

ISSN 1857-9965



ELTAM JOURNAL

No 5

12/13 ELTAM INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Exploring and Sharing the Art of Teaching
New Challenges – New Perspectives

February, 2026

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Amidst turbulent world changes, English teachers keep together, work hard and contribute to positive professional growth.

Great thanks to the editorial board and all the contributors.

We are looking forward to our next conference.

Editor-in-chief

ARTICLES

USAGE OF METAPHOR IN TEACHING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract: There is growing research worldwide to explore effective methods using metaphor (e.g. verbal explanation, conceptual grouping, guessing strategies, pictorial clarification or TPR). Most of them are based on its for-vocabulary acquisition. This research acknowledges metaphor in that respect, but it also includes a review of the curriculum, the approved ninth grade textbook, and open-ended student and teacher questionnaires to explore formal metaphor and its informal integration into the curriculum and its pedagogical effectiveness from student and teacher perspectives. The results of the research show how the inclusion of metaphor in teaching stimulates intercultural learning, discussion and communicative activities.

1. Introduction

The concepts that govern our thought are not merely the product of the intellect. They also govern our daily functioning, down to the most mundane details. Our concepts structure what we perceive, how we navigate the world, and how we treat other people. Our ideational system thus plays a central role in defining our everyday realities. If we are right in thinking that our conceptual system is largely metaphorical, then the way we think, what we experience and what we do every day is a metaphor.

But our conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of. In most of the little things we do every day, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines. Just what these lines are is by no means obvious. One way to find out is by watching the language. Because communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an important source of evidence about what that system is like.

Research in cognitive linguistics highlights the importance of metaphor as a conceptual mechanism that enables learners to connect new linguistic forms with prior knowledge. Educational studies indicate that metaphor-based instruction can improve reading comprehension, enhance vocabulary retention, and foster creative language use. Teachers who explicitly discuss metaphorical meanings encourage students to interpret figurative language more confidently and develop flexible thinking skills. However, previous studies also show that many teachers receive limited training in teaching figurative language systematically, which results in sporadic and unsystematic use of metaphor-related activities in classrooms. Consequently, there is a need for empirical research examining how structured metaphor instruction influences learning processes in primary education.

2. Theories of the Use of Metaphor

Theories of metaphor interpretation generally fall into two broad approaches. Traditional theories propose that listeners first process the literal meaning of an expression and then reject it in order to arrive at the metaphorical meaning. In contrast, more recent direct approaches argue that listeners often understand metaphors immediately, because contextual information guides interpretation from the beginning and makes literal analysis unnecessary. A key question in this debate concerns the role of context: whether it acts only after multiple meanings have been activated or whether it restricts possible interpretations from the outset.

Several major theoretical models explain how metaphor comprehension occurs. The salience hypothesis (Giora, 1997) suggests that highly familiar or prominent meanings are activated automatically during the early stages of processing. When metaphors are familiar, both literal and metaphorical meanings may be activated, whereas unfamiliar metaphors may initially trigger only literal meanings until context directs interpretation. Research also indicates that linguistic processing and contextual processing may operate simultaneously, allowing listeners to select appropriate meanings efficiently.

Interaction theory (Black, 1962) argues that metaphor meaning emerges through the interaction between the source and target domains. The target domain functions as a filter that highlights certain characteristics of the source domain while suppressing others, enabling new meanings to arise even when no obvious similarity previously existed. Building on this idea, blending theory (Fauconnier & Turner, 1998) proposes that metaphor comprehension involves the integration of elements from both domains into a new conceptual structure or “mental space,” which may contain features not present in either domain alone.

Another influential explanation is the comparison–categorization theory (Gentner & Bowdle, 2001), which states that novel metaphors are initially understood through comparison between the two domains, whereas conventional metaphors are processed through categorization, with listeners directly accessing the relevant established meaning. Similarly, the class inclusion model (Glucksberg et al., 2001) suggests that the source domain functions as a category describing the target domain; listeners interpret metaphors by assigning the target to a category defined by the source.

Despite their differences, these theories share the assumption that metaphor comprehension requires identifying meaningful connections between source and target domains. Successful interpretation depends heavily on contextual information, shared cultural knowledge, and familiarity with the connotations associated with both domains.

3. Metaphor in learning English as a foreign language

Since metaphor functions as a cognitive instrument for observing the world and creating new senses, it is significant to introduce metaphor into language teaching. According to Ortoni (1975, p. 45)¹, “metaphors are necessary, not merely beautiful” and he explains that there are various ways in which metaphor can facilitate learning. A metaphor can convey a concept or

¹ Ortony, A. (Ed.). 1979. *Metaphor and thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

idea through a powerful image or vividness of expression. Metaphor can also capture unspoken information. What metaphor conveys is virtually impossible to express in another way without losing the meaning of the message.

In the field of cognitive linguistics, metaphor is no longer considered a mere decoration of language, but functions as a cognitive instrument. It prevails in the everyday speech of people. Language and thought are related and necessary.

Because language is fundamentally metaphorical, the ideational system that governs people's everyday speech, thinking, and even action is fundamentally metaphorical. Metaphor is considered a way of thinking or conceptualizing the world. From a cognitive perspective, metaphor functions as a "bridge" for people to gain better knowledge and understanding of new, abstract, and ill-defined concepts. Therefore, metaphor has been adopted as an analytical tool in many discourses. However, the main drawback is that "metaphors are selective and they represent a part, but not the whole, of the phenomena they describe" (Weade & Ernst, 1990, p. 133)².

4. Research Methodology

This study investigates the role of metaphor awareness in English language learning, focusing on how students recognize, understand, and interpret metaphorical language. The research examines several types of metaphorical expressions, including idioms, phrasal verbs, collocations, and cases of metaphorically motivated polysemy. Particular attention is given to the effectiveness of different learning methods, such as semantic and etymological explanations, verbal clarification, idea grouping, guessing strategies, pictorial presentation and Total Physical Response (TPR). The research primarily focuses on students' awareness and comprehension of metaphors, rather than their production in writing, as understanding is considered a prerequisite for effective use.

The study was conducted as a short-term research lasting three weeks, with two instructional hours per week. Participants included ten ninth-grade students (aged 13–14) with a solid level of English proficiency, as well as five English language teachers who contributed professional perspectives through questionnaires. The research aimed to explore how metaphor is represented in curricula and teaching materials, how students and teachers perceive metaphor in language learning and whether explicit attention to metaphor supports language comprehension and intercultural awareness.

5. Research Structure

The research consisted of three main components:

1. Curriculum analysis for the ninth grade (school year 2024/2025) in order to determine whether metaphor or metaphor-related language (idioms, collocations, figurative expressions) is explicitly included in instructional objectives and activities.

²Weade, R. & Ernst, G.. 1990. Pictures of life in classrooms, and the search for metaphors to frame them. *Theory into Practice*, 29 (2), 133-140.

2. Textbook analysis of the previously approved ninth-grade English textbook *Pet Buster* (2019/2020 edition), focusing on the presence of metaphorical expressions and the ways in which they are presented to learners.
3. Questionnaires for students and teachers, designed to gather information about metaphor awareness, teaching practices, and attitudes toward the role of metaphor in foreign language learning.

The study addressed several key research questions:

- How does metaphor as a stylistic and cognitive device support the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language?
- What instructional approaches are most effective for developing metaphor awareness?
- Does working with metaphor contribute to intercultural understanding and empathy?

To answer these questions, the following instruments were used:

- Overview and analysis of the ninth-grade curriculum;
- Review of the approved ninth-grade English textbook;
- Structured questionnaires for students and teachers.

5.1 Data Collection Procedures

5.1.1 Curriculum Analysis

The curriculum analysis examined learning objectives, recommended activities, and teaching approaches relevant to metaphorical language. Although the curriculum emphasizes vocabulary development, communicative competence, and intercultural awareness, metaphor itself is not explicitly highlighted. However, many listed activities—such as association games, mind maps, contextual vocabulary exercises, listening and speaking tasks, and creative writing activities—implicitly support the development of metaphor awareness by encouraging contextual interpretation and semantic associations.

The curriculum also promotes communicative, lexical, task-based and interactive teaching approaches, all of which create opportunities for integrating metaphor instruction even when it is not formally specified.

5.1.2 Textbook Analysis

The textbook *Pet Buster* was analyzed to determine how metaphorical expressions appear in instructional materials. The textbook consists of sixteen modules organized around grammar, vocabulary, reading, listening, and communicative tasks. Although grammar remains the central focus of each unit, numerous metaphor-related expressions are present in vocabulary sections, including idioms, phrasal verbs, collocations, proverbs, and figurative comparisons.

Examples identified include:

- Weather metaphors (e.g., *a warm welcome, an icy look*);
- Color metaphors (e.g., *a gray area, feel blue*);
- People-related metaphors (e.g., *a shoulder to cry on, a rough diamond*);
- Proverbs and fixed expressions (e.g., *early bird, silver linings*);
- Verb–noun collocations (e.g., *make a promise, do the laundry*).

The analysis indicates that metaphors are present but not systematically taught, suggesting the need for more explicit instructional attention to metaphor awareness.

5.1.3 Classroom Exploration and Questionnaires

Students participated in introductory activities designed to explore their existing understanding of metaphor. They discussed examples in both Macedonian and English, compared literal and metaphorical meanings, and identified metaphorical expressions encountered in songs, films, and online materials. These activities revealed that many students had prior familiarity with metaphorical language but lacked systematic awareness of how metaphors function.

Questionnaires were then administered to both students and teachers. Student questionnaires examined their familiarity with metaphors, sources of learning (classroom instruction, independent learning, or other subjects) and their perceptions of the usefulness of metaphors in learning English. Teacher questionnaires focused on whether metaphor is explicitly taught, how often it is used in instruction, and whether teachers believe that metaphor awareness contributes to language acquisition.

6. Research Findings

Ten ninth-grade students from “Gjorgji Sugarev” Primary School in Bitola participated in the study (three from class 9-1, three from 9-3, and two students each from classes 9-2 and 9-4). All respondents had studied English for nine years; six had excellent academic achievement and four very good. All students reported that they were familiar with the concept of metaphor, noting that they had previously studied it in Macedonian language classes in the sixth grade. Subsequent English lessons reinforced their understanding and introduced several examples of metaphorical expressions in English.

Although metaphor is not explicitly included in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages or in the national curriculum, questionnaire results showed that students are nevertheless exposed to metaphor in English classes, most often through idioms and figurative expressions. Students identified expressions such as “*I’m all ears*,” “*I don’t get it*,” and “*Beats me*,” confirming that classroom exposure as well as everyday life plays an important role in their familiarity with metaphorical language. Teacher questionnaires supported this finding: while teachers acknowledged that metaphor is not formally included in

the curriculum, some reported intentionally incorporating it into lessons, particularly when teaching idioms, because they believe it enhances learning.

During classroom activities, students initially found metaphorical meanings challenging but became increasingly interested once explanations were provided. They actively engaged in discussions by comparing English metaphors with similar expressions in Macedonian and by creating their own metaphors. When asked to complete the sentence “*Learning English is ...*,” students produced a variety of metaphorical responses such as “*a key to success*,” “*a bridge between the present and the future*,” “*a passport to new worlds*,” and “*a treasure that follows its owner everywhere*.” These responses demonstrated both comprehension of metaphorical language and the ability to apply it creatively.

Overall, the findings indicate that explicit discussion and integration of metaphor in the classroom increases student engagement, improves understanding of figurative language, and supports vocabulary learning. The results also suggest that similarities and differences between English and Macedonian metaphors can serve as a valuable resource for developing intercultural and linguistic awareness.

7. Results

The findings reveal that metaphorical expressions appear frequently in instructional materials, yet they are rarely accompanied by explicit teaching strategies. Teachers reported that metaphor explanations were often provided spontaneously rather than as part of planned activities. Students who participated in structured metaphor-awareness tasks demonstrated improved vocabulary retention and greater confidence in interpreting figurative expressions. Survey responses also indicated higher levels of engagement and participation during lessons that incorporated metaphor-based exercises compared to traditional vocabulary instruction.

The results suggest that systematic integration of metaphor-focused activities can significantly enhance learning outcomes in primary English language classrooms. Metaphor awareness supports learners in connecting linguistic forms with conceptual understanding, thereby strengthening long-term retention and communicative competence. Teacher training programs should therefore emphasize practical strategies for teaching figurative language, including guided interpretation tasks, contextualized vocabulary practice, and creative language production activities. Incorporating metaphor instruction into curriculum guidelines would further encourage consistent implementation across educational settings.

8. Conclusion

Understanding figurative language requires learners to identify the implicit connections within metaphorical expressions through inference. Encouraging students to consciously analyze metaphors, especially by comparing English and Macedonian examples, promotes both language development and critical thinking. Such analysis highlights linguistic and cultural similarities and differences, thereby fostering intercultural empathy and deeper comprehension. Research suggests that students benefit more when metaphors are taught intentionally rather

than encountered incidentally, as conscious reflection strengthens both vocabulary retention and conceptual understanding.

Although metaphor exists in all languages, not all conceptual or linguistic metaphors are shared across cultures. Exploring both shared and culture-specific metaphors enables students to recognize universal conceptual patterns while also gaining insight into cultural diversity. This cross-linguistic awareness helps anchor new vocabulary and meanings more effectively in learners' memory and supports the development of intercultural competence.

This study was conducted within a limited setting, involving a small number of students and teachers from one school, and therefore cannot be generalized broadly. Future research should include larger and more diverse participant groups and examine how metaphor awareness influences language learning outcomes across different educational contexts. Investigating the relationship between metaphor use, learner motivation, and academic success may also provide valuable insights, as metaphors play a central role in how individuals conceptualize experiences, set goals, and interpret reality.

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BILINGUALISM AMONG IDENTITY, EMOTIONS AND COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: Bilingualism as a phenomenon in a family, social, and school context deserves additional focus on sensitive aspects, i.e. to which language matrix do bilinguals feel they belong more; in which language are they freer in expressing feelings and how they establish links between the languages. In order to explore it, a micro-qualitative research was conducted, based on keeping an ethnographic diary, while the goals were:

- determining the role of bilingualism in building identity (personal, professional);
- analysing ways of verbal expression of feelings among bilinguals,
- defining communication links between the first and second languages.

From the semi-structured interviews with respondents aged 20 to 40, it was concluded that bilingualism is a key element in the personal and professional identity. Bilinguals express emotions more intensely in their native language, and in everyday life they often switch from one language to another, depending on the context of communication.

Keywords: bilingualism, identity, emotions, communication, native language, second language

Introduction

Bilingualism in the teaching process is a current pedagogical trend, as one segment of a multilingual reality worldwide. There is a growing body of evidence suggesting that there are potential benefits to individuals, schools and societies in being bilingual, e.g.:

- increased mental flexibility;
- improved inter-cultural skills;
- increased opportunities for global exchange and trade. (UNESCO, 2022)

In addition to a number of stimulating factors, which favour bilingual pedagogical solutions, there are also a multitude of stereotypes that relate to various aspects of the life and work of bilingual people, such as:

- bilingual children have a language delay;
- children get confused by hearing more than one language;
- children will automatically pick up the languages the parents speak;
- bilinguals should not mix their languages;

- being bilingual means being fully and equally fluent in two languages;
- after childhood, it's no longer possible to be a fluent bilingual.

The importance of bilingual approaches is also emphasized by UNESCO, pointing to it as a way to preserve and nurture minority languages, which are often endangered on the linguistic landscape, and sometimes even in gradual extinction. For that purpose, UNESCO promotes bilingualism as an aspect of multilingualism, which primarily enables everyone to become familiar with their mother tongue, which is key to both inclusion and linguistic and cultural diversity. Bilingualism should be a segment of long-term educational policies and strategies, taking into account a number of interesting findings about its impact on social, emotional, and cognitive levels.

In order to shed light on three aspects: emotions, communication and identity, within the framework of the course Bilingualism and Multilingualism (graduate studies at the School of Foreign Languages at UACS), micro-qualitative research based on keeping an ethnographic diary was organized according to the following aspects and sub-themes:

- *Languages and identity* (by answering questions as: how do bilingual persons experience their native language in comparison to the foreign languages they know?; do they feel a sense of "belonging" to multiple cultures through language?),
- *Languages and emotions* (replies on which language is used as the closest to expressing emotional states of love, sadness, anxiety, fear, joy, etc.?),
- *Communication and code switching* (code mixing, code switching, code and slang on social networks and video games etc.).

In addition to being a tool for communication, language is a reflection of identity, feelings, and social interaction. The language used by bilingual persons might affect how they express their emotions and view themselves, especially in social, academic, professional settings.

Methodological framework

The research conducted was of a qualitative nature, aimed at detecting feelings, attitudes, and values that bilingual people possess in their daily use of both languages. An ethnographic diary was kept in order to record all the nuances in the respondents' answers. It was conducted in the period October-November 2025.

The research objectives were oriented towards:

- determining the role of bilingualism in building identity (personal and professional) among bilingual individuals;
- analysing ways of verbal expression of feelings among bilingual individuals;
- defining communication links between the first and second languages.

The hypotheses emphasized the following expectations:

- bilingualism is a key element in the personal and professional identity of bilingual individuals;
- bilingual individuals can predominantly express emotions more easily and intensely in their first, native language;
- bilingual individuals often switch from one language to another, depending on the context of everyday, informal communication.

Semi-structured interviews were organized with 22 participants, of whom 6 were men and 16 were women, in the age category from 20 to 40 years, from several regions in the country. They

came from different professional backgrounds; such as: representatives of the IT, legal, business sectors, social science students, foreign language teachers etc., who use both Macedonian and English languages parallel in their regular daily activities.

Observations and experiences

Through semi-structured interviews with the respondents, three important aspects of bilingualism were highlighted, namely how it contributes to building identity layers (personal, ethnic, professional); what are the links between the two languages and emotional expression, and how communication styles are established among bilingual individuals.

a) Language and identity

Bilingualism and multilingualism are quickly becoming the norm in every social context. Meanwhile, the research on the participants' perception of bilingualism and multilingualism in relation to their own identity was limited due to a number of sensitive aspects (sharing personal reflections on personal, cultural, professional, ethnic identity). By using this ethnographic lens, the study investigates the language identity of bilingual participants, possible tensions between the mother-tongue and the instructional (English) language and its usage in the professional setting. The aim of this research was to find possible links of interaction between the participants' mother-tongue and English as professional language that influence the perception of participants towards their identity. Several important dilemmas guided the creation of an ethnographic diary:

- English language as an official instructional language serves as marker of the professional identity.
- Mother tongue can be tool for connection and behaviour support.
- Low conflict between personal and teacher identity is reported.
- Multilingualism is an asset, not a setback.
- Code-switching can be helpful.

Several patterns were noticed that are noteworthy to mention, such are mother tongue can be tool for connection and behaviour support, low conflict between personal and professional identity was reported, multilingualism is an asset, not a setback and code-switching can be helpful. Additionally, collecting and analysing this research data confirmed that linguistic authenticity is dependent on context.

The majority of participants acknowledged that each language had a distinct function in their life and defined their connection with Macedonian and English as balanced but context-dependent. As the national language, Macedonian was constantly presented as their go-to for daily communication and cultural identity. Because it feels the most natural and emotionally genuine, participants stated they used Macedonian mostly when interacting with friends, family, and members of their local communities.

Alongside this, English was seen as an intellectual and practical language that was primarily used for professional growth, media consumption, and college courses.

When asked participants if they agree with the following statement: *"I feel more authentically 'myself' when speaking my mother tongue."* Third of them completely agreed with it, while the other expressed a reservation about it. However, all of them associate this feeling with

their personal life and in a more private-centred situations. They are more likely to use their mother-tongue in situations such as reading to their children, interacting with family members and friends, communicating with the outside world.

These answers indicate that Macedonian and English language have different but complimentary functions in the participants' emotional and linguistic lives. Macedonian carries a sense of familiarity, comfort, and cultural belonging, and it is still closely linked to their sense of self, home, and emotional expression. English serves as a language of opportunity, self-improvement, and wider communication, even though it is not emotionally dominant.

In general, rather than being hierarchical, the connection between the two languages is dynamic. Participants see English as broadening their emotional and communicative horizons, rather than as a replacement for Macedonian. This shows us a healthy bilingual balance where both languages coexist and interact, impacting participants' communication as well as their self-perception in many social and emotional situations and contexts.

b) Language and emotions

Language and emotions are deeply intertwined, shaping how we as humans express, interpret and understand things. Through words, tone and context, language is known to give form to our inner emotional state. This also allows us to communicate joy, anger, love, fear, sadness, and many more multi-layered emotional states. At the same time, emotions influence how we use and perceive language, colouring meaning, and guiding interactions. The linguistic choices can amplify or soften emotional impact, reflecting cultural norms and identity. The crucial question was based on huge dilemma: which language feels more emotionally "yours," and why do you think that is?

Given that it is their mother tongue, the language of their upbringing, and the language they use to communicate with their family and close friends, the majority of the participants chose Macedonian as the language that feels most emotionally "theirs". Macedonian is the most natural and emotionally grounded language for self-expression, according to them, because it displays a sense of intimacy, cultural belonging, and personal identity. According to most participants, Macedonian has reclaimed its position as the language that most closely relates to their identity, even though English used to feel closer because of early literary exposure and frequent use.

Although they viewed Macedonian as the more intimate language, few participants acknowledged that both languages have emotional depth. This means that a person's emotional attachment to a language is dynamic and can change based on exposure, context, and life experiences. However, one participant chose English, arguing that early fluency and comfort in the language can occasionally result in a strong emotional association, especially when the first language use feels limited by exposure or dialect. Another participant talked about how their emotional bond with English has been strengthened by their extensive use of the language throughout their academic and personal lives. These answers imply that although emotional identity is usually dominated by one's mother tongue, strong emotional attachment to the second language can be developed through prolonged exposure and its subsequent proficiency.

These answers show how linguistic identity and emotional attachment interact in a "complicated" way. Generally speaking, Macedonian is the primary emotional language, highlighting its significance in interpersonal interactions, cultural identity, and genuine self-

expression. It is ingrained in participants' identities and serves as the foundation for their emotional experiences and communication.

However, English holds a secondary but significant place, especially for those participants who have been exposed to it from an early age on both an academic and social level. Therefore, alongside nativity, exposure, practice, and skill all influence emotional attachment to a language. In addition to feeling emotionally competent in a second language that has become essential to their education and social interactions, bilingual students also manage multiple linguistic identities, as shown by this dual emotional connection.

This study showcases that for bilingual speakers, language and emotion are tightly connected. While English is a practical and occasionally empowering tool that also presents challenges for confidence and anxiety, Macedonian offers comfort, familiarity, and genuine self-expression. English proficiency, preparation, and experience can reduce stress, but public speaking, performance pressure, and self-expectations all heighten emotional reactions. According to these answers, bilingualism is a psychosocial phenomenon rather than just a cognitive or linguistic one, with identity, life experiences, and emotional attachment all influencing which language feels "most mine" in a particular situation.

c) Communication and code switching

Code-switching can be a strategic pedagogical tool to build deeper relationships with students and provide additional clarity to the learning process. Speaking multiple languages is beneficial for all participants as it provides a socio-linguistically opportunity to swift between different perspectives which could reduce the number of misunderstandings in communication. Few teachers (as representatives of sample) in bilingual and multilingual environments in Macedonia have an adaptive approach to their linguistic self and a low conflict between the two identities. In casual conversations with friends, some participants mentioned that they frequently transition between Macedonian and English, a practice known as "code-switching." This also shows that these participants' bilingualism is an integrated language identity that changes constantly based on circumstances and emotional comfort, rather than just applying two different systems.

Both Macedonian and English are used on a daily basis by the participants; informal, personal, and emotionally intimate communication is dominated by Macedonian, while academic, professional, and digital activities primarily happen in English. While English offers expressive flexibility for specific concepts or situations, code-switching in casual conversation shows a deep integration of English into everyday speech. Macedonian is still essential for identity and emotional authenticity.

It's interesting to note that because of their extensive exposure to and schooling in English, one student stated that they "prefer English in almost all situations." We can notice a possible change in linguistic comfort, when, particularly after years of academic immersion, some bilingual speakers may begin to identify more with English as a language of fluency and self-expression. However, despite consuming a lot of English-language content online, a number of participants noted that they "rarely physically speak English." Participants still rely on Macedonian for spontaneous speech and emotional communication, which suggests that passive and active language use are not well balanced.

Conclusions

The micro-qualitative research confirmed all three hypotheses, i.e. the key role of bilingualism in the personal, family and professional lives of the participants. This also supports the emphasis on the position of the mother tongue for the free, spontaneous expression of emotions, while the second language (most often English) is a reflection of professional, formal contexts and activities, in which the cognitive component is dominant.

The participants' responses show a clear contextual distinction between the roles that Macedonian and English play in participants' lives. Macedonian continues to be the language of relationships, identity, and belonging, dominating face-to-face conversation and emotional expression. English, on the other hand, functions as a language of intelligence, media, and globalization, connected to education, technology, and cross-cultural communication.

In addition to fluency, this division demonstrates how emotional comfort and social interactions affect language choice. Socio-linguistically speaking, Macedonian is the firm foundation of culture and personal identity, while English is a "prestige" language associated with modernity and success.

Additionally, a slight conflict between authenticity and fluency was shown by the participants' responses. Even while some participants believe that their academic experience has improved their ability to communicate sophisticated ideas in English, many nevertheless choose Macedonian for informal or emotionally-influenced conversations. Reflected in this duality is the experience of bilingual people, who must continually negotiate identity and emotional depth across two linguistic systems. In the end, this data showcases that both languages coexist in complementary harmony rather than a rivalry, each playing unique but equally significant roles in influencing these students' thoughts, emotions, and interpersonal relationships.

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS VS. GENERATIVE AI, THE BIG SHOWDOWN

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND ELT IN NORTH MACEDONIA: TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES

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Abstract: The dissemination of generative AI as a tool for commercial and every-day use quickly started to sow fear amongst professionals anxiously awaiting their positions to be replaced by artificial intelligence potentially making them obsolete in the workforce in general. One of the most affected professions or callings are, without a shadow of a doubt, language teachers, and especially English language teachers, as AI is initially based on English and most of the research done via internet search engines, regardless of geography, is in English.

Walking hand-in-hand with the fear of becoming obsolete is also the dread of leaving learners with a scarce and superficial knowledge of the language for straightforward communicational purposes without the depths of intertextuality and implicational information that the English language can offer. If learners are only equipped with mere communicational learning, paying attention more to language efficiency and economy than to the endless possibilities of its expressive values, the usage boils down to a lingua franca; a means to an end, and nothing more than that.

The authors of this paper propose new ways of utilising generative AI without allowing for too much independence for lower lever learners of English in order to keep them on track with a productive language learning process.

Keywords: Generative AI, English language teaching, English language learning, obsolete profession, communicational usage, deeper language learning.

1. Introduction

Over the past decade, education, and particularly language learning, has trespassed multiple paradigm shifts. These transformations have accelerated, initially with the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by the availability of ChatGPT, at the end of 2022 as an advanced language model based on generative artificial intelligence (genAI). While the pandemic mainly transferred classes and assessment in the virtual space (Clune, 2020), the rise of genAI opened and encouraged deep discussions about the efficacy and effectiveness of the current pedagogical practices and skills needed for success in the digital world. At the same time, there was a rise

in justified fear about the dangers of embracing these tools unconditionally at the expense of critical thought (Bonfield et al., 2020; Ramirez-Montoya et al., 2022).

The spread of artificial intelligence as an everyday tool soon began to sow panic amongst professionals, including English language educators/teachers (ELT), as they anxiously await for their positions to become outdated. This concern is especially prominent amongst English language educators, as the large language models (LLMs) are mainly trained in English; though other world languages are not falling behind. An even bigger fear compared to being replaced by technology, is the danger of superficial learning and knowledge of the language amongst students, due to the fact that the AI LLMs put focus on economy and efficiency of communication, or mainly communication on a “need-to-know basis”, undermining and completely disregarding the richness of intertextuality and the expressive function of language. Should learning mainly boil down to a lingua franca for basic purposes, language itself turns simply into a tool or means of communication, and not a purpose in itself.

Nevertheless, the integration of technology in English language teaching is not a new phenomenon. Beginning with the use of the radio, television, mobile telephone apps, each new technological advancement wave has brought a new air of optimism, with a critical debate in hand (Salaberry, 2001). Researchers like Levy (2009) are accentuating that positive results in learning still mainly depend on pedagogy and teacher expertise, and not the tools themselves. Currently, in the era of education 4.0, AI is promoted as a revolutionary force. Empirical data already suggests that there have been positive effects in all language skills; from speech improvement and fluency (Liu & Hung, 2016; Madhavi et al., 2023), to an increase in grammatical correctness and lexical abundance, and writing as well (Dizon & Gayed, 2021; Song & Song, 2023).

While empirical research increasingly documents the effects of AI on learner performance, considerably less attention has been paid to teachers’ beliefs, perceived readiness, and classroom practices, particularly in smaller educational systems. Understanding teacher cognition is critical, as pedagogical integration of AI ultimately depends not on technological affordances alone, but on teachers’ perceptions, readiness and current classroom practices. This study, therefore, aims to examine the beliefs and practices of English language teachers in North Macedonia regarding generative AI, with the goal of ensuring the basis for future professional growth and development of the educational programmes.

2. Literature Review: AI in ELT

Computerised, mobilised and AI-assisted language activities are not new in the ELT field (e.g., Barreta and Maritza, 2018; Yang and Kyan, 2022). Each technological trend has brought a surge of scientific papers usually serving several purposes. Some papers’ goal is to inform ELT teachers of novel tools, to highlight pedagogical and research possibilities that new technological developments have opened up, to survey ELT teachers and students about their use and preference regarding new tools, to explore how novel tools affect autonomous second language learning, and/ or to test scientifically whether new tools improve learning outcomes (Garett, 1991). Discussion about how facilitative or detrimental such technological innovations

are for language learning also abound in the literature. While some researchers have argued that L2 pedagogy has to take advantage of new technological tools (e.g, Dunkel, 1987), others have been more skeptical and called for a more objective and critical analysis of the correlation between increased technological sophistication and pedagogical effectiveness (Salaberry, 2001). In his review of the use of technology (radio, television, VCR, computers, mobile phones) for second language learning, Sallabery (2001) critically analyzes articles that proposed pedagogical use of technological resources published since 1916 in the *Modern Language Journal*. He cautions against the overly enthusiastic acceptance of new technologies and encourages their critical examination urging researchers and practitioners to examine the pedagogical value of such tools. He brings to light several important issues: (a) that technological advances are revolutionary but they do not always guarantee pedagogical benefits, (b) each technological wave spurs optimism, debate and a surge of research albeit with limited or flawed methodology, (c) a large number of the findings regarding the effectiveness of the use of novel learning tools are impressionistic rather than empirically grounded, i.e., evidence for the effectiveness of a particular new tool comes from teachers and students' subjective preferences, and (d) the use of new technologies does not always serve a pedagogical purpose and hence its use is not always justifiable. This perspective is also reflected in Levy (2009) who demonstrated that meaningful learning outcomes across all language skills still primarily hinge on pedagogy, teacher expertise and learning training rather than on the learning tools themselves. In Garrett's (1991) words, 'technology should serve language learning and not vice versa'. While each technological wave has promised to revolutionise and transform language learning experience and efficiency the central debates remain the same: efficacy, learner autonomy and pedagogical alignment. It is wise to take this historical perspective into account whenever faced with a new technological boom that promises once again magic-type solutions to all educational issues pertaining to language learning.

In the current era of Industry 4.0 and Education 4.0 the prophesied revolutioniser of language learning is AI and we are witnessing the same pattern: a growing body of research attempting to document and statistically measure AI's impact on second language learning. This section, therefore, provides a brief overview of existing findings of empirical ELT-AI research. For clarity, the review will be organised around the four language skills.

2.1 AI in Speaking

Empirical studies exploring how AI technology impacts learners' speaking performance either focus on overall speaking performance, or specific sub-skills such as pronunciation or fluency. For instance, Yang and Kyun (2022) conducted a systematic review of 25 studies on AI-supported learning published from 2007 to 2021 and revealed that for the skill of speaking, pronunciation was the most common subskill being researched, followed by pedagogy and technology. This review reflects the general findings of recent empirical studies that while AI has been found to improve speaking performance, the emphasis of individual papers has varied: some found gains in fluency and pronunciation, while others in self-reported motivation and engagement.

For example, Liu and Hung (2016) used AI generated spectrograms showing a visual representation of the pitch significantly improved participants' pronunciation by reducing the flatness of pitch and intonation patterns. In another study, high-school pupils were instructed to memorise unknown vocabulary with two pronunciation teaching methods. It was revealed that the group that received AI speech recognition teaching and practice retained the new vocabulary longer than the one which had a simple phonetic alphabet pronunciation practice (Kazu and Kuvvetli, 2023).

Madhavi et al. (2023) also investigated whether information and communication technology (ICT) and AI tools can improve students' speaking skills. An experiment with 100 participants was conducted: 50 were in an ICT group and 50 in a non-ICT group. Participants received 60 hours of training either with ICT and AI tools or with traditional methods. ICT and AI tools included films with subtitles, YouTube videos, mobile apps, and a speech-recognition software. Pre-training to post-training results demonstrated that the ICT and AI group outperformed their peers across all speaking parameters. Namely, the ICT group demonstrated higher gains in vocabulary, fluency, grammar, pronunciation and expressive ability with improvements around 70-78% compared to 50% in the non-ICT group. The authors conclude that students' communicative competence can be improved by integrating ICT and AI tools which address linguistic, social and affective barriers to speaking. Similarly, Minguan et al. (2025) explored how Liulishuo, an AI-powered mobile application, impacts undergraduate EFL students' speaking performance. A 10-week quasi-experimental study revealed that using the AI application significantly improved participants' speaking performance, in particular pronunciation and fluency. Gains in vocabulary and grammar did not reach significance.

In terms of novel pedagogical avenues, Dizon and Tand (2020) demonstrated that AI could be used as a conversational partner, or a coach in a self-directed, out-of-class autonomous second language learning. In their study learners conversed with Alexa, a personal voice assistant, for two months and self-reported that using Alexa was fun, easy to use, effective for learning and useful for lowering anxiety. Usage patterns also revealed that participants' engagement was limited suggesting a discrepancy between reported and actual usage. When participants were faced with technical and comprehension problems they had a tendency to abandon the conversation, rather than attempt repair. However, as Salaberry (2001) cautions, self-reported efficacy of new technological tools has certain limitations and does not provide reliable proof of pedagogical benefits.

2.2 AI in Writing

Early research on how AI can facilitate L2 writing focuses on AI-driven grammar checkers such as Grammarly. In general, studies have found a positive learning effect of such treatments in comparison to more traditional ones. For example, Dizon and Gayed (2021) conducted a counterbalanced study with 31 EFL students to investigate how Grammarly impacted mobile L2 writing. Participants alternated between using Grammarly (experimental condition) or not

(control) for completing their writing assignments. Results demonstrated that Grammarly-assisted writing tasks in higher education had significantly fewer grammatical errors and greater lexical richness, but limited effects on fluency and syntactic complexity. The authors recommend that AI-powered writing assistant with synchronous corrective feedback and predictive text can help ease the cognitive burden L2 students often encounter and can also aid with writing with better accuracy and greater lexical variety. Building on this research, Dizon and Gayed (2024) conducted a systematic review of 24 peer-reviewed studies on Grammarly published between 2009 and 2023. One finding was that research has expanded since 2021, with a main focus on university learners in Asian educational contexts.

Similarly, Nazari et al. (2021) conducted a randomised controlled experiment investigating the effect of AI-powered writing assistant (Grammarly Premium) on 120 graduate ESL students' academic writing. The experiment consisted of two groups: an experimental one using Grammarly and a control group without AI support. Results showed that the Grammarly group not only produced more accurate texts but also reported higher levels of engagement and motivation, demonstrating that AI grammar checkers may also foster learners' self-efficacy and willingness to write in L2.

More recent studies have moved beyond grammar checkers and have explored how generative AI writing tools impact L2 writing. Unlike static grammar checkers, generative AI (GAI) serves as a "digital tutor" or co-writer, offering possibilities for brainstorming, structuring, and stylistic refinement. For instance, Fitria (2023) examined the use of ChatGPT in writing English essays, noting that it significantly aids students in organising their thoughts and generating coherent outlines, though she cautions that human oversight remains essential for factual accuracy. Similarly, Barrot (2023) discussed the 'pitfalls and potentials' of ChatGPT, highlighting that while it can democratise access to high-quality writing support, it also poses risks regarding academic integrity and the potential loss of a student's unique authorial voice if used without critical pedagogical scaffolding. For example, Song and Song (2023) investigated the effects that ChatGPT had on university students' academic writing and motivation, and found significant gains in students' organisation, coherence, grammar, vocabulary and motivation. Fifty EFLT undergraduates were either assigned to the ChatGPT-assisted group or to the traditional instruction group. The experimental group used AI both in class and home and received real-time AI feedback on grammar vocabulary, organisation, and coherence. The control group received teacher-led instruction and feedback, but without AI tools. Results from IELTS writing tasks and a writing motivation scale revealed that the AI-assisted group significantly outperformed the control group for overall writing, organisation and coherence, language use, and motivation.

While these studies point to a beneficial impact of AI tools, both corrective and generative, on L2 writing, when used with appropriate scaffolding, they did not investigate the long-term learning and generalisation effects. A recent study sheds light on this issue. Namely, Fan et al. (2025) found that ChatGPT can significantly improve academic writing essay scores, even at times outperforming groups guided by human experts. However, no significant differences were discovered regarding knowledge gain or transfer, suggesting that while ChatGPT can

improve short-term task performance, it may not foster intrinsic motivation or long-term learning outcomes.

2.3 AI in Listening

Compared to speaking and writing, fewer empirical studies have examined the impact of AI on learners' listening comprehension. For example, Alrasheedi (2024) used a quasi-experimental design with 100 university students split into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group practiced listening comprehension using Duolingo and AI chatbot, while the control received traditional instruction. Results showed that the experimental group scored significantly higher in all listening comprehension sub-skills: literal, critical, inferential, and creative comprehension, with large effect sizes. In a different context, Xiao (2025) conducted a longitudinal randomised controlled experiment with 84 participants to investigate the impact of AI-driven speech recognition on listening comprehension, flow, and anxiety. Over an 8-week intervention the experimental group practiced with Google text-to-speech technology which provided real-time speech-to-text transcription of the listening passages together with immediate feedback, while the control one practiced without AI. Results from the IELTS listening tests demonstrated that the experimental group achieved substantial improvements in listening scores, and reported lower anxiety and greater immersion, which was sustained during the post-testing after three weeks. These results suggest that AI can support listening comprehension by providing a scaffold during practice, but can also boost learners' affective states by reducing anxiety and foster group immersion. Finally, AI has also been found to improve listening comprehension in self-study contexts (Chaikovska et al. 2024).

2.4 AI in Reading

Research on AI in reading has mainly demonstrated a positive effect on vocabulary acquisition, reading comprehension, self-regulation, and engagement. The progress of technology has also been evident in the teaching and practicing the skill of reading. Technological advances have enabled various software applications (iStart, McNamara et al. 2006; 3D-Readers, Johnson-Glenberg 2007; Read-ToMe, Hwang et al. 2020), Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITSs) and intelligent computer-assisted language learning (ICALL) to enter the L2 classroom. Studies have demonstrated that these softwares have a positive impact on learners' reading comprehension through provision of targeted instruction in metacognitive and cognitive strategies and extensive practice (e.g., Golan et al., 2018). While human instruction occasionally makes use of these sophisticated strategies, Elleman et al. (2022) point out that teachers' use of such strategies is often infrequent and inconsistent due to limited knowledge and insufficient classroom time. Results from a recent study (Shafiee Rad 2025) showed that longitudinal use of AI platforms for reading (Read-ToMe) led to increasing learners' reading comprehension, self-regulation, and engagement than the more traditional methods. This platform had various beneficial features that could be utilised. For instance, text-to-speech feature, built-in dictionary, compulsory comprehension questions, level adaptation, personal

reading goals, immediate feedback on reading speed and accuracy, rewards, as well as personalised reading experience.

So far, research has mainly demonstrated that AI-assisted instruction positively impacts L2 vocabulary and general reading comprehension. Studies have shown that there is a significant improvement in learners L2 vocabulary when (a) AI-assisted reading with target vocabulary density has been manipulated with AI-assisted reading (Cao and Xu 2025), (b) texts are tailored to students proficiencies (Heilman et al. 2010), (c) vocabulary is repeatedly used through an AI game-based practice (Jackson et al. 2015), and (d) intelligent tutoring and ICALL systems were used to train learners in comprehension strategies and vocabulary gains were a by-product (McCarthy et al. 2020).

Two recent meta-analyses have also singled out vocabulary as the most frequently targeted skill in AI-assisted L2 learning. Providing additional support, studies utilising AI for L2 learning most often reported gains in vocabulary and comprehension, even though they remain limited to short-term interventions (Yang and Kyun 2020; Went and Chiu 2023).

2.5 Interim summary

Overall, empirical research on AI in ELT shows potential to facilitate language learning across language skills, although its impact varies depending on the skill, context, and pedagogical implementation. In speaking, AI-powered tools such as speech recognition systems, sound waves, and conversational agents have positively influenced learners' pronunciation, fluency, and motivation (Liu & Hung, 2016; Kazu & Kuvvetli, 2023; Madhavi et al., 2023; Mingyan et al., 2025). In writing, both corrective and generative AI applications such as Grammarly and ChatGPT, have yielded significant improvements in grammatical accuracy, lexical richness, coherences, and self-efficacy. Researchers point to the fact that learners and teachers alike, should be aware of over-reliance on AI and its detrimental effects on knowledge formation (Nazari et al., 2021; Song & Song, 2023; Fan et al., 2025). With respect to listening, there have been fewer studies, but those available point to a positive association between AI-based platforms and chatbots and learners' comprehension, anxiety, and engagement (Alrasheedi, 2024; Xiao, 2025; Chaikovska et al., 2024). Similarly, research on reading highlights that adaptive AI tutoring systems and personalised feedback consistently improve learners' vocabulary acquisition, comprehension, and self-regulation (Heilman et al., 2010; Shafiee Rad, 2025). When integrated thoughtfully and when pedagogically-justified, AI can serve as an ally of learning.

While much of the existing research documents how AI can support learners, there is still limited research on the extent to which English language teachers are familiar with the concept of AI and how they perceive and experience AI in their own geographical and pedagogical context. In smaller educational systems such as Macedonia, understanding teachers' familiarity, beliefs and actual classroom practices is a crucial first step towards developing meaningful professional development training and support. It is therefore the purpose of this paper to

survey ELT teachers and understand their beliefs and practices regarding AI in Macedonia, with the aim of documenting the current pedagogical situation, as well as providing an informed foundation for future education and curriculum development.

3. Methodology

3.1 Respondents

The respondents in this study were 37 English language teachers in Macedonia (2 males and 35 females). Email invitations containing the survey link were sent to state schools and private language schools, with a request that the questionnaire be forwarded to English language teachers. Participation was voluntary, and 37 teachers completed the survey. The majority of respondents were experienced language teachers with over 10 years of teaching experience (86.5%), followed by teachers with 5 to 8 years of teaching experience (8.1%). Only 5.4% of respondents had less than 4 years of teaching experience. A percentage of 75.5 of the respondents taught face-to-face, while only 24.3% taught both online and face-to-face. Participants also came from a diverse geographical as well as pedagogical context. Most of the participants came from the capital city Skopje, followed by Bitola, Ohrid, and Veles. In terms of where they teach, state schools were the most common (59.9%), followed by private schools (18.9%), private English language schools (10.8%), higher education (5.4%), and other (5.4%). Respondents were equally involved in teaching ages 11-13 (27%) and 14-18 (27%), followed by ages 5-10 (16.2%), and university students (5.4%). 24.3% of the respondents selected “other” and further elaborated that they usually teach a broader span of ages.

3.2 Instrument

The questionnaire used in this study was taken and adapted from the British Council report (Edmett et al., 2023). The instrument included both closed-ended and open-ended questions structured around four dimensions: (1) familiarity with AI tools, (2) beliefs about the benefits and limitations of AI for the language skills, (3) current use of AI in their teaching and assessment, and (4) professional development needs. Closed-ended questions included five-point Likert scale items where respondents indicated their endorsement level from strongly disagree to strongly agree, as well as “click all that applies” questions. Open-ended items invited respondents to further elaborate on their views and practices.

3.3 Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed online. Participants were informed that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary and posed no foreseeable risks. Prior to providing informed consent, respondents were also informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

3.4 Data Analysis

The collected data was analysed using a descriptive mixed-method approach. The quantitative items were analyzed using descriptive statistics, i.e., frequency counts and percentages. Because of the small sample size, the focus was on pattern identification rather than inferential statistics. Open-ended questions were thematically analysed by both authors.

4. Results

4.1. Familiarity with AI and tools used

Results indicated that just under half of the respondents were slightly familiar with AI (43.2%), followed by moderately familiar (32.4%), not at all familiar (13.5%), and very familiar (10.8%), suggesting a moderate familiarity overall.

In terms of AI-powered tools that respondents used, the most popular were the language learning apps (40.5%), language generation AI (40.5%), and chatbots (18.9%). Speech recognition software (16.2%), automated assessment and grading (13.5%), and text-to speech tools (8.1%) were chosen by fewer respondents. A significant percentage of respondents reported that they did not use any of the suggested AI tools. In addition to the tools listed, some respondents indicated that they use particular classroom oriented platforms such as Twee and MagicSchool, which use AI for lesson design and content creation, and Kahoot, Baamboozle, and Edpuzzle incorporate AI for feedback or learning analytics.

4.2. Teachers' Beliefs

The next section in the questionnaire asked respondents to rate 13 Likert-scale items statements about AI in ELT on a five-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree and two additional closed-ended items (See Appendix A).

Table 1

Teachers' Beliefs about AI's Impact on Improving English Skills (N = 37)

| Skill | M | SD | % Agree/Strongly Agree |
|-----------|------|------|------------------------|
| Speaking | 3.90 | 0.79 | 64.8 |
| Writing | 4.00 | 0.73 | 70.3 |
| Listening | 4.14 | 0.71 | 78.4 |
| Reading | 4.08 | 0.74 | 75.7 |

Note. Percentages represent the proportion of teachers selecting each category on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

Table 2

Teachers' Beliefs about AI's Role in English Language Teaching (N = 37)

| Belief Statement | M | SD | % Agree/ Strongly Agree | % Neutral | % Disagree/ Strongly Disagree |
|---|-----|-----|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Learners should write without AI tools. | 3.6 | 0.9 | 75.6 | 18.9 | 5.4 |
| AI can plan effective lessons. | 3.9 | 0.8 | 59.5 | 24.3 | 16.2 |
| AI is more useful for ELT than other subjects. | 3.4 | 0.9 | 43.9 | 40.5 | 15.6 |
| By 2035, AI will replace teachers. | 2.6 | 0.8 | 13.5 | 40.5 | 46.0 |
| AI makes language learning unnecessary. | 2.3 | 0.7 | 10.8 | 16.2 | 73.0 |
| Worried about AI's impact on teaching roles. | 3.1 | 0.9 | 32.4 | 27.0 | 40.6 |
| AI negatively impacts learners' ability to improve English. | 2.6 | 0.8 | 21.6 | 45.9 | 32.4 |
| Teachers have received enough AI training. | 2.4 | 0.8 | 13.5 | 24.3 | 62.1 |

Note. Percentages represent the proportion of teachers selecting each category on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree).

4.3. Teachers' needs

Table 3 shows the professional development areas the teachers expressed interest in. The most frequently selected area was *workshop on how to use AI tools* (n = 14), followed closely by *how to tailor instructional material to different levels of EL learners* (n = 12). Moderate interest was shown in *how to create exams with AI* (n = 6), while fewer teachers indicated a need for training in *how to grade using AI* (n = 3) or *how to write lesson plans with AI* (n = 1). Overall, the results suggest that teachers prioritise general familiarity with AI tools and adapting instruction to diverse learners over more specific AI-integrated teaching tasks such as grading or lesson planning.

Table 3

| Professional Development Area | Count |
|---|-------|
| Workshop on how to use AI tools | 14 |
| How to tailor instructional material to different levels of EL learners | 12 |
| How to create exams with AI | 6 |
| How to grade using AI | 3 |
| How to write lesson plans with AI | 1 |

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Overall, the findings of the present study suggest that Macedonian teachers' beliefs and practices largely reflect global trends, while also revealing specific local challenges associated with integrating AI in smaller educational systems.

The reported levels of familiarity suggest that teachers' engagement with AI remains moderate rather than advanced. While most respondents indicated that they were either slightly or moderately familiar with AI tools (75.6%), only 10.8% reported being very familiar. This pattern suggests that AI has entered teachers' professional awareness; however, their familiarity may still be largely surface-level.

The most remarkable conclusion from Table 1 is the average number of teachers who believe that AI has positive effects on all four language skills, where listening and reading have scored the highest. This could suggest that Macedonian teachers are familiar with the AI tools as powerful aids in receptive skills, which correlates to the research done Alrasheedi (2024) and Xiao (2025), proving that the AI platforms seem to be lowering anxiety and improving listening immersion.

In writing ($M = 4.00$), teachers expressed considerable confidence in the usefulness of tools such as Grammarly and ChatGPT for improving linguistic accuracy, consistent with Dizon and Gayed (2021). However, a notable discrepancy emerges in Table 2: despite recognising AI's benefits for writing, 75.6% agreed that students should write without AI tools. This tension may reflect concerns about what Fan et al. (2025) term "metacognitive laziness," whereby excessive reliance on generative AI could undermine the long-term internalisation of knowledge and the development of independent proficiency.

Contrary to the concerns regarding professional obsolescence raised earlier in the paper, the findings indicate strong professional confidence among Macedonian teachers. Only 13.5% agreed that AI makes language learning unnecessary. This finding is key due to the fact that it accentuates the human component in ELT. As Salaberry (2001) argues, technological waves often generate optimism and disruption, yet pedagogical effectiveness ultimately depends on the teacher. In this study, AI is largely perceived as a productivity-enhancing tool (e.g., for lesson planning, $M = 3.9$) rather than as a substitute for the teaching process itself. Nevertheless, the fact that 32.4% of teachers reported concern about their future professional role warrants careful consideration and further investigation.

Perhaps the most critical finding concerns the perceived deficit in professional training felt by Macedonian teachers. While teachers have positive beliefs for the potential of AI, up to 62.1% stated that they have not received any or enough training. This gap highlights a challenge and stands in contrast to the expectations associated with Education 4.0.

Teachers' professional development interests further reflects this finding. The strongest demand was for practical workshops on how to use AI tools, followed by interest in personalising

instructional materials for learners at different proficiency levels (Heilman et al., 2010). Notably, fewer respondents expressed interest in AI-assisted grading or lesson planning, suggesting that teachers are not seeking automation of their professional responsibilities, but rather pedagogically grounded guidance for integrating AI meaningfully into their practice.

In conclusion, data suggests that the ELT sector in Macedonia is in a state of transition. There is a high cognitive acceptance of AI (positive beliefs), but very low technical implementation due to systemic and systematic scarcity of preparatory activities in education. Instead of a "big showdown" between the teachers and AI, the results are pointing at the need for symbiosis, where AI would take over administrative and technical load, leaving room for the teacher to focus on deeper language and intercultural values that technology can and probably will not be able to replicate.

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**ELT METHODOLOGIES IN OTHER FIELDS:
STUDENTS' MUTUAL ASSESSMENT – TOOL FOR DEEPENING LEARNING, CO-
CONSTRUCTION OF KNOWLEDGE, CRITICAL THINKING AND TAKING
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE LEARNING -
THE CASE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION UNDERGRADUATE CLASS**

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Abstract: Students' mutual assessment has been a successful methodological tool, and it can be employed in various higher education courses. This research presents the empirical process of implementation of students' mutual assessment, as well as the research outcomes from survey conducted with students participating in the course Business Communication, undergoing mutual assessment.

1. Introduction

Teaching methodologies have been highly disregarded in higher education because of different factors. The first reason is that specialization of teaching staff usually goes into professional fields, having the burden of producing research work in the corresponding field. While research is very important and contributes towards knowledge, recognition and fulfilling required criteria, methods for transferring that knowledge to students are often neglected. Very few of the teaching staff are familiar with teaching methodologies and end up having dry teacher-centered classrooms. Of course, incorporating case studies, in-classroom discussions and research projects are considered the golden teaching standard of the higher education classroom, but in reality, things do not seem as simple in practice.

2. Reasons for neglecting/ignorance of teaching methodologies in other fields

Teaching methodologies are usually covered in undergraduate studies with teaching directions, as required by law – psychology, pedagogy and teaching methodology courses are usually covered in-house (different higher-education schools and directions for teachers). Consequently, a lot of disciplines like economy, law, political studies, electrical engineering etc., as well as other applied directions, do not incorporate teaching instruction and teaching staff in those areas in secondary and elementary schools are obliged to take these required exams at schools of pedagogy, which often offer them as supplementary qualifications.

However, these requirements are confined to state regulated teaching posts (elementary and secondary school teachers), while teachers in higher education do not have any such obligation. No teaching position in higher education – TA, assistant, associate or full professor – requires having any kind of teaching methodology training by law.

University or college management staff are usually aware of this shortcoming and organize teaching methodology PD workshops and alike, but these are rarely obligatory and not many of the higher education teaching staff are interested in attending, usually having their reasoning that they are dealing with adult students.

3. Higher education students as young adults

The ‘clients’ of higher education are usually students aged 18/19-22/23. Apparently, when they enter the higher-education system, they are still in their teens and suggesting that we are dealing with adult full-grown persons is most of the time wrong. As a first/second year college language instructors, we can responsibly claim that we are also dealing with childhood remnant personality features, which need to be attended to (we are not psychologists, just offering our observations here). Catering to their curiosity and involvement has been the greatest challenge, having also in mind the distractions of new technology (mostly smart phones), which we have to ‘fight’. Therefore, employing teaching methodologies that encompass creativeness and visual representations (drawing, wall tests, etc.), digital tool technologies (interactive learning LMSs), as well as kinesthesia (movement) in the classroom seems to be crucial for keeping their attention and motivation.

On the other hand, the term *young adults*, highlighting the word ‘adult’, suggests that students should be given greater responsibility in their own learning, co-construction of knowledge and critical thinking. Of course, a greater burden is born by the instructor with the task to design the course syllabus, select textbook and additional materials, set the learning objectives and expose students to as much of content relevant variety, but students’ opinions and discussion are very important as well. Focusing on topics like ethical working, diversity and discrimination cases sometimes makes it difficult for students to come to their own understanding and accepting of preferred ‘by-the-book’ case outcomes, especially when living in a certain culture governed by slightly different rules and prevailing opinions. Their co-managerial role in a course plays a very important role, as well as their accepting of this role, having in mind they have seldomly been offered this opportunity in the strict framework of the previous obligatory education (elementary and secondary).

Mutual assessment has been one teaching methodology combining the two approaches to students who are starting their adulthood, but also bearing teen features.

4. Mutual assessment research – the case of a business communication higher education course

The mutual assessments process includes students having blind mutually assessing each other's tests, with multiple choice questions and partly open-ended questions, open for discussion and various interpretations during the assessment, but also open to mutual co-construction of knowledge by agreement and negotiation of the correct answer. Correct answers are not always black-and-white solutions where one answer excludes other options. Teacher's open-mindedness, flexibility and ability to differentiate between foolishness (e.g. having green hair as a sign of diversity in the workplace) or giving acclamation for peculiar answers students are able to defend and prove, is crucial.

The process is moderated by the teacher – it is not the case where students are given the freedom to mark any answer according to their own will – but teachers as moderators instigate debate and challenge (un)acceptance of student answers. Basically, students challenge themselves given the opportunity that their voice be heard.

The process and features of the mutual assessment

- Blind review

Written tests have their title pages removed, carrying the identification data (name and ID), and students are basically 'in the dark' about whose test they are checking. This is usually done with bigger groups to prevent bias among students. Students tend to be more lenient to the classmates they are friends with and the other way round – classmates they do not interact with socially.

Previous experience has shown that employing self-assessment can be reliably done autonomously with smaller groups of students. Autonomously means that each student in smaller groups (up to 7 or 8 students) can be given their own test to check without employing secrecy. These students tend to be even more self-critical regarding checking of their answers. In our whole career of 20 years now, only 1 student is registered to have lied with checking (adding points for incorrect questions), which was of course noted and reprimanded.

- Red pens

Students are given red pens to mark points or correctness of a test question. Students are told to put themselves in the shoes of the teacher and take the grading seriously. Red pens amplify this role, giving students a sense of importance and seriousness based on their experience and traditional marking. Additionally, using the red color impacts students' emotional well-being, psychological states and self-esteem (Klubnichkina et al., 2024).

- Serial focusing on questions

The teacher leads the students to focus on questions in a serial order, meaning one by one. When attention is kept on one question, students try to discern the correct answer, and sometimes

debate and critical thinking arise at these points. Jumping from question to question and discussing different questions with different students at the same time brings about chaotic behavior and confusion, as well as split focus, which are very difficult to be managed in-class.

- Test questions – devising and checking

The best questions are constructed around having more or open choices. For example, having multiple choice questions with three choices (a, b, c) with instruction that there can be more than one correct answer, makes students delve deeply into critical thinking. Some of the offered answers can be partially excluding (logics functions AND, OR) and some questions can be ‘personal’. What ‘personal’ means that if one student can prove and defend why certain choice of offered answer is correct and legitimate (often drawing on their personal experience; sometimes even rendering the teacher ignorant that that option even exists), it will be accepted, but also the different answers of the other students, most often ‘following the book’ or their other personal experiences will be accepted as well. Shortly, no ‘one-fits-all’ approach is applied. Points are accepted and summed based on how well a student is familiar with the material and can refer critically to it.

E.g. Barriers to effective listening are (3 pts)

a) physical discomfort b) split focus c) multitasking

With essay and/or open-ended questions this process is self-evident. Students have the freedom to critically assess their classmates’ answers and assign points based on their estimated value of the question.

E.g. Define communication barriers and discuss which ones bear greater significance. (5 pts)

We, in class, together as a group, discuss what could the correct answer be, how many and which examples for communication barriers should be given, and afterwards the outcome of the discussion should be taken as a milestone for checking correctness of the answers. It is then left to the student to decide how many of the 5 points should be allotted based of the presented answer. Some students need help with deciding when they are not prepared or interested enough, some need help when facing confusing answers, but the majority of the students get the gist of the checking after the second question and accept the responsibility of their role as assessors/teachers. Very few refuse the responsibility to decide claiming the role bears too big a burden for them.

- Counting points

Students are left to count the points and sum them up by group of exercises or grand total. They mark the points on the test itself. They are asked to be careful. It rarely happens that a student would add more points for a wrongly answered question – most of the time students are critical enough, which is probably the effect of the ‘teacher’ role they are assigned regarding responsibility.

- Reattaching title pages to the tests and giving back to owner-students to review checking

After the tests are checked, the title pages are reattached to the correct tests. NOTE: the teacher needs to have a marking system of both title pages and remaining pages so that no mistakes are made. Then tests are given back to students to review the outcomes of checking. Students go back to the questions, see how they are checked, confirm with teacher and/or classmates for a particular question, and come to the teacher with any issues they have. Usually, there are mistakes in counting, rarely students disagree how a given question was graded. Students need to prove to teachers and their classmates why they should be given more points to a certain question, and the majority of other students have to agree.

Research - Survey of student's opinion on mutual assessment

At the end of the course, students were given an anonymous survey with 8 multiple choice questions with 5-point Likert scale answers (I completely agree; I partially agree; I neither agree nor disagree; I mostly disagree; I completely disagree) and one open-ended question to fill in.

Anonymity was used to ensure honest answers – some of the students might fear repercussions from the teacher if they show disagreement.

Results

One class of students taking Business Communication in their second year of studies took the survey, 16 students that were present (out of 24). They had Macedonian as language of instruction. The questions pertain to the different aspects of the points described above.

The results are presented accumulatively in Table 1 for the Likert questions and Table 2 for the open-ended question.

Table 1:

| Survey question | I completely agree | I partially agree | Neither agree nor disagree | I mostly disagree | I completely disagree |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Peer review gave me the feeling that my opinion and reasoning were taken into account in the assessment. | IIIIIIII | IIIIII | | II | |
| 2. I feel that my knowledge has deepened by listening to the thoughts and reasoning of my peers. | IIII | IIIIIIII | I | II | |

| | | | | | |
|--|----------|--------|------|-----|--------|
| 3. I like that my opinion and reasoning were taken into account in the assessment. | IIIIIIII | IIII | I | | |
| 4. Peer review encourages my critical thinking. | IIII | IIIIII | I | II | |
| 5. I like having responsibility for the assessment. | IIII | III | IIII | II | |
| 6. I am confused by the fact that I have the role of a professor in the assessment and I would not like to bear such responsibility. | IIII | IIII | II | I | III |
| 7. I think the professor lets us review each other's tests because she is too lazy to review them herself. | I | III | | III | IIIIII |
| 8. I don't like questions that can be interpreted with different answers – I like it when there is one definitive correct answer. | III | II | IIII | II | III |

9. Please provide additional thoughts about the mutual assessment of tests.

Table 2

| |
|---|
| I don't have any opinion... everything is fine. |
| I like that we grade ourselves mutually because in this way we acquire much more knowledge. |
| I like this type of assessment |
| Excellent opportunity to analyze ourselves our answers and opinions on the given questions |
| I don't have additional thoughts because the mutual thinking was pretty solid |
| Different method from the other courses and it is very interesting and fun |
| Interesting and responsible |
| Mutual assessment is good for diversity. For the other courses, our tests are assessed by the teacher. This is good for a change. |

I like it in general, but I don't like it when somebody who doesn't learn grades mt tests and gives me fewer points, so I think that it is best that the teacher grades our tests

Discussion

For the first four questions, the results are mostly positively distributed around the positive left end of the Likert scale answers, as expected from experience of in-class discussion with the students. These statements revolve around students' opinion being valued, critical thinking and deepening of knowledge.

Things start to shift with question 5, where students hesitate around the issue of responsibility, which is further proved with question 6, where clustering answers on the left side of the table represents the negative end, which means that students in general do not like taking responsibility for their own assessment. This might be the effect of being put usually for the first time in this role.

In question 7, some of the students do partially believe that the reason they are grading their own tests is laziness on the part of the teacher, which might come across like that.

And the biggest surprise comes with the ambivalence of students for questions with multiple correct answers. Our impression from in-class commenting is that students don't like this kind of questions, but they would rather have one clear-cut correct answer. It seems that teachers formed their opinion wrongly, based on the most vocal students in class.

In the last question, most of the narrative answers illustrate positive student attitudes towards mutual assessment, apart from the last comment. This attitude has been repeating over the years, though less and less lately, with the point here that even those students who don't master the material can listen and learn in the mutual assessment process. All students have the chance to correct the marking of a certain answer if they think it is not correct after the tests are given back for review of the checking. The goal is that active learning is happening with all students during the mutual assessment process for most of the time.

5. Advantages, problems and conclusion

The advantages of mutual assessment are numerous, the obvious being students' opinion being valued, critical thinking and deepening of knowledge (Zi Yan, 2023). The process itself involves slight funding (red pens), flexibility and greater teacher tolerance for heated discussions. Apparently, students are more motivated to defend their answers when grades are at stake.

The survey helps with getting opinions from all students, including the ones that are more introvert and not so vocal in class.

Only once in 15 years of applying mutual assessment, a student, at the quality circle meeting, expressed non-satisfaction of the mutual assessment process, rendering it ‘a waste of time’. This was deemed an outlier as compared with the overall student opinion.

We, as teachers of English language as our primary training, are lucky to be able to employ different teaching methodologies even with content courses, and encourage bigger incorporation of teaching methodologies training among higher education teaching staff.

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ONLINE VS IN-PERSON LEARNING: HOW STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE LEARNING COMPARED TO TRADITIONAL IN-PERSON LEARNING DIFFER FROM PROFESSOR PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract: With technology becoming a staple of daily life, it has inevitably entered educational spaces, especially following the lock downs that happened due to the COVID-19 pandemic in and after the year 2020 and the sudden increase in online learning. Many, both students and professors, have different views and opinions on online learning and how it compares to traditional in-person classroom learning. Therefore, this paper aims to see the different views of both groups, their thoughts and feelings regarding previous online classes; furthermore examine what they feel can help in the future implementation, use and development of online learning,

Key words: Online Learning, In-person learning, hybrid, education, students, professors

Introduction

The learning environment has seen a complete transformation in recent years mostly due to increased use of technology and unexpected challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic. The transition from in-person classes to online classes is the most significant change. All universities and colleges around the world had to suddenly move to new ways of learning. This has brought up multiple questions and claims that created arguments on which one between online or in-person education is preferable. Since then online classes have become a routine of college life for students. Platforms like Zoom, Google Meet, Microsoft Teams, and Moodle are used on a large scale for joining online classes, discussions, homework, and exams. They assist students in learning at home and create an easier learning environment for some. Negative consequences also arise from the implementation of digital technologies. For example, not all people have a stable internet or quiet, cozy rooms to study. Distractions at home, problems with technology, reduce study time and put the students' focus and interactions at risk.

Professors also encounter some challenges and compromises in the online learning process. While some of them enjoy the convenience of computer-based instruction, other professors feel uneasy with the nature of online communication. Instructions through the screen make it harder to read students' responses, engage with them, or build close connections. Professors themselves can put in long night shifts creating materials, fixing technical issues, or creating pedagogic strategies fitting the online context. Teaching professionals who are used to experiments and traditional classes, virtual reality will seem artificial and unnatural. Online

tests have also complicated learning and education. Instead of the old traditional standard tests, the new tests are conducted online, either under or without video surveillance programs or monitoring. It is not comfortable for both professors and students to have this arrangement. The students are annoyed or interrupted while being tested, especially when technology betrays them and when they feel that they had their privacy violated. Professors need to put more effort to ensure that academic honesty is preserved in trying to design equitable and beneficial tests that will be successful under an online setting.

Alongside the issues of an academic type, online education has also impacted the psychological and emotional life of students. Online classes can ensure greater customization of the schedule, but at the same time lead to loneliness, isolation, and burnout. Without the advantages of human face-to-face interactions, some students fail to be motivated, get help, or become part of a learning community. Heavy screen use and separation from routine schedule and social contact over the long term may cause burnout, stress, and anxiety. In-person classes, on the other hand, seem to be more structured and appropriate for instant contact such as peer-to-peer assistance and sharing.

This research paper is a critical analysis of the student and professors experience of in-class versus online learning. It examines survey data to address how both environments influence learning in terms of communication, productivity, emotional investment, consumption of digital media, and scheduling and taking exams. The study also investigates how these perspectives align with or differ from previous studies, and theorizes future trends in hybrid education approaches. With regard to the strengths and limitations of both practices, the intention is to observe how learning can be optimized and tailored for students and professors alike in an equitable and considerate manner.

Literature review

The transition to online education during COVID-19 pandemic, has led to plenty of research into its efficacy when compared to in-person learning. Distinct benefits and limitations have been demonstrated in both forms particularly in terms of student involvement, communication, learning results.

A recent study done by Means and Neisler proved that students were more satisfied with traditional in-person learning, claimed improved attention, motivation and communication with professors. The also acknowledged that online classes provided essential flexibility and accessibility particularly for those balancing work or family responsibilities. Many students preferred hybrid learning which is a combination of the two (Means and Neisler 2020).

It has also been studied how professors adjusted to remote teaching during the pandemic. While academics valued the freedom and digital capabilities of online teaching, many struggled to keep student interest and evaluate learning outcomes. The absence of real-time contact and classroom presence limited their teaching and assessing particularly those unfamiliar with the use of digital tools (Rapanta et al. 2020).

Another research backs up these findings, agreeing that both students and professors believe that in-person learning promotes deeper understanding, communication and a better sense of community. Nevertheless the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of online and hybrid learning models (Najla et al. 2021).

Overall, the data indicates that, while online learning has technological benefits, in-person learning are still seen as more successful in generating meaningful interaction and responsibility both in students and professors. Also, students and professors are becoming more interested in hybrid learning, which combines the benefits of both in-person and online learning.

Research Methodology

To gather personal views and opinions from both groups, surveys were sent out to both professors and students attending the University American College Skopje (UACS) and American Highschool Skopje (AHSS) and some students from Ss. Cyril and Methodius University. The surveys were sent out to all four years of highschool students, as well as all levels of college education along with all departments and majors. The surveys were both hosted on Google Forms and were fully anonymous, with the student survey having 22 questions and the professor survey having 25 questions. It was open for a few weeks during May in this spring semester of 2024/2025 academic year. Our reason for sending out surveys was to gather data related to personal experiences and views on both topics, and to analyse the data compared to our hypothesis. Both surveys are detailed below in Appendix I.

Hypothesis

For our hypothesis, we believe that students may feel that they preferred online learning with some caveats that they felt less productive and less connected to their professors and peers. As for professors, we are expecting results that show they overwhelmingly prefer in-person teaching and in-person communication with their students, and that they will answer in opposition to many of the points brought up about online learning. Finally, we are expecting both groups to show different attitudes to technology in education and hybrid learning, with students more in favor than professors.

Analysis/Discussion

Student survey results

The responses from the students showed us their expectations, preferences and challenges. The majority were female students (68%), male students (31%), and other (1%) all between the age of 19-25 (71% the largest group), 15-18 (27%), 26-30 (2%). For their level of education the majority were undergraduate (60%), highschoolers (36%), masters (3%), PhD (1%). Most of them have taken an online class (95%) where only (5%) haven't. When asked about their preferred learning method, 60% chose hybrid, 29% chose strictly in-person, and 11% chose strictly online. Their strong preference for hybrid learning was connected to several important reasons, especially the balance it provides between flexibility and structure. They appreciate the possibility to attend some lessons online while still benefiting from in-person learning for more demanding subjects.

Students mostly mentioned the organized setting of in-person classes as essential to their academic performance. Many of them agreed that the physical presence in the classroom produced a greater feeling of accountability and urgency. In addition, the students stated that they feel more focused when the professors are physically present.

About 80% of the students specified that they felt less productive during online classes. Among the reasons for this were the lack of discipline, temptation to multitask, external distractions at

home. According to a number of responders, online learning was convenient, but it didn't provide a strong learning environment. One student said, "There is no learning atmosphere, distractions are plentiful, and concentration is very hard to maintain when temptation is at every step."

Another important issue was communication. According to 73% of the students, communicating in person with professors is easier. They also mentioned feeling ignored or finding it difficult to ask questions during online classes. Many students complained about the general lack of immediacy in online communication and the delayed answers to emails.

When it comes to emotional connection and engagement, 68% of students reported feeling less connected to both professors and peers during online classes. They explained that conversations before and after class, group projects, collaborative activities played a critical role in developing a sense of community. Without these online classes were "isolated" and "impersonal."

In the case of course structure, 63% believed that online classes were less structured than in a classroom. They identified confusing platforms, uneven formats, and a reliance on self-discipline as obstacles to success. One of the respondents said, "Online classes are very straightforward; I think they should become as creative, fun, and engaging as in-person classes."

Regardless of the common preference for hybrid learning, several students found advantages to strictly online learning, notably its flexibility. Students who worked part-time or traveled long distances found online classes to be more convenient. In contrary to this many felt that the flexibility alone wasn't enough to compensate for the disadvantages.

Students provided the following suggestions for possible improvements to online learning:

- Include interactive elements during online classes like breakout rooms, direct Q&A, live polls etc.
- Improve the organization and uniformity among the learning management systems.
- Demand attendance to boost participation.
- Professors to provide more virtual office hours.
- A mix of asynchronous and synchronous exercises to meet different learning styles.

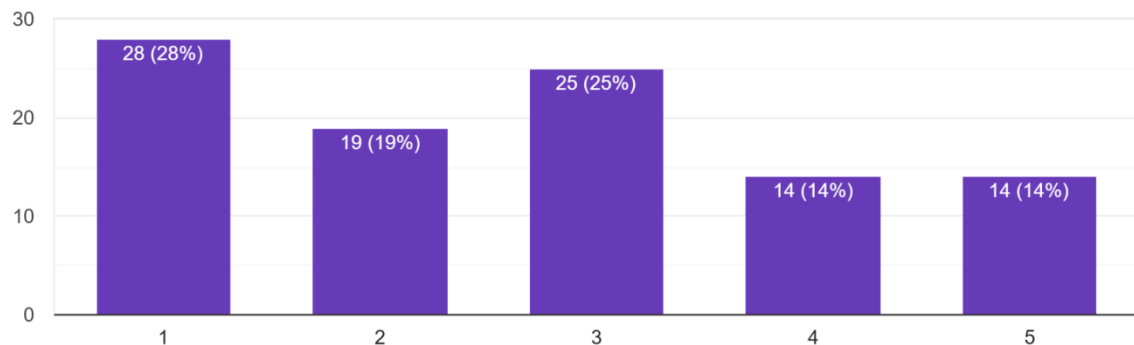
One student summarized, "Hybrid formats foster better socialization/workflow with fellow students/colleagues." This suggests a desire for a balanced approach that merges the strengths of both learning environments.

The survey with the questions and responses may be seen below:

When asked if the students have taken any online classes, 95% respondent with yes and 5% responded with no.

Do you feel that you prefer online learning?

100 responses



(Fig. 1 Q1 in section 2: *Do you feel that you prefer online learning?*)

Why?

89 responses



(Fig. 2 Q1.2 in section 2: *Do you feel that you prefer online learning?*)

The students stated their reasons for why they prefer online classes. The most common ones were less travel time with (31.5%), then better socialisation/workflow with fellow students (16.9%), more flexibility (15.7%), easier access to materials online (14.6%), learn better with less/no people around (6.7%) and learn better with more familiar environments (4.5%).

The follow up question was “If you don’t prefer online classes please explain why.” and here are some of the answers:

| |
|--|
| I don't prefer online learning since I don't feel as though I can communicate properly with the professor. It is more difficult for me to ask questions since I don't think they can understand and interpret what I am trying to say 100%. Sometimes, I also tend to do other things instead of following the lecture (sleeping). |
| In general I do prefer online classes, the only aspect I enjoy with regular classes is socializing. |
| I love school because I get to socialize with people, so when I take online classes I feel like that's kind of stripped from me. |
| It doesn't feel proper, you're not actively learning. |
| Less focus. Online internet problems |
| There is no learning atmosphere, distractions are plentiful, and concentration is very hard to maintain when temptation is at every step |

(Fig. 3 Q1.2b in questionnaire: *If you don't prefer online teaching please explain why.*)

The next questions (2,3,4) were about whether students felt more productive and concentrated better during online classes. Most student disagreed that they are more concentrated during online classes with 38 respondents strongly disagreeing, 13 disagreeing, 27 feeling neutral, 11 agreeing, and 11 strongly agreeing. About whether they are more productive 33 respondents strongly disagreed, 19 disagreed, 26 are neutral, 11 agreeing on the topic. The next one was whether they prefer submitting work online the respondent replies with 58% with strongly agree.

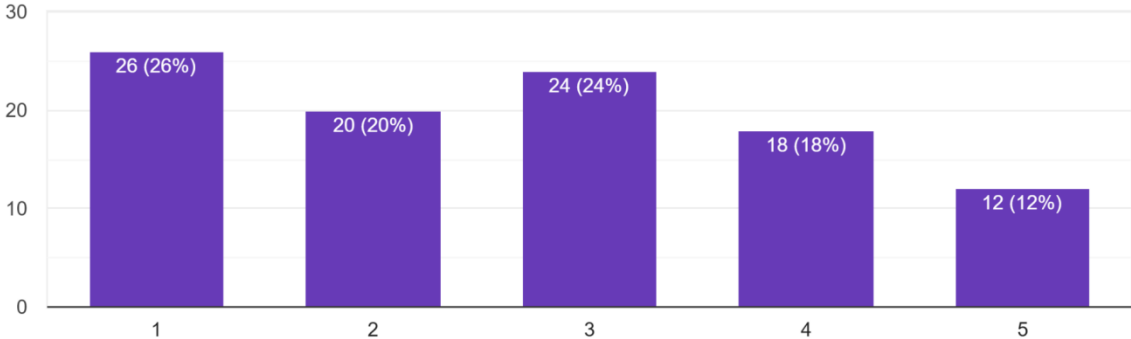
Questions 5,4,6 were about whether they prefer communicating with professors online (the most common was 33% with neutral), communicating also with their peers online (28 responded with disagree and 26 with neutral) and about whether they prefer online materials (33% responded with neutral and 22% responded with strongly agree).

The last question of this section whether their online education has improved their overall learning experience with 26% strongly disagreeing, 24% being neutral, 20%

disagreeing, 18% agreeing and 12% strongly agreeing.

Do you feel that online learning has improved your overall learning experience?

100 responses

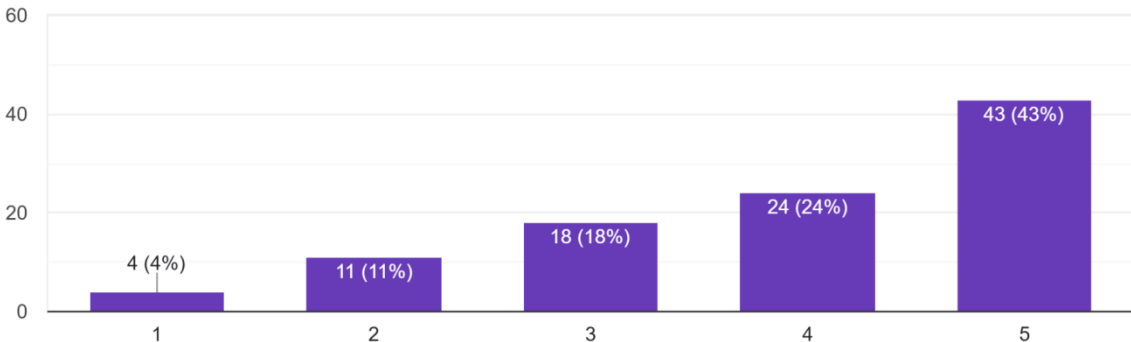


(Fig. 4 Q7 section 2 in questionnaire: *Do you feel that online learning has improved your overall learning experience?.*)

The next section of questions was about their in-person learning. On the questions whether they prefer this type of learning method out of 100 respondents 43 responded with strongly agree, 24 with agree and only one respondent prefers online learning.

Do you feel that you prefer in-person learning?

100 responses



(Fig. 5 Q8 of section 3 in questionnaire: *Do you feel that you prefer in-person learning?.*)

In the following question students stated their opinion on why they chose the previous answer. The most common answers were:

| |
|---|
| Feel more focused with professor physically present (35.1%) |
| Better in-class interactions (13.4%) |
| Better socialisation/workflow with fellow students/colleagues (21.6%) |
| Better communication with professors/fellow students/colleagues (16.5%) |
| Easier access to materials physically (3.1%) |

The next questions were about whether students are more productive during in-person study (39% responded with strongly agree and only 4% with strongly disagree), if they have better concentration during in-person study

(41% responded with strongly agree, 27% responded with agree, 19% with neutral, 7% with disagree, and 6% with strongly disagree).

The students also answered if they are more comfortable submitting work through in person means and most of them responded with neutral (44%) and also if they prefer physical materials over online material they responded with 33% strongly agree and 27% with neutral meaning they prefer physical material (books, syllabuses, readers) over online material.

About the preferred way of communicating with their professors student clearly stated that they prefer in person communication (39% with strongly agree, 26% with agree and neutral) and only 4% don't prefer this method. Communicating in person with their fellow students was also the most voted option with 48% that strongly agree and 17% being neutral on the topic. They also stated that they feel less connected with their peers and professors during online classes, when asking questions they have problems receiving an answer and feeling left out.

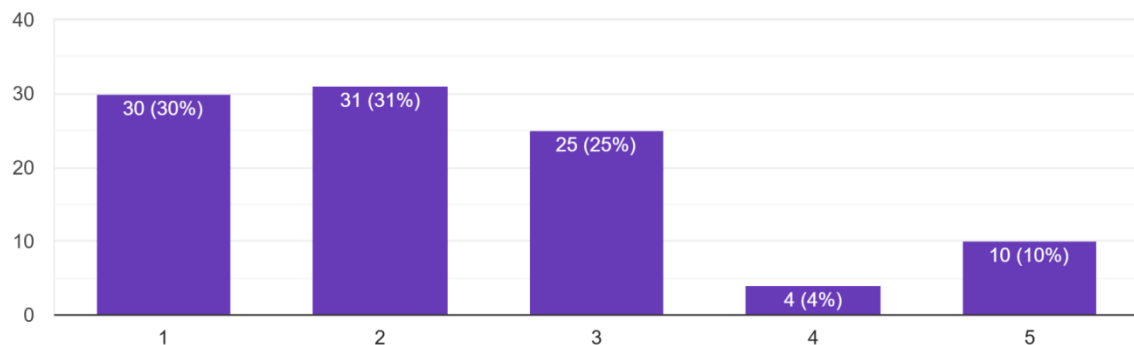
For the question whether they find traditional classroom studying better the students clearly agreed (42%).

Students also stated that technology should be part of their studying no matter if it's online or

in a classroom.

Do you think that technology should be kept separate from learning environments?

100 responses



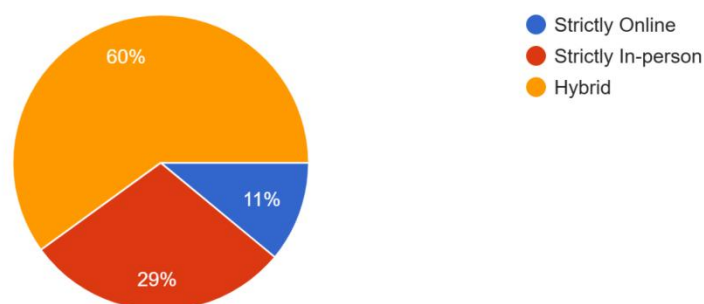
(Fig. 6 Q20 in questionnaire: *Do you think that technology should be kept separate from learning environments?*)

For the question of whether they think online classes are less structured than in-person classes the students mostly answered with neutral.

The last chart shows us that students prefer hybrid classes which is a combination of in-person and online classes with a student clearly stating “i think the best option is 3 times per week physical and 2 times per week online”

Do you prefer strictly online classes, strictly in-person classes, or a hybrid of both?

100 responses



(Fig. 7 Q21 in questionnaire: *Do you prefer strictly online, in-person or hybrid classes?*)

The last question was asking the students to state how online classes can be changed for a better learning experience, and here are some of the answers:

Honestly, I don't think much can be done to make it better. It is more difficult to focus on a lesson when it is online, and generally speaking most students don't pay attention to the class. Online learning materials are a different case, they are helpful and should be used, however we should also have access

| |
|---|
| to physical books, textbooks ect. |
| Having a hard copy of the books instead of all of them being available only online. Having online classes and doing online studying is too much screen time, and it will cause for a headache. |
| However, if it is a hobby/am extracurricular activity, for example, learning italian/spanish/german, online learning methods can be preferred. Because there is a possibility that I dont havw time to go there in-person, but I have time to go online, I would go. Because going online, is better than not going at all, which means that I will never leafn the languave if I not choose the online learning. |
| It is best to utilise all the tools at our disposal, so it would be beneficial to incorporate online learning materials like tutorials and simulations in some classes. But it is of course crucial to have in person and if possible practical demonstrations and tasks as well. |
| online classes are very straight-forward, i think they should become as creative fun and engaging as in person classes |

Professor survey results

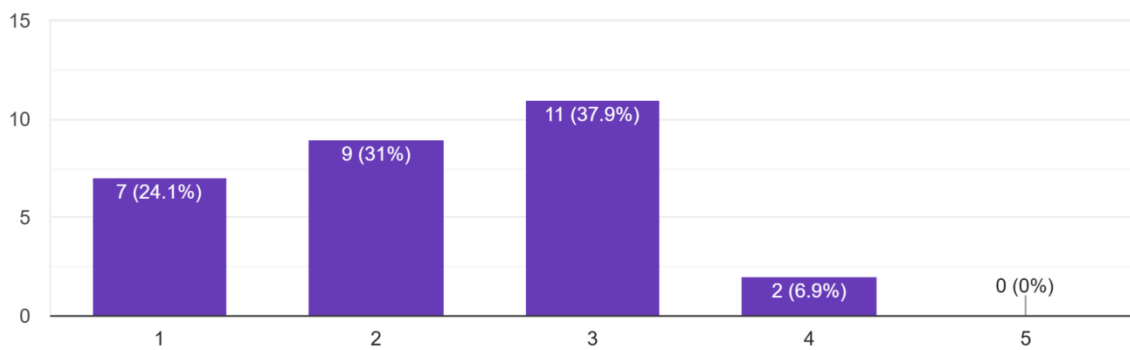
This section will focus on analyzing the responses of professors to the questionnaire, detailed above in the methodology section alongside being shared in full at the end of the paper. There were less respondents than the student survey, with only 29 respondents. There were 30 questions in the survey, with an extra optional question at the end. They were divided into demographic questions (gender, age, level of education), questions about online learning, questions about in-person learning, and experience based questions about both styles of learning and their perceptions of them.

Demographically speaking, from all the respondents the majority were female (69%), with only 9 responders being male (31%). All were between the age groups of 31-40 (20.7%), 51-60 (31%), and the largest group were aged between 41-50 (48.3%). For level of education, the majority were college professors at 22 responders (75.9%), with the remaining 7 (24.1%) being highschool professors.

The section on online learning had 12 questions, ranging from how the professors felt about their own productivity and focus, about their students productivity and focus, communication between themselves and staff members/students, and whether they felt that online learning was the superior teaching method.

Do you feel that you prefer online teaching?

29 responses



(Fig. 8 Q1 of section 2 in questionnaire: *Do you feel that you prefer online teaching?*)

Question 1 of this section was to gauge general feelings on the subject, as was a similar question regarding in-person teaching, as some may have more nuanced feelings on the subject than strictly being for or against online learning. The results showed overwhelming disagreement (taking into account the options ‘strongly disagree’ and ‘disagree’ together) though the second highest view on the matter was neutral. Only 2 responders (6.9%) showed agreement with the statement, and none chose the option to ‘strongly agree’ with this statement. However, as later questions and results show, there are distinctions made between online classes for professors, for students (from the professors point of view), online materials, and generally how technology is and can be incorporated into schooling.

There was a sub-question tied to Question 1 regarding why they felt the way they did about online learning, having both multiple choice and the ability to submit answers. The majority answered that online learning facilitated better communication and workflow with students/colleagues (28%), that online classes were more flexible (24%), and that it was easier to access materials online (16%). However, some submitted answers were:

| |
|---|
| Better solution when you can not have in person teaching |
| All the options for answering goes in line if my answer is pro online but it is not |
| No energy, no body language, no passion, soulless |

I dont like teaching online due to lack of physical presence in the same space

Fig. 9 Q1.2 of section 2 in questionnaire: *Why?*

Afterwards, a tweak was made to the questionnaire where one more question was added for professors to explain better why they felt the way they did about online education, with many of the answers provided aligned with later questions answers as well. The answers are reflected below in Figure 3:

| |
|--|
| Because direct contact allows for genuine non-verbal communication and group dynamics |
| Better socialization |
| No connection with the students |
| You cannot share full experience online and it is difficult to interact with students for practical activities. |
| It is better to perform the teaching activities in classroom. |
| Better interaction in the classroom. However if you have interested students online breakoutrooms are amazing way to work with all. It depends on number of students as well |

(Fig. 10 Q1.2b of section 2 in questionnaire: *If you don't prefer online teaching please explain why.*)

Questions 2, 3, 4 and 5 were all connected to productivity and focus during online learning, for both professors and students. Question 2 and question 3 were both tied to productivity, with professors' answers overwhelmingly disagreeing that their students were more productive with online learning, with 13 respondents (44%) strongly disagreeing and 7 (24.1%) disagreeing, with 8 responders (27.6%) feeling neutral on the topic. However, when answering question 3, whether they felt that they themselves were more productive with online study, the majority results were neutral, with the next most common being disagreement. In comparison, for the first question only one responder answered that they agreed with the statement, and for the second question four responded that they agreed.

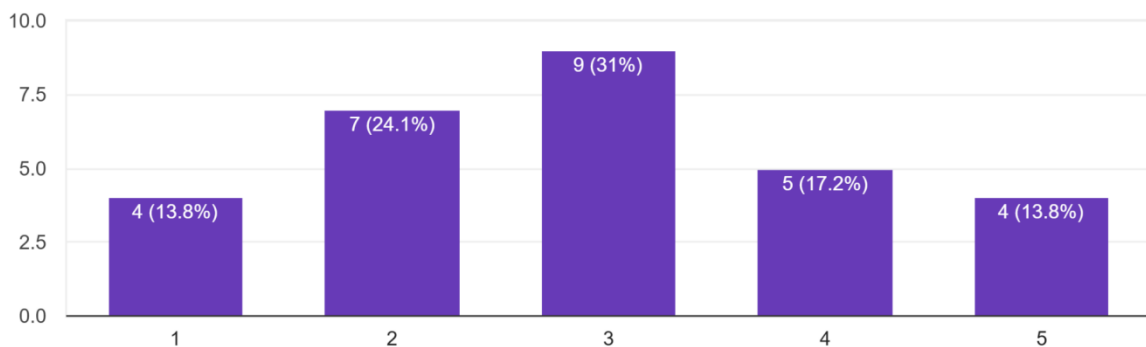
These results are reflected in the next two questions, both asking whether they felt their students and themselves were more concentrated during online classes. Related to whether they feel their students concentrate more, 15 participants answered strongly disagree

(51.7%), whereas for whether they felt they themselves concentrated better, the majority responded neutrally with 13 answers (44.8%).

Related to whether they preferred online communication with students and colleagues, the majority were in agreement, with similar results coming from whether they preferred online materials and whether they preferred receiving online work. Interestingly however, the results for whether the professors preferred online communication with colleagues and their students differed slightly, with the vast majority being neutral to in agreement with the statements regarding colleagues, yet the results being more neutral to mixed when asked the same question about communicating with students.

The final question was whether the professors felt that online learning was an improvement to their overall teaching experience, with the results being mixed, as shown below.

Do you feel that online learning has improved your overall teaching experience?
29 responses



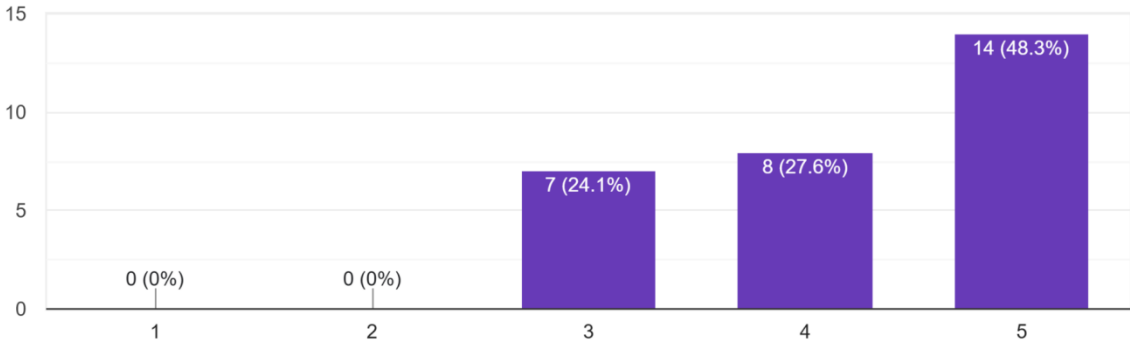
(Fig. 11 Q9 of section 2 in questionnaire: *Do you feel that online learning has improved your overall teaching experience?*)

There were many similar questions in the next section of the survey which focused on in-person education. The first few questions were similarly related to productivity and focus, with the overwhelming consensus being in agreement that in-person study had better productivity and focus among both students and professors, from the professors point of view. However, when asked about receiving work (homework, essays, projects) physically and

whether they preferred physical material (textbooks, syllabuses, worksheets), the answers skewed more neutral for both questions.

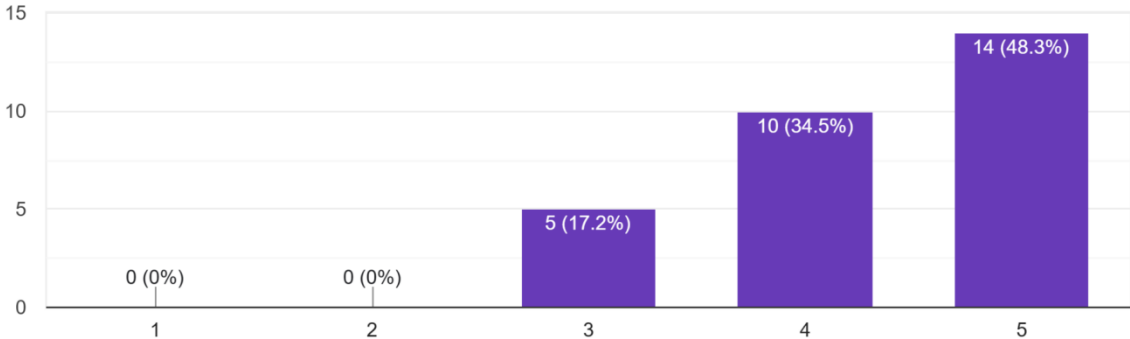
Question 5 of section 3 (In-person Learning) asked whether they felt it easier to communicate with students physically, with the majority of respondents answering that they strongly agreed (44.8%) or they agreed (34.5%), which is in interesting contrast to how they answered when asked whether they preferred online communication with students, where the answers were mostly neutral to positive. The final two questions, 6 and 7, asked whether the professors felt that in-person teaching was the better teaching experience, and whether in-person learning was the better education experience for students.

Do you find traditional in-person classroom teaching to be the overall better teaching experience?
29 responses



(Fig. 12 Q6 of section 3 in questionnaire: *Do you find traditional in-person classroom teaching to be the overall better teaching experience?*)

Do you feel that traditional in-person classroom learning is the overall better education experience for students?
29 responses



(Fig. 13 Q7 of section 3 in questionnaire: *Do you feel that traditional in-person classroom learning is the overall better education experience for students?*)

Both questions, while similar, were asked to be able to compare how professors felt about teaching in-person, whether they felt it was better for their students, and finally how students themselves thought about in-person learning (seen in the analysis section of the student survey). The answers to both questions were overwhelmingly positive, with the same number of respondents, 14 (48.4%), answering that they strongly agreed with both questions. Interestingly, there were less neutral answers when asked whether they felt that in-person classroom learning was the better education experience for students, with 7 (24.1%) responding neutrally to whether they felt in-person teaching was the better experience, and 5 (17.2%) responding neutrally to whether they felt in-person learning was the better education experience for their students. This shows that regardless of how they feel on the topic of online teaching vs. in-person teaching, professors overwhelmingly agree that it is better to educate students in-person than online, which is also shown in how they feel better connected and that they communicate better with students in-person.

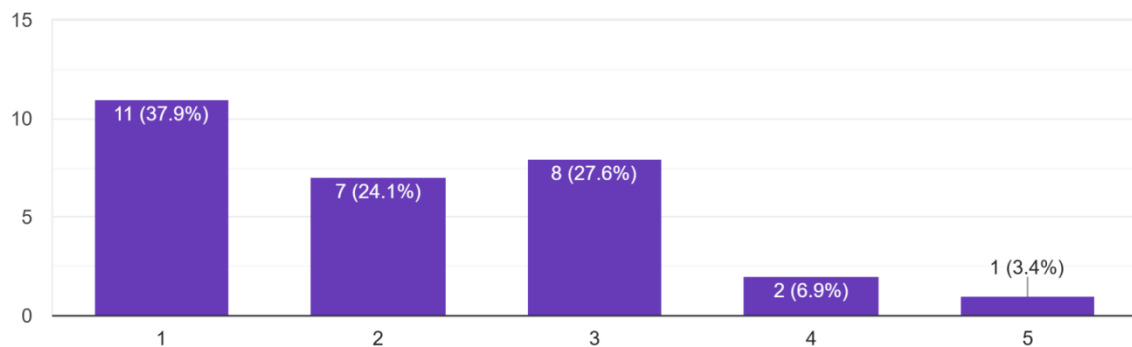
The fourth and final section of the survey was more focused on experience based opinions, i.e. connection to students, perceived distractions, class structure, and opinions on technology. Question 1 of section 4 asked whether professors felt less connected with their students when teaching online, with the answers skewing neutral to in agreement with the statement. Both options 'agree' and 'strongly agreed' had 10 answers each (34.5%), neutral having 6 (20.7%), and 3 responding in disagreement with the statement (10.3%). These answers can be correlated with previous sections' questions regarding communication with students online in comparison to in-person, where professors answered that they preferred in-person communication with students. These answers are also reflected in figure 2 and figure 3, where professors answered that online study felt as though it had "No energy, no body language, no passion, soulless" (see Fig.2), or that "You cannot share full experience online and it is difficult to interact with students for practical activities." (see Fig.3). In general, professors prefer being physically present and communicating in-person with their students.

Regarding distractions, professors answered overwhelmingly that they felt their students were more distracted during online lessons, with 14 (48.3%) answering that they strongly agreed and 12 (41.4%) answering that they agreed, with the rest remaining neutral. As for if they felt that online lessons were less structured than in-person lessons, 7 answers were neutral (24.1%), most were in agreement or disagreement, both having 8 answers each (27.6%), and the remaining 4 were split evenly between strong agreement and strong disagreement (6.9%).

The final two questions, alongside the extra optional question, were all asked in order to gauge professors' views on technology in education. Question 5 asked whether the professors think that technology should be separate from education, where 11 respondents (37.9%) strongly disagreed and 7 (24.1%) disagreed, making most responses strongly opposed to the notion. This reflects similar sentiments when asked about technology previously, such as submission of work online, online communication with both colleagues and students, and online materials. These answers make it clear that, regardless of how technology can and is misused in education, it can be overall positive and aid students who truly wish to learn, as well as making the jobs of professors easier. Similarly, when asked in the next question whether they preferred strictly online, strictly in-person, or a hybrid of both, 20 respondents (69%) answered hybrid, and the remaining 9 (31%) answered strictly in-person, showing the similar views expressed in this question.

Do you think that technology should be kept separate from learning environments?

29 responses



(Fig. 14 Q5 of section 4 in questionnaire: *Do you think that technology should be kept separate from learning environments?*)

Similarly to the student survey, the final question was an optional question asking “What do you feel can be changed to make the online learning experience better for professors?”, with the answers shown below.

Small groups of students with their camera turned on. More activities like online exercises and e-homework and more interest in the subject by the students. More suggestions and creative ideas for better online classes - for example, watching some videos or movies on YouTube or maybe visiting online some galleries and museums.

NA

| |
|--|
| New platforms |
| Professors who love their job |
| Mind increasing that on line learning is important and modern option. |
| Nothing, not a fan of it, waste of time, energy and it just doesn't feel as serious. It's like "the easy way out". |
| More productive and creative way of teaching |
| Smaller groups with interested students |
| Access to more tools and training |
| It really depends on the subject. IT could be online, sciences not so much. We are in need of science laboratories |

(Fig. 15 Q7 of section 4 in questionnaire: *What do you feel can be changed to make the online learning experience better for professors?*)

Conclusion

With the rise of technological advancements and incorporation of technology in every aspect of our lives, we felt it was important to get different points of view on the matter of online learning. Since it impacts both students and teachers, this paper was made to interrogate both sides and see their points of view on the matter. The results we gathered and analysed were similar yet different to what we hypothesised, especially in how technology was viewed overall by both sides. While some students may enjoy how easy online classes are, some get frustrated and wish to have in-person learning; likewise, while we assumed most professors would be in staunch opposition to online learning, there were more answers that were milder or simply had more nuanced views, i.e. while online classes might be distracting and less productive, they did not oppose all forms of technology, nor did they call for the complete removal of all online based education. It was fascinating to hear opinions and views from both sides, especially on the final optional questions where both students and professors answered how they felt that online learning could be improved.

It is clear that many do not oppose online education entirely, but there are many issues related to it; especially with how when COVID-19 struck, nobody was prepared and many

online classes felt cobbled together and less structured. Now that years have passed, online learning has changed and many still use it, whether it be occasional classes, for students and tutors who live far away, or even for students who cannot attend for medical issues. We also saw that both students and professors prefer a hybrid model of learning, leaning into the idea that both groups do not oppose online, but rather want it to be improved.

Learning can come in many forms, and we should not disregard one style because it is not as refined as the other, because results show that it is not the mere existence of online learning that makes it unpopular among students and professors, but its implementation and some of the issues present. When addressed, we may see a more positive outlook on online learning, and perhaps better education for all.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE 1

(Students perception of online learning compared to traditional in-person learning)

This survey has been created to assess students', both at a highschool and college level, thoughts and perspectives on online learning experience in comparison to the traditional in-person learning.

There are 28 questions in total, it should take around 5 minutes to complete. It's important that you answer honestly. By proceeding, you acknowledge that you have been informed about the purpose of this research and that you agree to participate voluntarily.

All responses are anonymous and data will be used exclusively for academic purposes, to improve our understanding of students' view on this subject.

* * * * *

Section 1

1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female
 - Other

2. What is your age?
 - 15-18
 - 19-25
 - 26-30
 - 35+

3. What level of education are you?
 - Highschool
 - Undergraduate
 - Graduate
 - PHD

4. What year are you in?
 - First year
 - Second year
 - Third year
 - Fourth year

5. Have you taken online classes?
 - Yes
 - No

Section 2: Online Learning

Multiple choice

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

1. Do you feel that you prefer online learning?

1.2 Why?

- Less travel time
- Flexibility
- Learn better with less/no people around
- Learn better in more familiar environments
- Easier access to materials online
- Better socialisation/workflow with fellow students/colleagues
- Other:

1.2b If you don't prefer online learning please explain why.

- ...

2. Do you find yourself more productive with online study?
3. Do you find yourself concentrating more with online study?
4. Do you find yourself more comfortable submitting work (homework/projects/essays) through online means (email, school website)?
5. Do you find yourself preferring online materials (syllabuses/textbooks/worksheets/readers)?
6. Do you find it easier to communicate with professors through online means (email, text messages, school website, online class, etc)?
7. Do you find it easier to communicate with fellow students/colleagues/colleagues through online means (email, text messages, school website, online class, etc)?
8. Do you feel that online learning has improved your overall learning experience?

Section 3: In-Person Learning

Multiple choice

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

9. Do you feel that you prefer in-person learning?
 - 1.2 Why?
 - Feel more focused with professor around
 - Better in-class interactions
 - Better socialisation/workflow with fellow students/colleagues/colleagues
 - Easier access to materials physically
 - Better communication with professors/ fellow students/colleagues
 - Lack of access to technology/internet for online study
10. Do you find yourself more productive with in-person study?
11. Do you find yourself concentrating more with in-person study?
12. Do you find yourself more comfortable submitting work (homework/projects/essays) through in-person means?
13. Do you find yourself preferring physical materials (syllabuses/textbooks/worksheets/readers)?
14. Do you find it easier to communicate with professors in person?
15. Do you find traditional in-person classroom learning to be the overall better learning experience?

Section 4

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

1. Do you find it easier to communicate with fellow students/colleagues in-person?
2. Do you find yourself feeling less connected with professor/s through online study?
3. Do you find yourself feeling less connected with fellow students/colleagues through online study?
4. Do you think that technology should be kept separate from learning environments?
5. Do you feel that online courses are less structured than in-person courses?
6. Do you prefer strictly online classes, strictly in-person classes, or a hybrid of both?
 - Strictly online
 - Strictly in-person
 - Hybrid

(Optional) What do you feel can be changed to make the online learning experience better for students?

QUESTIONNAIRE 2

(Professors perception of online learning compared to traditional in-person learning)

This survey has been created to assess professors', both at a highschool and college level, thoughts and perspectives on online learning experience in comparison to the traditional in-person learning.

There are 28 questions in total, it should take around 5 minutes to complete. It's important that you answer honestly. By proceeding, you acknowledge that you have been informed about the purpose of this research and that you agree to participate voluntarily.

All responses are anonymous and data will be used exclusively for academic purposes, to improve our understanding of professors' view on this subject.

* * * * *

Section 1

1. What is your gender?
 - Male
 - Female

2. What is your age?
 - Under 25
 - 26-30
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51-60
 - 60+

3. What level of education do you teach?
 - Highschool
 - College

4. Have you taught online classes?
 - Yes
 - No

Section 2: Online Teaching

Multiple choice

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

5. Do you feel that you prefer online learning?

1.2 Why?

- Less travel time
- Flexibility
- Teaching is better with less/no people around
- Teaching is better in more familiar environments (i.e at home)
- Easier access to materials online
- Better socialisation/workflow with students/colleagues
- Other:

1.2b If you don't prefer online teaching please explain why.

6. Do you feel that your students are more productive with online study?

7. Do you find yourself more productive with online study?

8. Do you feel that your students concentrate more with online study?

9. Do you find yourself concentrating more with online teaching?

10. Do you find yourself more comfortable receiving work (homework/projects/essays) through online means (email, school website)?

11. Do you find yourself preferring online materials (syllabuses/textbooks/worksheets/readers)?

12. Do you feel that online teaching has improved your overall teaching experience?

13. Do you find it easier to communicate with colleagues through online means (email, text messages, school website, online conference, etc)?

14. Do you find it easier to communicate with students through online means (email, text messages, school website, online class, etc)?

15. Do you feel that online learning has improved your overall teaching experience?

Section 3: In-person Learning

Multiple choice

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

16. Do you find yourself more productive with in-person teaching?
17. Do you feel that your students concentrate more with in-person study?
18. Do you find yourself more comfortable receiving work (homework/projects/essays) through in-person means?
19. Do you find yourself preferring physical materials (syllabuses/textbooks/worksheets/readers)?
20. Do you find it easier to communicate with students in person?
21. Do you find traditional in-person classroom teaching to be the overall better teaching experience?
22. Do you find traditional in-person classroom learning to be the overall better education experience for students?

Section 4

Multiple choice

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

1. Do you find it easier to communicate with students/colleagues in-person?
2. Do you find yourself feeling less connected with students through online study?
3. Do you feel that your students are more distracted during online classes compared to in-person classes?
4. Do you feel that online courses are less structured than in-person courses?
5. Do you think that technology should be kept separate from learning environments?
6. Do you prefer strictly online classes, strictly in-person classes, or a hybrid of both?
 - Strictly online
 - Strictly in-person
 - Hybrid

(Optional) What do you feel can be changed to make the online learning experience better for professors?

WORKSHOPS AND REVIEWS

INTEGRATING AI-GENERATED CONTENT INTO EFL LESSON PLANS

Marija Stevkovska, PhD
International University

Summary of workshop presented at the 13 ELTAM Conference, 25 Oct 2024

Abstract: There has been a significant increase in the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools in foreign language teaching due to the rapid development of digital technologies. AI tools support teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to plan lessons, create differentiated materials, and assess students' writing. While previous research has identified challenges related to lack of training and limited technical support, AI tools are welcomed by teachers as they reduce time for lesson planning and preparation of teaching resources. This article aims to demonstrate practical ways of integrating AI tools into EFL classes to support vocabulary, reading, grammar, speaking, and writing instruction through a sample A2-level lesson based on a prescribed coursebook unit. The findings suggest that EFL course instructors should use AI tools critically and reflectively in order to design activities that match their students' needs.

Keywords: AI tools, lesson plan, material design, EFL.

Introduction

Educators are increasingly utilizing various digital and AI tools to generate lesson plans and/or design differentiated teaching materials in a timely manner. In particular, teachers have been using ChatGPT extensively since its release on November 30, 2022 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2026). However, several disadvantages have been established, including inadequate training and lack of technical support (Zhou & Hou, 2025). This article aims to explore AI benefits for teachers and how AI tools can be integrated into English lesson plans.

EFL teachers frequently face challenges when using prescribed course books, which often require the substitution, adaptation, or supplementation of textbooks activities. The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) significantly reduces the time teachers spend on designing handouts or searching for appropriate videos, as AI-powered tools can rapidly generate customized activities, quizzes, and multimedia content.

Practical example

Below is an example of how AI tools can be integrated into a lesson plan. The table provides information about the target group, lesson aims, and class materials.

| |
|---------------------------------------|
| Students' age: 18-19 years old |
| Level: A2 |

Prescribed coursebook: *English File pre-intermediate 3rd edition* and the lesson covers unit 3B, entitled *Let's meet again*, pages 22-23 (Latham-Koenig, C., & Oxenden, C. 2013)

Class duration: two 45-minute classes

Lesson aims (unit 3B):

- to learn travel vocabulary;
- to develop students' reading skills (scanning technique)
- to talk about fixed personal arrangements using the present continuous
- to write about travel arrangements

Materials needed:

- travel vocabulary handout
- short travel-related reading passage
- worksheet for scanning practice
- whiteboard and markers
- computers/tablets/phones with internet access
- AI writing tools (e.g., Grammarly, ChatGPT)

AI tools can be used to design activities for teaching vocabulary and grammar, as well as for preparing reading, speaking, and writing materials.

ChatGPT and the free MidJourney AI app can be used to generate photos for visual presentation of the unit target vocabulary: airport, hotel, passport, ticket, destination, luggage, check in, take off, arrive, explore, sightseeing tour, foreign language, tourist attraction (see image 1 and 2 below).



Image 1: travel vocabulary (OpenAI, personal communication, September 12, 2024)



Image 2: travel vocabulary (Midjourney, personal communication, September 12, 2024)

The twee.com tool can be used to design a handout with vocabulary exercises for the target words, as shown below.

1. **A** Excuse me, where is the _____? We have a plane to catch.
B Just go straight and turn left at the traffic light.
2. **A** Hello, do you have any rooms available at the _____?
B Yes, we have a few rooms left. How many nights will you be staying?
3. **A** I can't find my _____ anywhere. Have you seen it?
B Check your bag again. Maybe it's inside a pocket.
4. **A** Did you pack all your _____ for the trip?
B Yes, I have everything I need in my suitcase.
5. **A** I need to print my _____ before the flight.
B You can use the kiosk over there to print it.
6. **A** What is your favorite _____ for a vacation?
B I love going to the beach and relaxing in the sun.
7. **A** When will the plane _____ for our flight?
B It's scheduled to depart in about an hour.
8. **A** We just arrived at the _____. Let's unpack and relax.
B Sounds good. I'll start unpacking my bags.
9. **A** I can't wait to _____ the city and see all the sights.
B Let's start with the famous landmarks first.
10. **A** We need to _____ at the _____ before we go out.
B Let's drop off our bags and then go _____.
11. **A** Are you interested in taking a _____ of the city?
B Yes, I would love to see all the important landmarks.
12. **A** The Eiffel Tower is a popular _____ in Paris.
B I can't wait to take a picture in front of it.
13. **A** Learning a _____ can be challenging but fun.
B I agree, it's important to practice speaking every day.

The number of items in the handout may be shortened. Alternatively, the teacher may cut out the dialogues in half and ask students to work individually or in pairs to match sentence A with sentence B, and then fill in the gap with the missing word. Teachers should always be aware that although AI tools can generate texts at the level requested (e.g., A1 or A2), such texts often contain B1-level vocabulary that needs to be revised by course instructors.

Next, twee.com can be used to generate an appropriate reading text. Below is an example of one such text.

I was so excited to travel to Italy alone. I got to the airport early to check in. My passport and ticket were ready. After waiting, the plane started to take off. When I arrived in Italy, I picked up my luggage. The hotel was nice and close to many tourist attractions. I went on a sightseeing tour and tried to speak some foreign language words. It was fun to explore without my parents. Italy is a great destination!

The final version of the text has been revised several times, as the initial text generated by twee.com contained B1-level vocabulary and more complex sentence structure.

Regarding the teaching of grammar, in particular the usage of the present continuous for personal arrangements, ChatGPT can be employed to design a handout which may be used in the presentation, practice, and production stage of the grammar section of the lesson. Below is an example of an activity generated by ChatGPT containing the daily schedule of a famous person suggested by the students.



Monday:

Morning:

- 7:00 AM - Wake up and morning meditation
- 7:30 AM - Workout session with personal trainer
- 8:30 AM - Breakfast with family
- 9:30 AM - Vocal warm-ups and exercises

Midday:

- 11:00 AM - Studio session for new album
- 1:00 PM - Lunch meeting with management team

Afternoon:

- 2:30 PM - Rehearsals for upcoming tour
- 4:30 PM - Social media content planning and recording

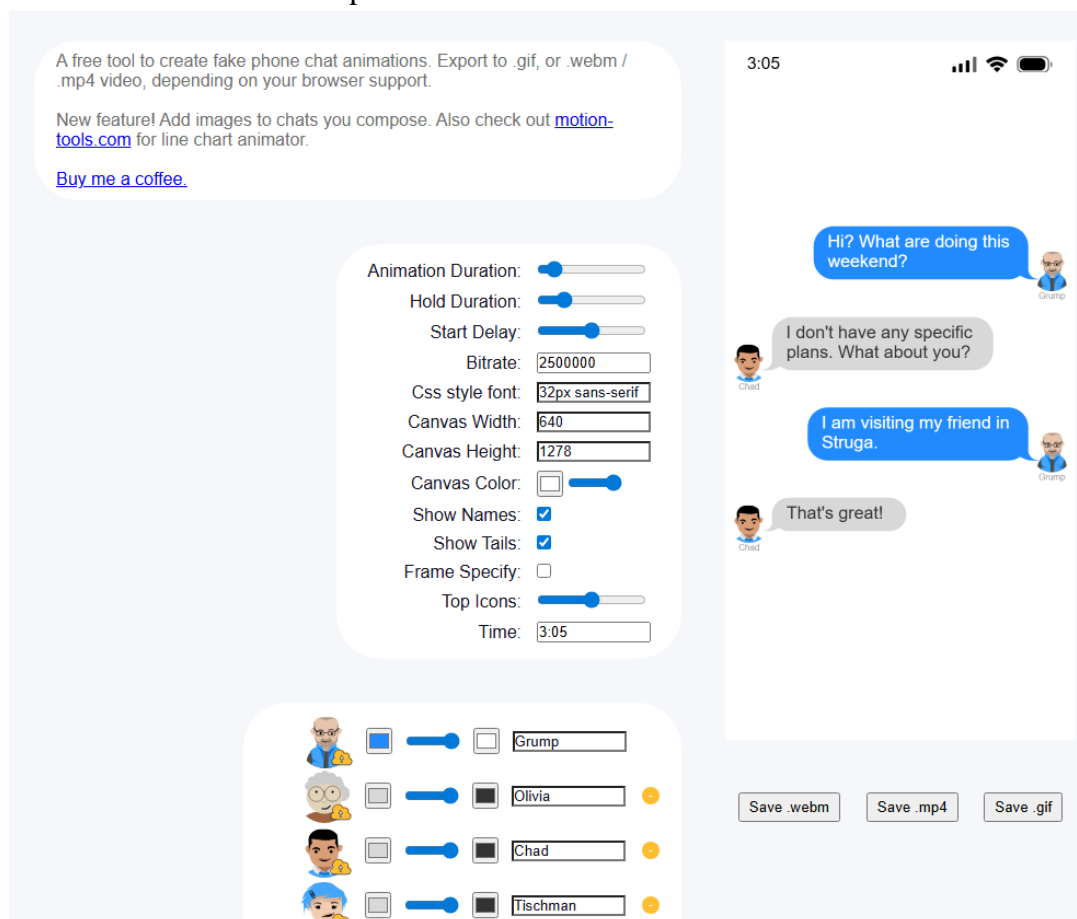
Evening:

- 6:00 PM - Dinner with family
- 7:30 PM - Quality time with kids
- 9:00 PM - Review business ventures and investments
- 10:30 PM - Relaxation and reading
- 11:30 PM – Bedtime

The text was initially generated by ChatGPT and was later modified by the author to meet the needs of the actual learners (OpenAI, personal communication, September 12, 2024). The schedule includes the time and activities in a work day of a celebrity. It can be used to show students the usage of the target tense. By means of induction, students would be able to formulate the rules for the usage of the present continuous for fixed arrangements. The same schedule can later be used as speaking prompts for a dialogue. For example, students work in pairs; student A is a journalist calling the famous person to schedule an interview with him/her, and student B is the celebrity.

As a follow-up, students can write about their weekly schedule, or use ChatGPT to give them the ideas about the busy agenda of their favourite singer/actor/footballer. In this way, grammar is taught more meaningfully and effectively because the students focus on the correct form while producing a meaningful text.

The lesson may finish with a writing exercise. Instead of asking students to write a text about their travel arrangements, they may chat with a classmate using the chat-animator.net application. The application allows students to create a video of the messages they are texting, as can be seen in the example below.



To conclude, AI tools can serve as valuable support for language teachers. However, it is essential to remember that teachers should critically review and adapt AI-generated content to ensure it aligns with their students' needs.

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GAME APPROACHES IN THE CLASSROOM

Summary of ELTAM Professional Development Days Workshop given by Biljana Krsteska-Papikj (31.01.2026.)

Introduction

The game component is one of the main didactic-methodical pillars in planning, organizing and implementing an interactive, simulative educational process.

The game as method enables support of several complex aspects at the micro-classroom level, namely:

- support of social skills,
- improvement of communication competencies,
- integration with cognitive, conative, moral, aesthetic aspects of students' development,
- deepening of a positive socio-emotional climate in a group,
- stimulation of problem thinking,
- learning through action,
- nurturing of soft components, such as: tolerance, empathy, exchange of experiences, resolution of conflict situations etc.

Different categories of games should be holistically incorporated into the daily educational process, i.e. energizing games, concentration games, motor games, language games, mathematical-logical games, musical games, etc.

The workshop organized by ELTAM (January, 2026) aimed to enable:

- exchange of experiences in an informal setting,
- support of innovative ideas,
- simulation of games that are easily applicable in the classroom, with the aim of promoting more methodological solutions and approaches that can enrich English language teaching.

1. Game elements in the teaching process

A series of game activities were conducted through practical simulation with the workshop participants, and in order to easily multiply them through practice, they will be presented through a display of instructions, necessary didactic materials, as well as guidelines for their repurposing in different curricular contexts,

1.1. Energizing games

❖ **Extraordinary flags**

Materials: paper, straws/wooden sticks, scissors, crayons, markers

INSTRUCTIONS: take/choose the flag; use scissors to recreate the shape; choose colours, signs, symbols, messages and add them to flag paper; present your flag.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
- to get to know the students better,

- to write, draw what they understood from the stories, songs, what they liked, etc.,
- the flags can also be used when randomly calling out students (flags` corner).

❖ 1-2-3

Materials: /

INSTRUCTIONS: stand in a circle, in the first round the numbers 1, 2, 3 should be repeated, according to your position in the circle;

- in the 2nd round the number 1 is replaced by a clapping your hands,
- in the 3rd round the number 2 is replaced by a snapping your fingers,
- in the 4th round the number 3 is replaced by a kicking the floor.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - numbers 1, 2, 3 can be replaced by pronouns (we, you, they etc.),
 - 1, 2, 3, 4 - can be replaced by seasons (spring, summer, autumn, winter),
 - helps in learning numbers: tens, hundreds, thousands.

1.2. Tandem and group formation games

❖ You are looking for me - I am looking for you

Materials: paper cards

INSTRUCTIONS: choose a card, and according to the animal drawn, on the signal START, start making sounds like the animal. Listen to who else makes the same sounds and form a tandem or group.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - to get to know the students better,
 - helps organize pairs or groups,
 - brings a positive mood to a group.



❖ What am I writing?

Materials: stickers in few colours, small drawings/illustrations

INSTRUCTIONS: find a pair according to the same colour and shape of the sticker under the chair; agree on which one of you is number 1 and which one is number 2.

Number 1 will get a piece of paper with a word that he/she has to write on the back of number 2 with his/her finger.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - practice writing new words related to the topic.

❖ Atom

Materials: /

INSTRUCTIONS: move freely around the classroom, stop at the word: ATOM and form groups with a given number of members. Instruction ATOM (1-10) should be repeated a few times, followed by forming new groups of participants.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - to get to know the students better,
 - helps organize pairs or groups,
 - brings a positive mood to a group.

❖ Student to student

Materials: /

INSTRUCTIONS: move freely around the classroom, stop at the phrase: STUDENT TO STUDENT and form the tandem with the participant who is next to you. As a tandem follow instructions: hand to hand, finger to finger, back to back, elbow to shoulder, right hand to left ear etc.

Phrase STUDENT TO STUDENT should be repeated a few times as support in forming new tandems.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - to get to know the students better,
 - helps organize pairs or groups,
 - helps in learning body parts.

1.3. Concentration games

❖ Colourful words

Materials: paper, markers

INSTRUCTIONS: the words are written in a colour that does not match the meaning; say the colour the word is written in, not read the word.

1. For example: if it says "GREEN" in red → the answer is red.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - concentration practice,
 - confirmation of knowledge with new words.

❖ Popcorn

Materials: /

INSTRUCTIONS: stand in a circle, count 1, 2, then clap your hands like popcorn instead of the number 3; count 4, 5 and then number 6 is popcorn, but should clap hands twice. Number 9 should be replaced with 3 hands claps etc.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - concentration practice,
 - confirmation of knowledge with new words.

❖ **Fiz and Baz**

Materials: /

INSTRUCTIONS: the words FIZ and BAZ should be repeated - one by one in the circle - with the right hand raised when FIZ is said, and the left hand tapped on the right knee when BAZ is said.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - concentration practice,
 - constructive support in a group.

1.4.Cooperation games

❖ **Forward - Back - Left – Right**

Materials: /

INSTRUCTIONS: form a circle and follow the instructions as follows:

1st circle - follow the steps according to the instructions and say them out loud

2nd circle - follow the steps according to the instructions and say the opposite words

3rd circle - repeat the instructions but do the opposite steps.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - cooperation and concentration practice,
 - repetition of spatial relation concepts.



❖ **Hula hoop**

Materials: hula hoop

INSTRUCTIONS: make a circle, hold hands, and find a way to pass the hula hoop without letting go of your hands.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - practicing cooperation,
 - positive climate in the group,
 - realizing the game with 2 hula hoops of different sizes.

1.5.Relaxation games

❖ **Walk on the...**

Materials: /

INSTRUCTIONS: stand in a circle and simulate with your body what the movement will look like to walk on hot sand, glass, honey, feathers, ice, mud.

- ✓ How / why to use the game in teaching process:
 - relaxation of students,
 - repetition of new terms, expressions.

❖ **Inspirational poster**

Materials: cardboard, paper poster, crayons, markers, audio component

INSTRUCTIONS: students organized in 2 groups around school desks, each student gets and uses one marker. While the music is playing, everyone draws game symbols on their own part of the poster. When the music stops, each student takes a step to the right and continue drawing the symbols started by the previous participant. The game is over when everyone returns to their starting position.

- ✓ How/ why to use the game in teaching process:
 - constructive cooperation,
 - logical thinking,
 - instead of drawing symbols on a given topic, you can write down terms, sentences related to the topic being discussed.

Conclusion

The introduction of game components enriches teaching with stimulation, innovation, and active attitude of students towards the content. Games enable building trust between students, but also in the teacher-student relationship, as partners. A key recommendation is to strengthen continuity in the implementation of game situations, as a didactic orientation of the overall educational process. Games that are dimensioned according to the orientation of current educational goals cannot be a threat to discipline in the classroom, nor to the authority of the teacher as a leader and supporter of student motivation. Games should also be a source of creativity and joy, so a large number of game models can be the creation of teachers, students, and parents.

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LIGHTS, CAMERA, ENGLISH!

A Summary of the ELTAM Professional Development Days Workshop Given by Tamara Jolevska Popov (20.12.2025)

Abstract

The modern high schooler lives in a world dominated by digital narratives, visual communication and fast social trends. This paper examines the chasm between the traditional teaching methods and materials and the realistic language needs of students. Through elaboration of the concept of 'authentic exposure' and strategic use of social media and popular culture, the paper offers an elaborated teaching plan, making use of pop culture not only as a motivator, but a cognitive tool to overcome and internalise complex language structures and media literacy.

Problem: From passive observer to active language alchemist

One of the largest challenges of high school education is the struggle for attention. English language textbooks often offer short, laconic, sterile dialogues that in no way reflect real life and real living, breathing dynamic language patterns, which we can usually find on the internet. Our goal and purpose as teachers is to create an environment where the English language will be a tool for identification and communication, and not a lifeless object.

At this crossroad, the key concept is reducing the 'affective filter' (Krashen, 1982). In high school, the fear of making a mistake, and henceforth be socially judged in the classroom is substantial. When education and the act of teaching include elements of popular culture (like analysing Led Zeppelin lyrics, or deciphering viral TikTok trends), we are essentially demystifying the role of the teacher, shortening the gap felt between the students and the teacher, thus lowering anxiety. This approach creates an emotional rapport with language, indispensable for logging entries in long-term memory.



*the image is created with genAI to serve the purpose of the workshop

Methodology and practice

The formula that reads $\text{ENGAGEMENT} = \text{MOTIVATION} + \text{ASSOCIATION} + \text{FUN}$ is not just a meaning-deprived slogan, but a neurologically justified approach. When the student ties fresh vocabulary to a ‘viral anchor’ (memory anchor), the brain creates stronger synaptic ties (Duff, 2002).

Explanation and activity plan (adapted to YA – young adults and high school students)

1. Linguistic deconstruction of memes (Meme Analytics)

Instead of traditional language drills and exercises (gap-filling, multiple-choice, open cloze, etc.), the teacher is encouraged to use memes to practice real-life use of grammatical tenses. For instance, students receive a photoshopped or AI generated image (eg: a cat in business attire). Their task would be to write three sentences in the Present Continuous to describe the image, and one finisher sentence in the Conditional to predict the reaction of the intended audience. Why this works? Well, it requires a high cognitive elaboration. The student is required to understand humor, context and apply grammar correctly to relay meaning.



*the image is created with genAI to serve the purpose of the workshop

2. Correcting digital registers (Tweet Translation)

This activity directly tackles the problem of an ‘overly informal register’. The task for the students would be to make an analysis of a famous person’s tweet, which would be written in an informal tone (slang), like for example ‘no cap’, ‘fr fr’, and “translate” it into three different registers: standard English, academic English, and formal register used to write a letter to a relevant institution. The main goal and value for students would be to learn and practice code-switching, which is a key skill to successfully navigate the professional world (Crystal, 2008).

3. Project-based learning: Digital podcast

This is a long-term project including all four language competencies (reading, writing, listening and speaking). The students are working in teams in order to create a podcast on a topic of interest (technology, music games) The process involves writing a scenario (writing competency), source researching (reading and comprehension), recording and articulation (speaking) and inter-student feedback and grading (listening and assessment).

Handling academic skepticism

A common concern amongst the academic circles is that pop culture is too ephemeral, or has a very brief ‘shelf-life’. However, the actual song, film or video is irrelevant, what matters is the skills for analysis, according to Jubas (2023). If the student learns how to critically deconstruct an Instagram post today, they will apply the same skill to an academic paper tomorrow. We are not teaching them isolated words, but equipping them to make sense and interpret the world around them.

Conclusion

Popular culture is not an artificial ‘sweetener’ for the bitter pill of studying and learning, but the core of language communication in the 21st century. With its strategic integration, high school teachers cease to be mere teachers and enforcers of rules, and they become mentors, leading students through the complex worlds of the authentic English language.

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CREATING THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR LEARNING: DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE AND INCIDENTAL GRAMMAR INSTRUCTION IN TEYL

A Report on an ELTAM Webinar given by Iлина Kachinske, PhD (May 2023)

University American College Skopje

Abstract: This paper reports on a professional development webinar developed and delivered for ELTAM. The webinar focused on developmentally appropriate pedagogy in Teaching English to Young Learners (TEYL). The workshop examined how young learners' biological predispositions and cognitive characteristics interact with classroom conditions. Drawing on developmental psychology (Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner) and second language research (Long, Schmidt, DeKeyser), the workshop explored alternative avenues for approaching grammar instruction in TEYL contexts. This paper outlines the theoretical foundations of the workshop and includes sample classroom activities.

Introduction

Grammar instruction in many contexts remains predominantly explicit and rule-driven, despite the surge of theoretical and empirical findings suggesting that explicit instruction is neither always necessary, nor developmentally optimal for young learners (e.g., Long, 1991; Kachinske, in preparation). This tension becomes particularly salient in young learners' classrooms, where developmental factors should guide instruction. Research in second language acquisition (SLA) suggests that learners benefit from grammar instruction only if the right conditions are set and when the instruction arises naturally from meaningful contexts, rather than through isolated rule explanation (DeKeyser, 2007; Kachinske, 2021; Long, 1996). Research in first and second language acquisition posits that children possess remarkable biological and cognitive predispositions for language learning (Lenneberg, 1967), but that predisposition alone does not guarantee development. The central aim of the workshop was therefore to demonstrate, in practical terms, how carefully designed L2 learning environments can allow young learners' linguistic potential to unfold.

The webinar sought to provide EFL teachers with the theoretical awareness and practical insight needed to make informed pedagogical choices in their classrooms. Rather than prescribing a single method, the session encouraged participants to reconsider the timing, explicitness, and embeddedness of grammar instruction in light of developmental and SLA research.

The webinar proposed that developmentally appropriate, contextualized, and often incidental instruction creates the conditions under which young learners' linguistic potential can flourish. Instead of positioning grammar instruction as the starting point of learning, participants were invited to reconsider the timing, explicitness, and embeddedness of attention to form.

This report mirrors the structure of the webinar itself. It begins by outlining key developmental perspectives that shape our understanding of how children learn. It then connects these insights

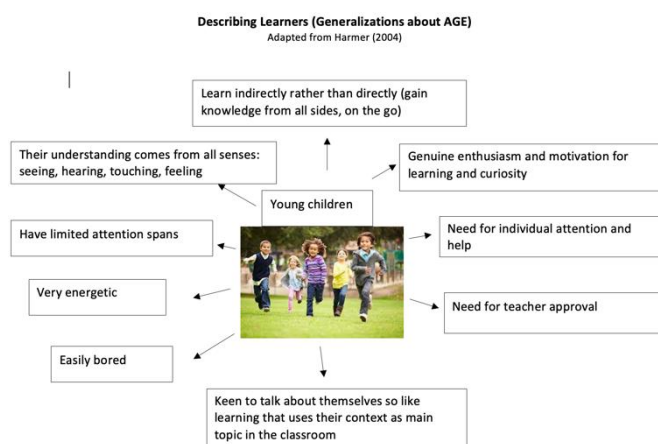
to research on attention, meaningful practice, and the role of explicit instruction in SLA. The following sections describe how these principles were translated into storytelling practices, and incidental grammar tasks.

How Children Learn

The first part of the workshop grounded classroom practice in developmental psychology. Participants revisited the foundational claims by Piaget (1970), Vygotsky (1962), and Bruner (1983, 1990), not as abstract theories, but as lenses through which everyday teaching decisions can be understood. Piaget’s view of children as active constructors of knowledge emphasizes learning through exploration, manipulation, and experimentation. From this perspective, language learning is not the memorization of rules but the gradual organization of meaningful experiences. Vygotsky complements this view by highlighting the social nature of development. Learning occurs through interaction with others, particularly within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where guidance enables learners to perform beyond their independent abilities. Language development, therefore, is inherently dialogic and collaborative. Building on these insights, Bruner introduced the concept of scaffolding, referring to the structured support through which adults guide children’s participation in activity. In classroom terms, scaffolding includes modeling, structured routines, guided questioning, and gradual release of responsibility.

Taken together, these perspectives suggest that young learners benefit from participation, interaction, repetition within meaningful contexts, and guided discovery more than from isolated rule explanation.

To move from theory to practice, participants were invited to actively co-construct our knowledge base by reflecting on young learner characteristics and cognitive constraints (Picture 1), and the pedagogical choices these characteristics naturally suggest. For example, as you can see in picture 2 shown below, participants were asked to think of what a quintessentially child-like characteristic is (*we are; we have/ don’t have; we learn by...*), and to connect that to a pedagogical choice (*so...*). See Appendix A for the jointly finished collaborative activity.



Picture 1

Young learners' characteristics and pedagogical choices

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| We are... | So... |
| Curious | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed us with interesting information |
| We have/ don't have... | So... |
| Short attention spans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the activities short |
| We learn by... | So... |
| Doing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't let us be passive listeners • Create tasks so that we can use our skills • Give us autonomy to participate in the learning process • Involve us in the teaching process; that will motivate us. For instance, ask us to draw characters for a story or make visuals and realia |

Picture 2

Developmental Characteristics and Grammar Instruction

The workshop then connected these observations directly to findings from SLA research. Participants were encouraged to consider what cognitive features such as limited working memory, developing metalinguistic awareness, and strong implicit learning mechanisms mean for grammar instruction in practice. For example, Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis suggests that learners must pay attention to linguistic features in order for acquisition to occur. However, this does not mean that learners need lengthy rule explanations. Attention can also be drawn through repetition, meaningful context, and carefully designed tasks that make patterns noticeable. Similarly, Skill Acquisition Theory (DeKeyser, 2007, 2015) distinguishes between declarative knowledge (knowing a rule) and procedural knowledge (using it fluently). Mechanical repetition of forms does not automatically lead to proceduralization. Especially for young learners, meaningful use of language may support deeper internalization than early rule-heavy instruction.

These considerations become even more salient when viewed through the lens of age-related differences in learning. The age factor in SLA research suggests that children, adolescents, and adults differ not only in ultimate attainment but in how they process instruction. For young learners in particular, the timing of grammatical explanation is crucial. As Long (1991) argues, grammar rules or corrective feedback are most effective when provided at the moment learners are negotiating meaning and require linguistic support to express themselves accurately. This understanding of timing led participants to reconsider the role of explicit grammar instruction in TEYL contexts, which is briefly described below.

Recalibrating Explicitness

Building on this understanding of timing and developmental sensitivity, the workshop invited participants to reconsider the role of explicit grammar instruction in young learner classrooms. They were encouraged to think why and how we can change the explicitness of our teaching. Participants explored a continuum of explicitness - implicitness through a range of activities

such as: input flood, input enhancement, negotiation, recast, output enhancements, dictogloss, consciousness-raising tasks, as well as input processing. Tasks particularly suitable for negotiation of meaning were also presented: jigsaw, information gap, problem solving, decision-making, and opinion exchange. It was emphasized that when instruction is grounded in incidental learning, differentiation is also possible.

This view can accommodate a variety of language learning aptitude and working memory profiles. The contextualized examples are created in such a way that they arise and stand out naturally from the context. For high aptitude learners this means that the chances for inducing rules are maximized. For low aptitude learners it means that when the teacher eventually provides the rules, they are not decontextualized, but rooted in meaningful activities. Similarly, once rules arise, learners with low working memory capacity have the advantage of constantly applying those rules through practice by having the rules provided for them when needed. Similarly, learners with lower working memory capacity will benefit more if rules are presented concurrently with practice when they are really needed (Kachinske and DeKeyser 2019).

Storytelling as an Incidental Grammar Instruction

The second practical segment of the webinar included storytelling as an alternative for incidental grammar learning. Using *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* as an example, participants explored how the same story can be adapted for different age groups (Appendix B).

A similar principle guided the “PLOCK Camel” activity (see Appendix C), where repetitive and enhanced input allowed learners to detect regularities incidentally and inductively. The workshop moved into the realm of meaningful practice through an information-gap activity designed to create a real communicative need for the target structure and plenty of opportunities for negotiation of meaning. In this activity learners work in pairs, or small groups, with two different versions of the task. Each partner holds only part of the information (e.g., different times, actions, or events), and the task can only be completed by asking and answering questions to reconstruct the full sequence or story.

Finally, participants were invited to design their own lesson (vocabulary or grammar) with an incidental focus.

Conclusion

This workshop was guided by a central metaphor: young learners resemble an acorn. They possess immense potential, but that potential unfolds only with the right conditions. The way the acorn needs sunshine, fertile soil and water to grow into an oak tree and fulfill its potential, young learners need engaging and/or attention-stimulating activities, authentic tasks, meaningful contexts and genuine interaction to flourish linguistically.

The workshop demonstrated that in order for instruction to be facilitative for the learning process, teachers need to be aware of the cognitive and affective milieu of their learners, so that they design activities and adopt pedagogical approaches that maximize learning. Knowing what we know, let's make grammar instruction more meaningful, contextualized, genuine, communicative, engaging, social, interesting and enjoyable, relevant, active and experiential, and memorable.

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Appendix A Activity jointly done with participants

| We are... | So... |
|----------------------------|---|
| Curious | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed us with interesting information |
| Full of energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do some TPR activities with us, such as songs, commands, exercises, acting out |
| Active learners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always put us in a motivating learning environment • Involve us in the learning process |
| Routine-loving individuals | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We function well in a structured environment and enjoy doing the same activities. • Start the class the same way, perhaps with a reinvigorating song or chant. • Use the same language when transitioning into various types of activities (add classroom language to our routines) |
| Social learners | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let's do things together • Give us interactive activities • Don't play us the TV or songs on a screen, read to us instead |
| Creative | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be our artist • Be our theater • Let's move away from traditional practice (drills, translation, repetition tasks) |
| Practical | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't give us rules beforehand, but always contextualized so that we see the real need to learn something • Give us context so that we convey meaning through language |
| Vulnerable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help us feel secure • Repeat familiar activities such as songs and rhymes • Set classroom rules beforehand so that when we do something we shouldn't have done you can gently remind us about our rules • Use our native language when you see we are lost |

| We have/ don't have... | So... |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Short attention spans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the activities short |
| Limited working memory | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct our attention to the important aspects & provide us with relevant rules while we practice |
| Good implicit learning mechanisms | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't teach us by giving us the explicit rules • Instead, give us rich learning opportunities so that we can figure things on our own |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let instruction be creative, meaningful and incidental (whereby grammar structures and vocabulary arise naturally from the context) |
| Still developing brains | |
| Loads of physical energy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TPR • http://www.blaineraytprs.com/ |

| We learn by... | So... |
|-----------------------|---|
| Doing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't let us be passive listeners • Create tasks so that we can use our skills • Give us autonomy to participate in the learning process • Ask us to draw characters for a story • Asks us to make puppets |
| Playing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create meaningful and playful tasks for us to practice new language |
| Listening and reading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immerse us in a rich language environment • Bring us loads of authentic materials such as interviews, movies, songs and books |
| Exploring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • we want to see, hear, touch, taste, smell |
| Discovering | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Let us discover new language patterns by ourselves • Use gestures, actions and pictures |
| Help from you | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help us navigate our way through the activities and the tasks • Ask us clarification requests • Elicit language meaning from us • Recast in English what we say to you in our L1 • Recast in English when we make a mistake • Use L1 for support if no one understand anything |

Appendix B

Varying the same activity based on the age group

Language and skills: listening and speaking

Appropriate age/ level: young learners below the age of 8 years; beginners

Book: Eric Carle, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* Eric Carle, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*

Summary description: What's one thing children absolutely adore? STORIES! Why stories? They provide meaningful context for learning of vocabulary, grammar and intercultural communication. While this topic deserves a webinar on its own, in this activity we will try to see how we can manipulate the same story based on the age group of the learners.

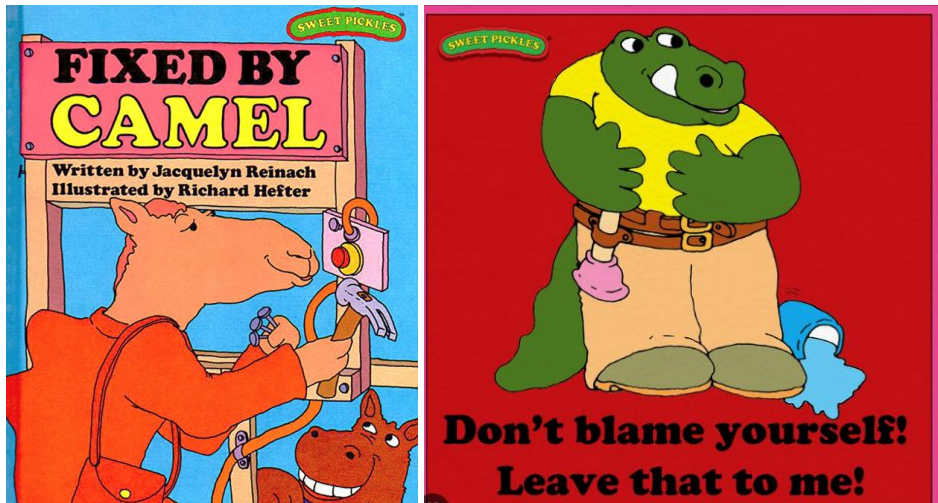
Possible focus: days of the week vocabulary, number vocabulary, food vocabulary, science: the life cycle of a butterfly

How can it be done:

1. Teacher brings the book and pre-prepared cut-outs of the characters and objects
2. Before they start reading the book, the teacher introduces the vocabulary by showing the cut-outs
3. The teacher acts out some verbs like

| 5-7 | 8-10 | 11-13 |
|---|------|-------|
| Teacher is telling the story by using realia/ paper cut-outs/ character drawings. Asks a lot of comprehension questions. Repeats the target words. Louder voice and special intonation accompany the target words. The second time the book is read/ told, the teacher leaves out crucial vocabulary for the learners to say. | | |

Appendix C



This is *Clever Camel* (authentic children's literature provides a wealth of resources for teaching L2). He lives in Pickle Town. He is the one who always makes clever choices and the whole town depends on his brains. Usually, he starts his day by having a hot, homemade meal, but yesterday he started his day differently. He skipped breakfast. Not a clever choice. He was so hungry he needed to stop by his neighbor, Accusing Alligator. Of course, Accusing Alligator accused Clever Camel of not having breakfast. In the afternoons, Clever Camel usually works in his garden, but yesterday he worked in the park. He decided to be useful for his town and picked up all of the trash being left out. Usually, Clever Camel spends his evenings preparing his food for the next day, as in the end he is Clever Camel. But yesterday, being so tired, he watched TV for two hours straight.

List A

Clever Camel's Adventurous Day

Here are some of the things that Clever Camel did on his adventurous day. Clever Camel did twelve interesting things that day. Only 6 are illustrated on your list. Talk to your partner and find out what Clever Camel did at 9am, 10am, 11am, 2pm and 6pm. In the end, reconstruct his whole day in the form of a story. Be creative!

| | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 8 am TO DRESS | 10:30 am TO BAKE BISCUITS | 2 pm TO HELP ACCUSING ALLIGATOR |
| 2:06 pm TO ACCUSE | 5 pm TO CYCLE | 10 pm TO ARRIVE HOME |

List B

Clever Camel's Adventurous Day

Here are some of the things that Clever Camel did on his adventurous day. Clever Camel did twelve interesting things that day. Only 6 are illustrated on your list. Talk to your partner and find out what Clever Camel did at 8am, 10am, 2pm, 5pm and 10pm. In the end, reconstruct his whole day in the form of a story. Be creative!

| | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| 8 am TO CALL BASHFUL BEAR | 10 am TO PREPARE A CUP OF TEA | 11 am TO SERVE |
| 2:05 pm TO COUGH | 2:10 pm TO ARGUE WITH | 6 pm TO BATHE/ POOL |

MENTORING AS A PATHWAY TO PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL GROWTH



Emilija Stojanovska

It seems that the terms *mentor* and *mentoring* have never been more present in different aspects of everyday life, and still, their definitions have never presented a bigger challenge. Very often, the meaning of the words evolves and is shaped by cultural context and institutional frameworks, but when it comes to education, one can conclude that mentoring is similarly defined and applied in various ways across countries and systems.

At its core, mentoring is often described as a process in which a more experienced individual shares their knowledge and expertise with a younger or less experienced colleague. However, the question that I would like to explore here is whether it is only the mentee who benefits most from the mentoring, or whether the mentor can gain and grow in the process as much, though perhaps unexpectedly?

My continuous professional development has given me opportunities to be part of various projects, which helped me shape my perspective in regard to these questions. Namely, I have been convinced that mentoring is by no means a unidirectional transfer of knowledge. Quite the contrary, it is a dynamic correlative exchange from which both parties gain, often with a more profound impact on the mentor.

It goes without saying that the mentee receives valuable advice and insight into their professional performance regarding the technical aspects of teaching, innovative ideas and classroom management tricks. Nonetheless, this process can offer as much growth and progress for the mentor as long as they are open to learning and embracing the changes that come their way and might make a significant impact in both their personal and professional lives.

One of the most impactful experiences for me was being part of MMN (Macedonian Mentoring Network), where my role as a mentor was to follow Angi Malderez's five-step

mentoring protocol, which enabled me to refine my communication skills. Communication is an essential part of every professional relationship, and especially significant is the skill of active listening. This means that instead of me giving an immediate answer or solution to all of the dilemmas and problems the mentee presented, I learnt how to ask reflective questions and guide the mentee towards coming to their own conclusions. This helped the mentee learn from their mistakes and gain confidence that they do not need others to solve the puzzles and problems they encounter in the classroom, but rather, they have the answers within themselves.

What is more, this not only helped me in the mentoring relationship but also in the classroom. What I mean is, instead of immediately providing my students with the correct answers to the questions they have or when doing an activity, I tend to guide them through the learning process and with that allow them to get the answers on their own. In this way, the students gain a deeper understanding of the matter and also strengthen their confidence. What is more, when knowledge is gained in this way, it tends to be more thorough and lasting.

Another benefit from mentoring, for me as a mentor, was to challenge my established routine in the classroom. It is not uncommon for teachers who have been teaching for many years to get accustomed to certain ways of work and rarely feel the need or understand the need for change. The mentoring experience reminded me that innovation and change can bring positive atmosphere and feelings for both my students and me. For instance, I used to do an activity called *Stepping Stones* to revise vocabulary with my students. In this activity, the teacher puts pictures on the floor in the classroom and asks the students to jump from one picture to the next and name them. I never considered using a similar activity to revise grammar, especially when learning or teaching grammar is often considered a tedious task. Working with my mentees introduced fresh perspectives and new creative approaches, so now when I teach my students the verb “to be”, I take them outside, and we play a modified version of the game *Stepping Stones*, but even more engaging and interesting. This is just one example of how working with a mentee can help the mentor transform classrooms into a more interesting and enjoyable place to be.

Similarly, I have noticed a big step forward in the way I have been using technology in the classroom. I have always considered myself quite enthusiastic in implementing learning applications for my students, yet keeping track of all of the latest changes and updates in digital tools can sometimes feel very overwhelming. I had an opportunity to be presented with new, interesting and most importantly, tested learning apps by my mentees that helped me save time

and bring more informed decisions when it comes to integrating them in the classroom. What I found most useful and would recommend are learning applications like: LearningApps, Wordwall, StoryJumper, Kahoot and Cartoonify.

Finally, mentoring has helped me revisit some important relevant literature and do some serious self-evaluation, which supports effective teaching and student understanding. Some of the theories that I found most helpful, and I believe that every teacher needs to take hold of, are: Glasser's Choice Theory, the Polyvagal Theory, Kurt Lewin's Leadership Styles and Self-Determination Theory. What these theories enabled me to understand better was my students' needs and behaviour, and helped me create a positive and safe classroom environment that promotes students' motivation.

To return to the initial question of whether mentors can benefit as much as mentees in the mentoring process, I believe the answer is more than evident, provided the mentors are individuals who are ready to step out of their comfort zone, embrace new ideas and do honest self-reflection. It is safe to say that mentoring is a two-directional journey that is based on collaboration, trust, patience and shared responsibility. What is more, it also helps to boost creativity, strengthen professional relationships and promote continuous learning. It is an opportunity for both personal and professional growth, only if you are ready to fully embrace it.

