

## **1<sup>st</sup> IATEFL Poland Business English Event in Co-operation with IATEFL BESIG**

(Saturday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of May, 2018 at Warsaw University of Technology)

***A Report by Peter Whiley, Editor of IATEFL Poland's Post-Conference Journals and E-bulletins.***

*Venue: Faculty of Mathematics and Information Science, ul. Koszykowa 75.*

A packed programme for this special one-day event, marking the welcome resurrection of IATEFL Poland's BESIG group, produced a full-house (140 delegates), and was very international, with representatives from 8 countries: Germany, Hong Kong, Lebanon, Ukraine, Hungary, UK, USA, and Poland. The atmosphere generated was very pleasant, and much networking was evident. Furthermore, an impressive set of modern, comfortable facilities enhanced the smooth and effective day. So, IATEFL BESIG can be proud of its re-launch, as it was truly memorable, and several fine presenters delivered high-quality workshops and talks. My role at the event was to be a roving reporter, gathering feedback from delegates about the programme provided, so that IATEFL Poland's BESIG could gauge whether they had created a worthy event, and could plan for the next one.

**Evan Frendo**, BESIG's International Co-ordinator, led the charge for a successful event with his keynote speech on: 'Minimizing miscommunication in the workplace'. As dogged and probing as ever, Evan always reaches consistently-high levels with his talks, and this was no exception. He spent the first half of the presentation exploring the types of miscommunication in the workplace, especially linguistic, pragmatic, and socio-cultural, and then analysed how trainers can help to limit the problems caused, via their specific teaching. One delegate said of Evan's presentation: *"he always brings lots of research to his sessions.....and always has an ELF perspective"*.

Each following hour had three workshops on offer, and I was fortunate to attend the 'Conversation Gala' by **Umut Temizkan**, which proved to be thought-provoking and student-oriented, with lots of mingling and usage of critical thinking skills. Umut's ideas are easy to replicate in the classroom, and showed how we can effectively introduce the latest business vocabulary and jargon to our students.

As Umut was conducting his first-rate workshop, **Dominique Vouillemin**, a BE Trainer with International House in London, was presenting a workshop titled: 'The Essentials of Teaching BE'. This was described to me by a delegate, as: *"Wonderful! Well-prepared, gave useful information....I was absorbed all the time, with listeners involved.....the pace and tempo were appropriate."*

**Maurice Cassidy**, with his 'Trainer know Thyself', delivered a traditional-type talk, with pleasant visuals. It was essentially a careers-oriented talk, based upon his own wide-ranging experiences in business. The audience enjoyed his pearls of wisdom and tips for pursuing a successful career, and it was a relaxing break from the interactive workshops on the programme.

**Katarzyna Worzyńska**, with her 'Be B! – Using Games in a BE class', ensured that everyone was fully re-charged after lunch, with her stimulating session geared around the famous games, 'Bingo' and 'Battleships'. In my opinion, her presentation was indeed the highlight of the day. Her concept of 'Bingo' was closely linked to debating skills, and her ideas were easy to implement. A very practical, useful session, which teachers could all take something away with them. I was so impressed by her, that I personally thanked her for her session afterwards.

**Sherrri Williams** was next on my list, especially as I had spoken at length with her in the morning, and found her to be illuminating and practical in her ideas. Her session, titled: 'DIY Design – Marketing Yourself as a BE Trainer', was very practical, indeed, as she promised, and had the audience acting as graphical critics by the end of it. The whole issue of layout and design was laid bare, and I will never again design a Post-Conference Journal without thinking of her! Others present enjoyed the session and we were all so impressed by her insistent taking of names and addresses, in order to send us her slides: a sharing, caring person, who made the intangible, tangible!

Last, but not least, **Geoff Tranter** was one of the three final presenters, whose session I could not resist. It was perfect to finish the day on a relaxing and humorous note, and good for Geoff, too, after all his work in organising the event with **Dorota Chromińska, Helen Strong**, and others. Geoff's title for his presentation was 'Humour – An Important Business English Skill', and he proceeded to show that humour is a lubricant that enables you to make life easier, especially in a business context. Everyone loved the content used, in particular, the "why did the chicken cross the road?" question jokes, and the multitudinous versions arising.

So, Geoff took us from his humorous best form to the closing ceremony, and then invited everyone to the Novotel Hotel for drinks, but 'not on the house!' It was a fine end to a memorable day. Of all the feedback I received, everything was positive, except for one lady who opined that PASE organised their conferences better. She asserted that: "PASE have seven sessions every hour, not three." I reminded her that "this was IATEFL Poland's BESIG group's first event, and besides, IATEFL Poland provide 9 or 10 sessions per hour during their Annual Conferences!" So, she was missing a few points – and I concluded that IATEFL Poland, its BESIG Group, and PASE, are all excellent organisers of conferences and one-day events. Saturday's grand occasion was a testimony to that.

**Peter Whiley**