes, are shy and embarrassed to talk in the classroom. Also young learners have a short attention span, so teachers have to plan short and varied activities in order for students to pay attention and not to get bored. The selection of the texts for young learners is crucial (Symeonidou, & Papadopoulos, 2017). According to the level of their learners, the learners' limited reading experience in the target language, their age and the difficulty of the tasks (Kuhn, Schwanenflugel and Meisinger, 2010 cited in Grabe & Stoller, 2011), teachers design appropriate and compatible reading activities and supplement the reading material with newspapers, stories, tales, magazines and comics. Reading and Writing are taught in parallel because when young learners learn to read, they enjoy writing too. It is difficult to find a single formula for teaching reading and writing in English as a foreign language because second language contexts can be varied and complex. When and how reading will be introduced to young learners will depend on the age of the children, the level of their exposure to English, their first language background and their ability to read and write in their mother tongue (Symeonidou, 2013).

When native language is properly introduced to young learners, it paves the way for English language acquisition. This is mainly observed on the level of literacy because learners already possess whole, effective, balanced and coherent Reading prerequisites to apply to a second language accession. Young learners' knowledge of phonemic awareness, grammar, word and sentence structure, their tendency to repeat and start from basic to more difficult elements, their ability to read and write in their native language help and equip them to have a positive attitude towards a second language acquisition, which they approach with much ease and self-confidence.

Young learners demonstrate a great interest and enthusiasm in learning how to read in English when learning the language (Pinter, 2006). Reading and Writing can encourage young learners to reinforce what they are learning orally. When young learners are able to convey and read simple messages or texts in English, they feel self-confident and have a sense of accomplishment in the second language. It is important to notice that they usually know how to read and write in their mother tongue and they bring with them some potentially useful strategies. Thus, the young learners have some understanding about what reading is. According to the strategies they bring, how they managed to learn reading in their first language can influence their reading in English. That is, they try to sound things out, they try to spell the words out and they also try to compare sounds and letters. It is essential to remember though, that the degree to which the young learners have managed to master one reading system may vary greatly. Naturally, young learners whose mother tongue uses phonography, and in particular the Roman alphabet, will find beginning to read and write in English much easier than those whose mother tongue uses other types of symbols.

Starting to read in English is quite difficult even for native speaking children because as Pinter (ibid) reports, in English sounding out the word does not always help with working out how it is written. Writing a word and pronouncing it may differ. Thus, the process of learning takes a long time to be fully developed from the first beginning and it seems to be complicated. English primary schools teachers teach letter-sound corresponding to phonics. In this case chants, songs and rhymes are ideal to be used, because they contain rhyming words and follow the same written pattern. In this way learners manage to recognize analogies below word level which help them to understand how to read and write words. Thus, it is advisable to start with working on sub-skills such as learning to decode familiar written language, match spoken and written forms or complete short texts with personally relevant information (Pinter, ibid).

Young learners are first introduced to the language through the alphabet, letters, sounds, their spelling and their phonic aspects. The letters are accompanied by visual aids (pictures, flashcards, posters, drawings, maps, lists, etc.). Then young learners are introduced to the phonemic aspects of the language, learn how to read and focus on the words and simple phrases and sentence level. This way they learn how to read and write texts. The young learners start with guided reading, and then they are led into the loud reading of letters, words, phrases, and short texts. When young learners become accustomed to loud reading, they are encouraged to proceed to silent reading.

*The reading sessions contain three stages:*

- *Pre-reading stage* in which teachers can target at the activation of the appropriate schemata which guides the learners to the message conveyed in the text, discussion of the cognitive strategies of specifying a purpose for reading and previewing the text (Grabe & Stoller, 2011),
- *While-reading stage* in which the learners confirm, compare, or find answers to posed questions (Nuttall, 1996) and practice various strategies as the strategy of *connecting text to background knowledge*, being the basic prerequisite of checking comprehension (Calfoglou, 2011 cited in Symeonidou & Papadopoulou, 2017). Also in this stage through silent (Calfoglou, 2004) and speed reading of the text the activation of the vocabulary through various techniques such as skimming and scanning are promoted. Reading for gist which is skimming (Grabe & Stoller, *ibid*) or reading for details (Scanning) are two reading techniques teachers can deploy with any text whatever its length, subject and level are. When to use this or that, depends on the way the teachers want their learners to approach the text. If the teachers want their learners to get an overall idea or simply the main idea, they may ask skimming questions, but if they want their learners to get deeper into the understanding of the text, then the scanning questions would be more suitable. Nevertheless, with reading for pleasure, such as stories, fairy tales and the like, teacher may ask skimming questions, with biographies, diaries, scientific research and menus, scanning questions could be better for tackling them (Symeonidou, 2013).
- *Post-reading stage* in which the learners are usually urged to use the vocabulary gained in the previous stages (Nagy and Scott, 2000) through games, oral tasks, discussion which help the learners develop a dialogic relationship with the texts (Widdowson, 1979), or they are assigned homework This way the learners are given the chance for a more global access to the meaning of the text (Calfoglou, *ibid*). When young learners start using dialogues, it is essential to see them in their written forms. Reading should follow the holistic process (Bartlett, 1932, cited in

Anderson & Pearson: 1988) and (Calfoglou, *ibid*) which involves learning many skills combined with a lot of drawing, colouring and using gestures. When young learners start reading texts, they skim and scan them in order to understand the meaning. Then, they can start guessing the meaning of the texts by looking at the word order or grammar patterns of the sentences (Pinter, *ibid*). Using dictionaries in class is useful for young learners to get used to finding out the meaning of unknown words and develop their vocabulary level by learning synonyms, antonyms, derivatives of the words enriching their vocabulary knowledge. Carefully designed text books which contain activities introduced in “entertaining and meaningful contexts” (Latha, 1999), assist young learners improve their reading skills. As Latha (*ibid*) states, “reading is central to the learning process”. The learners start with guided reading and then they are led into loud reading of letters, words, phrases, and short texts. When learners become accustomed to loud reading, they are encouraged to proceed to silent reading.

When teaching reading, it is essential to familiarize learners with different techniques and strategies (Bottom-Up and Top-Down skills focusing on meaning and form). Teachers may give learners various types of simple authentic or authentic like texts such as stories (Brown, 2001) and then implement them. After putting the young learners into the context of a story, they can read it several times using visual aids. Learners may be asked to retell it in class working in groups and different roles to each group may be assigned. When the story is narrated by all group members, the young learners have to rewrite it according to the Process Approach. Young learners need the basic skills of letters and words recognition. Reading from the bottom-up approach young learners are just learning how to read and need the basic skills of letter and word recognition (bottom-up skills) in addition to recognizing reading and writing as an interactive process of communication.

*The levels of texts (Symeonidou & Papadopoulos, 2017) from the bottom-up skills are:*

- Context
- Discourse
- Paragraph
- Sentence/Clause
- Words
- Letters/Sounds

Teachers should always keep in mind which of these components of text they are focusing on during their reading tasks. It would be better to help learners build strategies to gain meaning from all levels of the texts (Symeonidou, 2013).

*Approaches when teaching Reading to Young Learners:*

The basic approaches (Phonic approach, Whole Words approach/Look and Say, and Language Experience approach) which focus on a different level of text when teaching reading to young learners are:

- “Phonics Approach”: connects letters and sounds. It focuses on bottom-up decoding skills. It is a traditional approach to teaching reading, which tends to be boring and monotonous for the majority of young learners. In addition, foreign language learners may need to learn the script of the Roman alphabet. Teachers should strike a balance between the use of phonics for reading instruction and more top-down approaches, though.
- “Whole Words Approach:-: “Look and Say””: This approach is recommended for young learners at any age. Very young learners love it. It has been used in the development of the “Ladybird Read with Me” series. Using this teaching approach, the young learners begin reading instructions at word level. Then the learners build word recognition by connection word to meaning. With this approach young learners are first introduced to the language through the alphabet, letters, sounds, their spelling and their phonic aspects. The letters are accompanied by visual aids (pictures, flashcards, posters, drawings, maps, lists, etc.). Then young learners are introduced to the phonemic aspects of the language, learn how to read and focus on the words and simple phrases and sentence level. With the “Look and Say” process the teachers can use flashcards to teach new words. The young learners read these out loudly at least 3 times a day for 5 days. After learning new words, the young learners read a book based on these words. Then the learners move on to the next set of flashcards and the next book. The ‘Ladybirds series’ mentioned earlier builds young learners’ vocabulary by using previously learned words in each book. It uses the most frequent words and also new words in children’s books. (Clugosz, 2000).
- “Language Experience Approach: LEA””: It is originated from the teaching of L1 reading skills. It is based on the learners’ personal experiences (such as a visit, a T.V/radio programme, an art project, a film). It connects the spoken word to the written word. It also integrates reading and writing and it approaches the text at sentence level. In this approach it is important to mention that the learners discuss the experience and the teacher writes it down. Then the learners can copy, edit, and illustrate what the teacher wrote. The teacher can do it involving the whole class, or

individually (Brown, *ibid*). Reading skills and strategies can be developed when the teachers balance the classroom with both bottom-up and top-down strategies. This way they focus on meaning as well as form, and the learning process becomes interesting and enjoyable.

In order to build literacy in English, it is a very good idea to have a balanced literacy programme in both reading and writing (Cameron, 2001). There are *four kinds of reading programmes*:

- Reading Aloud (Teachers. select and read a book. Young learners respond to pictures, meaning and language).
- Shared Reading (Teachers read a big book or a small book of which each child has a copy)
- Guided Reading (Teachers read with young learners and work on building learners' strategies to become independent learners.
- Independent Reading (Learners read to themselves or with partners with little help or no teacher support)

#### *Reading Activities for Young Learners*

At the beginning of any course, young learners may be introduced to written words of printed materials. For example: labelled objects such as house, chair, book, picture, plant, by making word cards and hanging them up around the classroom. This would make the children curious about reading and writing and could show them the words they are familiar with orally at the beginning and written later on. Also the teachers can create posters with instructions, commands and a calendar with the names of the week or the months of the year or numbers they will use in class. All these tools will definitely attract the interest and attention of the young learners and help them make the links between spoken and written forms. Teachers may also introduce letter cards or magnetic letters to encourage young learners to make combinations and form words. Also teachers can ask young learners to practice matching pictures with written labels. Memory card games are often made by matching pictures and words. Young learners working in pairs may pick up two cards each at a time to see if they match. Games such as: "Domino" or "Snap" can be played in pairs or groups. Many course books contain cards or other materials which can be used in teaching reading and writing skills. Cards are also useful for storytelling and for vocabulary teaching. Teachers can also categorize words according to what sounds they begin with and create sound banks. Familiar songs and rhymes can also be explored with phonics activities. Many course books for young learners begin by teaching the alphabet through a sound. This is not going to help children to read but it will enable them to spell words

in English. They can practice learning how to write their names or the names of their friends, or play games like the “hangman” or simple puzzles.

*Useful Tips for Teaching Reading in a Young Learners’ Classroom:*

At the beginning of the school year, teachers can decorate the classroom with various objects, cards, flashcards, pictures and posters and label them. The young learners will be curious to read and also write these words. Also teachers can introduce letter cards or magnetic letters to encourage children to play with letters and letter combinations to form words working in pairs or groups. In this way children also build their vocabulary skills. It is advisable for teachers to categorize the words according to what sounds they begin with and create sound banks. Teaching the alphabet can only help young learners to spell words in English, but it will not support their reading. It is important to display the alphabet letters in the classroom and practice singing them regularly. Various word games, puzzles, guessing the missing words activities help children improve their reading and writing skills. As the language level of young learners’ increases, teachers can help them to start forming sentences, phrases and texts. It is recommended for the teachers to ask young learners to listen to the texts while following a text, a rhyme, a song or a chant (Symeonidou, 2013).

*For an optimal TEYL (Teaching English to Young Learners) environment (Symeonidou, 2015) teachers should:*

- Use English in class by the first time young learners get into the classroom.
- Make your classrooms attractive and well-equipped.
- Use puppets in class.
- Teach small class sizes.
- Use authentic material and realia in class (comics, cartoons, children’s television programmes, stories, songs, brochures, maps, newspapers, magazines, movies, movie trailers).
- Design well-planned lessons and challenging and interesting (stories, games, role-playing and problem-solving activities. Give clear instructions to young learners.
- Attend well-organised seminars, workshops, conferences, obtain peer observation, exchange programmes and get informed about new methodology concerning teaching young learners

- Create positive and friendly environment inside and outside the borders of the classroom.
- Use differentiated /personalizing instruction and flexibility.
- Use multiple intelligences and diverse learning styles.
- Use Pair and group work and promote cooperative and collaborative learning.
- Use Drama.
- Give emphasis on communicative proficiency.
- Have an access to technology.
- Keep activities short because young learners' attention span is short.
- Present the language in natural chunks (contexts), young learners learn through repeating phrases (drills).
- Keep lessons fun, lively and simple. Young learners show motivation to do things that appeal them.
- Give sufficient time for learners to make a smooth transition from one activity to the next, especially if the instructions are given in English focusing on getting everyone's attention and cooperation (Symeonidou, 2013).
- Give young learners adequate time to answer specific questions (Symeonidou, 2013).
- Make sure young learners become comfortable with one aspect of language before introducing another (Symeonidou, 2013).
- Allow patience to serve as your most effective tool in combating undesirable behaviour (Symeonidou, 2013).
- Don't get impatient (or at least don't let it show) when a particular student seems to make little or no progress. Remember that every child has different gifts, and all do not have a special aptitude for foreign languages. Making a child feel stupid or incapable of learning will certainly not improve his or her performance in your class and may significantly hamper his or her progress in other areas. Also keep in mind that you will never know just how much a student is really learning.
- In a young learners' classroom there are many different kinds of learning centres such as: a Block centre, an Art and Creating centre, a Dramatic play centre, a Library, a

Reading centre, a Writing centre, a Science centre, a Table toy centre and a Music centre which foster creative learning. By doing so, the learners are motivated towards all language skills and they feel responsible and self-confident (Orr, (2006).

*According to Chapman (2011):*

- The introduction to reading texts should happen gradually. It is essential to read, read and read everything you can find.
- Try to review phonics as often as possible.
- Ask your young learners to practice reading their text books and bring into class a new story or any extra material you can find from online. From the practice with word cards, young learners can play with sentences and phrases.
- Chop up sentences from various texts, stories, songs and ask learners to put them back in the correct order.
- Use many encouraging practice sessions with familiar language first and later introduce gap filling activities combining reading and writing skills. Also young learners can follow texts, songs, rhymes in the course book while listening to them.
- Get young learners to read short texts or dialogues which have been practiced orally. Reading can be achieved when many skills such as predicting guessing, reviewing, colouring etc. are involved in learning.
- Ask the class reading. Listen for their mistakes and stop them and correct them, or wait until they finish reading and correct their mistakes afterwards. Ask them to repeat the word(s) you have corrected for them.
- Create challenging and motivating activities in class, so as to keep young learners always interested. It is essential to keep your learners' confidence up.
- Ask your young learners to read together as a whole class.
- Ask your young learners to read quietly (silent reading).
- Ask your young learners to read working in various pairs/groups.
- Have your young learners listen carefully to you read.
- After reading a text have a discussion with your learners.
- Ask questions to individual learners after you/they read.

- The golden rule for learning is REVIEW! Teach your learners all kinds of new things and review what they have already learnt. When you run out of new ideas, review!

Teachers also use different types of reading. When designing a lesson, it makes sense to integrate clear skills instruction.

*An Integrating model for activities:*

- Pre-reading activities activate learners' schema/background knowledge to prepare them for the reading input (i.e. background knowledge of language structures as well as subject of text).
- While reading activities: give reading input by presenting target language structures within a meaningful or communicative context.
- Post-reading activities give learners opportunities to practice the target language structures through writing activities. The same model can be used when teachers design listening and speaking lessons. When native language is properly introduced to young learners, it paves the way for English language acquisition. Young learners are introduced to use:
  - The letters of the Roman alphabet along with some basic words in a fun way, through songs and chunks.
  - The phonetics.
  - The sounds.
  - The pronunciation and intonation system through visuals, chants, rhymes and songs (Phonic Approach and Whole Words Approach).

## **Conclusion**

Perhaps "*there is only one cardinal sin: impatience. Because of impatience we were driven out of Paradise, because of impatience we cannot return*". --W. H. Auden.

Learning is a process. It simply takes time. Learning is also an individual process. Some students will take more time to learn than others. In English to read and write takes time and seems to be complicated. This is because in English, sounding out the word does not always help with working out how it is written. In many English words there is not much consistency between what a word sounds like and how it is written (e.g. enough, through, height, weight, and so on). Letter-sound correspondence patterns (phonics) to all children can be easily achieved through songs and rhymes: for example "One two three four five, once I caught a fish

alive”, where five and alive both rhyme and follow the same written pattern. With this approach, young learners are encouraged to recognize analogies below word level to help them to work out how to read and write words. They are taught to notice that each word has an onset (first consonant or consonants) and a rime (the rest of the word), it is useful to group words that have a different onset but the same rime because they are pronounced the same way. Rhyming pairs are useful in reading. For example: “Jack and J(ill) went up the h(ill)”. For young learners another strategy that helps them read is the “whole word method”. It encourages them to learn some “sight vocabulary” that learners can immediately recognize when reading. This way, children are helped to see and remember words as visual images. This idea is that these words will be recognized immediately and no further decoding is needed. Thus, knowing such vocabulary can help with the initial reading speed. Recognizing lots of words is helpful because children can concentrate on processing longer, unfamiliar words and they are moving to reading and understanding texts. It is important to remember that teaching the reading skills should aim to make the readers strategic and autonomous.

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## **Let us use nonfiction literary texts in the EFL classroom**

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### *Abstract*

The present paper deals with the use of literature, nonfiction literary texts more specifically, in the EFL classroom as a means for fostering a holistic approach to language acquisition and personal development of students. The article addresses the challenges students and EFL teachers face when introducing literary texts in the EFL classroom. It also suggests ways how to embrace and overcome those challenges and setbacks and turn them into benefits. Our aim is, by sharing our experience in using a nonfiction literary text during a guest lecture at the New Bulgarian University to a group of English language students, to encourage EFL teachers to experiment with literary texts and document their experience and classroom interaction. We refer to Horner's model for "personal development of whole individual", Duff and Malay's three criteria (linguistic, methodological and motivational criterion) for using literature in the classroom, and Collie and Slater's cultural criterion, adding a fourth connecting criterion to support our endeavor. We also provide a lesson plan for the critical essay "Women and the Future" (1924) by Dorothy Richardson which could be used by EFL teachers.

**Key words:** *Literature, EFL classroom, nonfiction, holistic approach, Dorothy M. Richardson*

### **Introduction**

In recent years, researchers and EFL teachers generally agree on the potential benefits of introducing literary texts in the EFL classroom. The move towards incorporation of literature and literary texts into the EFL classroom occurred in the late 80s and has been developing ever

since. The argued benefits of including literary texts in the EFL classroom include advancement of vocabulary (Frantzen, 2002) and grammar knowledge (Tayebipour, 2009) but also development of sociolinguistic and pragmatic competences (McKay, 2001). The cultural aspect, since language and literature are an essential part of culture, has also been stressed out by researchers and should not be marginalized over the linguistic one (Caroli, 2008). However, researchers point to serious difficulties of introducing literary texts in the EFL classroom. These difficulties range from the language itself used in literature like vocabulary and complex syntax, to the cultural issues explored in the texts and even the practical side of text selection. These aspects affect students and teachers respectively. As McKay (2001) and Savvidou (2004) point out, students often find grammatical structures and lexis exuberant and very often too difficult which makes the reading comprehension too demanding and even dissimulating. Literature very often can be far from the conventions of Standard English; it disregards the set standards for different levels of language competences of students; intentionally bend or even break the grammatical rules they have been taught to follow and go beyond the most common usages of language. These aspects could “hamper understanding instead of providing practical examples” (Lima, 2005: 186); they could also provide “misleading models” (Widdowson cited in Bobkina&Dominguez, 2014: 252) which might result in confusion when it comes to learners of a foreign language. Moreover, the cultural aspect of literary text may often be overwhelming for students since literature abounds with cultural concepts to which students sometimes are not familiar at all. This could not only hamper reading comprehension but it could also frustrate the students. The text selection is another aspect which makes the introduction of literary texts in the EFL classroom difficult to which we will refer to in the following section. However, we would like to address all these above mentioned ‘difficulties’ as challenges. It is evident that the introduction of literary texts in the EFL classroom is a challenging task for both teachers and students. For one thing, they are not regularly part of neither the curriculum nor the standard course books (there are exceptions of course) which, on one hand, can be motivating for the students since working outside of the course book very often stirs students curiosity, but they are time consuming for the teacher. The lessons require a lot of preparation and effort from the teacher in terms of providing background information, materials, and additional lesson planning. They are also more demanding for the students as well since they would face a text which was not tailored for their particular language competences. Another challenge is the lack of consensus on how and when to use literature in the classroom between educators, teachers, and researchers. There is also a lack of empirical research on the matter which still leaves space for questioning the role and even the relevance of literature for language learning. Paran (2008)

calls for exploration of classroom interaction, sharing experiences through teachers' diaries, testimonials, practices which could be especially valuable for generating what Carter calls "enhanced paradigms for greater empirical research" (Carter, 2008: 11). Thus, the aim of the present article is to encourage teachers to introduce literature in the EFL classroom. Although demanding, introducing literature in the EFL classroom is a challenge which could be rewarding for both students and teachers. Literary texts can add freshness and unexpected development of ideas in the ELF classroom; they can serve as impetus for meaningful discussions and exchanges; they can motivate and culturally equip the students; and they could also enable them to make connections across the curriculum making their acquired knowledge and developed skills and competences more resilient and meaningful. Furthermore, our aim is to help teachers in the process of choosing the right reading for their students and in this sense we advocate for the use of nonfiction or critical essays due to their potential for a comprehensive and integrated methodological approach which enables teachers to work on the personal development of the students as a whole individual. Moreover, critical essays are suitable for addressing the identified criteria by researchers which support the use of literature in the classroom such as the linguistic, the methodological, the motivational, the cultural, and the connecting criterion which we added. In addition to this, our aim is to share our experience and practices and encourage EFL teachers to share theirs as well and thus contribute to the much needed classroom-based research. The article is based on an actual experience of implementing a nonfiction text in the EFL classroom in higher education and through that experience it deals with the issue of selection of nonfiction readings and explores how they are relevant for the EFL classroom. We also talk about the methodological approach which was adopted and we provide a lesson plan which can be used by teachers. Finally, a conclusion is presented. The lesson plan we will provide further in the present article was developed for the purposes of a guest lecture in a Modern English Language course at the New Bulgarian University in Sofia, Bulgaria to a group of ten second-year English Language students (future EFL teachers) at the Faculty of Languages and Culture in March 2019. During the course of the class students read, analyzed, and discussed the short essay "Women and the Future" (1924) by Dorothy M. Richardson.

### **The selection of a nonfiction text and its relevance in the EFL classroom**

The selection of literary texts which could be used in the EFL classroom has been identified by researchers and teachers as one of the most challenging tasks (Bobkina and Dominguez, 2014). In the article "Literature in the EFL/ESL Classroom" Khatib, Rezaei, Derakhshan outline four crucial aspects which should be taken into account such as students' language proficiency, their

age, gender, and their background knowledge (204). The essay “Women and the Future” chosen for the class is challenging in vocabulary and syntactical structures and requires advanced language skills and competences. All these aspects were taken into consideration (as it was outlined previously, the students were in their second year of university studies in the TEFL concentration and had well-developed language skills at a C1 level – according to the expected outcomes from their previous study year; their age ranged between 19-30 years of age and they were predominantly female – according to the roster sheet provided by the University where sex was also indicated even though women’s issues, we believe, can and should be discussed even in groups where there are predominantly male students. However, the fact that they were predominantly female students, might have made the environment more secure and relaxed for them to express their opinions). The length of the text was taken into consideration as well. Duff and Maley in *Literature* (1990) warn about the use too long or too short texts. Longer texts tend to frighten the students (Bobkina&Dominguez, 2014: 252), and sometimes even demotivate and discourage them due to the effort and time they demand, but they also require sufficient class time which teachers not always have at their disposal. However, short texts and excerpts could not always provide “extended contextual support and repetition” (Duff&Maley, 1990:7) which could be indispensable for reading comprehension. Thus, having all this in mind, we believe the length of the essay (approximately 1500 words) was suitable to meet the needs of the class and the students i.e. the time frame and the objectives. Moreover, the date when the class took place was 8 March – The International Women’s Day and the topic of the essay was women and the future, the image of women constructed by men, criticism of the pioneers of feminism, and a portrayal of the author’s concept of the “womanly woman” contrasted to the phenomenon she calls the “modern woman”. Knowledge of feminist concept (by either teacher or students) could add to the thoroughness of the discussion but it is not a prerequisite for achieving the objectives of the class. However, some explanations in reference to certain names or concepts included in the essay are essential for the understanding of the text which could be covered in the warm-up activities or explained during the analysis of the reading (they would be provided below in the lesson plan). Furthermore, the selection of a non-fiction work from the beginning of the twentieth century on a social issue – women’s equality - which is still relevant today offers a possibility to work on the “holistic development of students” (Bobkina&Dominguez, 2014: 249) or as Horner (1983) calls it personal development of the whole individual. In his *Best Laid Plans: English Teachers at Work* (1983), Horner argues in favor of including literary texts in the EFL classroom suggesting that literary texts in the EFL classroom could be an important tool in achieving students’ development in the whole.

The “personal development of a whole individual” consists of three components: psycholinguistic development, aesthetic development and socio-moral development which could be achieved by introducing literary texts in the EFL curriculum. Duff and Maley (1990) go in line with Horner’s model and identify three criteria which back the use of literary texts in the EFL classroom: the linguistic criterion which rests upon the importance of exposing students to authentic reading. In this way students get the chance to encounter a variety of styles and registers, language types and language varieties, linguistic and pragmatic functions. In this sense, the essay “Women and the Future” is an excellent example of complex sentence formation which characterizes Richardson style. We will illustrate this with the second paragraph of the essay which is composed of only two sentences:

Nearly all the prophets, nearly all of those who are at work constructing hells, or heavens, upon this loose foundation, are men. And their crying up, or down, of the woman of today, as contrasted to the woman of the past, is easily understood when we consider how difficult it is, even for the least prejudiced, to *think* the feminine past, to escape the images that throng the mind from the centuries of masculine expressiveness on the eternal theme: expressiveness that has so rarely reached beyond the portrayal of women, whether Madonna, Diana, or Helen, in her moments of relationship to the world as it is known to men. (Richardson: 411)

The present paragraph was one of the most challenging but students were encouraged to rely on the knowledge and competences developed in other courses like Linguistics or Syntax, Academic writing or Composition to make out its meaning. They were asked to think about what the noun phrase “this loose foundation” refers to and where in the text it was explained. Furthermore, they noticed the use of the conjunction “and” at the beginning of a sentence and discussed what they were taught in their Composition course and how this challenges their conceptions of how “and” could be used in a sentence. Moreover, at a syntactical level, they discussed the length of the second sentence which makes the biggest part of the paragraph. It showed itself to be an excellent tool for reflecting on the formation and the function of sentences, the wide range of structures and ways of connecting ideas (they encountered the conjunction *albeit* and the preposition/adverb *withal* for the first time and pondered on how they are used to connect ideas), just as Collie and Slater point out (1987). In addition to this, students discussed the italics used by the author for the word “think” and the possible reasons why “think” is put in italics. In terms of vocabulary, they were familiar with the meaning of the majority of words and phrases in the text. However, they encountered some of the vocabulary for the first time (for example *to throng*, *to fetter*, *rampant*, *vanguard*, *gregarious*, *vicarious*,

*concerted, ad hoc, freebooter* etc.). Few idiomatic expressions could be found in the text (*to bid fair, to exhume hatchets, to divorce from the past*) and the majority of the students were not familiar with them. In this sense, the essay met the first criterion which closely relates to the psycholinguistic development i.e. internalization and reinforcement and to some extent to the aesthetic development from the Horner's model.

The second criterion outlined by Duff and Maley is the methodological one which refers to the possibility of a literary text to stimulate multiple interpretations and different opinions. It is evident that fiction can provoke much debate and different opinions, but we believed that non-fiction i.e. critical essays on social issues relevant today is even a better option. The essay "Women and the Future" published in 1924 tackles the issue of women's position in society from a historical perspective, discusses the present state and provides a vision for the future thus opening a fertile ground for discussion about whether the visions promoted in text have been realized in our present (or the future referred to in the text). Feminism and women's fight for equal chances in society is an important and relevant issue today and it is an excellent opportunity for debating, expressing opinions, ideas, giving personal examples, connecting to personal experiences etc. Put in a historical perspective through the text, it motivated the students to oppose their ideas about how/to what extend/why/whether (only) men constructed the images and representations of women we have in our collective memory, whether they agree or disagree with the ideas promoted in the text: What is a "Modern Woman" according to the text; do you agree with it and how would you define a "Modern Woman"?; Should women divorce with their past and create the image of the "Modern Woman" as explained in the text?; How does today's society define a "Modern Woman"? How does the author define the "Womanly Woman" and do you agree with her, why and why not? Do you agree with the author's ideas about women and the future? Has that future been fulfilled? What do you think is the future for women and their fight for equality? etc. These are just a few of the possible questions for debate that the text offers. These are not questions created for the discussion's sake only and to which students cannot relate as it often occurs with texts specially tailored for language purposes found in course books. As Brumfit (1986:15) suggests, students should engage in "content-based purposeful learner talk in English". Including critical essays in the EFL syllabus gives students the opportunity to have a real interaction with the text, with each other, and with the instructor. They could make the language learning meaningful and provide an opportunity to build what Horner called personal development of the whole individual making the EFL classroom holistic and infused with important social issues. In this way

students could become aware of those issues motivating them to build opinions and develop critical thinking skills or they could also provide an opportunity to express their already developed ideas and thoughts on those issues. As the most recent research in the field suggests, literature could be a means “for critical thinking enhancement among language learners” (Bobkina and Dominguez, 2014: 251 referring to Gajdusek, Ghosn, Van, and Langer). Developing critical thinking skills should be the common objective of all courses and education in general thus including the EFL classroom. In his “Literacy Acquisition through Literature”, Langer stresses out that through literature students could reflect on their lives and the world that surrounds them. Literature opens horizons of possibilities “allowing them to question, interpret, connect, and explore” (607). Even though research generally deals with fiction, short stories, novels, even poetry, we believe that critical essays, and other forms of nonfiction, could serve this purpose just as well, or even better in some occasions. As Bobkina and Dominguez state, referring to Ghosn, literature motivates students not to take things for granted and “may bring changes in the attitudes towards the world” (2014:251) which goes back to Horner’s model and the socio-moral development of students which could be achieved through the themes of the text, its content and the possibility to raise awareness of issues.

The third criterion proposed by Duff and Maley which, we believe is crucial for language acquisition and successful development of language skills, is motivation. According to them, literary texts in the language classroom enhance students’ motivation. This is achieved by the authenticity of the materials and the meaningful context. Texts dealing with social issues promote this even more. Students get engaged with the text and the concepts and issues they promote or criticize. Students establish interaction and engagement with the text and with the concepts it explores which can also be of affective nature and thus contribute to the learning process and developing of language skills. Motivating engagement, Bobkina and Dominguez say, “creates a positive general effect on the learning process which is at the same time positive for the particular process of language acquisition” (250). During the analysis of the essay “Women and the Future” students were fully engaged and obviously motivated. They shared personal experiences, provided examples of “modern women”, “womanly women”, talked about the inequalities, injustice and discrimination in their society they had felt or witnessed, talked about the positive changes and the things that should be changed in the future. The majority of the students were women, but men were equally motivated to talk about the issue. They expressed their points of view, some opposed theirs to the opinions of others, some agreed. However, it was a stimulating, fruitful, meaningful and engaging debate which also served

language purposes by making the students reuse their already acquired vocabulary and syntactical and lexical structures but also the ones found in the text.

Collie and Slater (1987) point out to a fourth, cultural criterion. The importance of developing intercultural communication skills, understanding and appreciation of different cultures in time and space through literature in the EFL classroom have been identified by many other researchers as well (Carter 1991, Van, 2009, Tayebipour 2009). The essay “Women and the Future” provides an opportunity to build understanding of the English culture and the culture students feel they belong to, and to compare and contrast both societies. For example, students discussed what the situation was like in regards to women’s right at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the essay was written in the UK and in Bulgaria, when women in both countries got the right to vote and how, what the situation was like in the present in both societies with respect of women’s rights etc. Moreover, the text gave an opportunity to the students to learn and discuss about some mythological characters included in the text like Helen of Troy, the Roman goddess Diana, Perseus and Andromeda from Greek mythology (An anecdote accrued from the class. In the text, Richardson says that male representation or “expressiveness” of women rarely went beyond the image of “Madonna, Diana or Helen”. During the analysis, one of the students, when asked who these women were and what they represented, thought that Richardson referred to Madonna, the pop-singer which stemmed into a lively discussion about the pop-culture, the socio-cultural context in which Madonna appeared and the possible reasons why the pop singer used the name Madonna). The text enabled them to return to some canonical male figures from English literature like Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Thomas Hardy who are briefly referenced in the text. The text also refers to Harriet Taylor Mill, the British philosopher and women’s rights advocate, and Henry Thomas Buckle, the historian, whom they were not familiar with, and thus it made them want to discover and learn more; it aroused their curiosity and piqued their interest for possible additional research when they left the classroom.

The last criterion, which we propose and goes in line with the recent research into the integrative language teaching (Carroli, 2008; DeBlasé, 2005), is the connecting criteria. Literature, offers an opportunity for an integrated lesson giving the students the chance to make connections across different courses in the curriculum. In higher education, integrative learning is believed to be a crucial tendency or movement since the world outside of the classroom is not categorized in disciplines and courses. Content does not stand alone and students have to be prepared for an interdisciplinary and integrative approach to problem solving and critical thinking.

Integrative learning can have many varieties. It can include: “connecting skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences; applying skills and practices in various settings; utilizing diverse and even contradictory points of view; and, understanding issues and positions contextually. [...] making connections within a major, between fields, between curriculum, curriculum, or between academic knowledge and practice.” (Hutchings, 2005). In this sense, the essay “Women and the Future” enables making connections between various courses such as Academic writing/Composition (by analyzing the structure of the essay which is divided in three parts or by analyzing the text at a syntactical level); Linguistic courses such as Morphology and Syntax, British History and Culture (for example, the rise of feminism in the UK, the Suffragette movement, religious groups in the UK – the text refers to Quakerism, a religious group which emerged in England in the 17<sup>th</sup> century etc.), Art (the text makes reference to La Gioconda or Mona Lisa, Leonardo’s masterpiece, discussing its greatness, or Rossetti’s paintings of women and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and their treatment of women in their paintings), English Literature (the text refers to Charles Swinburne, Robert Browning and several other writers mentioned previously such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Thomas Hardy, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning and how they represented women in their works; it could also be connected to Christina Rossetti’s poem *In an Artist’s Studio*), Philosophy (Nietzsche’s understanding of women is also briefly referred to in the text which could be expanded additionally). However, this wide variety of options and the great potential of the text for cross curricular connection do not mean they should be all explored within one lesson. How extensively the connecting criteria, even the remaining criteria for that matter, would be explored depends on the objectives of the lesson, the time frame, the students and their interest, and the teacher and the approach chosen.

### **The Methodological approach**

There are many ways to approach literary texts in the EFL classroom. Various methodological approaches are possible and there is no consensus what could be the best way to do this. In their article “The Use of Literature and Literary Texts in the EFL Classroom; Between Consensus and Controversy”, Bobkina and Dominguez identify two possible causes for this phenomenon: the existing disagreement among researchers about the role of literature in the EFL classroom on one hand, and the wide range of theories on literature teaching on the other. However, they conclude that most probably there is no universal methodological approach which would suit the needs of all students and teachers. They survey, according to them, the most relevant approaches to teaching literature in the EFL classroom like Wellek and Warren’s intrinsic and

extrinsic approaches (1984), Maley’s the critical literary approach and the stylistic approach (1989), Carter and Long’s cultural, Language and Personal Growth Approach (1991), Lima’s intuitive analysis and syntactic analysis (2005), Van’s (2009) six approaches which correlate to the approaches for analysis of literature. Most recently, researchers advocate the use of an integrative approach which combines and fuses various approaches to ensure maximum results and effectiveness. Thus, the latest attempts to propose an approach for using literature in the EFL classroom include linguistic, cultural and personal elements (Bobkina and Dominguez, 2014: 255) which we relied on.

### **Lesson Plan**

The following lesson plan was used for a guest lecture held at the New Bulgarian University to a group of future EFL teachers (second year students). The students’ age varied from nineteen to thirty years of age. Their level of English was advanced. During the course of the class students read, analyzed and discussed the short essay “Women and the Future” (1924) by Dorothy M. Richardson. Prior to this class, students attended another an-hour-and-a-half guest lecture in their English Literature class delivered by the same lecturer on the topic of Dorothy M. Richardson and her fiction titled *Development of Feminine Consciousness in Pilgrimage by Dorothy M. Richardson*. During that lecture, the students were introduced to the life and work of the author (with whom they were not familiar at all), her fiction and non-fiction. The major aspects of the topic of the lecture were elaborated and illustrated with excerpts from the novel following a discussion. The first lecture served as a contextual support and offered some background knowledge which could put the text covered in the second class into a wider perspective. Even though, we believe, it is not indispensable to provide this more elaborate extra-textual information to work on the text in class, the background information made the students more confident in approaching the text itself. However, some background information could be very useful for achieving the lesson’s objectives and they are provided in the lesson plan which follows.

<b>Lesson Plan</b>	
<b>Topic</b>	<b>Women and the Future</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Further) develop reading comprehension skills for demanding texts (critical essays)</li> <li>• Build up vocabulary; interiorize various types of sentence structures</li> <li>• (Further) develop writing skills</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Further) develop critical thinking skills</li> <li>• (Further) develop speaking skills</li> <li>• Raise awareness of social issues (women’s equality)</li> <li>• Learn about political and social movements in the UK, feminism, social issues, cultural aspects</li> <li>• Make connections across the curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Age/Level</b>	Adolescent/Adult <span style="float: right;">CEFR</span> Level B2/C1
<b>Time</b>	90 minutes
<b>Materials</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reading for each student;</li> <li>• Two sets of the text cut in paragraphs;</li> <li>• Images of Madonna, Diana, Helen of Troy, Mona Lisa, a few of Rossetti’s paintings (Beata Beatrix, Venus for example)</li> </ul>
<b>Introduction</b>	<p>This lesson looks at Dorothy Richardson’s essay “Women and the Future” published in 1924. The essay can be found in <i>The Gender of Modernism</i>, Bonnie Kime Scott (ed.) Indiana University Press, pp.411-414. In the dawn of the rise of what she calls “a new species of women” or the “modern woman”, Richardson briefly surveys the past and present male, mythological, cultural, feminist representations of women. She calls to a union of the past with the present, regardless how limited it is in regards to how women are portrayed and understood in society. She elaborates her concept of “womanly woman” – a self-centered individual who embraces past, present and future, and thus is free to try “to be as good as she wants to be”. In the lesson, students are briefly introduced to the topic of women’s equality, feminism, the cultural and historical context of the reading and then are given a jigsaw reading in groups to put the pieces (paragraphs and headings) in order. Further on, they read the text, work on vocabulary, syntax, the structure of the essay, answer a few reading comprehension questions and discuss the concepts elaborated in the text. As a follow up, they write individually their own essay Women and the Future.</p> <p><b>Background</b></p> <p><b>Dorothy M. Richardson</b> (1873-1957) is an English writer considered to be one of the forerunners of English Modernism. She wrote <i>Pilgrimage</i>, a thirteen-volume semi-autobiographical novel published between 1915 and 1967. The term “stream-of-consciousness” as a narrative technique was first applied to describe her writing by May Sinclair. In <i>Pilgrimage</i>, Richardson emphasizes the importance and the distinct nature of female experience and development of feminine consciousness.</p> <p>For more background information on Richardson, you can check out Dorothy Richardson Society webpage</p> <p><a href="http://dorothyrichardson.org/society.htm">http://dorothyrichardson.org/society.htm</a></p> <p><b>Madonna</b>- representation of virgin Mary (ital. <i>ma donna</i> – my lady)  <b>Dianna</b> – (Roman mythology) goddess of hunting, later of moon and chastity</p>

	<p><b>Helen of Troy</b> - daughter of Zeus and Leda, married to Menelaus, who by that marriage became King of Sparta, she was abducted by Prince Paris of Troy. This resulted in the Trojan War when the Achaeans set out to reclaim her.</p> <p><b>Perseus and Andromeda</b> – (Greek mythology) Andromeda was the daughter of the Aethiopian king Cepheus and his wife Cassiopeia. When Cassiopeia's hubris leads her to boast that Andromeda is more beautiful than the Nereids, Poseidon sends the sea monster Cetus to ravage Andromeda as divine punishment. Andromeda is chained to a rock as a sacrifice to sate the monster, but is saved from death by Perseus.</p> <p><b>Harriet Taylor Mill</b> (1807-1858) – British philosopher and women’s rights advocate</p> <p><b>Henry Thomas Buckle</b> (1821-162) – British historian</p> <p>For more background information on women’s suffrage movement and feminism, you can have a look at:</p> <p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage_in_the_United_Kingdom">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women%27s_suffrage_in_the_United_Kingdom</a></p> <p><a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminism</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-1920s-in-Britain/">https://www.historic-uk.com/HistoryUK/HistoryofBritain/The-1920s-in-Britain/</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/feb/05/the-1920s-young-women-took-the-struggle-for-freedom-into-their-personal-lives">https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2018/feb/05/the-1920s-young-women-took-the-struggle-for-freedom-into-their-personal-lives</a></p>
<p><b>Key vocabulary</b></p>	<p>throng (n)- crowd; to throng (v)- to fill, to cram</p> <p>to fetter (v) – to chain</p> <p>vicarious (adj) – felt or enjoyed through imagined participation in the experience of others</p> <p>concerted (adj) – planned, agreed</p> <p>ad hoc (adv) – unplanned, for the special purpose of</p> <p>freebooter (n) – pirate</p> <p>to bid fair (idiom) – to seem probable; likely</p> <p>gregarious (adj) – sociable</p> <p>leech (n) – bloodsucking worm</p> <p>to prompt (v) – to move to action</p> <p>hatchet (n) – a small axe</p> <p>to resuscitate (v) – to revitalize</p> <p>vanguard (n) – leader, innovator</p> <p>rampant (adj) – uncontrolled</p> <p>heyday (n) – prime, peak</p> <p>incandescence (n) – light</p> <p>withal (adv) –in addition</p>
<p><b>Procedure</b></p>	<p><b>Warm – up</b> (15 min)</p> <p><b>1. Brain storming</b> (10 min)</p> <p>This activity introduces the students to the reading and the writing of argumentative essays. Tell the students that they are going to read an essay from 1924 by the English writer D.R. about women and the future. A brainstorming activity should follow. Write a two-column chart on the board: Women in England in 1924 and Women in England now (the future in regards</p>

to the text). In pairs, students should fill in as much as they can. Another option is to make it a group activity. The choice depends on the students' background knowledge. After completion, students should share their ideas and collectively fill out the chart on the board. The chart should not be wiped out until the end of the lesson.

**2. Anticipating (5 min)**

After having completed the brainstorming activity, students should anticipate what the essay could be about. Write the title, the name of the author and the year of publication on the board. Write the question: *What could the essay predict about the future of women?* Students should guess the author's thesis statement and the evidence (the arguments) she could use to support her main idea. In this way, students are reaffirming some basic concepts of Composition/Academic writing courses or perhaps writing activities of EFL courses (MEL/EFL/ESL) and get warmed up for the reading. Their answers should be put on the board and should not be wiped out until the end of the lesson.

**Jigsaw reading (30 min)**

Divide the class in two groups. Each group gets a cut out essay in paragraphs. Students should put it in order. They have 20 minutes to assemble the reading and 5 minutes to compare and contrast their proposals between groups and together decide on a version. At the end they get the complete essay and compare and contrast their work with the essay itself (5 more minutes) and check whether the text follows the guidelines they were instructed to use when writing an argumentative essay. At the end, students should be able to identify the main idea of the text and the arguments used to support it.

**Reading Comprehension (35 min)**

Students read the text silently, together with the teacher work on the vocabulary, syntax (long, elaborated sentences, unconventional punctuation) style and cultural concepts and people mentioned (show them the images and the reproductions of paintings either on an overhead projector or in hard copy; discuss the writers and their literary output briefly; elicit from the students whether they remember any of their works and female characters). Then, write the reading comprehension and discussion questions on the board for students to answer: What are the images of women presented by male writers, artists and founders of feminism according to the text? Do you agree with them? Why (not)? Explain the concept of "modern woman" as elaborated in the text? Explain the concept of the "womanly woman" as elaborated in the text? Which one do you prefer? According to the text, why women should not divorce from the past? Do you agree? Why (not)? What is the future of women according to the text?

**Discussion and Follow-up (10 min)**

Go back to the brainstorming and anticipation task in the worm-up part. Let them look at the chart and assumptions. Ask whether they would like to include or take out some information in the chart. Ask whether their assumptions were correct, whether the text addressed the issues they believed would be covered (the text focuses on internal freedom and spiritual liberation instead of civil rights); ask if they agree or not, how they feel about the essay, if they have learned anything and what if yes; ask how the essay

	made them feel; what is the future for women according to them. As a follow-up activity (for homework), students should write an essay titled “Women and the Future”
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### **Conclusion (limitations)**

Since the mid 1980s literature has been trying to find its place back and redefine its role in the EFL classroom. In order to successfully do this, the EFL classroom should be understood not only as a place where students build their linguistic or language skills and competences. The EFL classroom should evolve (and it has been evolving) into an environment where students are developing as individuals and where teachers adopt and implement a holistic approach for students’ growth. Furthermore, the EFL classroom should also provide a niche where knowledge could become resilient and meaningful through integrated learning and making connections throughout the curriculum. Literary texts should not be taken for a tool for merely linguistic or language purposes. Literary texts, if well-used, could be a means for fostering students’ enthusiasm and persistence, for sparking their interest and strengthening their motivation as well. We suggest using nonfiction literary texts due to their potential to serve the multifaceted purpose and potential of literature in the classroom: the linguistic, the methodological, the motivational, the cultural, and the connecting criterion. Literature can raise issues and awareness of various challenges societies have been facing and could generate students’ personal involvement and affective connection to the materials and to the language itself. However, including literature in the EFL classroom is a challenging endeavor for teachers as well as students. EFL teachers often lack materials, training in literature teaching in general or as a means in the EFL classroom. The lack of empirical research is another setback. Thus, teachers willing to experiment are left to figure out ways how to implement literary texts in the EFL classroom on their own, and this requires a considerable amount of time and effort for planning: selection of readings to suit students’ age, language proficiency, needs, interest; finding background information; drafting activities etc. The potential benefits of using literary texts in the EFL classroom depend on the appropriate use of the readings and careful planning. In absence of sufficient amount of pedagogically-well-designed materials for using literature in the EFL classroom, especially for nonfiction, we share our experience in introducing nonfiction literature in the EFL classroom at higher education and offer a lesson plan for the critical essay “Women and the Future” (1924) by Dorothy Richardson hoping to encourage EFL teachers to

experiment with literature and document their activities in order to motivate other EFL teachers for the future of the EFL classroom could be literature.

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# **Equipping students in the secondary education with skills for independent learning and motivation for lifelong learning**

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## *Abstract*

Equipping students with skills for independent learning plays an important role in the achievement of students, their motivation for continuing their studies at institutions for higher education, as well as, their motivation for life-long learning.

This paper identifies the skills for independent learning of high school students and analyses what contributes to equipping them with such skills. The research question asked is: to what degree are high school students familiar with the concept of life-long learning and what is their motivation for it, as well as, their skills for independent learning.

The survey was conducted among the sample of third year students from Josip Broz Tito High School who follow the general high school curriculum and the International Baccalaureate diploma students. The aim of the survey was to identify whether there are differences in the attitudes of students and their motivation for lifelong learning, as well as, their readiness for independent learning and what the correlation to the programs they follow, is.

The conclusions from this paper suggest lowering the number of subjects that are studied in the last two years for high school which will decrease the academic workload and will enable time for independent research and work on projects and individual and group projects.

The decreasing of the wide range of content and placing greater accent to specifying clear objectives will encourage critical thinking skills, creativity and independence in learning, as well as, application of the knowledge and its relevance for later in life.

Also, participation of students into activities out of the school in non-government youth organizations is recommended, where they will learn the skills for communication with other members of the society and participation in project activities of local and global impact.

**Key words:** *motivation for independent learning, lifelong learning, general high school programme, International Baccalaureate programme*

## **Introduction**

Nowadays, education, qualifications and skills of the individual play a very important role in his/her positioning on the labour market. In recent years, as a consequence of the financial and economic crises, many people in their mid-career become redundant and are faced with the need for continuous education and acquiring new qualifications. The institutions for education provision are considering models of education which will offer to students increased mobility and opportunities for lifelong learning, transfer of knowledge and qualifications for successful adaptation to the labour market.

More and more authorities in the educational theory and practice argue that acquisition of knowledge does not begin or end in the classroom, especially now that the information technology enables access to knowledge outside of the school, without the assistance of the teacher. Because of that, the ability of the student for independent learning and motivation for lifelong learning, both have a very important role in the process of education.

In order to answer the question: to what extent the educational system in the Republic of Macedonia equips the students in the secondary schools for independent learning and how much are they motivated for lifelong learning, it is necessary to approach the problem in a systematic way and analyze the curricula and subject syllabi in relation to the aims and learning objectives. Themes and content in the textbooks and other teaching materials and their didactic and methodological preparation should be analyzed and results compared to their relevance and compatibility to the global information technological society.

This paper attempts to provide an answer to the question: **To what extent are the students in secondary education familiar with the term lifelong learning and what is their motivation for it and what are their skills for independent learning?**

Using the method of a survey among the students from the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme from Josip Broz Tito- High School from Skopje and with a comparative analysis of the responses, the attitudes and motivation for lifelong learning of high school students are identified.

## **Definition of the concept of lifelong learning in the literature**

The concepts in numerous education systems, especially after the introduction of the term lifelong learning within the OECD, „Lifelong learning for all” in 1996 include the aim of equipping the students with skills for lifelong learning. Nevertheless, in practice, the measurement of this ability of students who go through the organized education system or formal education is still not clearly determined.

Kirby, Knapper et.al. in their work ‘Development of a Scale for Measuring Lifelong Learning (International Journal of Lifelong learning 29:3 291-302, 2010) define the concept of lifelong learning through commenting of the understandings of the concept which range from the literal meaning of the term learning which lasts during the whole life to those that would not agree with the thesis that lifelong learning means lifelong education.

They reflect upon the explanations of Dobson (1982) for lifelong learning as an activity which cannot be limited only to the formal educational institutions, but is performed in different environments including the workplace, volunteering organizations and NGO’s. The authors: Candy, Crebert & O’Leary (1994) and Knapper & Cropley (2000) talk about the need to change the accent in the education towards equipping students for independent learning. They describe the students which are capable for lifelong learning as able to:

- Set aims and objectives for learning;
- Apply knowledge and skills appropriately;
- Be able to evaluate their own achievement;
- To search for information;
- To adapt their strategies for learning to different contexts "<sup>5</sup>

In their work Kirby, Kanpper et al (2010) make an attempt to create a scale for measuring the abilities and skills for lifelong learning. When constructing the scale they take into consideration the previously determined dimensions which are mentioned earlier in the text. They describe the approaches to learning as composed of three main approaches: **deep approach, surface approach and achievement approach**. They look at each approach as composed of strategies for learning and motives for learning.

Here, it is necessary to explain in more detail the contributions of the authors Ramsden and Entwistle (1981) as well as Biggs (1987,1993). According to them, students who apply the approach of deep learning and use learning strategies for understanding the meaning have

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<sup>5</sup> Kirby, Kanpper t al (2010) стр. 292

internal motivation. The students who have the surface approach use strategies which avoid understanding the meaning and are externally motivated for learning and learn because they have to learn. Those students who use the achievement approach for learning use various pragmatic strategies and are motivated by the success itself, but are not motivated to learn the content in the first place. According to Evans et al.(2003) the **deep learning approach** which is directly connected to the need for knowledge and with the flexibility in learning is relevant for lifelong learning.

Professor David Perkins in the interview at the IB World magazine (May 2010) presents a worrying fact that in practice the interest of the students for learning in the school diminishes with the age and that most interested for learning are students up to grade 3 in primary school. According to him, it is an excuse that it is a natural process that motivation for learning diminishes with age, he claims that the gap between what schools teach students and what is really important to learn is increasing.

He thinks that many models of education place an accent on increasing achievement of students in relation to set standards. Instead, it is more important to increase the relevance of what is included in the syllabi because most of what is learned seems irrelevant to students compared to their interests and needs in life. He suggests that teachers should develop in students **critical and proactive thinking and curiosity for research**. The classroom should be a place for opportunities, should encourage students to make a connection between what is studied and real life. From his statements it could be concluded that motivation for lifelong learning increases with the relevance of what is learned.

From the literature review of the concept of lifelong learning several characteristics of students prepared for lifelong learning could be identified and they are: independence in setting aims and objectives in learning as well as evaluation of their achievement, ability for critical thinking, curiosity and searching for information outside of the textbook or the teacher as a source, deep learning and internal motivation.

### **Motivation for lifelong learning and independence within the reformed high secondary education and the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme**

In the Republic of Macedonia, secondary education is compulsory for all students who have completed primary education. Therefore, the curricula and syllabi for all types of vocational and general high school programmes have to include the concept for lifelong

learning and methodology for equipping students with skills for independent learning and motivation for lifelong learning.

When designing the reformed general high school curriculum in 2001 the aims of the general high school programmes were set as "developing the students' individual physical and intellectual abilities (for abstract thinking, analysis, synthesis and (humanistic, moral, esthetic and civic values). Students should be prepared for creating and preparation for later life and work in the context of peace, cooperation and mutual respect and understanding"<sup>6</sup>

The accent was placed on 9 more focused aims among which are aims for acquiring sound knowledge as a foundation for continuing to higher education, forming a scientific approach towards the world and connecting knowledge from related sciences and disciplines, developing skills for practical application of knowledge, active use of one or two foreign languages, developing an ability for critical thinking and individual approach.

In the Josip Broz Tito High School in Skopje, the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme has been introduced in the school year 1996 and has been successfully implemented ever since. The concept of the all four programmes of the International Baccalaureate focuses around the profile of the IB learner. The profile describes that the students should be as intellectually curious learners, capable of critical thinking, and with developed communicative skills, principled and behaving with integrity, open towards each other and caring for others. They should be courageous and explore new roles, ideas and strategies, balance their intellectual, physical and emotional development, reflect and evaluate their own learning and academic development.

Students should acquire skills needed for research and should be independent in learning. They should be encouraged to actively enjoy learning and keep that desire throughout their whole life.

If one analyzes the set aims in both concepts it could be concluded that in both of them there is an aim for deep learning and its connection to the wide range of disciplines. Also, there are common aims for development of critical thinking and individual approach. Further, it could be noticed that there is a similarity in the focus towards intellectual curiosity and acquiring skills for research and lifelong learning. There are differences in the formulation of aims, but

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<sup>6</sup> Се за новата гимназија ,( 2001), стр.8

there is similarity in the aims which are crucial towards the development of independence in learning and motivation for lifelong learning.

Nevertheless, the conceptualized aims and the reality of the classroom not always correspond and that was the motivation to explore the question: **To what extent are students in secondary education familiar with the term lifelong learning and what is their motivation for it, as well as, what are their skills for independent learning?**

### **Methodology of the investigation**

During the month of January 2011, a survey was conducted among students from Josip Broz Tito High School to compare the views and attitude of students from the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme and the students from the national general high school programme about their motivation for lifelong learning and the ability for independent learning. The survey was conducted among 89 students out of which 64 students from the third year of general high school curriculum and 25 students from the two classes of IB Diploma programme from third and fourth year of high school.

The survey consisted of 22 questions which were grouped around several key characteristics of the ability for lifelong learning. They were

- Ability for critical thinking;
- Independence in learning encouraged by the teaching, assessment and the content of learning;
- Preparedness for looking for information from sources outside the textbook;
- Approaches to learning;
- Motivation for participation in activities outside of the regular teaching and lessons;

Here, it is necessary to mention the limitations of the investigation which was conducted with a relatively small sample of students as a beginning investigation on this topic to see whether there will be differences in the attitudes of students regarding their preparation for lifelong learning. The number of students with the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme is relatively small compared to the number of the students in the rest of the generation of third year students in the school.

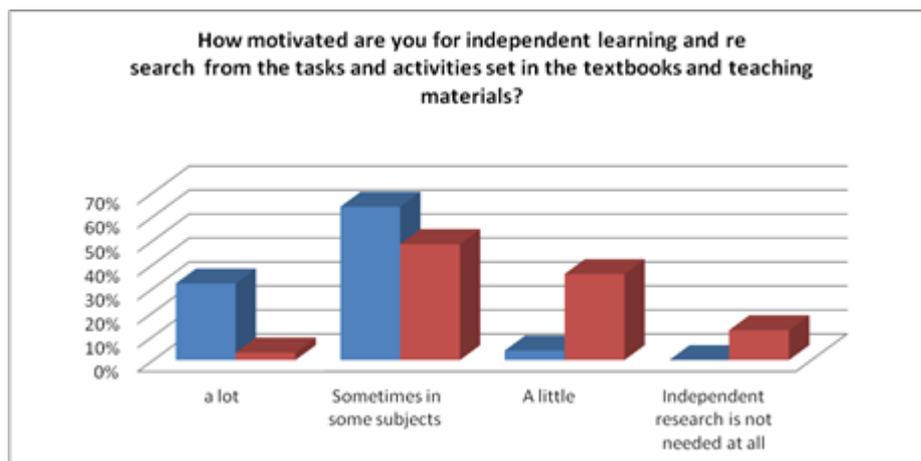
### **Analysis of the data of the investigation**

After conducting the survey among students in both programmes a quantitative analysis was made of the percentages of answers of students from the IB programme compared to answers of the students from national programme. The results from the comparison give evidence to draw conclusions about the preparedness of the students for lifelong learning depending on the educational programme they follow.

All students without any significant difference state that they understand the term lifelong learning, while differences emerge in respect to which characteristics or skills the students consider crucial for lifelong learning. The largest percent of the students from the IB programme stated that they are ready to search for other sources, they possess skills for critical thinking and intellectual curiosity. With the students from the national programme the largest percent falls to creativity, then preparedness for searching for other sources and last is the ability for critical thinking.

Regarding the motivation for independent research within the teaching both groups show similarities in their statements around 76% and 64% in relation to the answers that they are sometimes and from some subjects motivated. Differences in their responses appear with the question about the methods of assessment. It could be commented here that students from the IB programme who are externally assessed in all subjects express that they are more motivated for independent research than other students. Also a difference can be noted with responses about the content and tasks in the textbooks and teaching materials which can be seen from the following table.

Table 4



IB Students- blue      National programme students - red

Around 30% of the students from the IB diploma programme responded that they are very motivated, while the other students only 3% said that they are very motivated for independent research and learning and from the tasks and exercises in the textbooks and other teaching materials.

Regarding how much are students ready to search for other sources of information outside the textbook, it could be seen that students from the IB diploma programme with a large percentage of 76% are members in other libraries other than the school library. A large percentage of 72% of students have said that they study from additional resources, which is a strong indicator that they are capable for independent learning. The largest percentage of surveyed students from the national programme 43% have said that they study only what the teacher requires from them.

A large percentage of students from the IB Diploma programme 76% say that for them learning represents a challenge, while a large percentage of students from the national programme 56% say that studying and learning is something that they have to do. It could be commented that with the first group deep learning approach is prevailing which is one of the characteristics for lifelong learning.

Regarding the relevance of the knowledge there is also a difference in the answers of both groups in respect of the answer that what they study will be useful for their later life. It is interesting to notice that among answers of IB Diploma students there is a large percent of 68% that readiness for lifelong learning is very important for easier employment.

## **Conclusion of the investigation**

Except for some questions where the difference in percentages are minimal, most responses which target the students' attitudes for abilities for critical thinking, independent learning, depending on the way of assessment and the teaching materials, readiness for searching information outside of the textbook, approaches to learning as well as motivation for participation in activities outside school, there are significant differences in the responses of both groups.

According to the set characteristics which according to the literature could be taken as determiners for readiness for lifelong learning, from the comparative analysis it could be concluded that the students in the IB diploma programme have clearer and more confident attitudes about readiness for lifelong learning and research, in respect to the methods of assessment and teaching materials used in the programme.

The differences in the attitudes could be explained by multiple factors such as the smaller number of subjects that are studied in the IB diploma program, 6 rather than 12. The first group of students have a deeper approach to learning.

Also, a large influence is the external assessment that does not depend only of the subject teacher so that students from the IB Diploma are motivated to ask responses outside of the textbook and what the subject teacher is offering. Differently, the students from the national programme have said that they study only what is required by the teacher and is printed in the textbook, so they do not feel the need to search for other information. The differences in the motivation for independent learning regarding the content of the textbooks and teaching materials also suggest that the relevance of what is studied in the IB Diploma programme is larger in respect to what is important to the students.

## **Findings and recommendations from the investigation**

From this investigation recommendations can be formulated which should be included in the new concept for general high school curriculum. Among the more important recommendations for better motivation of students for lifelong learning are the following:

- Reducing the number of subjects which are studied in the last two years of secondary education which will lead towards better conditions for deep approach in learning.
- Reducing the content from the syllabi that are not relevant for life in the future globalised information technological society so that students will be more motivated for studying.
- Didactic articulation of the content and tasks in the textbooks which will enhance and develop critical thinking.
- Encourage students to search another sources of information and development of abilities for selecting relevant sources.
- Connection of the assessment objectives to aims and objectives of the teaching and setting clear standards and criteria for assessment.
- Providing students with opportunities to participate in individual and group research activities in youth clubs and organizations.

In the end it should be stressed that of vital importance for the development of motivation for lifelong learning in students is the professional development of the teachers who with their model of behavior and continuous professional development should demonstrate to students the necessity for lifelong learning for successful professional life and better status in the society and wellbeing of the family.

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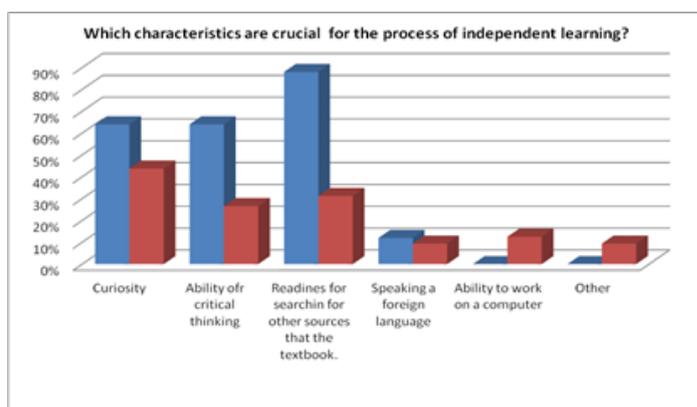
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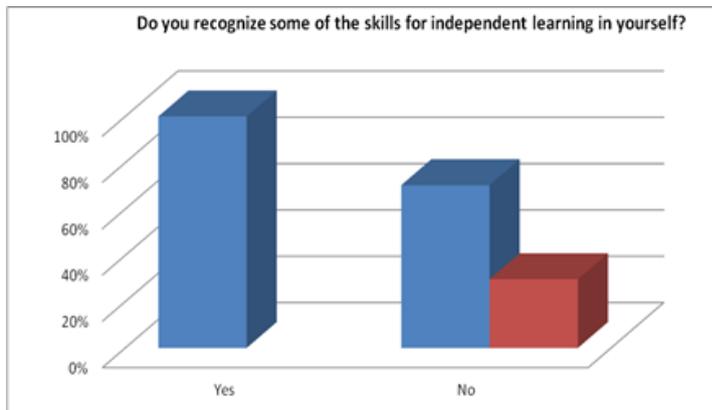
## Appendix

Table 1



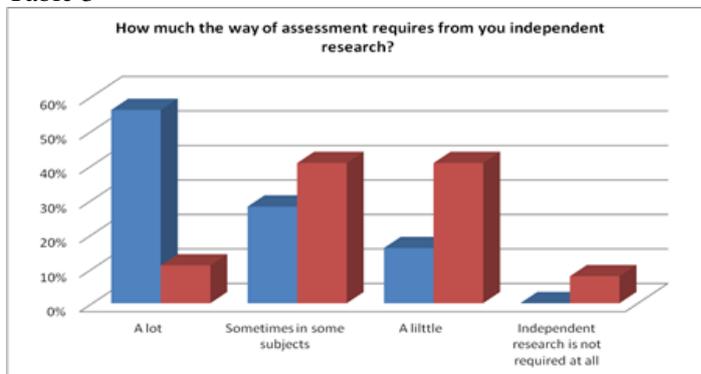
IB Students- blue      National programme students - red

Table 2



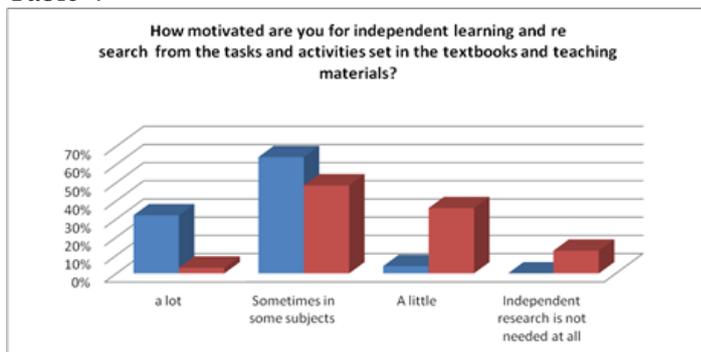
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Table 3



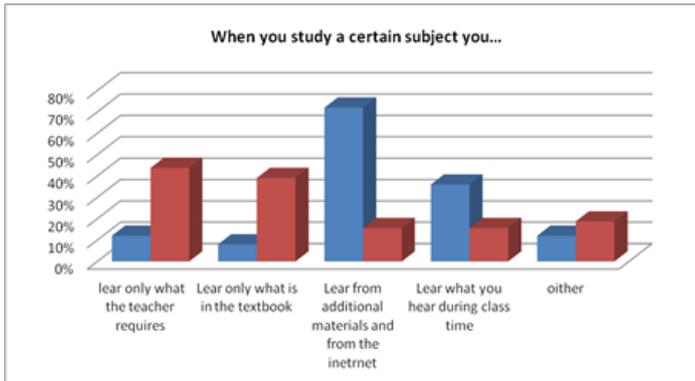
IB Students- blue      National programme students - red

Table 4



IB Students- blue      National programme students - red

Table 5



IB Students- blue      National programme students - red

Table 6

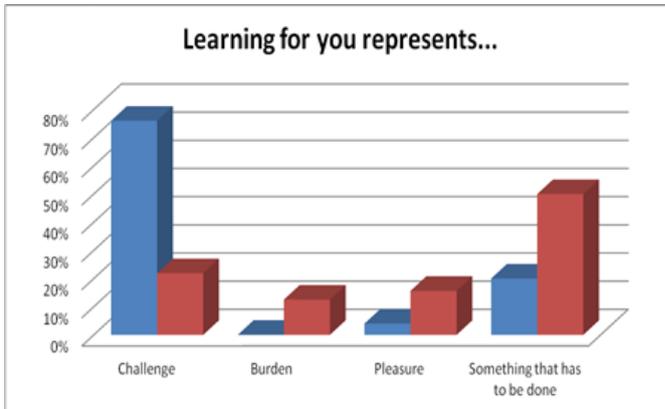
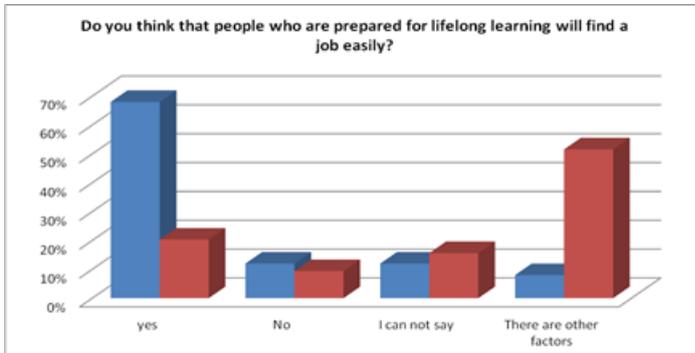


Table 7



IB Students- blue      National programme students - red

## **Multidisciplinarity in focus: English language and business educators collaborating on original teaching material**

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### *Abstract*

The academic research purpose of this paper focuses on the basic need for educators to generate original teaching material. Said information would reflect their personal research, analysis and sublimation efforts to mold into handouts that will represent their intellectual property. Additionally, it shows potential for further publication and use by less experienced educators.

Beginning with the supposition that educators have practical experience in their field of research and teaching and are in contact with practitioners from their domain, the paper advocates for creating new and genuine case studies having in mind the needs of their respective subjects. The reason for choosing said genre is the fact that it gives educators the freedom to be creative and innovative, practice their composition skills and express just the right amount of information, or lack thereof with the use of narrative tenses and language manipulation. Having delved into the language facet of the endeavour, we would like to stress the importance of the English language educator that needs to work in collaboration with their colleague-educators on putting the teaching material within a frame that is grammatically, syntactically, lexically and genre-wise up to par.

The genre of the case study is nothing new in European universities and this Socratic Method of acquiring knowledge and its immediate application are the main characteristics of a PCL classroom. However, the need for steering clear from stale and dated stories told by established authors many years ago imposes the urge and thirst for new and original stories.

Methodologically, the study relies on empirical evidence, information from available literature and a survey distributed among stakeholders in the educational process in universities, with text and multiple choice answers. The combination of literature and evidence consulted and cross referenced ultimately verified the set goals of the research set previously. This study forms part of a trilogy of longitudinal studies, actively renewed over a period of nearly seven years. The

continuation of results presented in all three papers favours the need and tendency towards an active PCL (participant-centered learning) classroom, inevitably paving its way towards the Third Generation of Universities (3GU), an active and cosmopolitan ESL learning environment as proposed by prof. Johan Wissema, PhD.

**Key words:** *original teaching material, practical experience, learner, (English language) educator, Socratic Method, PCL classroom, ESL, 3GU.*

### **Introduction and theoretical framework**

In a fast moving world of change and innovation, it seems as if education is constantly lagging behind all other aspects of life that are experiencing a constant and strenuous feeling of advancement and upgrade. This may seem a provocative statement, as there is a great amount of literature written on the topic and proposing new and inventive ways to advance teaching and classroom behavior, however it begs the question of how many of these attempts for modification and improvement actually stick in the educational curricula and take part in the course syllabi presented to learners by educators, additionally listed in the learning outcomes expected of educators to enable and learners to master. This short study is a part of a trilogy of studies on the subject of active and participative learning (PCL) aided by the genre of business cases as a storytelling and learning device. *'The case method is a powerful teaching tool for developing skill as well as conveying knowledge'* (Garvin et al. 1992). The original spin that this part of the study has is the crucial role of the English language educator in the writing process. Business professionals will have abundant knowledge in their own field, which will serve the purpose of providing the subject matter of the teaching material, and language professionals are in this multidisciplinary relationship to provide a framework, or genre, suitable language and vocabulary used, provide syntactic support and check for matching of denotation and connotation. The language teacher, whilst writing, carries the additional weight of adding language focus aims and objectives to the already prepared list, in order to fully enable future business professionals in terminology and communication for the career.

The initial need to produce such a study, or rather a group of studies complementing each other and looking closer into the different aspects and approaches to active learning and acquisition of subject matter is to stress the other equally important aspect of an educator's career, and that is research and productivity in terms of research results, commentaries and framework for new practices. In specialising and choosing a teaching concentration, language educators focusing

on business communication quite often find themselves in a position of balancing business subject matter with specific aspects of business communication and terminology, all the while resorting to already proven teaching practices and pedagogical measures. In this multidisciplinary undertaking where a language and business educators “feed off” each other’s knowledge and techniques, the language educator fulfills the specific role of putting everything right into words to tick several boxes. The case study needs to be understood by students on the lexical and grammatical level, it needs to signal connotation as opposed to denotation, to lead the student to a certain meaning or conclusion pertaining to the subject matter, defined in the tendency to aid students in making informed decisions based on research and discussion with peers, and colleagues. Having properly acquired subject matter through well-written business case studies, students ‘*will hone both their problem-solving and their ability to think and reason clearly*’ (Hammond, 2002) later in their professional career.

*‘The case method is about stating and comparing opinions, and learning from the differences and similarities. In an academic programme, communicating conclusions about a case happens orally (study groups, class discussions, presentations), and in writing (class assignments, research projects and examinations)’* (Ellet, 2007).

William Ellet wrote a The Case Study Handbook (2007) to aid educators successfully deliver the case study problems to their students. At the end of the first chapter he jokingly tells his readers that by the time they finish the initial preparation for their first ever case session they will have a ‘*literal and figurative headache*’ (Ellet, 2007). Ideas have little meaning unless they are shared, and that is how he understands the case method.

Philip Nathan from the University of Durham takes an interesting viewpoint in his multi-structured analysis of the case method. He does consider it a very important teaching tool and fully supports its integration into the business classroom. However he looks at it as a piece of writing, first and foremost, and thus the specificity of that piece of writing is looked into. His brief research paper titled Academic Writing in the Business School: The Genre of the Business Case Report depicts his idea of a case and its analysis and the follow-up report as a genre of their own. To that end, he introduces the abbreviations EAP (English for Academic Purposes) and ESP (English for Specific Purposes), pointing to the fact that pieces of writing pertaining to this genre are ‘*rich in business specialism-dependent lexis, but also the use neutral lexis to the end of arousing interest in the business student and create different business situations in writing to mirror the factual situation in real life*’ (Nathan, 2016). The business case for him is

a factually-based story that incorporates an embedded problem, presented in documentary form. As a follow-up he views business students as a '*simulated writer*' writing for a '*simulated audience*' (Nathan, 2016). Diving deeper into review, he notices the predominant business analytic tools used by this simulated author, like PEST, SWOT, STP analysis, and goes beyond to even talk about the linguistic and micro-linguistic level by making point of the predominant verb forms, the voice, metaphors, idioms, symbols and other noticeable linguistic features. Nathan talks about the use of personal pronouns as indicative of expressing personal opinion (I, my, we, us, our), and proposing advice or a solution (you, your). It is evident that personal opinions will prevail, leaving a case writer and the educator (if they do not represent the same entity) satisfied for fulfilling the goal of eliciting the learner's opinion, making the learner responsible for their own responses and material retention subsequently.

The case method of teaching seeks to abandon the passive and static classroom for a trend of participant-centered learning, where the educator will take a step back and let the participant (learner) take centre stage and actively pick the "fruits" offered to them in the form of knowledge. For that reason, in this text we refer to the revised taxonomy, done by researchers in 2001, bearing the title [A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives](#) written by Lorin W. Anderson, David Krathwohl and Benjamin Samuel, as it more suited to a participant-centered learning classroom where we witness an active process of learners "harvesting the fruits of knowledge", not from the comfort of their own seats, but from all over the classroom, to begin with, and later from all spheres of their professional lives.

The specificity of writing up a case from the viewpoint of an instructor and teacher are closely examined, to be able to better answer the question every instructor poses when preparing, attentively following their own lesson and in-class discussion and also post-class dilemmas that rear their head in addition to self-evaluation and criticism on the part of the students.

For the purpose of the paper, the words 'educator' and 'teacher' are used interchangeably, and even though they are different, at certain points it is believed better to refer to a teacher as an educator, because a teacher will impart teaching, but an educator will impart information and skill, which then does not only result in knowledge, but applicable knowledge. In this sense knowledge applies to not only business subject matter, but language skills as well (reading, listening, comprehension, inquiring for clarification of unknown term/notion, responding and writing follow-up essays). Additionally, the characteristic of creator/writer pertains to educator.

Essentially, with this method we are trying to convert a teacher into an educator and an educator into a teacher, or blend the two to make one successful entity that will enable a business student to solve their future business issues and answer any kind of question within their field with knowledge of subject matter and target language and, of course, good practice.

### **Study aims and objectives**

As defined previously in the introduction and partially in the abstract of this paper, this paper aims at underlining the need for original teacher-generated material, for our needs, specifically business cases, outlining the roles a business professional/educator and language educator in the writing process, to the end of subject matter being actively acquired by the target (their students), and stored not only in long term, but retrievable memory, from where it could be recalled easily when necessary. Finally, as unbeknownst to them, students will undergo a business communication/terminology lesson, they will be able to initiate, hold and close a discussion panel on the subject matter presented, and finish the study on said case by writing a legible and grammatically and syntactically correct response essay to the original teacher-generated case presented.

The study's overall goal is to propose a successful combination of the use of ready-made teacher material as opposed to teacher-generated business case stories with teacher-generated teaching notes (TN). One of the goals of the study refers to maintaining and developing the educators' researching practices through interviewing, cross-referencing information and using writing skills to produce an original piece of writing (basically a business lexis-charged story) for their lesson, and quite possibly for other, less-experienced educators. The final goal is to closely look at the effects of the case method on the learner and the face validity of teacher-generated cases from the viewpoint of both learners and educators. Having in mind the idea of increasing efficiency and efficacy of this teaching method, the research will revolve around the act of preparing educators' material and enabling the learner through the learning process. In the spirit of merging the previous knowledge of the authors in TESOL and business communication, we will consult literature on teaching methodologies and parallel the language teaching methodologies that apply to the case study lessons and the objectives and expected outcomes.

### **Methodology and study structure**

The paper is comprised of a theoretical background, supported by evidence from available literature on both topics, business communication and English language writing and proposes a practical approach for practitioners to try out in their business and ESP (English for Specific

Purposes) lesson. Based on the theoretical background, we move onto the empirical, i.e. practical part of the study where we present the results from the questionnaires from stakeholders, and the proposition for collaboration of language and business educators on creating original teaching material.

The practical approach will focus mainly on the research and writing process an English educator will go through in producing original material for their lessons or for the purposes of a joint venture with a business educator. To that end, there are two main focuses. The initial one is the needs analysis of stakeholders, and the steps that have been take so far. Following is the focus on research, meaning collecting valuable data from companies and the writing process, proposed with previous processing of information gathered and also selection of what data will be presented to students and what will be left for inference whilst reading due to crafty writing.

*'A case is a text that refuses to explain itself'*, reads the short definition of a case by William Ellet in one of the chapters in his book The Case Study Handbook: How to Read, Discuss and Write Persuasively about Cases, where he explains just that, the specificity of case writing (Ellet, 2007). A case writer needs to sit in front of a blank page with the mindset of persuading an audience of near-professionals of a certain problem. They need to include a significant and relevant business issue, crucial information for conclusions and completely refrain from stating any conclusions, but merely lead the reader through the text, at times with deterring from the main plot.

He observes that if any of these three components are missing, a case will not have an educational value. A writer needs to construct their work to prompt inference from their readers.

Aside from all the 'noise', which is to say deterrent information, they cannot succumb to the non-linear structure and must be able and be prompted to infer information, construct conclusions and the most important action is to be able to associate evidence from all over the case.

All in all, this genre of teaching material requires a crafty knowledgeable writer with excellent language skills in order to be able to transfer information through writing on one level, and on the next, to equip students for inference of relevant information from all over the text, all the while training them to use new vocabulary with knowledge and understanding.

**Survey report and needs analysis**

The study begins by assessing the need for use of original teaching material, i.e. original business cases in the classroom, thus underlying the need for educators to work together in a multidisciplinary approach to subject matter. Then, the following part is the excerpt from the survey distributed among educators (merely three questions, as the rest of the survey is not applicable for the specific type of collaboration presented in this paper). With the answers to these questions, we underline the need for creating, rather than using ready-made material.

**Answers given by educators**

**1. Do you find the ready-made business cases alongside complementary teaching notes helpful, or do you prefer to make up your own?**

**Table 1. Answers to question 1 from the survey report for educators**

	<b>Yes, I do. I am using them in full.</b>	<b>No, I usually make up my own versions of the teaching cases and complementary notes.</b>
<b>All Data</b>	40%	60%

**Figure 1. Answers to question 1 from the survey report for educators**



The main idea of this paper is creating personalised cases and complementary teaching notes (TN), deriving from the experiences of educators and students alike. This teaching material is a two way street. They need to derive from the experience of the educator, but they need to be informed by the responses (both verbal and non-verbal) of the students as well. The percentage of this results clearly points to the fact that the educators favour improving their teaching styles and practices, and that they are not sticking to only one model, or a “factory setting” if these do

not fit the group in their in-class discussion, or do not seem to fulfill the lesson objectives of . This question opens a more ample discussion about the different learning intelligencies of students and their learning styles, which will be looked into greater detail in the following question.

The greater number of answers against using ready-made teaching cases in English in full does not entail a complete refutation of the suggestions given there. Educators use them as guidelines and draw experiences from their context to give their lesson a more natural flow familiar to them and their students.

**2. Do you take into account the different learning intelligence types and different learning styles of students when choosing the case and making a lesson plan, or do you come across problems concerning the reception of material when using the case method of teaching? (Dr. Howard Gardner, 1996: verbal-linguistic, logic-mathematical, spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal and intrapersonal, naturalistic)**

**Table 2. Answers to question 2 from the survey report for educators**

	<b>Yes, I do. I change my lesson plan according to the learning styles of the group.</b>	<b>No, I find that a uniform shape works for the entire student body.</b>
<b>All Data</b>	73 %	27 %

**Figure 2. Answers to question 2 from the survey report for educators**



Following the flow of the study that strongly advocates for a revolutionary, unorthodox, participant-learning classroom, but informed from the experience of the educators, the answers to this question support and follow the idea of a PCL, enriched with one of the most universal theories about learning styles, Dr. Howard Gardner’s verbal-linguistic, logic-mathematical,

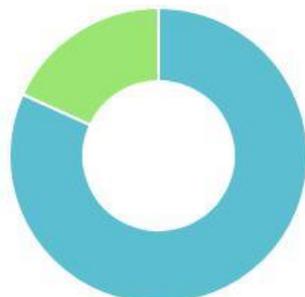
spatial, kinesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic, creating a convenient way for educators to easily determine the prevailing learning style of a larger group, and possibly offer a few more options for the students practicing a different learning style than the larger portion of the group, thus an instructor will offer options (discussion, visual multimedia aids, realia, role plays, additional reading or preparation for writing response essays etc, to cater to as many needs of the students as possible). The educator will resort to a simple scaffold-plan, meaning they will offer an account of the case, the plotline, they will make the learning objectives obvious to the entire group, resort to their discussion questions, however, also change up their lesson plan, sometimes even during the lesson itself, using improvisation as a tool to maintain the learners attention, all the while having in mind their destinations, the end point of the discussion. This is made easier by also having a written roadmap to discussion in their tailored lesson plan, and having reached their discussion destination, they conclude with a wrap up of the whole discussion and a board plan, particularly aimed at the visual learners.

### 3. How often do you use the case method and cases as tools in your curriculum?

**Table 3. Answers to question 3 from the survey report for educators**

	<b>I base almost my entire yearly teaching plan on teaching through the case method.</b>	<b>Very rarely, I find research and instructor-based teaching is more functional for my students and myself as an educator.</b>
<b>All Data</b>	82%	18%

**Figure 3. Answers to question 3 from the survey report for educators**



By applying this method with the special note on writing original material as a joint benefit of both educators (business and language) students will benefit from active learning and retention of subject matter and important business concepts and lexis through reading about someone's experience, discussion, persuasion, argumentation and conclusions, and response writing, left to the discretion of the learner and their learning style. Experiences from both educators and students point to this teaching method and the teaching tool, the case, saying that '*in the case method, initially called the "problem method", students must analyse a real-world business challenge and throughout the lesson that is what keeps them at the edge of their seat*' (Baron, 2015). Educators will produce cases, and students will consequently devour them in lesson, each one more successfully than the previous one. It is a practical exercise for the mind, thinking not regurgitation, having a critical mind and questioning almost all data presented in lesson and not taking any of it for granted.

The distinctive academic method makes learning more meaningful and puts due weight on their critical thinking processes, students get the privilege to learn from their teachers, but from their classmates as well, and depending on the level of study and age of the fellow students, sometimes, learning from classmates happens more often as the discussion is the part of the lesson reserved for student participation exclusively, and finally, they learn to take a position they believe in and express their opinions in a convincing manner, thus, entirely justifying the pie chart above. Reading an eloquently formulated case will consequently enable students to speak eloquently about the previously read problem.

### **The writing process in all its glory**

Let us now resort to looking closely at the process of case development, mainly consulting literature from HBS educators and authors who have had their papers and books published by HBSP. We will be gravitating around Ellet's The Case Study Handbook (Ellet, 2007). We will also consult literature in the form of handouts, presentations available for learners and educators alike online, and unofficial and experiential notes made by language and business educators in order to formulate a pre-writing plan, fabricate a solid and lesson-worthy case with valid propositions for teaching notes, and also self-check if we have catered to every need a student engaging in in-class discussion or writing a response essay at home might have. As writers, developers and educators using the case as a teaching tool, and the case method as a teaching method, we also need to compare our work to that of more experienced educators and make sure that it is not only the tool itself (the case) that is expected to produce optimal results in face

validity and knowledge that is safely stored and can be recalled from the “folders” of long-term memory of the future business professional, and any student taking the Business Communication/Terminology subject. In the direction of enabling the environment (classroom, and atmosphere within it), Trajanovska has concluded:

*“The course (EFL) blended together the communicative approach, the collaborative learning (Gayer et al. 2008), and the digital media facilitating both interaction in English and social processes (Mondahl et al. 2009).”* (Trajanoska, 2016)

This quotation draws attention to the most important part of teaching, the approaches to learning, catering to students’ different intelligencies, and the awareness of the educator in order to impart knowledge successfully. It is not just about educators doing their job; it is about doing their job right, in a way that would provoke feedback, whether positive or negative. At that point an educator can be sure that they have stimulated discussion and that learners can start tapping into the more advanced stages of learning, according to the pyramid of adult learning and Bloom’s learning taxonomy, where they become aware and own up to cognition and meta-cognition.

It will probably seem strange to any reader that the emphasis is first and foremost put on the TN, following the case, and they may feel like they are reading about an upside-down research, but even though the writing process begins with the case (the plot, problem) and then followed by the TN, the preparation for the lesson on the part of the instructor usually goes the other way around. They do know the story of the case, but are beginning their preparation with a particular accent on the TN. In this eloquent quotation, Trajanoska is putting due attention on digital media to facilitate the process of teaching and interaction in English and the accompanying social processes that happen before, during and after the lesson, on a more informal basis.

We will also mention MJ Roberts’ abridged paper titled Developing a Teaching Case published by HBSP in 2001. His paper can almost be compared to a recipe on how to develop a business case in the sense that he lists the different steps that a writer needs to take in order to end up with a finished project, a well-developed case with solid TN propositions. He dwells on two types of preparation even before pen-in-hand. Initially he talks about the preparation that takes place immediately after the decision to write a business case on a specific topic, for a specific company/group of people and the work that derives from preparing oneself to harvest information from the sources (finding a company, questionnaire, agreeing on the terms, or altering the story). Secondly, he will talk about the preparation that helps put the writer’s mind

into writing mode in order to prepare for the first draft. He advocates that the writer needs to determine the exact situation the protagonist is going to be in, and follow that by writing the first paragraph, which would mostly consist of description and introduction of the character to the readers. Preparing an outline and constructing a timeline would follow the steps above. By doing this it means that as writers they are aware of the background and they might decide to make this evident to the reader or not, depending on whether that is important to the case and how they would suggest the board plan for discussion should develop. The fourth step is to write down the whole case. Experientially, he has found that many writers tend to have a longer waiting and reflecting period before they start writing, during which some information may get lost or even the enthusiasm that should be conveyed through the authoritarian voice of the writer/narrator may become less potent. He also suggests writing the TN simultaneously with the case itself due to the fact that there are many concepts to teach through a single case, and it is as simple as forgetting a concept that might ruin the case as a tool for its particular purpose.

In continuation, we have consulted another author who has had his work published by the HBSP, and his paper to a case writer and educator seems like a logical continuation of the previous didactic hand-out also published by the HBSP. T. H. Chan, from the School of Public Health, which is a Harvard University School that uses cases as a successful teaching tool and also produces medical cases, has written a short overview of the steps writers should take when writing a teaching note. In 2014, HBSP published his paper Guidelines for Writing a Teaching Note where Chan explains that TN's are integral parts of any teaching case, no matter which area it is written for or the school that uses it. According to him a TN is a road map helping the educators scaffold the lesson, and allowing for students to feel as if their educator is knowledgeable and skillful in what they know and do, and that even though it is the learners that need to do all the work, that the educator will successfully guide them through the lesson and the discussion that develops. *'Teaching notes play five important roles: they increase teaching effectiveness, save time, build confidence, guide case writing and contribute intellectual capital'* (Chan, 2014). Chan also paraphrases Austin saying that Austin's papers determine what the case is about, its place in the course, the reason we have chosen to teach using that particular case, the business concept we will be teaching with the use of that case, and also the manner in which we will be teaching the concept with the use of the tool. *'Although there is no strict format for a TN, it usually contains the following components (according to Roberts)'*: overview or synopsis, learning objectives, preparation questions, roadmap to discussion, wrap up and a board plan (Chan, 2014). No matter the length of the case, how well

developed it is, the area of study it is referring to and the age group it is aimed at as a target group, using these components (which can be in any order suitable for use and best organized by an educator), a proposition for a TN would be closest to the final version of a TN. Tapping into past experience in discussion-based lessons (not particularly case method lessons), students will react better to the question: ‘*What is your attitude?*’ than they would to ‘*What is your opinion?*’. There is a simple reason hiding behind this logic. Namely, an opinion is a term that denotes something static, it calls upon the individual to practice judgment towards a particular thing or set of things. Whereas attitude is a term that denotes activity, meaning it calls upon the individual’s predisposition to act in a particular way towards a thing or a set of things. Thus, in the spirit of posing questions that would steer learners away from wrong and right answers, as judgment is in a way connected to discriminating the wrong from the right and vice versa, we resort to giving learners a linguistic freedom to take up a position, an attitude and defend it before their colleagues and peers.

*‘When I first worked with MBA students, I confined myself to conventional writing advice – coherent paragraphs; active voice; essays with a discernible beginning, middle and end. The advice had an impact, but not as much as I hoped. Eventually, I realised that in case examinations, students often did not know how to recognize the need for an argument or were unclear about how to write one. (This lack of knowledge is not the fault of students; it is the fault of writing instructions they have received). I immediately place argument at the forefront of my instruction. I experimented with thesis statements derived from an enthymeme<sup>7</sup>. I tried Stephen Tolumin’s syllogistic approach to the structure of an argument. In the end I kept it simple: conclusion, reasons and evidence.’ (Ellet, 2006)*

The most valuable guidance for developing cases for this paper has been provided by William Ellet’s The Case Study Handbook: How to Read, Discuss and Write Persuasively About Cases (2006). Even though he is focusing on the end product, the students’ reaction or understanding and response (feedback, through essays), it provides that much needed guidance for case writers and educators and the paves the path in which they should get to that moment of feedback through the student’s critical mind. He claims that teaching business concepts such as: Victor Vroom’s Expectancy Theory, the 5 C’s analysis of marketing situations, etc. are best taught through a model of deduction, and not induction, or example and discussion to reach a certain concept than vice versa, and that is reflected in the writing of the case itself. He also goes on to

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<sup>7</sup> An argument in which a premise is not explicitly stated.

refer to receiving knowledge versus making it, once again making a reference to the bipolarity of instruction vs. education. He claims that through the instructional model an instructor can deliver great volumes of subject matter in a short time period; however it would only be delivered and students would not be motivated to use it anymore than to merely regurgitate facts. The moment when they are faced with a situation where they would have to apply knowledge practically, they would experience an inability to do so. The sooner we introduce them to critical thinking and eliciting thinking not information, the sooner we will be able to rely on successful future business leaders.

To the end of making knowledge that would benefit the student, we will paraphrase Ellet's passages on what a case is. His discussion, though claiming that a case-based classroom requires an active educator and an active learner as well, gravitates more towards the role of the educator, and it is all about '*asking the right questions at the right time*' (Ellet, 2006). Students, according to him, are the ones responsible for making knowledge and create meaning in the classroom. They should not expect a single truth delivered to them by their educator, containing a number of concepts in the form of set phrases. What they need to do is create meaning through the concepts they know and feel the weight of responsibility for creating knowledge and meaning and using it. It is those concepts that will aid them feel the responsibility of making a business decision in their future careers, in real life.

A more practical approach towards case writing and the prewriting, writing and post writing process is presented by business and language professionals found at [www.thecasecentre.org](http://www.thecasecentre.org). The platform, aimed at writers and educators and the improvement in their writing and teaching endeavours offers practical advice in the form of a recipe to mainly aid the prewriting process. Abraham Lincoln stated that in order to chop down a tree in six hours, he would take the first four to merely sharpen the axe. This paraphrase determines our approach and emphasis on the writing process, undertaken by the English language educator as a process of "sharpening" of the axe before the teaching case lesson. Informed by the proposals on the platform, we provide our practical checklist for the future writer. Once having consulted these steps, we suggest that the writing process begin.

### **1. Field or desk-based?**

To begin with, the platform recommends that the writer determine the type of case, and henceforth continue the research accordingly. Understandably, there is a clear difference, and educators make a distinction between the two due to the fact that the kind of information

gathered and acquired has a different weight. Of course, field research is more valued and the information tends to be more charged with bias, opinions and emotions on the part of the participants, later characters or protagonists in the story of the case, which is very important for the readers' perception and inference when reading and attempting to offer a possible solution. It is of paramount importance to know that the validity of information is not in question in desk as opposed to field research, but it is what the interviewee has to offer in terms of tone, speech, body language and facial expression. It is also the atmosphere, which is a very important integral part of the structure of a company, and one that the case writer has to transfer on paper accurately.

The findings in this research correspond to field research, interviews with the protagonist in all cases and the exhibits that the writer is offered to lower the bias from the interviews. The names of the characters have been altered to preserve the privacy, and the context has also been somewhat changed, however it has been changed to one corresponding in internal organization, structure and alignment.

In addition, the information for these cases has been harvested by means of field research, retold by the managers and leaders in each (a reader could argue that they coincide). Interviews with the managers were conducted in order to receive first-hand information about the problems at hand.

## **2. Using multimedia**

Living in a society where not many things that are classroom essentials will engage a learner, instructors often resort to using multimedia to engage even the most tech savvy and demanding learners. In this sense, an instructor fulfills a great responsibility to assess the class and cater to their students' demands, according to a previously conducted needs analysis.

The propositions for TN in these three cases do not explicitly instruct a teacher to resort to any multimedia, but a proposition has been made to use screens and projectors instead of whiteboards to engage the visual learners more. It is left up to the discretion of the teacher if they will resort to sending the case to their students and having an entirely paperless classroom, thus adapt it to various discussion questions by enabling it entirely for learner-based activities (eg. small space for role play, computers or tablets for SWOT or any other kind of analysis – easy to share with their peers, space easily adaptable for small group discussions, enough technical and classroom equipment for preparing their findings and conclusions).

There is only one risk factor in this tendency towards a paperless classroom and that is the exclusion of realia<sup>8</sup> which could be argued unnecessary in business communication subjects. On the other hand, cosmopolitan universities tend to teach language through the students' primary subjects, thus realia has more weight and importance (Wisemma, 2009). This bullet point is understood as using methodological techniques to suit the learning styles of the students. According to Gardner (2006) there are eight learning intelligencies: verbal/linguistic, logical/mathematical, visual/spacial, bodily/kinesthetic, musical/rhythmic, interpersonal, intrapersonal and naturalistic (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009).

These have later been sublimated by Walter Burk Barbe (1979) to fit a more general structure: visualizing, auditory and kinesthetic modality of learning, or VAK, later expanded by Neil Fleming into: visual, auditory, physical and social learning. These areas fall under the umbrella of NLP, encompassing the three most influential components involved in producing human experience: neurology, language and programming" (Dilts, 2016).

### **3. A protagonist: telling stories**

Referring to the character telling the story, the one readers will identify with and the one that will impose the question: 'What do I do next?' A good representation of the protagonist will fuel a good classroom discussion and a very steep learning curve.

The case presented at the end of this study has one very strong and present protagonist, meaning that they themselves would reveal character traits, as opposed to inferring from the speeches of other characters, not present in the case. There are examples where a writer will choose to an all-knowing narrator, however, the protagonist will lose some of the weight of his character. The all-knowing protagonist is a riskier approach, as it may lead the writer to resort to suggestive language, rather than neutral open direct speech by the character(s).

### **4. Choosing a format**

The platform clearly states all the possibilities of creating a good compelling case in this day and age. The popular case format is still the one that is used the most and it is the one employed in this paper. Paralleling this point of the findings to the survey conducted and comparative desk research, case writers still resort to this traditional format, initially imposed by the Harvard Business School. Some of the educators claim that it is what readers (students) are most used

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<sup>8</sup> Objects and material from everyday life used as teaching material

to seeing and after a couple of cases they improve their case-solving speed and techniques because they know how to skim for information in this format.

The other possibilities also include: video and audio cases, graphic novel cases, and even virtual cases. These could serve as supplements (addendums) or even entirely replace the written word becoming the instrument instead of 20 pages of printed material.

At this point, the research poses and opens to further research the comparative study of how successful these formats are and if they could entirely replace the written word when talking about case studies as a fruitful and rewarding instrument in the classroom.

### **5. ‘Testing’ in the classroom**

Also viewed as the only certain way to see if the case as an instrument actually ‘works’, and a good opportunity to gain invaluable feedback from students and also colleagues. The case presented as an addendum to this study has been tested in the classroom multiple times with undergraduate students; spurring a prolonged classroom discussion of the existing and new ideas, followed by additional questions for some clarification and connotation of vocabulary. The other successful technique applied by students in said lesson in terms of ESL teaching goals was the attempt to infer knowledge by following rules of syntax in the English sentence.

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### **6. Teaching Notes**

The aforementioned T.H. Chan proposed: synopsis, objectives, preparation questions, roadmap of the discussion, wrap up and an additional board plan has been a good guideline for this thesis and the cases in it (Chan, 2014).

Much like this reference, this research has taken on the following structure of written cases:

- ‘cold call’ (naming a student at random to start off the discussion, or merely “break the ice” towards the case-based lesson, with the help of the teacher);
- synopsis (a short account of the entire case);
- learning objectives, clearly stated in the form of bullet points (more case-specific compared to the ones of HBS);
- preparation questions (these questions go into more detail in comparison to the HBSC)
- roadmap of the discussion (compared to the HBSC the roadmap into the discussion takes on a narrative structure);

- wrap up (in the form of a conclusion);
- board plan (not explicitly stated at the end; however, all of the cases propose a SWOT analysis, overviews of evaluations, and simple notes that would serve as catalysis for the discussion)
- response essay to the teaching case presented in the lesson.

### **Conclusions and limitations**

A teaching case is essentially a story. Educators and field professionals have many stories to tell, and as we are prewired to learn through stories from the earliest age, educators in need and sharing the desire to produce original teaching material should take this into account and tap into that part of the learners' brains, developing a multi-fold set of objectives; the more obvious ones being to teach business subject matter, and the higher order ones being to enable students and future business professionals communicate properly using syntactically and grammatically correct English sentences in both written and spoken form, charged with specialized lexis, giving the interlocutor the impression of an informed entrepreneur.

Referring back to the initial mention of professor J.G. Wissema, PhD, multidisciplinary, or the collaboration between professionals from different sectors, seemingly disconnected, but complementing each other surprisingly successfully, we could fulfill one of the goals of modern and active education and that is having a cosmopolitan learning environment (Wissema, 2009).

Research and literature both suggest that the trend of inclination towards an active and participative learning environment is positive, but, there are still researchers such as Stephen M. Shugan, Alfred D. Chandler and Jerry Kirckpatrick, among others who will prefer painstaking desk research and the classical method above the teaching case. Shugan sees an *'alarming disconnect between classroom learning and academic research'* (Shugan, 2006)

The limitations that the writer, the English language educator will face will fall under the category of processes: prewriting, writing, post writing and even writers' block. The information is there and it is factual, the presentation of those facts, the mere use of one term over another could alter the story irreparably.

This paper answers pressing questions connected to the success of the method using the tool as a good type of practice supporting contemporary tendencies of active learning, where students take responsibility of their individual processes of learning and own up to the knowledge, thus value it more than simply being handed facts by their educators in the shape of an original,

never-before-seen story. It is a delicate issue in learner psychology that retention is far greater when students come to the conclusions by themselves, obviously led to do so by the text itself, and looking back, they can point to the way they arrived at said conclusions. It represents a successful and enjoyable process during lesson time for both learners and educators, and one that expands beyond the lesson, before and long after, resulting in retained facts and knowledge, usable at any point in their future careers.

## 1. BASIC TOUCH IN NEVERNEVER LAND

*“I cannot believe I bumped the company car today, of all days!”*- he thought to himself as the manager attempting to keep a calm tone, but failing miserably. The conference room is caged by top-to-bottom glass windows, and one can easily make assumptions and form expectations just by body language and facial expressions of the ‘victims’ trapped inside, and at times, it was easy to judge by the tone of voice of the brand manager.

Russell was a HORECA agent, but also enjoyed the privileges of taking on smaller company projects of his own, and on top of having to sit down with hotel, restaurant and café owners and talk about the product for hours on end, he was also responsible for a small team of people, amongst which were 2 members of the office administration reporting to him and not his boss, the brand manager Jesse Green, a field team of 10 hostesses, 2 field employees responsible for merchandise, a substantial budget for each project, a van, and a company car that he had a minor car accident with that morning.

Being a foreign tobacco brand, they had enormous responsibilities to report certain results within certain time frames to the main office, and the demands were almost the same from each country’s team, despite the differences in said societies, contexts and tobacco culture. As a company, they needed to be loyal to their mother office and represent it according to certain standards, which lately, they had trouble living up to.

A year and a half ago, Russell undertook the most difficult job he could ever imagine. Counting on his team, he decided to take the portfolio for a new and completely unknown tobacco product and work towards meeting the goals and desired outcomes of the campaign listed in the portfolio. The desired outcome was to have at least 100.000 consumers after 6 months of campaign and build up the number of consumers from there. It is a product that should be made known as it brings the quality of a company that sells exclusive tobacco products, but this

particular cigarette is sold at a suggested price of two thirds of the sum of the mean price of available brands in stores.

Russell has been in charge of the project for 2 years now, and he has had some success; however, this particular morning he bumped the company car, was late to a staff meeting and had to deliver some rather disappointing news to his superiors. He walked in, interrupting the meeting, sat down on his usual spot in complete silence. When being asked to report on his team's work, he stood up, took a deep breath and a sip of water and began by:

*“The numbers are not adding up. I am alone at this meeting, I did not invite my staff, as I take full responsibility for the error and I am not that interested in the consequence, as I am quite sure there will be many, but I am now completely focused on a resolution for the situation. Let us not waste time by pointing fingers. I am now asking you as my superiors to give me ideas and offer help in order for me to be able to resolve the issue and continue building up the portfolio of Basic Touch country wide”* – he boldly spoke.

### **Appendix 1, merely for the eyes of the educator**

Brand name: Basic Touch, member of the City Tower Tobacco Company

Company's reputation – offering exclusive brands at high, but reasonable prices.

Basic Touch offers the same tobacco quality, at the price of two thirds of the medium price for cigarettes in the country. It is a completely new brand, never before seen or heard of in shops or in smokers' social circles; as if it does not exist. Create awareness and accumulate at least 100.000 consumers in 6 months.

Cigarettes' paper is of top quality and the filters are more porous than with any cigarette already on the market as they are lowest in tar, compared to the other 'light' cigarettes on the market in the country.

Consider:

-BTL marketing (below the line marketing, direct marketing strategies);

-including sellers of tobacco (small shops and big chains of well-known supermarkets) in campaign purposes;

-mystery shoppers;

-consumer engagement;

-brand ambassadors;

-3D approach towards BTL and awareness towards accumulation of consumers;

### **Epilogue, merely for the eyes of the educator:**

Russell was successful for a whole year, but come the second year, a small mishap in projection from the office staff left him with a town aware and pretty much “hooked” on his cigarettes, and him out of stock. He reports the problem to the main office, due to the seriousness of the situation, and does not try to evade the outcome and consequences, but rather focuses on the job before him and his team.

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## **Different perspectives on student efficiency**

Assessment and Student Efficiency

Elizabeta Hristovska Icheva  
Teacher trainer and PYP Coordinator

Since 2013, I have attended many IB online workshops on different topics but somehow always found myself curious about student inquiry and efficiency. No matter how old and experienced the teacher is, if we are lifelong learners, then we usually ask ourselves: Am I doing the assessment right? Do I engage my students enough? Are the outcomes of students valid, relevant to their learning process? ....

Throughout the years of my teaching I've learnt that the word student inquiry and student efficiency must be recognised for their role of bringing *deeper awareness* to our role of giving the children more *pertinent* opportunities to use their efficiency. In other words, providing the children with more *real life* chances to use their voice, make choices for themselves, both collectively and as individuals, and to encourage ownership for their own learning. So, let's look at the area of assessment and how we, as teachers, can increase the children's involvement with this part of their learning cycle.

### **The Roles of Assessment in the Classroom**

When we consider teaching and learning as a cycle, then assessment is a critical part of that cycle, which if removed, would render the cycle incomplete. What I think is that there's the traditional teaching-learning-assessment cycle, which we are all familiar with and take responsibility for, as teachers. Then there's, another one, the **Inclusive Assessment Cycle**, where the children take certain responsibilities for their assessment. The methods & expectations from the cycle would obviously look different according to their age level but the cycle would remain the same.

Overall, it enables a greater level of collaboration with your students in, what is ultimately, *their* learning experience and reflection.

If we see the functions of the two TRADITIONAL forms of assessment, we can easily identify ways to make it more inclusive. And if we begin to make it *all* more inclusive, ultimately it becomes its own title of **Assessment AS Learning**.

### **1. Assessment FOR Learning, known as as formative which means:**

pre-assessment,  
on-going assessment,  
reflection sheets,  
KWL charts,  
the portfolio over time and so on.

This is what we would do **traditionally**: As teachers we use evidence from these assessments to look at the children's' content knowledge, understanding and skills. We use the information from these assessments to inform our planning and the direction of our teaching as the learning progresses.

But when doing assessment **inclusively**: Then we give the children the opportunity to predict their own outcomes prior to the assessment and then to reflect upon their results afterwards. This can include free choice of working on differentiated materials, keeping track of scores on simple charts or graphs, looking back upon previous assessments and sharing feedback. Keeping those records in their working portfolios allows them free access to look back, review and reflect. If we need to redirect our plans at this stage, then the children are aware of this need.

**2. Assessment OF Learning:** You probably know this form of assessment as the summative assessment. It is used at the end of a unit of learning.

Traditionally: Its job is to create evidence of the students' *cumulative* learning and compare their achievement against specific standards. I find that this type of assessment can be subjective and therefore less valid if the activities are not planned *effectively*. The validity of the activities and the quality of the feedback determine the effectiveness of the assessment, thus thoughtful consideration of the expectations of the assessed activity is crucial.

Inclusively: We encourage the students to use the already given task of inquiry and skills as a starting point for creating a checklist or rubric to show expectations. Discuss what content (standards) and strategies were included in their learning of the unit and have them come up with their own ideas to show what they know.

**3. Assessment AS Learning:** And so, we can see that this is where much of the student efficiency can be seen and encouraged. It is an *inclusive assessment* method and it goes along the lines of

self-assessment,  
peer assessment, teacher assessment & feedback  
reflection  
goal setting.

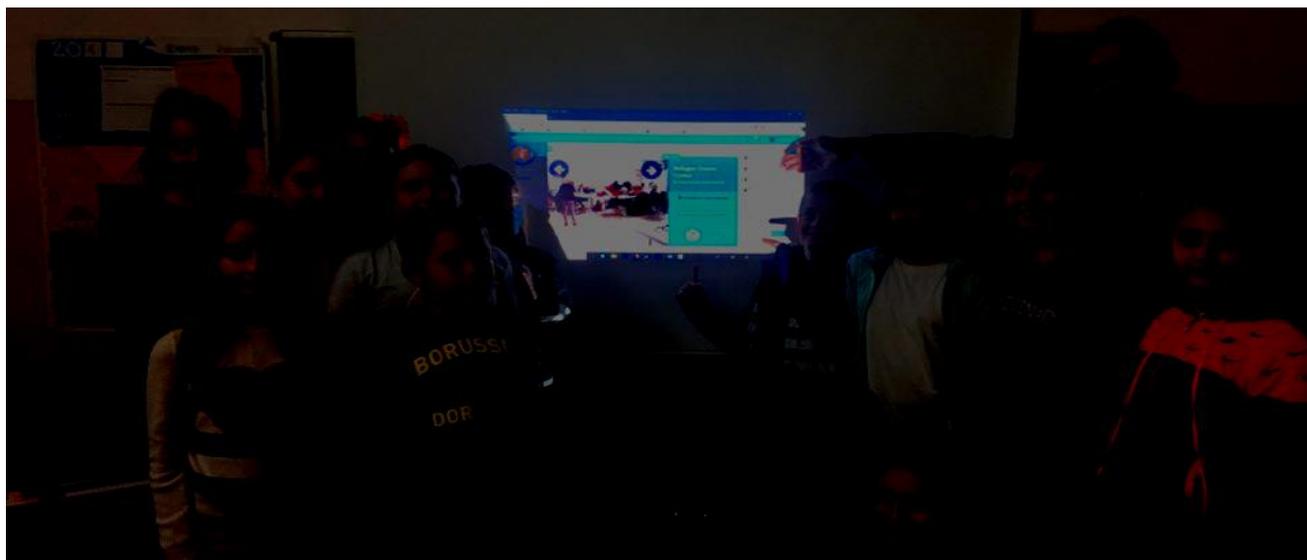
The students will *monitor* their progress, *question* their understanding and *reflect* upon their next steps and goals for themselves. They rely on quality feedback from a variety of sources to add to the effectiveness of this assessment and use the assessment process *as a learning experience*. It requires responsibility and encourages accountability but it enables them to feel that they are an important part of their own development. And also, it takes time to develop their reflective thinking skills which is not easy process but we can guide them through it.

**Inclusive assessment** is the way how we understand our role that I believe increases efficiency. The implementation of the assessment can be differentiated according to the students' needs, interests and learning profile. It naturally develops the learning skills and leads to the student's voice being a loud and clear part of their learning experience. The evidence gathered can be used to inform parents of their child's progress and development from their child's own perspective and in alignment with the teacher's perspective. This is, in itself, valuable information both for the student and the parents.

At the end I would say that there are many tools and strategies for assessment out there and I'd like to look more closely at those tools that will encourage **inclusive assessment** – assessment **AS** learning. We can always find more about ways to implement greater student efficiency in our everyday teaching as well as co-planning our units and inquiry with our students' participation.

**The whole WORLD is a classroom with BELOUGA or  
Learn of the world with the world**

Kiro Jordanov, MA  
Primary and secondary school English language teacher



Belouga is a free educational platform that allows the students to learn English through communication with students from other countries all over the world. The platform is consisted of many aspects in the process of learning such as:

- Students' Belouga profiles;
- Impact campaigns;
- Newsfeed;
- Deep-dive series;
- Certification courses;

With a mere overview of the platform on [www.belouga.org](http://www.belouga.org) the user can easily see that the platform offers a lot both for the students and the teachers, but for the communities too.

The purpose of this article is to describe the use of the platform Belouga for educators and students alike as a way to maximize its language – learning potential in the classroom. The article is also a road map of how to use the platform to teach other 21<sup>st</sup> century skills by teaching English as a foreign language by incorporating technology into their language teaching, for both curricular and extracurricular purposes.

Its founders and the educational director love calling the platform Netflix for education.

## STARTING YOUR BELOUGA PROFILE

*Planning and preparatory activities:* Before you start your journey on Belouga it is advisable to watch a Belouga presentation and inspect the platform yourself so that it will be easier for you to present it to your students and start “swimming” in the world of online education.

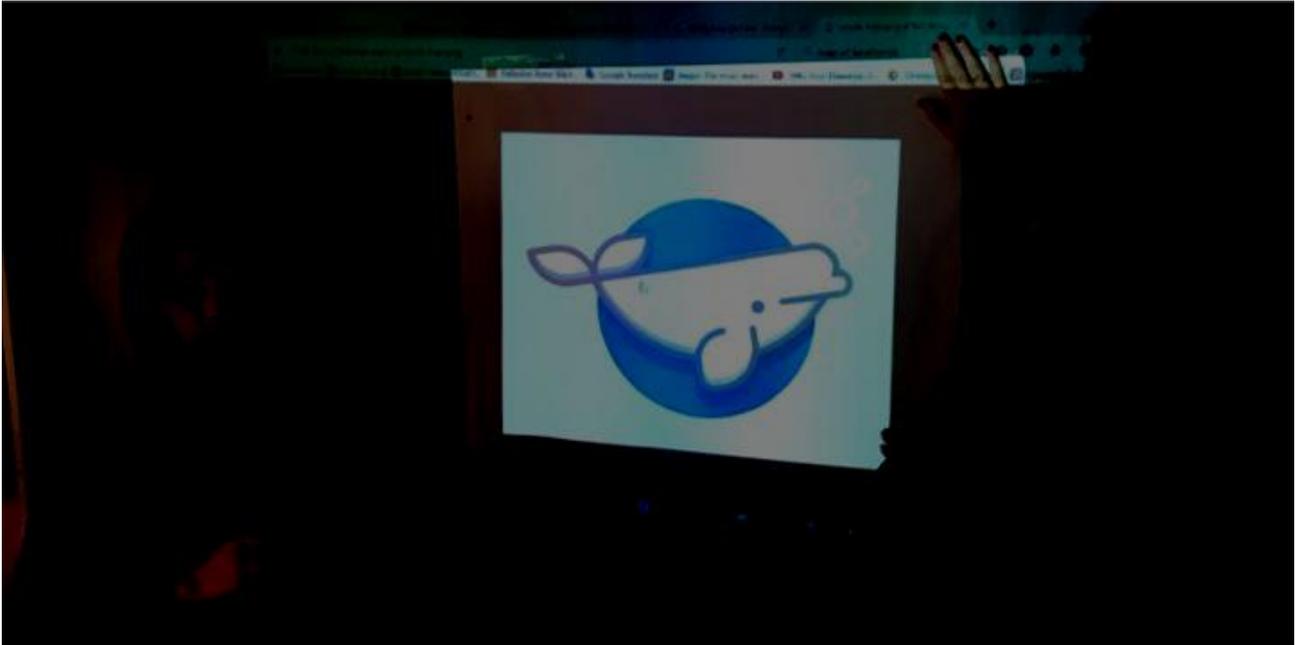
The introducing of the students on the Belouga platform should be well planned so the student don't ‘lose’ themselves on the platform by only navigating and not doing any learning. Do a well-structured lesson plan including the Belouga platform in accordance to the material you are going through at the moment.

*Signing in:* In order to be able to use the platform you have to be a teacher working in a registered school, which makes the platform a safe environment for students, unlike many other platforms or social media.

Being a teacher or a student you can make a profile on [www.belouga.org](http://www.belouga.org) by choosing the [Sign Up](#) button which will take you straight to a page where you choose the account type, whether it is a [school](#) that is registering or a [teacher](#), if the school already has an account on Belouga. As a teacher only you can register the classrooms and the students register in the classrooms you already have up and running.

With the registering on the Belouga platform and starting to use your profile, you will receive a user guide with all the necessary information and guidelines on your e-mail. Read it carefully, it will be very useful tips, tricks and an introduction to the platform.

The teachers' responsibility is to choose the schools and teachers he/she wants to connect his/her students to. The profile questions and profiles are very important here because students and classrooms are connected by the age of the students, their interests and willingness to connect.



*Swimming:*

### **Gamification**

Students create their own profiles on the classroom profile and their teachers' profiles by filling in basic information for them, after that they answer questions and by doing that they fill in their profiles in different categories: Cuisine, Culture, Environment, Family, History, Interests and School.

With the answer of each questions students present themselves and their countries' culture and at the same time earn points. They earn 5 points for each answer and 10 if they upload a photograph, if they comment on each other's answers they receive additional 10 points for each interaction. In this way students learn and reproduce their language by answering questions in English and have the feeling of playing a game by earning points with every action they make on the Belouga platform. Students love playing games, so Belouga offers them the joy of a game at the same time learning English as a foreign language, without any stress or pressure being imposed on them. After earning a certain number of points, students can interact among themselves, but what is very important, they do not interact in secret message option, but by commenting on their profiles, asking questions and feedbacks. Teachers have an insight in their communication at all times, so it is a safe way for them to communicate without the risk of insulting or hurting the feelings of other student, intentionally or unintentionally.

## **Deep-dive series**

The Belouga platform does not only serve as an online game or a social platform, even though it may seem as one to the students, it is an educational platform. The Deep-dive series is a series of successful lessons produced by teachers all over the world addressing different problems in the societies around the world like hunger, endangered species, sustainable development etc. So teachers are enabled to use Belouga as assets for the lessons they prepare and at the same time contribute or tell their stories to other teachers from all over the world.

A very important point of the Deep-dive series, or lessons placed on the Belouga platform is that they comply with and teach the 17 SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations) which is very important because, important as they are, they are not taught and looked into in the school curricula. Going from here we can see that Belouga is conscious about nature and the human habitat by teaching the youth about the importance of the sustainable development of the globe.

Whenever a lesson on the Deep-dive series is done, each student earns 50 points.

## **Newsfeed**

You have something about your life, culture or country you want to share with the world! Then put it on the Newsfeed and teachers and students from around the whole world will see it.

The Newsfeed part of Belouga will make sure that your story is told. Whether is an issue your community is struggling or something you want to boast about, a cultural event, a simple dinner with your favorite traditional food or anything you want to share with the world, or teach the world about it, post it on Belouga's Newsfeed.

## **Impact campaigns**

So what do the students do with the points they earn on their profiles, from their comments and interactions; and from their Deep dive lessons? What is this race for points?

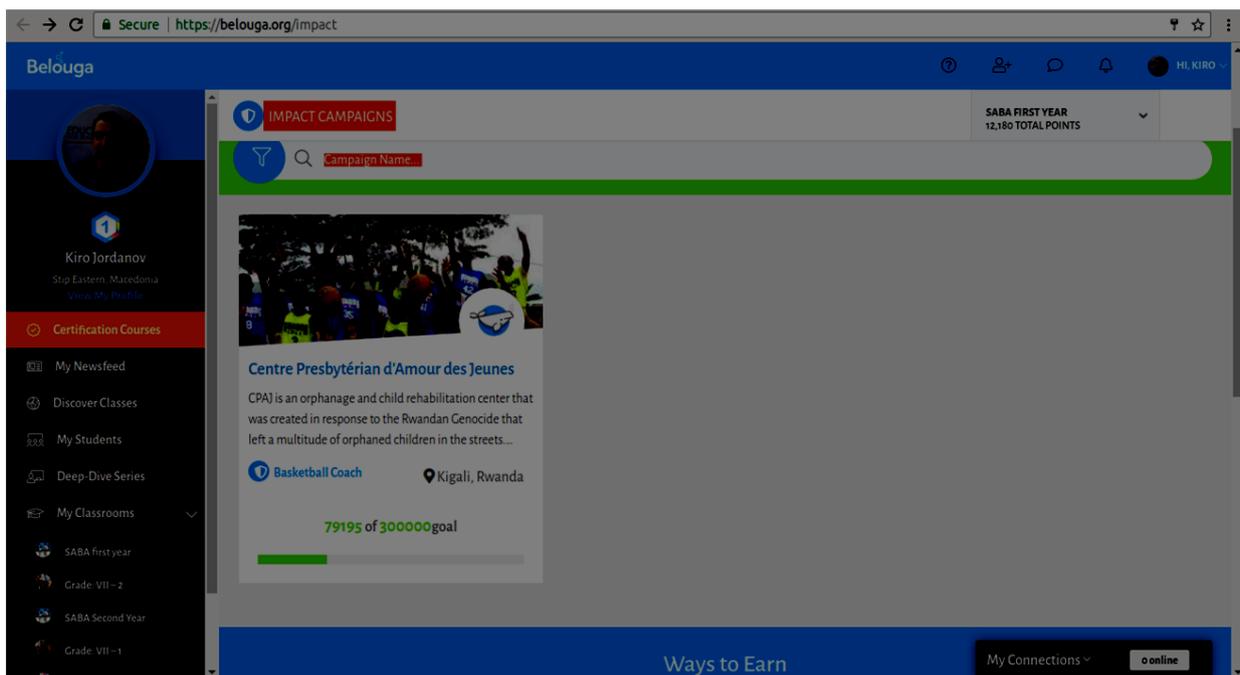
*Your students can change the world. You can change the world.*

*Your students can help other students and schools overcome obstacles and problems by giving or investing points.*

Another very important aspect of Belouga is helping schools, students or communities in need. For that purpose the Impact campaigns are launched on the platform. Whenever there is an issue a Belouga school has they can make an Impact campaign, and as the name itself tells you it is a campaign for the schools to make an impact on the school or the community.

This teaches students altruism and selflessness, which is an important trait nowadays. Students will be happy to be able to help their peers, to make a change, to make an impact on the world. Students like being able to help and change the world to the better, you will be surprised by their enthusiasm and readiness to work on the improvement of the world. Students feel important and like that feeling, the more impact they make, the more eager they get to work on the Belouga platform. This leads to better language learning and keeping their interest in meaningful studies.

*Students make an impact on the world.*

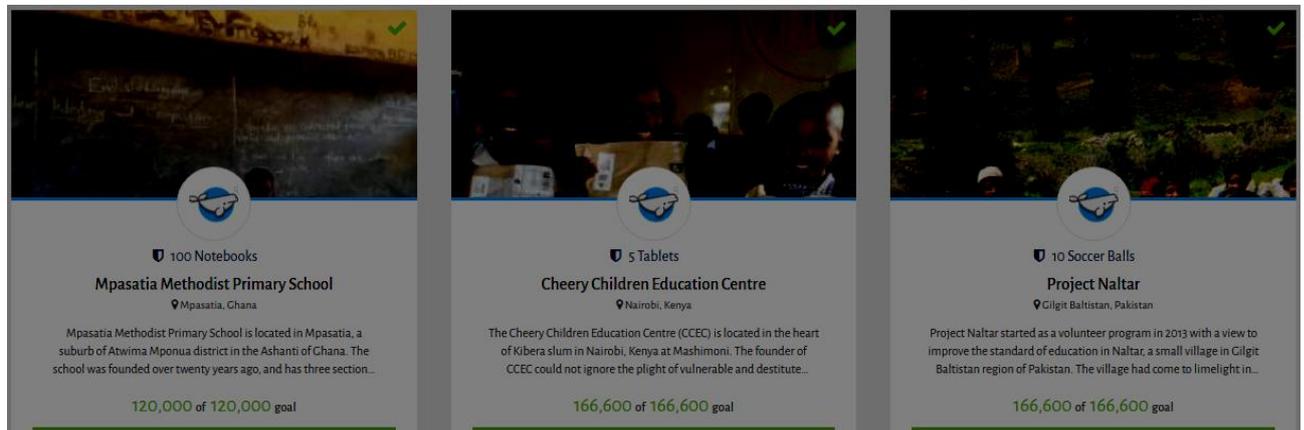


I will give you some examples.

- ⑩ My students from fourth, fifth and sixth grade helped their friends, students from Nigeria build a new classroom in their school because they had almost no conditions for learning, they didn't have any electricity in the classroom, their school was made of stones plastered with mud (most of them falling off) the windows were broken etc. My students finished an impact campaign which helped the students in Nigeria rebuild their school. After the students donate their points to an impact campaign, they can leave a note to the school, the teacher or the students they are donating to, that is a great way to show they care.
- ⑩ In another case, my student completed an impact campaign by giving points to students who had no notebook nor workbooks in Chana. The next day they organized themselves

and were collecting notebooks all over the school, giving their breakfast money to buy notebooks for friends on the other part of the world.

- ⑩ To another school in Nigeria, to Cherry educational center, my students helped receive drinking water, which they lacked, only by giving points from their Belouga profiles.



My school is preparing for launching an impact campaign at present, so let's connect if you want to give a hand!

### **Certification courses**

Teachers can benefit greatly from the Belouga platform. Professional development of the teachers is something Belouga cherishes and develops. The aspect of professional development for teachers is making sure that teachers around the world are keeping pace with the modern society and the needs of the modern teacher. In the certification area teachers can find tutorials, theoretical and practical lessons about the latest developments of education. The topics like the SDGs in education, Curiosity based learning or Global citizenship are something that is treated in the Belouga Certification Courses, and are not usually a part of the more backward educational systems, where a classical instruction is still practiced. What is very important is that these courses are certified and the teachers will receive a certificate of achievement after finishing each of them.

Being a Belouga teacher will definitely distinguish you from your colleagues, you will be a modern, up to date teacher serving the students as a connection between the school and the real world needs.

### **Why are the SDGs so important?**

The UN SDGs are the essential goals of the modern world for preserving and advancement of the planet earth and the community's people live and evolve in and around. The Belouga community is strongly connected and is evolving around the Sustainable Development Goals to which the UN countries have dedicated and which are the future of the Earth, but the curricula have not included them. Belouga teachers are committed to the future of the world.

At present, I and my students are building a sustainable city, in that way students both learn English and learn the importance of sustaining the planet, of renewable energy, they learn about economic growth and other goals the world leaders should have in mind.

The Belouga platform is both computer friendly and smartphone friendly, therefore whenever there is a bad internet connection in your classroom or there is no internet connection, you can always ask your students to take their cellphones out of their pockets and learn with their best friends, their favourite toy – their smartphones. Smartphones can be a great asset in your classroom when using Belouga, the only thing is that your Belouga class should be well organized. You can always present your Belouga classes on your projection screen and your students will follow you no matter what the condition or variation of your lesson is.