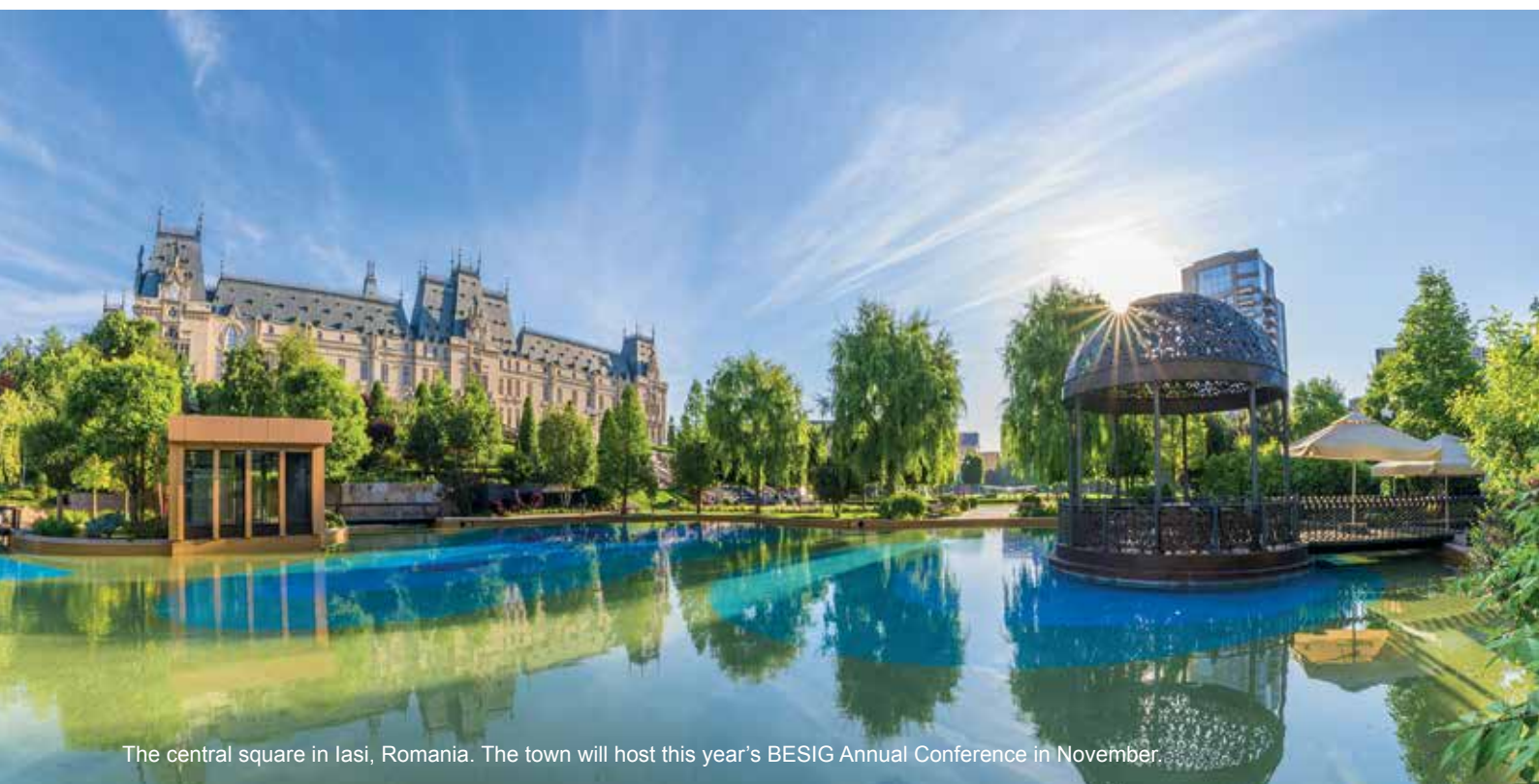iatefl

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BUSINESS ISSUES

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE BUSINESS ENGLISH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP

The central square in Iasi, Romania. The town will host this year's BESIG Annual Conference in November.

Summer 2018 Issue 99

www.iatefl.org

BESIG Committee Members

Joint Coordinator

Dana Poklepovic
Email: dana.poklepovic@besig.org

Joint Coordinator

Evan Frendo
Email: evan.frendo@besig.org

Business Issues Editor

Chris Stanzer
Email: chris.stanzer@besig.org

Development and Administration Coordinator
Andrzej Stesik
Email: andrzej.stesik@besig.org

Events Coordinator

Helen Strong
Email: helen.strong@besig.org

Treasurer

Steve Miller
Email: steve.miller@besig.org

Joint Web and BESIG Online Team Coordinator
Oksana Hera
Email: oksana.hera@besig.org

Joint Web and BESIG Online Team Coordinator
Rob Howard
Email: rob.howard@besig.org

Contributing to *Business Issues*

Business Issues, the publication of BESIG – the Business English Special Interest Group of IATEFL (the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign language) – is published three times a year, in spring, summer and autumn. The Spring issue is digital only, whereas the Summer and Autumn issues are issued in print and digital form. If members wish to receive the print issues, they can select this option in the members' area of the IATEFL website.

> Submission dates for articles and advertisements are: 15 July (Autumn issue), 15 December (Spring issue) and 15 March (Summer issue).

BESIG reserves the right to accept or reject articles depending on their quality and suitability for our readership. If an article is accepted for publication, the editor reserves the right to alter titles and headings where appropriate and make minor editorial changes deemed necessary for reasons such as space, style, clarity or accessibility. If more than minor changes are needed, the author will be consulted and an edited version of the article will be sent to the author for approval.

Although every effort will be made to include articles accepted for publication in the next issue, BESIG reserves the right to postpone publication if necessary. Advertising is also very welcome. Details can be found on the webpage https://goo.gl/exaCjE or from the Newsletter Editor.

Notes for contributors

When you write for *Business Issues*, please use Arial 12pt and do not exceed the maximum 1200 words. One page articles (approx. 600 words) are also welcome. Please include a short biographical note of no more than 40 words at the top of the article. Please also include your address (this will not be published) and a (separate) recent full-face photograph of yourself.

Send photographs and graphics separately as .jpg files (not embedded in Word documents), label them clearly and indicate where they should be placed in the text. Please also ensure that you have obtained permission to reproduce any illustrations submitted.

We assume that your article has neither been previously published, nor is being considered for publication elsewhere. If we do wish to reprint, we need to know where the article was first published and what permission you have obtained.

Advertising

You can buy space in *Business Issues* (circulation: worldwide, circa 750). The advertising rates are as follows for advertisements requiring no setting or adjustments:

Full page   £360 + VAT
Portrait (297mm x 210mm)

Half page
Landscape (186mm x 120mm)
                         £180 + VAT
Portrait (122mm x 158mm)
                         £120 + VAT

Any other size or proportion is negotiable.

Discounts: Three consecutive ads per year: 10%; Visible link to BESIG website on your website: 10%; Both: 20%). Booking 3 or more consecutive ads also entitles the advertiser to place an advert on the BESIG website free of charge for the duration of the contract with the newsletter.

All changes to advertisements ordered as a series (for a run of two, three or more) are the advertiser's sole responsibility. If any change is required, the new artwork must be emailed to the Newsletter Editor before the copy date for articles and advertisements for the next issue of the newsletter.

All bookings for space, inserts, flyers, quotes for colour, setting, etc should be made to the Newsletter Editor at the address on the left.

Submissions should be sent as an email attachment to the Newsletter Editor: chris.stanzer@besig.org.

Proofreader
Jennie Wright

Design and Layout
Martyn Barr

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Editorial

Welcome to this summer issue of the BESIG newsletter where you can read about both recent and upcoming events in the BESIG calendar.

Markus Jürgen Dietz has written a report of BESIG's PCE at the IATEFL Conference in Brighton in April. Building on the success of and learning from the World Café first trialled at the BESIG conference in November, this took a similar format with fifty-plus delegates from around the world engaging in "conversations around questions that matter".

BESIG offers a Facilitator Scholarship to the IATEFL Conference each year and this year's winner was Alan Simpson. On page 14 he tells us what it meant to him to win and describes his conference experience and how it has affected him. A condition of the scholarship is to give a presentation at the BESIG Showcase and he has written a description of this for us on page 16. You can read about the other presentations at the BESIG Showcase on the pages following this. Some of these were written by Marcela Harrisberger and you can find longer versions on her blog. Part of Oksana Hera's presentation at the Showcase covered using emojis in company mails. This so captivated the

Rob Howard and Oksana Hera, BESIG's new Online Team Coordinators

audience that we asked her to write about it separately for us.

Michelle Hunter explains the difference between coaching and teaching, and looks at the overlap between coaching and professional business English training. While at the other end of the teaching spectrum, Karin Heuert Galvão offers some survival skills for the novice business English teacher.

Grace Alchini describes a project she initiated to motivate university students in Mexico and Deborah Johnson looks into how we can teach our learners to be confident speakers.

In the last summer issue, Geoff Tranter told us why he thinks humour is an essential language skill in the workplace and gave us several strategies to use in the classroom to help develop this. Continuing this theme, Annabelle Baptista-Baumann offers some sound dos and don'ts for using it with our business English clients.

From our regular writers Claire Hart continues her *Zeitgeist Unleashed* column with three suggestions for business English teachers and trainers to protect themselves from mental ill-health. Roy Bicknell continues his new series of duets – activities for mixed-ability pairs – with two new ones. And lastly, Gabrielle Jones tackles the minefield of swearwords in business English and gives advice on how the business teacher/trainer can support their learners in choosing the optimum communication lexis.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue. If you are interested in contributing to the newsletter, please contact me at the address below.

Chris Stanzer is a freelance trainer living in Bulgaria. Email: chris.stanzer@besig.org

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Letter from the Joint Coordinators

BESIG started 2018 full of enthusiasm, with a handful of projects in the pipeline.

Committee news

Pete Rutherford has stepped down as BESIG Online Team Coordinator. We are thankful to Pete for his great contribution to both the BESIG Committee and the online team, and, in particular, for having worked hard in linking BESIG with other SIGs around the world. The position will now be shared by Oksana Hera and Rob Howard who – after standing unopposed – were elected Joint Coordinators. Both Oksana and Rob have been working in the BOT for some years. Their bios can be found here: https://goo.gl/tgg1FY.

Website

As you may know from the e-Bulletin, in March we announced the launch of our new website http://besig.iatefl.org/. The new site's design is more modern and easily accessible from desktops and any mobile device. We encourage you to visit it and send us your feedback to besig@iatefl.org. Like any other project, the new website has different stages and involves the joint effort of all our teams. At the moment, we are migrating the content from the old website, a task that will take us a few months. If you need any information related to past conferences, newsletters or old archives, you can still go to the old website www.besig.org which will be available until the migration process is over. In the meantime, we are also working on the development of the members' area. We hope that the full project will be implemented by the end of the year.

IATEFL BESIG at the Annual IATEFL Conference in Brighton

BESIG had a fantastic turnout at the IATEFL Conference in Brighton both at our

The new website's design is more modern and easily accessible from desktops and any mobile device

Pre-Conference Event and our Showcase. Throughout this edition, you can find articles with information about these events.

Malta Conference Selections

We have also released the sixth volume in our Annual Conference series, *Malta Conference Selections 2017* which is now freely available. It is a fully linked and clickable pdf edition. To access and download the Malta conference

proceedings, go to the Malta conference webpage (https://goo.gl/vCSlNz) and scroll down the page to click.

We would like to highlight the valuable contribution that BESIG Editorial Team makes to our members by organizing the content shared in our conferences and making it accessible to everybody. Those who were not able to attend the conference can have a first-hand account of the topics discussed, and those who – having attended – need to refresh their knowledge, find in the *Conference Selections* an excellent source of reference. We invite you to enjoy this benefit and also to send your submission whenever you give a talk at our conference.

The number of BESIG volunteers is growing

Since we took over as Joint Coordinators, we have been encouraging our membership to take a more active role in our SIG. We are thrilled to welcome a group of new volunteers who will be collaborating in the Events team. As we always say: You don't need to commit to large endeavours; every little task counts in teamwork. You can find out more about volunteering at https://goo.gl/tvnYC9.

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BESIG Events Team 2018

Helen Strong (UK)
Ingolstadt, Germany
helen.strong@besig.org

Events Coordinator (committee role)
Responsible for organising face-to-face events (e.g. annual conference, BESIG presence at the IATEFL conference).

Andrzej Stesik (Poland)
Poznan, Poland
andrzej.stesik@besig.org

Admin & Development (committee role)
Responsible for schedule planning, proposal selection and conference speakers, as well as the Maria Keller Scholarship.

Andreea Nechifor (Romania)
Iasi, Romania
andreea.nechifor@besig.org

Local Organizer, Iasi
Responsible for organization on the ground in Iasi, liaising with the conference hotel, local organizations, local helpers, local publicity, etc.

David Koster (Netherlands)
Brno, Czech Republic
david.koster@besig.org

Sponsors and exhibitors
Responsible for liaising with the publishers about sponsorship and exhibiting.

Maribel Ortega (Dominican Republic)
Munich, Germany
maribel.ortega@besig.org

Conference Programme Coordinator
Responsible for the layout of the programme, as well as flyers and schedules for publicity purposes.

Mauline Lawrence (Jamaica)
Stuttgart, Germany
mauline.lawrence@besig.org

Activities and sessions
Assisting in the planning and scheduling of activities at the annual conference and other face-to-face events

Barbara Goulet (Canada)
Berlin, Germany
barbara.goulet@besig.org

Website (past events); Proofreading
Responsible for updating the new website with details of our past events; helping to proofread the conference programme

Sarah Brown (USA)
Berlin, Germany
sarah.brown@besig.org

Networking activities for delegates
Assisting in designing and implementing networking activities at the annual conference in Romania

Membership survey

We have published a survey to learn about your interests as well as your concerns in relation to BESIG. The information we gather is used as a basis for many of the decisions which we make on your behalf. If you have not completed it yet, we would like to ask you for a few minutes of your time to answer it. The survey can be found here: https://goo.gl/forms/2uikK4CdX8bVZW2i1.

Travel grants and scholarships

In line with our desire to help more members attend our face-to-face events, this year the Committee has decided to award two Roving Reporter grants and three Conference Photographers grants. We will also be awarding the 2019 BESIG Facilitator Scholarship to attend the IATEFL Annual Conference and give a

talk at our Showcase and the Maria Keller scholarship for first-time speakers at our Annual Conference. Information about these grants and scholarships is soon to be published.

The David Riley Award for Innovation in Business English and ESP

For the last ten years, in conjunction with Macmillan, BESIG have offered the David Riley Award for Innovation in Business English and ESP. The competition attracted a large numbers of submissions over the years, and was adjudicated by three members of the BESIG committee; winners were presented with their award at the BESIG Annual Conference (see page 6 for the full list of winners over the years).

Sadly, all good things must come to an end, and so it is with the David Riley Award. The BESIG committee, in consultation with Macmillan, and in recognition of the difficulty of having to choose between often quite dissimilar innovative submissions, has therefore decided that it is now time to discontinue the award. BESIG would like to thank everyone who has been involved over the years, and in the same spirit of innovation so encouraged by David Riley, look forward to new opportunities and developments in the future.

Looking forward

As part of our goal of working closer with other SIGS around the world, this year IATEFL BESIG is cooperating in two face-to-face events. The first is the 1st IATEFL Poland Business English Conference in cooperation with IATEFL BESIG. This was a one-day business English event which took place at Warsaw University of Technology on Saturday, 19 May. For more information, please visit https://goo.gl/1c5ZCL. We will be carrying a report of this in the next newsletter.

The second is the JALT BizCom Conference in Tokyo, Japan to be held on 8-9 September 2018. BESIG will be supporting the Business Communication Special Interest Group of the Japan Association for Language Teaching in their

The David Riley Award for Innovation in Business English and ESP

David Riley was a teacher and a school administrator but he is best remembered for his work as a writer, editor and publisher. Respected for his true understanding of the ELT classroom, and the motivation he inspired in his students, he used this experience to create truly innovative publishing projects. It is fitting, therefore, that this award, to recognise new talent, creativity and innovation in the field of business English and ESP was created in his memory in 2008, a year after his death.

The award has now been discontinued. The following is a list of the winners over the ten years since its creation:

2017 *Business English for Beginners A1*, by Mike Hogan and Britta Landermann, published by Cornelsen.

2016 *ETpedia Business English: 500 ideas for Business English teachers* by John Hughes and Robert McLarty, published by Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd.

2015 Joint winners: *A-Z of Business English Activities* by Julie Pratten and *Presentation Lesson Hacks* by Phil Wade.

2014 Joint winners: ELT Jam and Newscorp for their website for students, *Newsmart* www.getnewsmart.com and Vicki Hollett for her *Simple English Videos* website www.simpleenglishvideos.com.

2013 Joint winners: *Managing Projects* by Bob Dignen and *Leading People* by Steve Flinders, both published by Delta Publishing.

2012 *Collins Business English: Listening app* by Ian Badger, published by Collins.

2011 *Open English*, the most renowned online English school in Latin America, offering online live classes with American teachers.

2010 *English 360*, founded by Cleve Miller, an open platform for English language blended learning.

2009 *English for Law Enforcement* by Charles Boyle and Ileana Chersan, published by Macmillan.

2008 *Good Practice – Communication Skills for the Medical Practitioner* by Marie McCullagh and Ros Wright, published by Cambridge University Press.

conference taking place at Toyo University. Full details are on the JALT BizCom website (https://goo.gl/K2zQL2).

IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference in Iasi, Romania

Our annual conference will take place in one of the historical and cultural centres of Romania, Iasi, from 16–18 November 2018. Note that this year the conference is longer than normal – we will be starting at 9am on the Friday morning. The theme of the conference will be *Exploring the frontiers of business English*. The call for proposals is open. For further details, as well as tips and suggestions for travelling to Iasi, you can go to https://goo.gl/Y7o5SN. We look forward to meeting you in Iasi (pictured below).

Dana Poklepovic is a communication skills, business English trainer and certified ontological and executive coach. She runs a consulting firm that provides training and coaching services to companies and freelance professionals in Argentina.

Evan Frendo has been active in business English and ESP since 1993, mostly in the corporate sector. His methodology book for teachers, How to Teach Business English (Longman, 2005), is used in teacher training all over the world. Email: evan.frendo@e4b.de.

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Report on the Spring Open Forum

One of the events at every IATEFL Annual conference is the SIG Open Forum, which is basically an opportunity for participants to meet SIG members and find out what the SIG has to offer. This year the BESIG Open Forum was divided into three parts. First Evan Frendo, the joint Co-ordinator, briefly introduced the role of the SIG Committee and the teams of volunteers behind the scenes, explained the various scholarships and awards available this year, gave details about the new website, announced our receiving of the Fair List Award for gender balance in its online programme, and outlined plans for the rest of the year. He also thanked Pete Rutherford for his sterling service on the committee and as leader of the BESIG Online Team, and confirmed that Oksana Hera and Rob Howard had been elected as Pete's replacement and would be sharing his responsibilities.

This was followed by a focus group activity where participants split into groups of 6–8 people, and discussed various issues and themes such as membership benefits, channels of communication, suggestions for spending BESIG funds, and so on. Each group was moderated by a member of the BESIG committee or one of the volunteers whose role was to encourage participants to share ideas and information which would help the committee plan for the future.

Finally, the Open Forum finished off with drinks, giving members and non-members alike the chance to mingle and get to know each other.

Evan Frendo introduced the Open Forum

Thank you, Pete!

*Pete Rutherford
Outgoing Web Coordinator*

Focus groups discussed various issues and themes, followed by drinks and a chance to mingle!

Evan Frendo has been active in business English and ESP since 1993, mostly in the corporate sector. His methodology book for teachers, How to Teach Business English (Longman, 2005), is used in teacher training all over the world. Email: evan.frendo@e4b.de.

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BESIG ONLINE:
A round-up of the SIG's online activities

March came in like a lion with a fact-filled swap shop, where our members share ideas, tips and techniques for teaching, hosted by our own Kirsten Waechter discussing how to integrate English for Specific Purposes into the BE classroom. The topics we all brainstormed included:

- How do I teach myself?
- What are reliable resources?
- Can I teach ESP as a non-native speaker?
- Where can I find materials?
- How can I tweak (or recycle) my own materials?
- How should I teach ESP matters?

It is always a pleasure and a fantastic learning experience to join in the swap shops where the host acts as a scribe, noting the ideas put forward by the participants. BESIG Committee members and participants from around the world all share their individual insights as it pertains to their culture and circumstances. We hold them every few months and each event has a theme. Be sure to join in and share your thoughts and expertise at the next one.

Due to the IATEFL Brighton conference, April didn't have any online activities but most of the team came together and met face-to-face during the PCE, Open Forum and Meet the SIGs event, and many conference goers posted regular updates with their highlights in our Facebook group. It also marked both a happy and sad event: the hand-over of the Coordinatorship of the online team from Pete Rutherford, who has steered the BOT wonderfully for many years, to the

Members of the BESIG Online Team (BOT) from left to right: Kirsten Waechter, Grace Alchini, Rob Howard, Oksana Hera and Sue Annan

new joint coordinators, Oksana Hera and myself. Pete will stay on the team as an active member and we all wish to thank him for the tremendous job he has done and for all the support he will continue to give.

In May, Emma Sue Prince delivered a wonderful webinar titled *The future of soft skills – which ones do we need to teach in the BE classroom?* hosted by Oksana Hera and moderated by Grace Alchini. Emma Sue is a qualified teacher and management development trainer, author and business consultant with expertise in soft skills, trainer training, materials design and qualification development. She is author of *The Advantage*, published by Pearson Business which redefines soft skills as personal competences we can all develop and nurture. During the webinar, Emma Sue discussed the history and

definition of the skills, what employers are looking for and also how to include them in the BE classroom and how to make use of them as a teacher.

A PDF of additional resources from Emma Sue Prince together with recordings of both webinars will shortly be available to BESIG members in the members-only area of the new website: http://besig.iatefl.org/. You can also read reviews of both these webinars on pages 10–11.

Rob Howard

Another part of our online activities in 2018 has been regular Facebook discussions which have turned out to be diverse and fruitful. Our group members contributed eagerly both with their responses and ideas for future topics.

Rob Howard is the owner of OnlineLanguageCenter and partner at Business Language Training Institute. He is a teacher, writer, consultant and speaker regarding Online, Business English and Image Technology and founder of EFLtalks, a worldwide PLN+ for teachers.

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In January, we asked for our community's reflections on how the BE training sector would develop, which resulted in a variety of aspects mentioned. The participants talked about all possible influences and trends that have been coming into play recently: from Google Pixel Buds, AI and Natural Language Processing mentioned by Evan Frendo to Ron Morrain's insights regarding the possibility of teachers being replaced by AI. Marjorie Rosenberg highlighted the effectiveness of Neuro-Linguistic Programming techniques for the BE classroom, whereas Philip Saxon shed light on the current trends in Hungary. Rephrasing the contribution of Pete Rutherford on the topic, we are heading towards bright innovations in the sphere of language and communication training. To learn more about this discussion, follow the link here: https://goo.gl/G6RWWP.

We were inspired by Jack Ma, the co-founder of Alibaba Group, in February. At the World Economic Forum he had stated his vision of teaching future generations saying: "Everything we teach should be different from machines" (quoted from the video: https://goo.gl/czakdn), prompting us to share ideas on how BE trainers can help learners of all age groups to succeed. Julie Kacmaz stressed the importance of intellectual humility, Lalitha Murthy added that teaching values was indispensable, while Kirsten Waechter said that teachers themselves would need more coaching tools to provide such training. You can find out more about this thread here: https://goo.gl/Q8J7n7.

Preparing for the World Café at the 52nd IATEFL International Conference in Brighton, the group eagerly shared what could encourage them as trainers to teach an ESP or a BE course or discourage from taking up the challenge. The attitude of our learners was the key aspect to consider according to Andreea Katia, and Lia Kalianos said it was the challenge itself that could inspire the teacher. Analía Duarte shared that receiving positive feedback from her clients added to the sense of fulfilment as a trainer, while Tyler
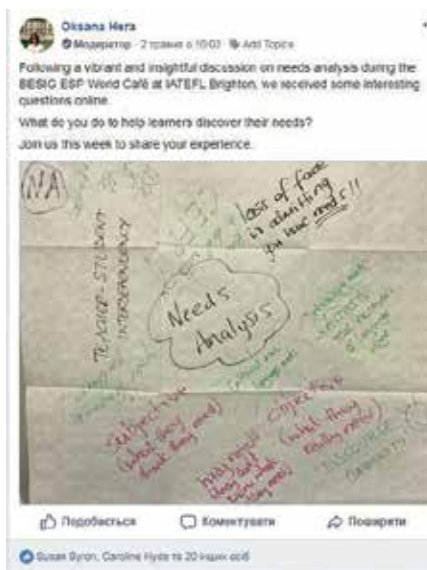
May's Facebook discussion question, illustrated by one of the finished sheets of paper from the BESIG and ESP World Café at IATEFL Brighton

Sharf described trainers as 'enablers' facilitating the growth of clients. This nicely linked with the thrill of teaching ESP classes shared by Evan Frendo and Ros Wright's comment on teaching learners what they really need. The whole discussion can be accessed here: https://goo.gl/2GEaoU.

In May, our contributors generously shared the established practices they use to help learners discover their needs. Lalitha Murthy described her tried and tested approach, while Sue Annan claimed that needs have to be analysed on a regular basis throughout the course. Maria Lewicka and Elizabeth Evans Cicconi found some similarity in their own approaches. And Cath Prewett-Shrempf acknowledged the power of trainers' networking as well as organising company visits and inviting guest speakers to keep learners in tertiary education updated about recent developments. To enjoy this final spring discussion, follow this link: https://goo.gl/9jgBES.

Overall, we believe that such an exchange of ideas is beneficial for all involved, as we

An excerpt from the May Facebook discussion

come up with new ideas for our classes and training sessions, reflect on how we can improve our practices, and reach out to those who need inspiration for the next stage of their professional journey. Join our discussions – it may be your insight that your colleagues have been waiting for you to share.

Such an active start of the year does not mean that BESIG Online Team is going on holiday. With the meticulous planning of Kirsten Waechter, we have a great line-up of webinars scheduled for summer. June's event on the third is with Rob Howard, who will be sharing his expertise on how he helps his learners give better quality customer service in English. On 1 July, Louise Goodman will be talking about applying the total customer experience to BE, and on 5 August, Sherri Williams will guide us on how freelancers can market themselves. For more details about these online events, keep an eye on our new website https://goo.gl/B8U8qq, our blog https://goo.gl/f1BTCs, and the newly activated LinkedIn group.

Oksana Hera

Oksana Hera is a freelance business English trainer based in Lviv, Ukraine. Working primarily with IT professionals, her interests lie in strategies to enhance in-company training and learners' motivation.

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Weekend Workshop reviews

Weekend Workshop 77: Kirsten Waechter – How do we teach ESP in BE?

Kirsten started by saying the swap shop had been prompted because the upcoming BESIG PCE at the IATEFL Conference in Brighton was to be held in conjunction with the English for Special Purposes SIG. She continued by saying that we are the language and communication experts but problems can arise when we don't know the specific vocabulary required, and then proposed a series of questions which she, herself, had wrestled with at the start of her BE teaching.

How do I teach myself?

We discussed making use of the internet, reading widely, asking stakeholders or shadowing the client. The discussion moved on to training courses and various courses were put forward. In the end, it was determined that the clients were the best people to learn from.

What are reliable resources?

Apart from material from the learners, and recordings of their meetings, many participants used specialist publications, where available, or websites such as the BBC. Access to specialised online dictionaries was then discussed with Kirsten asking how the participants check their reliability? It was agreed that asking the learners to assemble glossaries of key vocabulary for their field was helpful, and that consulting with experts, or just asking the students what is relevant, goes a long way to proving validity of the material used.

Can I teach ESP as a non-native speaker?

This question was shot down in flames as no-one necessarily has the monopoly on

correct terminology, which can, anyway, change as time and circumstances develop, or depend on the client's Community of Practice and how it uses the language. It was also suggested that it could be difficult for teachers if they are expected to know the language required just by virtue of being native speakers.

Where can I find materials?

Although books are a good starting point and might make a framework for working from, it was agreed that they can be limited in their scope and may be too generic for specialists. YouTube channels and Instagram were also suggested. The best material though is actually the client, and if they can share material with you, even if a non-disclosure document is required, that would be the best option. Some clients expect material from their trainer, however, so it might be good to provide framework materials for the learners to contribute their own content.

How can I tweak (or recycle) my own materials?

If working in the same field is a constant, you may be able to recycle material. Otherwise adding or chopping parts out

to cope with changes in ability or skills could be necessary. Ask the learners to add more relevant content and remember that if you signed a non-disclosure clause, you will need to keep the material general (unless you check media to see whether this is a well-known fact first!)

How should I teach ESP matters (methods, activities)?

This generated some useful ideas. Simulations are good, providing they reflect what happens at work. Labelling pictures, drawings and graphs can be used to good effect. Translation was proposed, but direct equivalents need to be provided. Key vocabulary can be found on training websites from the companies concerned, or from YouTube, Twitter, Instagram. Describe their daily routines. Recycle vocabulary by using slips of paper with key words to use in context. Sometimes the learners just need guidance, when the amount of material surpasses their capacity for understanding.

It was an extremely lively and useful meeting, with several ideas for future webinars coming out of the discussion. There will be more to follow, for certain.

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Weekend Workshop 78: Emma Sue Prince – Soft skills – so what?

This event was enjoyed by participants from all corners of the world. We started by trying to define 'soft skills' and came up with a problem of terminology. Although employers are looking for graduates with excellent soft skills rather than technical knowledge, they know them as: generic, core, life, hard, employability, key and 21st Century skills. Basically, they are looking for attitude and character in their new recruits.

These skills are starting to become better defined, as more research is taking place into the needs of the job market. Once employed, communication skills, teamwork, adaptability, problem solving, critical observation, conflict resolution and optimism can be observed, however, skills like punctuality, flexibility, good communication, and cooperativeness are less difficult to measure.

Emma Sue believes soft skills are becoming more defined; however, there is a still a lot of ambiguity around what they are. There is a problem in that trainers of soft skills are unregulated. It means that there are many untrained 'experts' out there – and no one agrees on how to measure their effectiveness.
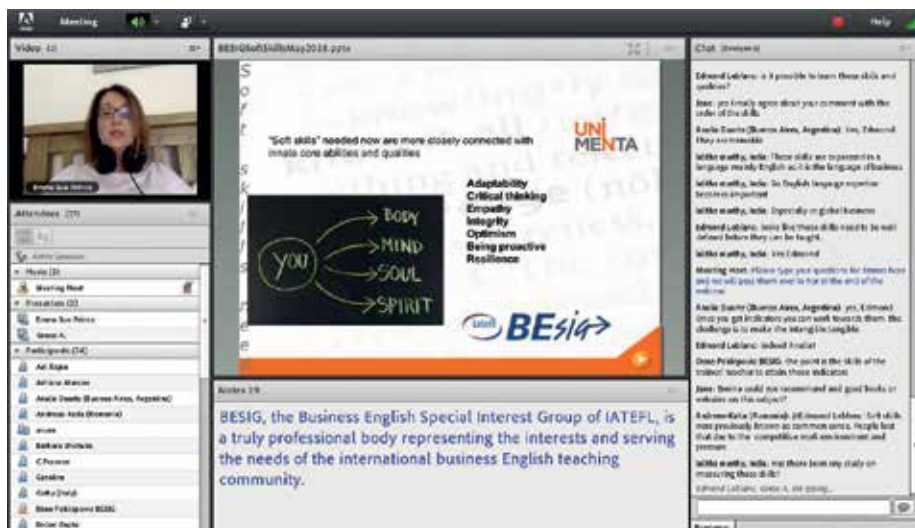
Another difficulty is that clients are increasingly looking nowadays to buy a product or bite-sized chunks of training and don't wish to buy full courses. For trainers, however, this could be good news as for those who are able to tailor-make courses, there are lots of opportunities.

She also believes that there are seven innate core abilities which comprise the basis of soft-skill training. These are: adaptability, critical thinking, empathy, integrity, optimism, being proactive and resilience (where being able to handle the inevitable setbacks is important). These skills help with all the attributes above which employers are looking for.

She believes that business English teachers are well-placed to work on soft skills as we understand the experiential learning circle. Unfortunately, she thinks that it is underused by teachers, who do not take their students the full way around the experiential learning cycle of experience/interpret/generalise/apply. Reflection is critical and a key role in the cycle. It would seem that we often stop before the reflection process is fully used.

It is also important for us to develop these skills as it's all about developing self-awareness and we can't help others if we don't look at this in ourselves. Soft skills give us the opportunity to learn about ourselves and so adapt our behaviour in future events.

Emma Sue then took us through a simple reflection process which we can use with our learners and emphasised that it is important to practise in low-stake situations to be able to use them in high-stake ones. She also advocates mindfulness, the ability to be still and be focused and present in the moment.

We agreed that projects which combined soft skills with English development were a good mix, and that perhaps English is, itself, a soft skill. The preferred idea is to focus on the skills before teaching the English. As Emma Sue pointed out: awareness-raising leads to more in-depth focus on communication.

This was a well-received workshop, with some excellent take-away ideas for our business English classes.

As well as being an Eltchat moderator, Sue Annan works in a private language school in the Channel Islands, where she teaches both general and business English and trains teachers for Trinity College London. She has been a member of BESIG since 2008.

The IATEFL BESIG PCE Brighton

Markus Jürgen Dietz gives us a taste of the ESP-BE World Café in Brighton.

It's Monday morning and everyone here has taken the whole week off. We could go for a walk along the beautiful and lively esplanade just across the street. The weather isn't even too bad, although it's April and we're in England. Instead, about 50 English teachers from all over the world are sitting in groups of four to six in a fairly unadorned room with no windows and listening attentively to the gentle voice of Steve Miller, Treasurer of IATEFL BESIG and one of the organisers of this event. Everyone is curious and a little excited about things to come in the next hours, while Steve is slowly walking back and forth, explaining in his calm – yet somewhat dynamic manner – what today's edition of the World Café is aiming at and which steps it will involve.

We're in Brighton at one of the Pre-Conference Events of the 52nd IATEFL Conference: the ESP-BE World Café entitled *Exploring and Sharing Best Practices in English*, jointly organised by IATEFL BESIG and ESP SIG. The idea of the event is to engage in "Conversation around questions that matter", as it says in the flyer that can be downloaded from the IATEFL website (https://goo.gl/A4b4zy).

Once Steve has finished, Laura Hudson, Regional Manager for Macmillan in

The facilitators of the world café from left to right: Alan Simpson, Tanja Murphy-Ilibasic, Laura Hudson and Steve Miller © Syke A.K.

Germany, Austria and Switzerland, steps on the stage and presents participants with three questions she wants them to discuss in their groups. Just a few minutes later the room has turned into a huge buzz of conversation. Laura's topic is *Resources and Materials*, and for the next hour we're discussing issues such as the appropriateness of materials, e-learning, how specific English for specific purposes should be and the challenges business English teachers face. Questions are being raised, thoughts and perspectives exchanged, ideas are flowing around the room.

This is carried out in three discussion rounds of about twenty minutes. In each round the group members take notes on a large sheet of scrap paper that will later be hung up on the wall next to the sheets from the other groups. After each round about three quarters of the participants change tables, while one or two members of each group stay where they are to ensure some continuity.

It is half past eleven when the event lives up to an essential promise that is implied by its name and transforms into what can actually be called a café: we have a break and head upstairs, where coffee, tea and biscuits are waiting for us. It's an exciting moment for my metabolism, which has been signalling for a while that it wants a top-up on its caffeine supply, and an opportunity for me to notice that 60 minutes of engagement in intense discussion about professional issues don't prevent these English teachers, many of whom have never seen each other before, from lively chatting during the break.

After the coffee break Alan Simpson, a professional English trainer based

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in Japan and the winner of the 2018 IATEFL BESIG Facilitator's Scholarship, has the second set of three questions for us about *Needs Analysis and Evaluation*. It doesn't take the tables long to become immersed in animated conversation again. And after the lunch break, which provides us with some energy replenishment and another opportunity to chat and get to know each other, Tanja Murphy-Ilibasic, who is a Germany-based business English trainer and coach with over 25 years' business experience, takes over and we discuss *Teaching Techniques*. Our very last task for today – and one that inspires a valuable exchange of ideas – is to share our favourite teaching technique with our table, identify why it works so well for us and discover what could make it even better. Finally, before we call it a day, we get together as a whole group as we have done after each set of questions to share ideas, give examples and consolidate what we have talked about at the different tables.

So, what are the advantages and what are the challenges of a World Café? What's in it for us? There is no doubt that the World Café is an excellent platform to facilitate networking. It is hard to think of another format that provides participants with the opportunity to speak with almost everyone else in the room for at least

Getting ready to start

twenty minutes. Secondly, the World Café promotes a very open discussion with colleagues about topics that are meaningful to all participants. The participants explore the topics together and share ideas and information. Thirdly, a suggestion for future events: I think the World Café would also be an efficient way to present and discuss input that comes from outside. To this end we would need, in addition to a set of questions about each topic discussed, presentations of some kind that are related to the topics and more than introductions to the

questions. Such a presentation could introduce an unusual or provocative perspective or new results from research. Alternatively, more specific topics could be chosen, i.e. ELT topics the presenters are more familiar with than anybody else in the room.

This brings me to the first of two challenges I see: There's a danger that a second or third World Café carried out in the same way and with more or less the same group of participants could be going in a circle. To bring about an upward dynamic, we would need additional input. The second challenge we face at a World Café is that someone must see to it that groups keep on track during the discussion rounds. It is easy to get carried away and talk about something that hasn't got much to do with the topic. This didn't happen to me in Brighton, but the organisers should keep an eye on that.

My personal bottom line? I like the communicative spirit the World Café conveys. The experience in Brighton was amazing and I would like to take part in more events of that sort. I'm also asking myself if I can use the format for my English classes. This might take some adaptation, but I believe the initial investment will pay off in the long run in the form of enhanced learning efficiency.

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Markus is from Germany, where he started his teaching career in 2001. In 2012 he moved to Lausanne, Switzerland, mainly to learn French. Having a degree in Business and the Cert IBET, Markus teaches general and business English as well as German to adults and young adults.

IATEFL BESIG Facilitator Scholarship winner 2018

Alan Simpson tells us what it meant to him to be the 2018 IATEFL BESIG Facilitator Scholarship winner.

No way, really? Had I just won? I replied to IATEFL that of course I would accept the award and attend the conference in Brighton. I knew I had been helping my local Business Communication SIG in Japan, but also thought that there were would have been lots of applicants. I just thought; why not try?

One thing led to another in the build-up to the conference. First, I had won the scholarship, then I was asked to represent JALT, (a Japanese teaching association) at the conference and also cohost the BESIG World Café Pre-Conference Event (PCE). I had also started to collaborate with BESIG to run a business communication event in Tokyo in September 2018. Momentum is such a wonderful thing!

On the evening of Sunday the 8th of April, I went to a meet the IATEFL supporters, volunteers and associate members' event. I enjoyed meeting some people for the first time, and others who I've only corresponded by email, including the ESP & BESIG teams.

The next morning involved lots of setting up: moving tables, laying out paper tablecloths, markers, sweets, getting the background jazz music on, hanging up washing lines, clothes pegs and flip-charts for the PCE. The audience trickled in, and the World Café opened for business. Ideas emerged, conversations flowed and connections deepened. Pictures and visuals which captured the teaching materials, needs analysis and teaching activities can be seen at https://padlet.com/hyde1/3tkggvp5dhg1

(with thanks to Caroline Hyde and the ESP SIG for creating the Padlet take-aways). It was an honor to be able to work with the events' team, see how effective it was, and hear people share their knowledge as they developed friendships and visions.

Over the next few days, I met publishers to talk about books and sponsorships, professors to discuss research, award winners to agree how lucky we were, and IATEFL staff to find out how to make professional looking emails and newsletters, (by using packages like

Mailchimp and Pagesuite). Furthermore, I discussed student collaborations with teachers from around the world. The IATEFL conference truly brings teacher/trainers together, and I will now certainly continue further collaborations.

Then it was showtime! The BESIG showcase day. There were a number of interesting talks, from English as a lingua franca, lexis, video conferencing, workplace English, group dynamics, and most of all a chance to meet other professionals with similar interests. Throughout the day, I picked up lots of useful ideas, made some new friendships and deepened others. I had worked hard at preparing my workshop and was relatively confident in the technology. There was a small hiccup with some interference online, but the audience were able to interact with the role players online to achieve the aim of carrying out an authentic simulation. Afterwards I was really happy to receive positive feedback.

As I drank wine and had dinner with my new friends that evening, we continued the discussion about intercultural business training, and I realized a few things. Business English is not just a job for many of these trainers. It's a passion. It's a way of life. And as I headed home to Tokyo, I was busy writing lists, writing reports, and reflecting on how to develop new projects. Being a business English facilitator is hard work, and usually unpaid, but from one or two years ago, I have learned so much, organized many projects, and grown. Thank you BESIG for this opportunity, and if you are considering applying for this scholarship, I highly recommend it!

Certificate of Appreciation

IATEFL would like to thank

Business English Special Interest Group

for the generous donation of the

BESIG Facilitator Scholarship

awarded to

Alan Simpson

in the year 2018

Jon Burton | Chief Executive IATEFL

Alan Simpson was an engineer, fundraiser, teacher-trainer, and then in-house corporate trainer for a Japanese engineering company for a decade. He recently transitioned into academia, and has been building the JALT Business Communication SIG since 2015.

We hope you enjoyed the 2018 Conference in Brighton, see you next year in Liverpool!

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A dynamic and interactive Contrast Cultural Method video conference training workshop

Alan Simpson, BESIG Facilitator Scholarship winner, describes his workshop for the BESIG Showcase at the IATEFL conference, Brighton.

The Contrast Culture Method (CCM) is an experiential training method, first developed by Dr. Edward Stewart in the 1960s, based on intercultural, interpersonal and interactional principles. The intercultural relates to psychological motivations, perceptions of culture, emotions, and patterns of thinking. The interpersonal is the sociological dynamic and complexity of the interaction, i.e. how are private values represented in public work-life environments? The third part of the cultural trilogy is the anthropological principles of customs, traditions and beliefs which are represented through the language and actions of the role players (Wasilewski & Kawakami 2012).

It is therefore crucial for this training method that role plays should be unscripted to simulate authentic reactions. In the video conference training workshop at the BESIG Showcase, the audience participants watched a live role play and then commented on what they had seen. The two trained role players from different countries didn't practise together beforehand, although they practised with other role players and, with the audience of the training workshop in mind, a scenario was developed over several months. We came to the conclusion that it would be based on simulating a video conference chat between head office and local area managers about someone from the head office who had been transferred to the local office and had been working there for three months.

We used the video conferencing platform Zoom for this project. At first I shared my screen with the role players and hid my video, so that they could see what I was presenting to the conference audience while they waited in Seoul and Osaka. When I finished my introduction and switched to their video feeds, the role players started with: "Hello, hello, can you hear me?" and I began to take notes, because I didn't know exactly in which direction the conversation would flow. At first there was interference when the role player representing the head office manager spoke. His voice wasn't clear, and it was difficult to catch what he said. The other role player asked him to repeat, but just continued with what she had to say anyway. I was sweating. Maybe it was due to his wifi signal strength, or his talking speed. Either way, it was authentic. The local area manager continued. She wasn't comfortable working with the employee that had been transferred there, and neither were her staff. He was a good leader and achieved goals, but he wasn't close, and wouldn't even socialise. The head office manager, who we could now hear, wanted to give him more time, and dismissed the importance of socialising. In fact, he looked frustrated at why she kept mentioning it. Finally, the local area manager wanted to keep this conversation just between the two of them. The head office manager was surprised, why did she want to keep this information to themselves?

When the role play finished, I interviewed the head office manager and asked him about how he felt, trying to engage with

some of his emotions and reveal some of his thoughts. I asked questions like: "How did you feel?" or "I noticed you said that meeting goals was the most important thing, can you tell me more about that?" Just trying to dig deeper and identify some of his values. And similarly, "I noticed that she said that the employee doesn't socialise much together – what did you think about that?" We were pushed for time, so I then interviewed the local area manager. I tried to find out why she felt frustrated, and why it was important to go out socialising together. After both interviews, I brought back both role players, still in character, to interact with the BESIG Showcase audience, who asked questions like: "Has the head office run overseas training programs like this before?" (which they hadn't), and: "Why is it important to build social relations while out drinking with the local office members?" (for relationship building and to build a stronger team).

At the end of the session, I introduced the role players' real identities, (Tomomi and Daniel), and we discussed whether the values they used were their real values, which they were for Tomomi and weren't for Daniel. Some interesting insights from the audience were: how authentic the interaction was, and how quickly we could get to some difficult or complicated issues, which are difficult to get to in other training methods.

The aim of the role play activity was not problem solving nor coming to a consensus, but for the members of the audience to raise their awareness of their own, and others' values. I didn't mention the values we were trying to represent, such as hierarchy, directness, harmony, and face, because it's crucial for the audience to come to their own conclusions, and if given more time, we could have explored their own values more extensively together, as

we continued to do with some audience participants that evening (without the online role-players unfortunately).

We are part of a Contrast Culture Method SIG of the Society for Intercultural Education Training and Research (SIETAR) Japan, and I am the coordinator of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) Business Communication SIG. If you would like to chat to us about this method or anything else, feel free to contact us: Alan - alanmarksimpson@gmail.com;Tomomi - tkumai@hotmail.coml; Daniel - daniel@ogu.ac.jp.

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Alan Simpson was an engineer, fundraiser, teacher-trainer, and then in-house corporate trainer for a Japanese engineering company for a decade. He recently transitioned into academia, and has been building the JALT Business Communication SIG since 2015.

BESIG Showcase at the IATEFL Conference, Brighton

At the annual IATEFL Conference, each SIG has one day of presentations, one after another in the same room, called the Showcase. BESIG's Showcase got off to an excellent start with Gregory Burrows-Delbarry who, assuming that the audience had never taught business English before, took them through a very thorough overview of what constitutes business English. As most of our readers are already teaching in the field, we haven't reported on this here, but we have asked Gregory to write a summary which will be posted on our website for all to see.

Gregory Burrows-Delbarr

Gregory was followed by Rachel Lawson who shared with us studies from her Masters last year. The session *Focussing on lexical chunks in business emails - a beneficial approach?* presented the results of a study she described as an action research into her own teaching, as well as to find out about the practices of other BE teachers. She also aimed at checking her clients' satisfaction and the results they were getting. In her study, she wanted to know whether students would really improve their email writing skills, their fluency, accuracy and appropriacy of language, and if their production would be speeded up. Her research questions were focussed on finding out the relevance of using chunks in this context, in addition to the learners' and teachers' perceptions of the subject.

To conduct the study, she collected email writing samples from students before and after a course on using chunks, BE teachers filled out a questionnaire, and she carried out semi-structured interviews with learners pre and post course.

From the email writing samples she collected, she realised there was significant improvement in accuracy and effectiveness post-course, students were able to use chunks appropriately, and they attempted to use them as politeness markers. Speed of production did not increase, though.

The questionnaire responses showed teachers believe using chunks is a more efficient way of teaching language used in emails, also that a lot of email language is indeed formulaic, and that focussing on chunks helps learners feel operational more quickly.

The interviews she conducted with students pointed out that before the course they relied heavily on Google translate, had minimal awareness of fixed phrases, and had some awareness of politeness makers. After the course, students were able to notice more chunks in emails, some of them had speeded up their writing (quicker to use chunks and more precise), but others took longer (more language and more care). However, it took them fewer emails to get results.

Overall, she concluded that focussing on lexical chunks in business emails is a beneficial approach. Some chunks were learned and produced, students were more confident and aware of politeness markers, macro organizers and register, their communicative competence improved, and they wrote more proficient and professional emails. As for the teachers, they consider that focussing

Rachel Lawson

The participants of the Forum on ELF from left to right: Gemma Williams, Rudi Camerer, Judith Mader and Analía Duarte

on chunks is obvious and it is hard to ignore them in BE emails, and that using authentic texts and learner product is key to approach it.

After a coffee break, it was the turn of a Forum on ELF moderated by Evan Frendo, featuring talks by Rudi Camerer, Gemma Williams and Analía Duarte.

In his talk, *Language-culture-identity: a paradigm for teaching English as a lingua franca*, Rudi Camerer talked about the disparity between the language we teach our students and the one they actually need to be able to perform well in real life situations. He argued that the number one aim of our teaching should be trust-building, and that students should also possess diverse discourse in ELF to be able to deal with a variety of expectations, unexpected behaviour, and utterances in a way that does not risk damaging a trustful relationship. He mentioned how the newly published *CEFR Companion Volume With New Descriptors* is dealing with this issue, by showing a greater focus on language seen as a social system and a more considerable emphasis on context.

Gemma Williams then talked about *Integrating ELF awareness into business English teaching and beyond!* She pointed out that research into ELF shows that intelligibility is far more important than accuracy and raised the question: "Is it helpful for us as teachers to push native speaker norms in the classroom and shouldn't we be encouraging fluidity over

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error correction?" She presented a case study conducted among teachers which revealed high levels of applied ELF and ICC awareness, however, NS norms still influenced evaluation of 'correctness'. She concluded that our long-held beliefs and assumptions around correctness in English may need robust self-enquiry.

Analía Duarte wrapped up the forum with the talk *Gesturing and voice expression to enhance the speaking skill*. She argued that students need to train the whole body and adopt new patterns of behaviour to communicate in a foreign language. She explained how gestures are co-expressive with speech and help organize information for speaking, they lighten the cognitive load, improving performance, and serve developmental purposes, also functioning as a bridge from individual cognition to the social other.

In short, the Forum on ELF was a great opportunity for both novice and experienced teachers, to either learn more about the role of ELF in BE teaching or to reflect upon their practices in the classroom, aiming at promoting efficient learning opportunities to students and fostering the acquisition of more relevant language they will be more likely to use and find in real life situations.

Alan Simpson, BESIG Facilitator Scholarship winner, followed in the afternoon with *A dynamic and intercultural business video conference learning experience*. You can read his account of this on page 16.

Up next was Oksana Hera. Her talk, *Learner-trainer cooperation for enhanced workplace performance*, contained a section on using emojis in company mails. Oksana has written it up for us and you can read it on the following page.

Lastly came Michelle Hunter with *Group dynamics and speaking in class 'Rounds'*. As Michelle says: "Group dynamics develop irrespective of the teacher". Participants can take on 'roles' either typical, or atypical of their regular

Oksana Hera

personalities. Teachers can be helped or hindered by these different characters. To get the BESIG Showcase audience thinking about group roles and dynamics, Michelle asked everyone to remember the last time they were in a learning situation as a learner. She suggested they may have encountered the 'eager beaver' type, or perhaps the 'strong silent' person, or the 'joker', or the 'chatterbox' who tends to sit at the back of class with his friend. Whatever the individual characters in a group, collectively, there is a risk that a certain 'Gruppengeist' will evolve. Should a certain group spirit arise, there is little we can do to combat it; think Tai Chi defence tactics and offer no force against which it can fight!

So how do we manage to achieve a set learning goal if our group is not working with us? If the goal is oral fluency and demands each student take every opportunity to speak, how do we get reluctant, over-dominant, or shy students to talk? How do we create a learning environment with a coherent

Michelle Hunter

group dynamic?

According to the findings from Michelle's research, three elements play a vital part:

1. Keep Calm
2. Lead by Example
3. Listen and Wait

Her eighteen study participants were divided into two groups, creating an ideal situation to instigate 'Rounds', one of the practical, coaching techniques which was the second focus of the talk. 'Rounds' are formed to give everyone a voice. Each person speaks freely one by one, knowing they will not be interrupted, while simultaneously being aware that time is precious and everyone needs to get 'their time to talk'. Being such small groups ensured the process ran smoothly with these students.

According to Michelle, data gathered from the focus groups indicated that there was a genuine appreciation of how calm the lessons were. From the students' responses, it was clear that they had taken on board some of the coaching principles she was aiming to instil in the group: attention, ease, equality and appreciation. A number of individuals mentioned how well the speaking opportunities had been shared among the group. One student commented on 'Rounds': saying that it "made people talk more" and that "they said different things than they would have said if we had reacted".

Overall, based on in-class observation and feedback, this particular group of students responded well to coach-approach teaching, particularly when practising oral fluency. The group collectively picked up on behaviours modelled by their teacher and recognised the value to their learning experience by doing so.

The presentations were all very well received and the day was rounded off with the Open Forum followed by drinks and time to chat to each other, discuss what we had seen during the day, and network.

Marcela Harrisberger is a Business trainer, a teacher trainer and a professional coach. She is based in Germany, where she teaches online classes. In addition to her CELTA qualification, she holds a graduate degree in People Management. She writes a blog at: www.coachingforelt.com.br

Chris Stanzer is a freelance business English trainer living in Bulgaria.

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Using emojis in corporate correspondence

Oksana Hera asks: Are you all smile(y)s in your corporate chats?

With a wide range of communication channels in the modern world, trainers face a challenge of adapting their activities and approaches to the immediate needs of their learners. While emails hold their prominent place in day-to-day business communication, many companies nowadays use at least one application or platform for video calls and text messages. Even though these messages are still called 'texts', quite often they consist of a single symbol, for instance, an abbreviation, or an image which may well represent a word, a phrase, or an emotion that in other instances would take more words to express.

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2018), an emoji is "a small digital image or icon used to express an idea or emotion". The first contextual example it provides is "emoji liven up your text messages with tiny smiley faces". This quote accurately illustrates one of the main reasons my learners like using these symbols: they allow them to be more expressive and less restrained in their workplace communication. Remembering that successful cooperation relies on trust and how well every message is communicated, how risky can emojis be when used between people who work together but have never met each other face to face? How can we as senders make sure that they produce the impression we intended?

Delving into my learners' corporate chats, it became obvious that they could have benefited from some guidance regarding the possible pitfalls of using emojis. In the given company it was generally accepted to use these among locally-based colleagues, and as some senior foreign team mates communicated with the use of emojis,

others followed suit.

In her report on visual representation of emojis on various platforms, Hannah Miller (2016) clearly demonstrated how different even the most common emojis may look, sometimes even triggering a strikingly different reaction.

To guide my learners safely down this tough road, we resort to the following activity, which was first presented during the BESIG Showcase Day at the 52nd International IATEFL Conference in Brighton in April 2018.

1. In pairs on their smartphones the learners send each other 2-5 of their favourite emojis and research what these look like on various platforms using *Emojipedia*, a website which
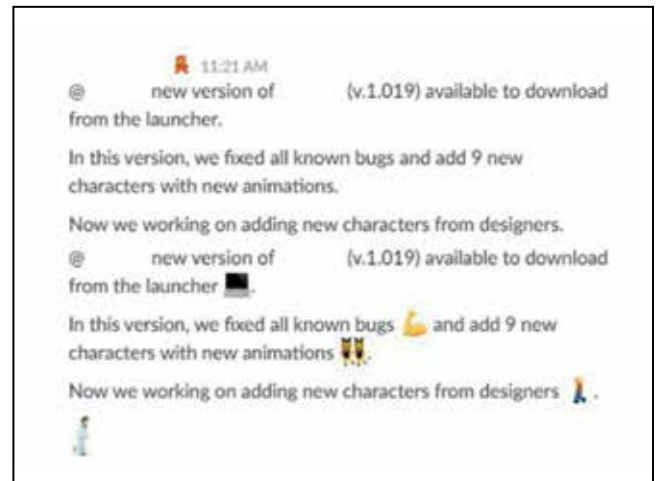
Figure 1

Figure 2

lists emojis and explains their meanings. In Figure 1 you can see how a common beaming face smiley with smiling eyes may be received if you send it from an Apple device to a Google one (*Emojipedia*, 2018).

2. After this, learners discuss in pairs if they would reconsider using some of their favourites knowing about the visual difference on other platforms.

3. Every learner selects a message they wrote earlier in their work-related chat and has to improve it by adding an emoji if appropriate.

4. At the feedback stage you can encourage learners to share their reasons for opting to add specific emojis or avoid them.

With the kind permission of my learner, Figure 2 vividly illustrates the outcome of this activity. A developer working on the design of animation found it reasonable

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to add a variety of images to his message from Slack, the software used as a collaboration platform by the company, as he was confident it supported the message intended for the technical team and designers. He did agree, however, that the number of images per message could have been reduced.

In other cases, learners felt reluctant to use any emojis after the activity or resorted to a basic smiley to avoid any possible misunderstanding.

Overall, getting access to our business learners' communication on all platforms they use proves it is a rich source of ideas which requires some genuine interest on the part of a trainer to turn it into effective and practical activities.

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Oksana Hera is a freelance business English trainer based in Lviv, Ukraine. Working primarily with IT professionals, her interests lie in strategies to enhance in-company training and learners' motivation.

So what is 'coaching' again?

Michelle Hunter answers the question: "So tell me what the difference between coaching and teaching is again...'?

You know how it is when you've been working with a concept for a while and it's as familiar as your favourite pair of shoes? It's easy to overlook the fact that other people haven't worn your shoes before and therefore haven't visited areas in which you work on a regular basis.

I experienced this at a conference where I talked about my favourite, well-worn topic of coaching in ELT. Not taking into account that those in the audience were not at the same place as me on my journey, I neglected to outline a fundamental premise which would help frame the entire presentation. This led to two points of reflection in my post-presentation review:

1. Remember that assuming makes an 'ass' of 'u' and 'me', so stick to presentation basics and ask the audience what they already know about the overall topic.
2. Take the next opportunity to go back and clarify muddy points.

This article is my opportunity to clarify the muddy waters of the coaching or teaching dichotomy from an ELT perspective. By the time you reach the end of the article, you should have a clear picture of how coaching differs from teaching, at least when standing in my shoes.

Actually, 'dichotomy' is not quite the right word here. There are contrasts between teaching and coaching but the differences are not opposing; they are rather two possible actions on a single, sliding scale. Consider your learner at the outset of their language learning journey, with little to no knowledge or experience of using English. That is one end of our scale – let's say the starting point. Then consider the opposite end of the scale where your learner has reached a level of fluent proficiency. This, presumably, would be our ultimate aim as their teacher.

What methods can be applied to 'slide' our learner along the scale of successful English learning and acquisition? Will we be applying these methods with a 'teacher' hat or a 'coach' hat on? Irrespective of which hat we are wearing for which purpose, I think I can safely say our overall intention is to see our learners succeed. As we are business English teachers/trainers reading this, allow me to situate my demonstration scale in familiar territory.

Day 1 of a new course with Max. What are their needs? What do they want to achieve by when? How do they prefer to learn? Needs analyses are the starting point of any new course but which mental hat do we, as the assessor, wear when conducting them? The teacher hat probably focusses on what we, as the training expert, believe the new learner is likely to need based on such information as job functions, or particular situations likely to arise, eg, meetings, presentations, negotiations, trips abroad, etc. We will be thinking about the grammar and or vocabulary lessons up our sleeves; a particular course book which might be handy; online tools which might offer stimulating and interactive ways of learning and practising language points. The focus is getting the learner to learn English for work purposes.

The coach hat will have similar ideas in mind, but the dominant focus is on the individual as a complete person. We will ask open questions to ascertain how motivated our new student is, e.g. Do they truly want to be here for the purposes of language improvement? What degree of confidence in their abilities, in themselves, do they demonstrate? It is likely that we will be watching the non-verbals: eyes roaming around the room, skin flushing, and their general state of relaxation or agitation. The coach-teacher will aim to speak less than the learner and encourage communication irrespective of whether it is L1 or L2. When we do speak, our voice will be calm, measured and our bodies will mirror the learner in order to build rapport and create an environment of ease.

Many experienced teachers do some or all of this coaching 'stuff' too. I wonder if they would describe their actions as conscious ways to create rapport and ease. And what about their focus, would it go beyond purely learning English? A coach-teacher would focus beyond language goals and aim to keep the whole person in view, firm in the belief that Max is capable of achieving the goals they have set themself.

Back to Max then, let's imagine we've been working together for a number of months and interim goals have been reached. With a teacher hat, we might set a milestone test to affirm what has been learned so as motivate and encourage our learner to keep going. The points which demonstrated gaps in learning can be addressed with appropriate exercises: a gap-fill grammar exercise here, a text
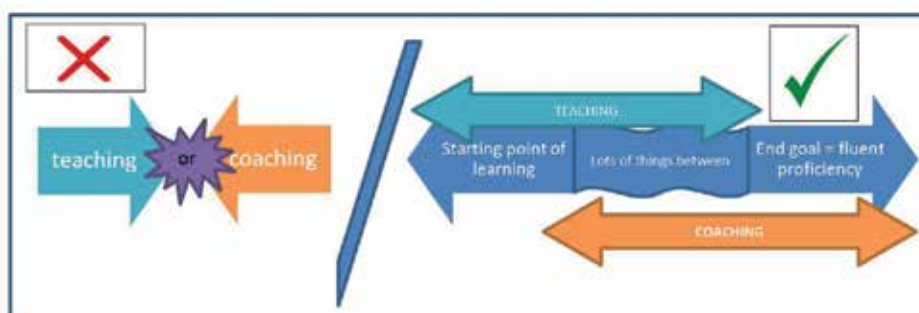
Teaching and coaching are not opposing practices

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comprehension exercise there, etc.

In addition to the language-focussed measurements, a coach-teacher keeps in mind Max's overall confidence and determination to keep going. Recognition and celebration of achievements reached is vital; as is calling the learner to account for missed targets. Learner autonomy is an integral element of the coach-teacher's modus operandi. Where gaps still exist, the coach-teacher will invite Max to look back and remember the initial goals set, and to consider the obstacles that got in the way of progress. Questions to ascertain current levels of engagement with those goals will determine whether they are still relevant or need reassessing. Then an updated or even completely new plan of action can be devised and fresh timelines agreed in pursuit of the reviewed

goals. The whole process is lead and decided upon by the autonomous learner; the coach-teacher provides the steadying hand, holding up the mirror and offering information as and when it is needed.

Based on what I have experienced and learnt about business English teaching and training over my nineteen years of practice, there are many overlaps between professional BE training and what is generally seen as elements of coaching:

- Establishing what the issue is
- Setting goals to get from A to B
- Drawing up a plan of action
- Evaluating what resources are available to support the plan
- Milestone checking of progress
- Celebration of achievement
- Creating rapport with learners

- Acknowledging their expertise and experience
- Encouraging learner autonomy

Coaching in business has been around since the 1980s; BE teaching has been aligning itself more closely with business skills training for the last ten to fifteen years. It stands to reason that a coaching-style of teaching fits well in our business-focussed area of ELT. For me, the fundamental difference lies less in what we 'do' and more in how we 'think'. What are our teaching beliefs based on? Do we have a fixed or growth mindset when it comes to our own teaching skills? How far are we able to let go of our well-intentioned desire to 'help' our learners and allow learning to occur, secure in the knowledge that they are capable of learning and developing – in spite of us.

Michelle Hunter is based in Stuttgart, working as both business English company trainer and university teacher since 1998. Certified coach since 2012 and holder of a MA in Coaching in Education, Michelle incorporates coaching principles into her teaching practice.

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Surviving the business English classroom

Karin Heuert Galvão offers some survival skills for the BE classroom.

It is true that many BE teachers start working in the field 'by accident'. One day they are thrown in with the lions and told "Go on! Teach!" It is also true that some teachers end up in this situation not having sufficient training or instructions, and soon realize it demands much more than teaching general English, and that it is necessary to have a few other tricks up their sleeves. First, here are three approaches which have helped me, followed by some tips to help anyone in this position:

Dogme

The idea of *Teaching Unplugged*, published by Luke Meddings and Scott Thornbury, that teachers "free themselves from a dependency on materials, aids and technology, and work with nothing more than the 'raw materials'" struck a chord with me. Having this in mind, and the concept that: "Education is communication and dialogue. It is not the transference of knowledge" as dissimilated by Paulo Freire, I came to the conclusion that by adopting Dogme in class, the BE teacher should be prepared not only for any piece of language that might arise, but also for business discussions. The moment the BE teacher delves into their learners' areas of expertise, they are not working as individuals anymore, but as a cohesive group, with the same interests.

TBL (Task-based learning)

TBL allows both teacher and students to learn through doing a set of tasks; these tasks must be meaningful and relevant to the point that natural/genuine communication emerges. In the BE environment, the teacher must select suitable tasks which are related to the pupils' jobs or positions in the company:

presentations, reports, decision-making tasks or project management tasks, for instance. In other words, the teacher brings their learners' daily life into the classroom. This way it seems more like we are in the boardroom solving problems and not in a regular class anymore.

Coaching

I have to start by clarifying coaching: I am not talking about 'language coaching', but Life and Career Coaching, the *Coaching for Performance*, as designed by Sir John Whitmore. Coaching is a process that supports a person or professional by allowing them to produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses or organizations, by helping them bridge

the gap between where they are **now** and where they **want to be**. Coaching is not mentoring, therapy, counselling or consultancy, but it is a process that creates clarity and accelerates their progress. As a certified coach, I can use tools, such as the GROW model in a way that the students feel as if they are in control (which they actually are). Students feel more empowered and in charge of their own learning, and taking responsibility for it is key.

Some further tips that helped me survive:

1. **Leadership & team building:** behave as a leader: you are in charge of
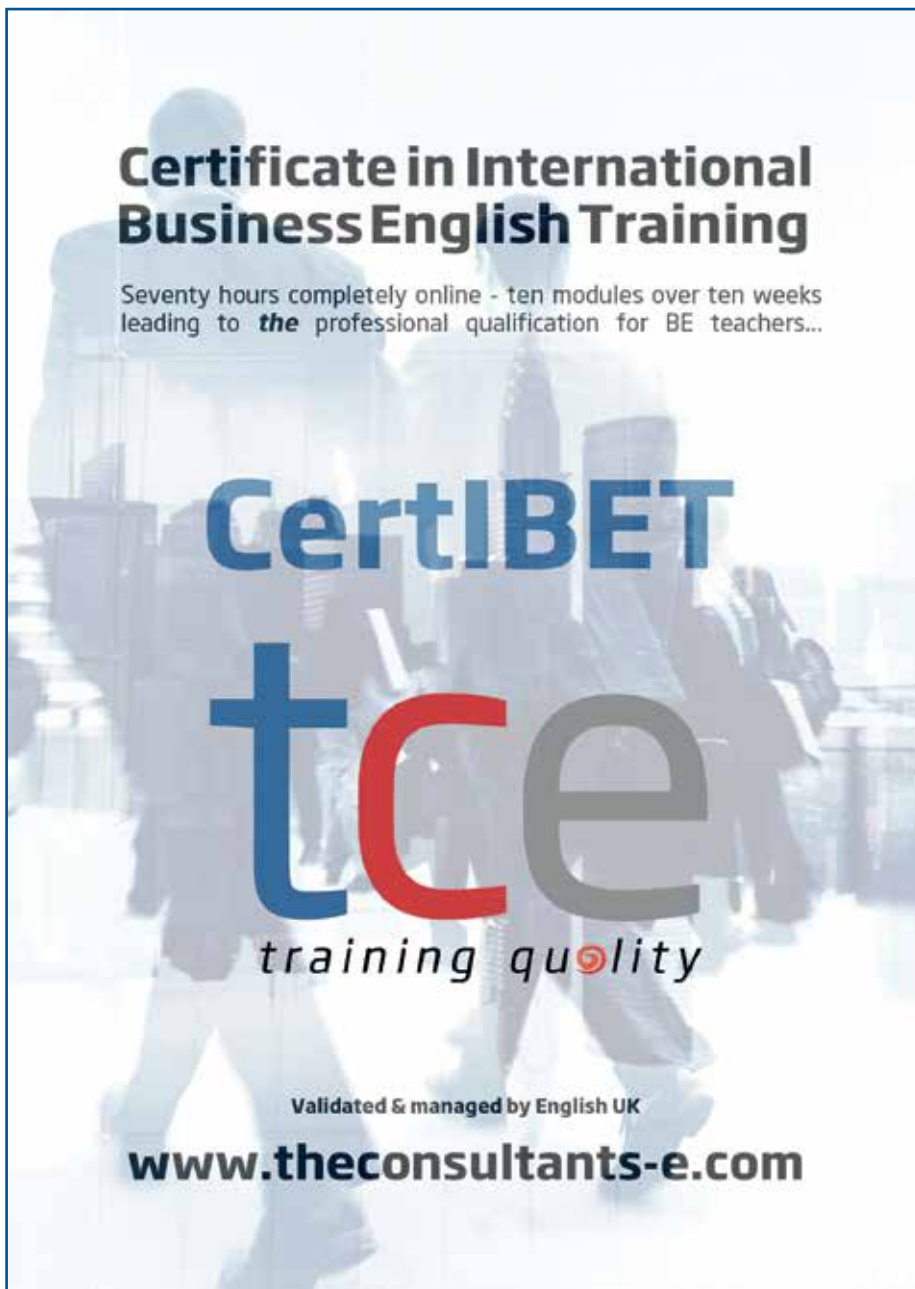
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the class, you are responsible for their motivation and you are held accountable for their commitment.

2. **Problem solving:** these students are hired to solve problems every day – and so are you. Critical thinking activities will provide everyone with the chance to develop their skills and language.

3. **Interpersonal & intrapersonal skills:** working collaboratively is an underlying art in today's corporate world, but understanding how to work with different backgrounds, cultures and emotions is even more crucial.

4. **Intercultural communication and competence:** some might say 'accepting' cultures; I would say we should understand them. In today's globalized world, adaptability is the number one priority in corporations, why shouldn't we adapt as well? Being a chameleon in the key.

5. **Business:** business English teachers must understand about business. There is no way to talk about business if you, yourself, are not aware of how to do business. Read articles and stay in tune of what is happening in the world of business.

6. **Negotiation skills:** you may work with strong opinionated students. That is why you must have solid and assertive arguments. Convincing these students is no game, so do your homework, or else you will have to bend the knee frequently.

7. **Analysis and evaluation of risks:** your learners perform these tasks constantly, based on data and criteria that you might not be aware of. That is why it is paramount that the BE teacher follows the news and market trends.

8. **Computer and technology:** you have no choice but learn how to work with technology. When you work with clients, they expect that from you. If you work with people from IT, you must also research about their jobs. I am not implying that you should be an expert in Python, but you should definitely understand the gist.

9. **Resilience:** there will be moments you feel as if it is the time to throw in the towel, but shake it off and focus on the goal. Life is full of ups and downs, and that happens in class too.

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Karin Heuert Galvão has worked for 17 years as an EFL teacher and 10 years as Director of i-Study Interactive Learning. She holds certificates as Life Coach by the European Mentoring & Coaching Council, International Association of Coaching and Sociedade Latino Americana de Coaching.

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1st IATEFL Poland BESIG Conference 19 May 2018, in cooperation with IATEFL BESIG

You can do a lot of networking online, but nothing really beats face-to-face communication, and this event was yet more proof of how true this is. IATEFL Poland is a vigorous, dynamic organisation, and so IATEFL BESIG was very happy to hear that the IATEFL Poland BESIG, so active in previous years, but which had sadly declined, was being resurrected.

140 business English practitioners from Hong Kong, Hungary, Lebanon, Germany, Turkey, UK, USA, Ukraine, as well as Poland met at the Warsaw University of Technology and enjoyed a full day of talks, workshops, sharing ideas, and, yes, networking. The opening keynote talk by Evan Frendo on *Minimizing miscommunication in the workplace* (sponsored by Pearson) raised various issues which were repeated and discussed throughout the day in the 15 parallel sessions. Other speakers were Rob Howard with a talk: *GET OFF MY CASE Studies – Frameworks for the Common (hu)Man*, and a workshop: *Screen Gemming: simplifying your onscreen images for better retention*, Umut Temiskan: *The conversation gala*, Dominiqu Vouillemin: *The essentials of teaching BE*, Radek Krzyżanowski: *Epic win – a sustainable engagement*

Evan Frendo during the opening keynote talk

strategy, Maurice Cassidy: *Trainer know thyself*, Andrzej Stęsik: *1-2-1 Language training and coaching in business English*, Katarzyna Warszyńska: *Be B! – Using games in a BE class*, Nick Hamilton: *Encountering the edge – evolution of BE teaching*, Sherri Williams: *DIY design – marketing yourself as a BE trainer*, Najwa Sabaa Ayoun-Fares, Mira M Alamuddine, Grasiella Harb: *Hands-on tips on how to teach research reports*, Robert Adams: *Digging deep to increase activation of language*, Oksana Hera: *How to add more*

value to your training programmes, Geoff Tranter: *Humour – an important business English skill*, and Clarice Chan: *Genres in today's workplace – implications for BE teaching.*

Many thanks as always to the IATEFL Poland organising team, led by Geoff Tranter and Dorota Chrominska, and ably supported by Helen Strong and colleagues from IATEFL BESIG, and of course all the sponsors (Pearson, Oxford University Press, and Regipio).

Geoff Tranter discusses the importance of humour as a business English skill

140 business English practitioners met at the Warsaw University of Technology

Sherri Williams: marketing yourself as a BE trainer

Evan Frendo has been active in business English and ESP since 1993, mostly in the corporate sector. His methodology book for teachers, How to Teach Business English (Longman, 2005), is used in teacher training all over the world. Email: evan.frendo@e4b.de.

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Motivating pre-work business English students

Grace Alchini describes a project she started to engage her pre-work business English students with their course.

Teaching business English to university students isn't the easiest of tasks. In most cases, these learners have no work experience at all. Unlike in-service students, who are experts in the field they work in, pre-service learners may not have even had the chance to study topics related to their future careers, and are generally unaware of how necessary communication skills in English may be in their professional lives or even what they will be doing once they graduate.

As teachers we need to provide our university students with a well-designed syllabus that can help them develop their linguistic competence for the workplace and the ability to pursue a successful career, whatever profession they choose. Furthermore, we should also allow room for the acquisition and exploration of business concepts that may be absolutely new for them. Sometimes we will have to explain some ideas, or ask our learners to search for information to illustrate the topics we will be dealing with.

However, this may not be enough if we want our students to succeed; we may need to work on their motivation to study business English as well. As we started our course, I performed surveys and interviews with my students and discovered most of them would have preferred to take a course in general English instead, as they could not understand the reason why they should specialise in this area of the language. They deemed it more difficult and unnecessary. Many of them stated they were not planning to "do business", as they were studying programmes such as engineering or law. I then realised that their idea of business English was purely associated with selling and buying, or

Grace Alchini's students working on their project

exporting and importing, and not with communication and the right skills to make a presentation, write a report or hold a meeting, essential in whatever professional field of work we could think of.

In-service business English students' motivation usually stems from their experiences at work, as they have urgent needs to communicate in their workplace. Consequently, I decided to have my learners simulate a work situation that would be related to their own fields of study. A course project was implemented which ran for ten weeks. Students had to work collaboratively in groups of four; in this case, they were allowed to form their own groups in order to let them find partners they could meet with easily as most of the activities were to be held outside the classroom. The aim of the project was the creation (at least figuratively) of an innovative product (or service). It could be something they had

devised before in one of their courses at university, or they could also pick something that already existed, just adding something that made it different.

The project

In the first session, once introduced to the project, students brainstormed ideas (they had to think of a minimum of three possible products) and prepared a slideshow they later shared with me so that I could give them feedback. Afterwards, they made their choice taking into account that the product had to show CSR (corporate social responsibility) in its manufacturing, marketing or any other stage. They were to show that, as a company, they cared for the community or the environment. They were also expected to consider that they would export their product to one or several countries and

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How to teach confidence!

Deborah Johnson describes how she helps her students to speak confidently.

As qualified English teachers we are let loose into the world to teach, embarking on our chosen path to help willing students become better orators. And hopefully, we are given the tools to help us do our jobs effectively. We dutifully focus on teaching those all important skill-sets – listening, reading, writing and comprehension – hour after hour with the clear goal of eventually turning out our fledglings with a much better understanding of the language than when they first started.

Is that all we can hope for and have we done the best for our students? Much has been accomplished since they first started; their listening has improved, they tend to want to read more, they seem to be able to comprehend much more than they ever did and they are armed with many more new words, however we seem to have missed one important ingredient: **CONFIDENCE**.

After speaking with several of my students, I have compiled a list of reasons they tend to find it difficult; this includes even some of the most advanced and seasoned students:

- Having to think before speaking
- Not sure they will be understood
- Cannot find the words quickly enough
- Afraid they may appear foolish
- Speaking in front of an audience/crowd can prove challenging
- Peer pressure
- Not happy with the way they sound
- Cultural differences (e.g. accents)

In other words they are over thinking the situation.

CONFIDENCE: do we build it – or can we teach it?

The five building blocks to confidence are: needs, knowledge, degrees of success, facing challenges and BELIEF! So how do we break this down as it relates to language learning?

The need has already been established otherwise they would not be taking lessons, and knowledge is acquired during the lessons. So we are left with facing challenges and the question of belief.

Let's first look at facing challenges and how they can be practised in a classroom environment:

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Role playing: This allows the student to use the language while in a safe and familiar environment. Make sure that it relates to their current requirements e.g. telephone skills, small talk, presentations, to name a few, work well with groups while teaching key phrases and chunks of words.

Realia: Have the students bring an item that holds some meaning for them – do not pre-teach vocabulary, make this part of the students' presentation. They love to talk about something that they are familiar with.

Shorter sentences and word chunks: Encourage students to use shorter sentences; that way they do not find themselves going down the proverbial 'Alice in Wonderland rabbit-hole' when trying to communicate. Try to make them make good use of the words they already have in their 'kit-bag', not go for complicated synonyms when a simple word will do.

Once you have done this, challenge them to practise outside the classroom with the following simple tasks:

Real-life experience: I ask my students to get themselves outside of their comfort zone at least once a week – and apply what they have learned either in a face-to-face or a telephone situation. I ask them to bring these experiences back into the classroom where we can discuss in detail what was successful or unsuccessful (ask them to keep notes if possible).

Recording: Ask the students to record their voices so they can hear the way they sound – and this would help them work on pacing, intonation and pronunciation. The recording can then be played in the classroom and used for further discussion and analysis.

TV or Radio: Who does not watch TV or listen to the radio? Most of us have a favourite programme that we love to watch and become very familiar with, and we usually have favourite characters. Have the student pick one they relate to or enjoy the most (and watch in English) and ask them to bring in some key phrases/words that are used and act out the part – they seem to really have fun with this one.

And lastly – BELIEF

As students' belief in themselves comes from within, it is vital we provide the necessary understanding, empathy and support that the language learner needs both inside and outside the classroom, and this is key to encouraging the students to be articulate and as confident as possible. I believe it is not only our job to teach a language using the four major building blocks (speaking, listening, reading and writing) but we need to add a fifth confidence block.

This fifth block (confidence) is the one that is the most over-looked and forgotten, however I do believe by taking time and with the use of some of the activities I mention above, we can be well on our way to establishing and encouraging confidence.

Let's ensure we are turning out students who are willing to Speak, Listen, Read and Write with **CONFIDENCE!**

Deborah Johnson is a business English teacher/coach living in Spain and working there for the last 12 years. She has a degree in Business Management as well as TEFL/CELTA. She teaches both UK/US Business English. You can reach her at aprendeingles56@yahoo.com

Motivating pre-work business English students

finally be able to justify their selection. In order to do all this, they had to first do some research and report findings. Each team then had to prepare a PechaKucha presentation to inform the rest of the class about their plans and get constructive criticism from their classmates.

During the following weeks, students continued working on the project while submitting a weekly assignment in which they applied what they had learnt in the course to the launching of this product: writing emails and reports, preparing an

infographic and a video commercial, and recording a simulated meeting by the marketing team.

Finally there was a presentation, which was twenty minutes long, followed by a Q&A session in which classmates pretended to be potential investors and asked questions (some of which were rather perceptive) to put the team to the test.

In the end-of-the-course reflection, students expressed their enthusiasm

about the project. They liked working in teams and having the opportunity to be creative, but above all, finding sense in what they had been learning in class. I could also see they were more motivated and using language and business communication abilities in context. Moreover, they developed soft skills such as responsibility, leadership, team work, problem solving, time management and flexibility. It has also been rewarding to know that some of these new skills are now being put to use by my learners post university.

Based in Mexico, Grace Alchini is an Argentinian ELT professional with over 32 years' experience teaching general and business English at universities and companies. Her main interests are collaborative learning, business communication, values in ELT, visual literacy and learning technologies.

Dos and don'ts of using humour in business English

Annabelle Baptista-Baumann gives some sound advice on using humour in the business English classroom.

A dog walks into a bar and asks the bartender, "Do you have any jobs?" The bartender says, "Why don't you try the circus?" The dog replies, "Why would the circus need a bartender?"

If you didn't find the above joke funny that's okay, humour is not easy, it's a bit idiosyncratic. According to Collins Advanced Dictionary: "It's the quality in something that makes you laugh, for example in a situation, in someone's words or actions, or in a book or film." However, what we laugh at is cultural as well as social, which is why exposing our students to humour is a gateway to a deeper understanding of how English works and helps them "to create and maintain social relations with native speakers" (Bell, 249). In addition, studies have shown that humour reduces tensions and even fires up the brain to learn. It even releases dopamine and serotonin into the blood stream; endorphins that give the brain pleasure and reward, i.e. you get an 'aha' moment when you understand the meaning of a joke.

Some of my business English students have expressed a fear of using humour, and some have felt alienated when they have not understood a joke. I would suggest that we give them access to more humour and opportunities to use it: "Obviously we cannot prepare our students for the spontaneous humour they will encounter, but we can provide them with new ways of thinking" (Bell, 250).

Here are some dos and don'ts of using humour in the BE classroom:

Dos:

1. Do pick a joke or cartoon that relates to the theme you are teaching or is telling of the business culture. Different students will understand the humour only at the utterance level before they are able to go deeper into the subtext of a joke.

2. Do explain the social potency of being able to understand and make jokes, and that jokes in a culture tell us what is important or laughed at in that culture. It is how we develop rapport, build trust, and create immunity against difficult situations.

3. Do explain the joke's setup if you need to. There are often double meanings created by a play on words or cultural understanding. Jokes play with expectations and create a sense of surprise. The brain thinks it knows where the road is going; but then suddenly there is a cliff. For example, in the joke above we might accept the idea of a (talking) dog working in a circus, but might not have considered that a talking dog would want a 'real job'. Therefore, our initial understanding has been replaced by our new understanding of what is possible.

4. Do let them know that practicing humour builds creativity. Being able to make connections that others may have not seen is a valuable skill to foster. Humour has been related to making complex decisions as well as managing social interactions better.

5. Do bring in humorous video clips and music to accompany lessons. If you're working on banking vocabulary, why not play Aloe Blacc's *I Need A Dollar* which plays on the idea of poverty or the cultural understanding of 'the man' as an institution in American culture. (lyrics and video here: https://goo.gl/98LWpx). Let the students tell you what they understand the music to be saying. Or the colloquial language of the boss man and paycheck as it relates to the seventies, we can laugh at the recession now and looking back we can even laugh at poverty. You could do the same with Abba's, *Money, Money, Money*, even contrasting the two songs with the idea of wealth. Ask what songs your learners know in their language about money.

Don'ts:

1. Don't ask too much of your business English students. If they don't get the joke, explain it and why you thought it was relevant, but don't feel you need laughter to have a lesson. The lesson is still valid based on the language and culture aspect which is gleaned from the activity.

2. Don't make fun of your students or use them as a punchline for your jokes because it may cause tension or embarrassment.

3. Don't use controversial humourists who joke about politics or put down women or different nationalities.

4. Don't use too much self-deprecating humour. Making fun of yourself may lighten the mood if there is a technology snafu, but don't put yourself in the position where your students are questioning your competence.

5. Don't try to teach people to have a sense of humour, that is beyond the scope of ELT, but we can give them examples of humour, expose them to our culture of humour, and let them experiment with creating humour in their L2.

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If you are naturally someone who jokes you may feel more comfortable with setting up a punch line. If you don't feel naturally funny, start slowly. Bring in a cartoon or a play on words and let your students figure out why it's funny.

The possibility of exposing our students to deeper layers of language using humour may be worth the deadpan stares when they don't understand. This is where the lesson starts. Don't deny them this moment in the learning process. We can only provide them with new ways to think about situations and in the case of bad jokes, increase their tolerance to pain.

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"BY GOLLY, MR. GIBSON, I BELIEVE YOU'RE JUST THE MAN WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!"

Annabelle Baptista-Baumann has been teaching English in Germany since 2006 and has a CELTA certificate, a CertIBET and a BA in English and Creative Writing. She is currently employed as an InCorporate trainer for Target Training GmbH. Email: englishtrainer@hotmail.com. Website: www.bauenglish.com.

THE PRACTICE:

Another pair of duets

In the spring issue of this newsletter, I introduced the duet principle for designing classroom activities inspired by the Duetti cycle of the Italian composer Luciano Berio. The basic idea was to transpose the educational principle underpinning Berio's musical series of duets and create a similar series of pair activities for the classroom in which learners of mixed level or ability are engaged in meaningful collaboration. For more background on the general setup of the new cycle and some didactical considerations around the first duets, I refer you to 2018's spring issue. Here are the next duets in this new series, with ideas on how they might be contextualised in the classroom.

Third duet

Most duets in this series aim to raise student awareness through seeking to engage their active 'noticing' during pair work. This is, in my view, an integral element that underpins their language acquisition, and which follows the noticing hypothesis introduced by SLA researcher Richard Schmidt in 1990. The third and fourth duets in this article have a similar orientation. The third duet is loosely based on a principle from the surrealist word game, *cadavre exquis* (exquisite corpse). The surrealists used techniques like this one to push the boundaries of rationality and provide new sources of inspiration in their writing and imagery. I have often used similar techniques for small group work, as they are not only playful but also foreground collaboration and challenge learners to engage with their peers.

So, how does the *cadavre exquis* principle work? When used for collaborative writing, the 'players' write in turn on a sheet of paper and create chain letters or stories: the first player folds the sheet to conceal what they have just written, and the sheet is passed on to the next player, and so on. The final 'text' when the sheet is unfolded and revealed to the players is,

as you might suspect, surprising or even incongruous regarding its language and content. And that is the very purpose of this surrealist word game. The unusual juxtaposition of text fragments can shock or delight but also points in my view towards an important educational principle. The semantic incongruity produced by the *cadavre exquis* engages our attention and we start *noticing* the language being used because of the unfamiliar juxtapositions.

The third duet for the classroom is loosely based on this surrealist principle. I ask the class in pairs to take one flipchart sheet and explain the rules of the game. Each pair starts discussing a topic that both learners are familiar with or which has been explored in class. After a short discussion (one or two minutes), one student writes a summary of what has just been discussed at the top of the flipchart sheet; the other makes notes on a separate notepad, for future reference but also to keep track of the pair discussion. The first student folds the top part of flipchart to conceal what they have written from their partner while the other uses their notes to give a short reminder of what they've been discussing. Discussion is resumed and after a couple of minutes the respective write-ups are repeated but the learner roles are then switched, and so on until the flipchart sheet is completely folded or concealed. The flipchart sheet is then unfolded to reveal what they've both written, and they review the juxtaposed text fragments.

This is a pair activity which requires enough classroom time to have it performed properly. Allow for 30 to 45 minutes for a complete flipchart text. That may seem long, but the didactical benefits are considerable. Using a large flipchart sheet is an essential feature as the larger format will visually draw students into the collaborative nature of this duet. Another important feature is the switching between different modes: first, we have the switch

between peer discussion and writing it up; second, we have the switch between different modes of writing. For the former switch, we need to bear in mind that students often have different levels of ability. One student may be more fluent or confident in their speaking ability than in their writing. A mode-switching activity like this duet allows student pairs to become more aware of their own and others' abilities. For the latter switch, the different writing modes can be an awareness-raiser for the participating students while also giving the teacher an opportunity to address the key differences in approach, for example that the flipchart writing may be more 'joined-up' or connected. This can help students understand and distinguish the different ways they can work in the written medium.

Fourth duet

When we talk about the mixed ability of students, we should also consider that we can only talk of higher or lower ability in general terms. There is no clear dividing line at which we can say in all cases, 'this is a higher or lower ability student'. This comes to the foreground in the fourth duet. This pair activity is a playful one but also addresses some of the concerns that students have when it comes to understanding their development in second language acquisition. One of the difficulties even 'higher-level' students have is understanding that their language is also structured in patterns. There is not only collocation but also colligation in the language they use. Indeed, the term lexicogrammar was coined to explain the interdependence of words and grammatical structures. Yet, many learners may not be able to distinguish 'correct' from 'wrong' patterns or understand why a certain pattern in a given context is the wrong one.

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This duet is about noticing the patterns in their own language use and can be seen as a first step in growing their awareness of these structures. The duet is as follows: each student writes up three short statements. Two of the statements should be written up as accurately as possible, depending on their own level and understanding. But a third statement should also be written which the student perceives to be clearly wrong, either for grammatical or lexical reasons. Each student then verbally 'presents' their three statements to their peer. It's up to the other student to then indicate which of the three statements is the 'wrong' one. They then agree with or correct each other's choice while reviewing their respective language use.

This production and correction/review can be performed for several turns, with the whole sequence taking up to 20 minutes. They then discuss what patterns they notice and which they find acceptable. Their findings can be 'reported' to the teacher, but the key feature here is the autonomy of the student pair and their working together to analyse their respective language and the patterns they may be using. This is in my view a good example of how students with different levels or abilities can collaborate. A higher-level student will also need to engage and draw on their learning ability, for example by explaining to their peer why their own 'wrong' statement is wrong. A lower-level student can meanwhile build on their learning confidence too by being offered better language examples while also having the opportunity to notice (deliberate) language mistakes.

Loose ends

Much more can be said about both these duets. For example, the fourth duet may require scaffolding for lower-level students; also, some examples of lexical and grammatical patterns may need to be

DUET

modelled by the teacher to ensure that the learning purpose of this duet stays in focus. But these duets and new ones in this developing cycle should also be seen as 'works-in-progress'. They are not set in stone, nor should they be. The duets are for revisiting and revising. This is what our classroom practice is all about.

Roy Bicknell lives and teaches in Amsterdam. He is interested in your views and comments. You can write to Roy at roy.bicknell@besig.org.

RESEARCH REVIEW:

To swear or not to swear?
Controversial language use at work

Social media allows today's business English trainers to communicate with peers around the world instantly, and spark debates on dynamic and relevant issues. Julie Nicholson started one such discussion recently in the IATEFL BESIG Facebook page. Julie is a Canadian trainer working in Germany and was asked to give feedback on a presentation that had been prepared by the communications department of one of her clients. The participant's first slide contained the phrase "This could be a f**king disaster". Julie's client didn't see this as impolite, but Julie considered the use of the implied swearword to have a strong impact on native speakers, and not the kind of impact they were aiming to achieve. She presented the situation to the IATEFL BESIG Facebook group and there ensued a long and complex debate among a large number of business English trainers. Many trainers consider the use of swearwords at work to be offensive. In fact, this is an area of interlanguage pragmatics into which a great deal of research has been conducted, identifying a range of social and pragmatic consequences of second language acquisition and use.

The use of taboo words has been identified as closely associated with one's social status – those of lower socio-economic status tend to use more swearwords as there is a lower risk of harming one's status further (Hansen, 2016; Hughes, 2006; Jay, 2009; Vingerhoets et al., 2013). Consequently, as trainers, many of us warn course participants using swearwords against doing so, explaining the offence that they can cause and the negative influence they will have on their personal image. Indeed, the American organisation Cuss Control Academy reinforces this idea through a series of courses and publications, warning organisations of the danger of using 'profanity' which causes risks to one's image, society as a whole and ultimately the English language.

A great deal of research has been carried out into the difference between how native and non-native speakers perceive swearwords. Greater anxiety is produced by the presentation of taboo words in the native/first learned language of bilingual speakers than in their second language (Gonzalez-Reigosa, 1976; Javier, 1989; Harris, Ayçiçegi & Gleason, 2003). This could explain why learners of business English are more likely to take risks and use English swearwords both in L1 and L2 situations, but wouldn't necessarily use the same swearwords in their own language in comparable L1-only situations.

Gawinkowska et al. (2013) conducted a study in which students from a Polish university translated an English text into Polish, their first language (L1) and a Polish text into English, their second language (L2), which contained offensive words. Translating from Polish to English, the subjects used stronger language and even added additional swearwords to the text. However, when they translated from English to Polish, words were softened, even left out entirely in some situations. Gawinkowska et al. concluded that NNSs emotionally distance themselves from taboo words, and they do not have the same impact as they would on NSs, illustrating that most NNSs do not understand the levels of offensiveness.

One cannot underestimate the prevalence of swearwords, at least in spoken communication acts. Such lexis is used in conversation almost as often as personal pronouns (I, we, our) and can therefore be counted among the most used words in the English language (Fägersten, 2012; Jay, K. & Jay, T., 2015; Vingerhoets et al., 2013). Business English teachers cannot, therefore, avoid addressing the subject of how and when (if at all) to use them. If we are to help learners understand the consequence of using such language, how to avoid causing offence, and even how to use taboo language to gain social advantage, it should be included as part of our curriculum.

Extensive research has looked at politeness theory and in particular the Community of Practice model to identify the socio-pragmatic uses of expletives in the workplace. In terms of workplace communication, a Community of Practice (CofP) is a group of people who share a profession or a professional aim, or a common work culture. The extent to which they practise their activities, including employing common communication strategies, indicates the extent to which they belong to this team.

Daly et al. (2004) conducted research into the use of the F-word in a New Zealand factory. Rather than concluding that it is offensive and rude, they were able to identify that, among a specific CofP it served a range of functions, including expressing solidarity and friendliness among group members, as well as to ease tension and maintain rapport. The researchers conclude that:

> Politeness is a complex concept and one which is culturally very slippery ... Acting in ways which are contextually appropriate typically requires extensive understanding of the cultural norms and values of the community of practice involved. Acceptable ways of expressing solidarity and mitigating FTAs cannot be prescribed or predicted, or even understood, without careful ethnographic analysis of

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the participants' normal everyday patterns of interaction in their usual workplace contexts. (p.961)

As business English teachers, trainers and practitioners, we want to support our learners in choosing the optimum communication techniques and lexis. We mustn't, however, forget that we are almost always outsiders to their Community of Practice, and therefore cannot ever say what is truly (un)-acceptable. It may be argued that, in the case of taboo and controversial language, rather than making judgements as to what is right and wrong, we should be guiding learners to understand the complexity of what is considered 'polite' behaviour and encouraging learners to be analytical within their workplace communication so that they can identify for themselves how acceptable 'taboo' language really is.

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Gabrielle Jones is a language and communication trainer, with 18 years' experience in developing and delivering business and specialist English language programmes. Based in Germany, she is involved in international corporate training programmes as well as a lecturing at two universities.

ZEITGEIST UNLEASHED:

Talking about business English teachers' mental health.

Phil Longwell created quite a stir at this year's IATEFL Annual Conference in Brighton. He presented the results of a survey he carried out into the state of ELT professionals' mental health in a session called Improving the mental health of English language teachers. Around 20 percent of Phil's 490 respondents mentioned that they suffered from some form of depression, and around 13 percent disclosed suffering from anxiety. For a more detailed summary of Phil's research, you can read what he posted about it on his blog (https://goo.gl/7i7kso) or watch the recording of Phil's IATEFL session on YouTube: https://goo.gl/rVqAQX. By creating one simple survey, Phil seems to have made it ok for teachers to admit to suffering from mental ill-health. This chimes in with a societal shift towards greater openness and acceptance around mental health problems. In the ELT world too, the genie now seems to have been let out of the bottle and a real conversation about the mental health of practitioners has begun. The next challenge will be to find ways that the industry can respond to this high incidence of mental ill-health and try to reduce it. But what can business English teachers and trainers do to protect themselves from mental ill-health? Here are three suggestions.

1. Know your limits and be prepared to say 'no'

This is particularly relevant for freelance teachers who may feel they have to take on everything they're offered to build up a financial buffer which will help them get through leaner times. This makes sense, but, paradoxically, saying 'yes' to everything may lead to you losing work in the long-term. The thinner you spread yourself, the lower the quality of your teaching is likely to be. Course participants will notice and your lack of energy and the lack of effort you put into lesson planning, may come up in feedback. Saying 'no' in situations where you already have enough on your plate will keep your teaching standards high and help to protect your own mental health. Turning down less interesting or not particularly well-paid teaching assignments often frees you up to take on more interesting and lucrative opportunities that come up later.

2. Reduce or use your travel time

Another issue which both freelance business English teachers and teachers on a contract have to face is the amount of travelling a typical working day often involves. Some people manage to deal with the stress by losing themselves in a book or a podcast and that's great if it works for you. If it doesn't, do whatever you can to organize your teaching time at different locations into longer blocks. I once taught at a university on a Monday morning and Thursday afternoon, but after a quick chat with the course leader, I was able to consolidate all my weekly hours into one day.

3. Find a buddy (or buddies!)

As business English teachers tend to be quite solitary beasts, I think it's important that we find ourselves a BE teaching buddy, or buddies, who we can offload to at the end of a busy and stressful week of teaching. Experts agree that having a support network there to talk to during tough times makes a big difference to our mental health. If you don't work at a school or institution where you regularly come into contact with other teachers, a local teachers' association would be a good place to start your hunt for a buddy. You'll often encounter other teachers who are looking for the same thing. Facebook teachers' groups, such as the IATEFL BESIG group, can also be a good way to get in touch with and offload onto other business English teachers if it isn't possible for you to do this face-to-face.

I hope following these three tips will help keep you mentally fit and avoid having problems in the future.

Claire Hart combines in-company and university teaching with materials development. She specializes in Business English and ESP, mainly technical English. Claire is interested in the latest developments in the world of ELT and helping to demystify them for other teachers.

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Don't forget to also check out the back pages of the IATEFL Voices bi-monthly magazine to connect with them. Go to http://www.iatefl.org/associates/introduction for more details.

Have an idea for a new column in Business Issues?

Write to: chris.stanzer@besig.org

Business English Special Interest Group Roving Reporter Travel Grant

The Roving Reporter Travel Grant is aimed at BESIG members who wish to attend the IATEFL BESIG Annual Conference in Iasi, Romania, 16-18 November 2018, and who are willing to write articles for this newsletter on sessions they attend.

For more information on how to apply, please see:

https://goo.gl/fznBq2

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