



International Federation of Language Teacher Associations
Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes

The Nordic-Baltic Region

Electronic Newsletter No.3.

(September 2020)

PRESIDENT's Note



Sigurborg Jónsdóttir, Iceland

It is autumn and we have been back to teaching for a good month. In some countries the schools are open to teachers and students in others there are restrictions with all the complications and setbacks we now know. This situation will now be our new every day for some time to come. On the NBR Facebook page our brilliant secretary Eglė Šleimotienė posted an article titled „The Evil Culture of Online Teaching.” It is really

worth reading. You will find some very important keywords to keep in mind: Perfection is not necessary; simplicity is much more important and of course connecting with your students.

The associations have been doing and will continue to do great work, setting up platforms and organizing all kinds of online events such as seminars, discussions, and chats. Associations are significant in keeping up the spirit and motivation of teachers. It is invaluable to be able to meet, even if it is yet another online occasion and to share your thoughts and concerns with colleagues.

Many are concerned that languages other than English might get scrapped from the curriculum, no longer be a part of school subjects and get delegated to online courses or language schools as a result. Let us use the upcoming European Day of Languages to promote all languages and their importance. The associations have planned events and of course many good ideas can be found on

<https://edl.ecml.at/.../tabid/1455/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>.

Language teachers let us have fun and enjoy languages not just one day a year, but all the year.

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CEFR

Common European Framework
of Reference for Languages

www.coe.int/lang-CEFR

Information from the Council of Europe

CEFR Companion Volume is available here: <https://rm.coe.int/common-european-framework-of-reference-for-languages-learning-teaching/16809ea0d4>

European Centre for Modern Languages Offers



Sarah BRESLIN, Executive Director

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) of the Council of Europe is pleased to announce the completion in both English, French and German of its EOL resource website "Learning environments where modern languages flourish" (www.ecml.at/learningenvironments), an output of the ECML programme "Languages at the heart of learning" (2016-2019).

This website offers a wide range of tools to create whole-school learning environments where languages are at the very heart of learning and teaching. This holistic approach supports and strengthens cooperation and professional development of all actors involved - language teachers, subject teachers, teacher educators, as well as headteachers - and embraces all fields of education - learning, teaching, schools and education systems.

At a time when schools are cautiously reopening across Europe, we are convinced that the EOL tools and resources can help develop and strengthen quality language education, which celebrates linguistic and cultural diversity and is so essential today to ensure intercultural dialogue, linguistic and cultural diversity and social cohesion in our societies.

We would be grateful if you could use your networks to spread the word about this new publication. All you need to do is forward this email, deleting the text of the message before you press send. Your recipients will then only receive the embedded image.

Language Challenges via App!



The new Language challenges app has just been launched in 20 languages on both the Apple and Google platforms (see <https://edl.ecml.at/#app> for the direct links).

What Do you Dare to Do in a Foreign Language?

To add an extra incentive to the initiative, the 51st challenge is "What do you dare to do in a foreign language?" and invites users to create a short video clip, based either on the one of the existing challenges or on one of their own invention, and upload it to the EDL website.

<https://edl.ecml.at/languagechallenge>

Discover the World Through Languages!

Despite the health crisis this year's European Day of Languages looks like being a very special day. With just under two weeks to go until the 19th edition of the EDL, there are lots of wonderful creative events foreseen all over Europe and indeed the world. Just have a look through the calendar (<https://edl.ecml.at/edlevents>) to discover them!

If you are involved in organising an event which is not yet featured in the calendar – please don't forget to include it, no matter how big or small.

STÍL (Association of Language Teachers), Iceland Informs



Hólmfríður Garðarsdóttir, President of STÍL

In Iceland – as elsewhere – teachers turned into superheroes by mid spring semester 2020. Their education, experience, expertise, ability to professionally reinvent themselves and their work methods, as well as their capacity to confront challenges, together with their dedication to their profession and their students, kept the educational institutions at all different levels running well into the summer.

These efforts have in some cases been rewarded but in other instances educational authorities have assumed (and benefitted from) teacher's commitment to their profession. Locally, the Minister of Education and Culture has in her different speeches expressed her thanks, the rector of University of Iceland submitted a gratitude letter to academic and administrative staff. In some secondary schools' teachers received a financial one-time recognition of few hundred euros, in other schools teachers received an allocation for their internet connections at home (for a month or two), while others were allowed to

transfer some basic equipment to their new work-stations at home, while all instruction moved to remote teaching and distant learning overnight.

Now, when a new school year opens, teachers still find themselves in exceptional circumstances and the challenges continue. Across the island teachers express worries about prolonged fatigue and they worry about the standing of language education as distant learning does not quite replace the dynamic collaboration on-site teaching offers. Therefore, the board of STÍL recognizes the need to engage in a promotional campaign for language learning and is considering how to conduct such an endeavor. Simultaneously, it continues to be committed to holding authorities informed about the extra efforts language teachers are selflessly contributing to the well-functioning of the educational systems, while also insisting on that this continuous contribution of time and expertise be financially recognized.

In summary therefore, the well accepted cry that all 'row in the same direction' when a disaster hits has once more worked on the island. However, there is a limit to what can be asked of individuals and for how long.

Overworked staff loses the needed passion to attend to bewildered and vulnerable youth, hence the danger of higher drop-out rates emerges at the same time as unemployment figures are bleak. The challenges continue to be manifold. Hence, it will be interesting to share information on good-practices and the measures employed at different school levels at our foreseen conference Future of Languages 2021.

I take this opportunity and confirm that most of those who submitted their abstracts and paid their registration fees continue to be on the draft agenda of the conference. By mid-January 2021, the preparatory team will reassume its tasks and submit a new "call for papers" to invite more teachers and researchers to become involved - assuming that the world be somewhat back to normality and travel conditions in order. I use this opportunity and invite all of you to keep up with our homepage: <https://vigdis.hi.is/en/events/fiplv-nbr-conference/>

Furthermore, we would appreciate that you encourage your colleagues to join forces with us and submit proposals. By so doing even more dedicated teachers become actively involved in forming the future of language learning and teaching.

Finally, STÍL in collaboration with the Vigdís Finnbogadóttir Institute of Foreign Languages and the Language Center of the University of Iceland decided to

dedicate the European Day of Languages, 26 September 2020, to the languages and literatures of Roma people. Considering the circumstances and restrictions, teachers were invited to access ready-made material to introduce these quite unknown cultural representations to Icelandic students. It included a general introduction to the origins and culture of the gypsies, as well as soundtracks and readings of original short stories and their translations. The central aim of the project was to open a door into the richness of languages, to introduce the peculiarities of the Roma languages and to promote a forthcoming publication, an anthology of gypsy short stories in translations into Icelandic. The material was made available with a grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture, the University Research Fund and others. In addition, we distributed posters from ECML in Graz and directed schools to access the ECML website - <https://edl.ecml.at/> and its rich collection of teaching materials, games, puzzles etc., made available for the occasion.

The Future of Teaching Foreign Languages in Finland - SUKOL



Outi VILKUNA, the chair of Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL (https://www.sukol.fi/in_english)

In Finland as in all of Europe and globally the challenges brought to us by COVID-19 have created its' heroes and underdogs. Teachers at all fronts have proven their professionalism by turning overnight to Master Yodas in using digital platforms and aids in their classrooms being remote or hybrid in their teaching methods. Most Finnish publishers joined the effort by giving free access to their

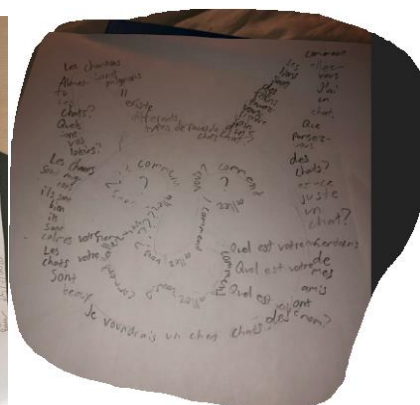
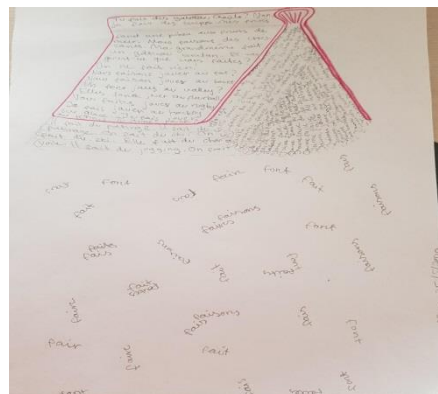
online teaching materials and student materials. It had however its' toll. During summer holidays we all were silently hoping that come autumn term we could return back to normal...whatever it then would mean. Well, it only meant that what was believed to be temporary revealed to be the new normal. For primary schools it meant being back to normal classrooms but with many new regulations and instructions for safety to follow. For upper secondary and higher education teaching at distance was more or less the new normal for safety reasons. Government had appointed economic aid to enable "patching" possible gaps in learning created during spring season at distance teaching time; this funding was meant to ensure special education resource in the autumn term. It turned out that many of the communes having applied for this funding were in addition laying off teaching staff for a given period of time in either the beginning of the autumn term or planning to do so at some point of the autumn term to make savings in the communal budgets that were and are cracking under corona. Another measure to cut costs seems to be ending the A2- language groups (usually starting from 3rd - 5th grade in primary school and being teaching groups of Foreign languages other than English as they are optional, not dictated to be offered by law. The early onset language learning programme A1 -language starting from 1st grade in primary school is also subject to cutting costs: offering only English seems to be the growing trend. The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL has been involved in many debates, interviews and other in order to emphasize the wrong turn taken by this development. In spring 2021 it will be time for next communal elections in Finland and thus one of our aims is to have candidates supporting our cause and bringing the issue of Foreign Languages learning and teaching to center of attention.

We have had to cancel or postpone or made into webinars most of the events planned for this year but are very glad that we have been able to offer some to our members despite the times we are living. Eg. on September 5th there was a seminar on Neuroscience of Learning for Foreign Language Teachers held in Helsinki and two more will follow this autumn

<https://www.sukol.fi/liitto/koulutuskalenteri> .

It was and is also possible to participate remote. The general assembly of the Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL will be held on November 21st in Helsinki most likely as a hybrid assembly. One of the many

issues will be electing new members to the board. We are also looking forward to finding ways to co-operate and make partnerships to ensure the quality and diverse Foreign Language teaching in Finland also in the future and for this purpose have set many meetings eg. with the Confederation of Finnish Industries <https://ek.fi/en/> who are equally worried about the diminishing number of workforce also skilled in Foreign languages and looking to join forces with a multifaceted consortium evaluating the possibilities of digital platforms to ensure nation wide equal possibilities to teach and learn Foreign Languages (namely other than English) cost-effectively and to market these means to the communal decision makers as a way to ensure equal access to language education all over Finland. An interesting thesis published at Turku University on this matter: Constructing life courses in times of uncertainty: individualisation and social structures in the context of Finnish education Tikkanen, Jenni (2020-01-11) <https://www.utupub.fi/handle/10024/148678>



News from Latvian Association of Teachers of English (LATE)



Robert Buckmaster

Due to the current continuing uncertainty the LATE Board decided to replace the planned two day Annual Conference in August 2020 with a one-day online Conference. This conference took place on Friday 21st August using Zoom. There were three different kinds of sessions:

- Live presentations and workshops conducted through Zoom.
- Pre-recorded presentations.
- Pre-recorded information announcements.

157 participants signed up for the conference. Over 100 participants watched each live session. Each live session was recorded as it happened and then put on LATE's YouTube channel and participants had the opportunity to watch the sessions later. Each presenter had prepared a number of questions about their session and these were put into Google Forms. The participants had to answer the questions about each presentation in order to get credit for that session on their certificate. Conference certificates were issued a week later once the Google Forms had been reviewed.

The online LATE 2020 Conference was free of charge for LATE members.

The conference began with an introduction by Inga Linde, LATE President, who outlined LATE's work over the year and our plans. This was followed by Steve Lever of Express Publishing talking about 'Being More Productive' in a live

plenary session. After a short break Alex Warren of National Geographic Learning spoke about 'Formative Assessment In The Young Learner Classroom'.



Alex Warren

After these two plenaries there was a slot for parallel workshops:

- Daira Ruta Morusa: 'Dare to Take the Blogging Challenge.'
- Alexander Sokol: 'Learning through texts: towards improving the quality of what our learners master as a result of reading, listening and watching.'
- Agnese Gromova-Ķūrena: 'Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into the Exploration of Culture in a Young Learners' EFL Setting.'
- Dons Kuklis: 'Student Agency - flipping the whole relationship.'

The last session before lunch was given by Dace Miška of Oxford University Press, who talked about 'Support tools for Online teaching and learning from Oxford University Press'.

Lunch then took place in homes all over Latvia.

Then Alex Warren returned to talk about Different Perspectives - Helping teenagers develop a critical eye. Czeslaw Kinski of Macmillan joined us from Poland to encourage us to 'Dig a little deeper developing reading comprehension with upper-secondary students'.



Czeslaw Kinski

Magdalena Szewczyk of Pearson gave the final presentation of the conference when she talked about 'Bridging the gap between school and adulthood'.



Magdalena Szewczyk

As mentioned earlier there were a number of pre-recorded sessions:

- Lauren Anderson talked about 'Online Learning in the US'.
- Anete Ubele spoke about "Online quizzes for testing students' grammar knowledge in English lessons of Grade 6"
- Līga Vilcāne spoke about 'Reading Detectives for Improving the Students' Reading Comprehension in English Lessons of Grade 7'.
- The US Embassy recorded a session about 'Opportunities and programs for English Language teachers'.
- Inga Saulīte-Bēniņa gave 'Baltic Council News'
- Tatiana Ginzburg gave 'Express Publishing News'.
- Iveta Vītola gave 'Pearson News: Back to School Ready to Move Forward'.
- Zane Šķinķe gave 'National Geographic Learning and Macmillan News'.

Overall, the feedback on the Conference was positive, and there was only small technical problem with one of the workshop's that was solved in a few minutes.

More details about the Conference can be found at

<http://late.lv/conference.htm> .

The Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers (EAFLT) as a Second Language Faces New Challenges



Ingrid Prees, Chair of the Board of the Estonian Association of Teachers of Estonian as a Second Language; TalTech Virumaa college, lecturer of Estonian, head of the working group of the Humanities

Background

Estonian as the second language gained relevance as an important part of the government's policy after Estonia regained independence in 1991. The Estonian Association of Teachers of Estonian as a Second Language (EATESL) emerged from the project "The regional network for in-service training of teachers of Estonian as a second language". The project started in 1997 and was initiated and financed by the British Council and the Estonian Ministry of Education and Science. The aim of the project was to prepare leading teachers of a national language and Estonian as a second language. The training programme included the acquisition of modern teaching methods, working out methodological and teaching materials, dissemination and introducing materials, starting the cooperation with

universities, and initiating cooperation between teachers of Estonian. In 2000 three regional centres were formed in Kohtla-Järve at Virumaa College, in Tartu at Annelinna Gymnasium, and in Tallinn at Pae Gymnasium. The centres organised seminars, information days, meetings with textbook authors, and offered library services.

The foundation of the association

The EATESL was founded on 8 December 2001. In September, this year TalTech Virumaa college celebrated its 20th anniversary, our Association celebrates its 20th anniversary next year. Gloria Estefan has said: „We seal our fate with the choices we make “. To guarantee the sustainability of the association the elections of a new board took place in June: seven members represent teachers of Estonian from different institutions: language centres, universities, and general education schools. Ingrid Prees, a lecturer of Estonian at TalTech Virumaa college, was elected to manage the activities of the Association during the next three years.

A new board has worked together only three months, but we have met three times to update the Statutes, initiate the communication between members, prepare an action plan for the ongoing three years. At the end of June, we gathered for brainstorming session. The agenda included the discussion of amendments to the Statutes and “Development Plan of the Estonian Language 2021-2035”. The aim of the development plan is the strengthening the vitality, development and learning of the Estonian. The brainstorm session resulted in working out a detailed action plan of the association, and proposals for the development plan to be sent to the Ministry of Education and Science.

Cooperation makes us stronger

EATESL is one of the founding members of the Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers. In 2012 the Association joined the Network of Estonian Teachers` Association. This summer the members of our new board participated in a summer seminar. Moreover, this summer we started cooperation with a non-profit organisation Eesti Keelepööre (Language Turn) a network of the teachers of Estonian as a national language and a second language. a platform for success stories and a recognition programme for Estonian language promoters.

Worldwide Estonian Learning Week

The Second Worldwide Estonian Learning Week will take place from 21 to 27 September. This year KeelEST is focusing on tastes, food culture and (Estonian) cuisine. See the programme here: <https://keelest.estinst.ee/en/>

We, the members of a new board, would like to get better acquainted with our members and for that reason we start organising virtual discussion evenings every Friday. The first discussion will take place during the Worldwide Estonian Learning Week. Apart from that we encourage our members to take part in a story writing competition and put down their memories of the association.

Small steps to big achievements

Although our association is in its infancy stage we move on with small steps to big achievements. As the first step we would like to meet our members face to face at the beginning of a new year (in Tartu in January and in spring in Tallinn) with the aim of sharing teaching experience and techniques how to diversify the lessons of the Estonian language.

But the greatest challenge is to start the preparation for the conference to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Association. Our board members dream big. Our biggest dream is the cooperation between active and enthusiastic members and partners. It is said that there are no impossible dreams. "Don't think of your weaknesses, failures or faults, focus on your talent and your possible contribution whether using your knowledge, wisdom, creativity, diligence or good soul" (Nick Vujicic).

A Pop-up Café Masha and The Bear in Aruküla



Leena Möls, teacher of Russian as a foreign language at Aruküla Basic School in Estonia

I work as a Russian teacher and I am convinced that in order to increase the students' motivation towards learning Russian it is not necessary to limit the teaching into regular lessons only. Students like to make blinis (Russian pancakes), dumplings and other national foods of Russia after the lessons. They love it when I introduce Russian culture, when we travel to Russia, or go on field trips to other places related to the language and culture, when we watch cartoons and Russian movies, participate in projects, learn songs and dances. Every teacher tries to find different techniques that would make the students more interested in learning a foreign language may it be German, English or Russian. When you ask me what my hobby is, I must say that teaching is one of my hobbies.

As a teacher my goal is to be creative and motivative, to teach in such a way that the children wouldn't lose interest in learning the language.

On Saturday (July 4th) we had the annual pop-up cafe day in Aruküla. It was the first public event allowed to be organized after somewhat lifting the restrictions set in March due to the Covid19 pandemic. We were over the moon because it allowed us to get out of our houses, meet our friends and acquaintances.

There were 12 pop-up cafes set up throughout our small town and one of them was Masha and The Bear - the Russian cuisine café. It was set up inside and in front of Aruküla Basic School. My students and I have participated in the pop-up cafe day for five years now. During the first two years we named the café simply The Russian Café.

The students also gave an interview to the local newspaper. Here's an extract from it.

"We have had a Russian themed cafe in front of the school during previous years as well. Three years ago the students and our teacher Leena decided to make it a bit more specific and named the cafe Masha and The Bear because one spring a graduate student, Ingely Penu, who was one of the authors of the idea, brought out that Masha and The Bear has been one of their teacher's favorite cartoons for years and has become a useful medium in learning Russian at Aruküla Basic School. In order to prepare for the café the students and the teacher spent the night at the school-house and cooked until late hours. The menu included Russian foods and in the setting of the café we used items related to Masha and The Bear cartoon. The visitors of the café got to play board games and watch cartoons while enjoying the food."

Ingely explained that they hoped to earn back the money they had spent on cooking but also to make a bit of a profit. "Since we are members of ELO - the national youth organization in Estonia - we donate the income to the organisation so that our curator, teacher Leena, can buy necessary ingredients for cooking with the kids."

This year, the café set up inside and in front of the school offered the following menu: hot Solyanka soup aka Settlers' Soup, cold Okroshka soup for warm summer days, layered Russian salads, different pastries filled with either potato, mushroom or meat mixtures, chanterelle and egg kulebyaka pie. For dessert the menu offered waffles, Mascha's cheesecake and The Bear's Lollipop Cake. The teacher and the students appeared at the opening event in the cartoon-related costumes.

"In the lessons of teacher Leena there was this funny topic - Masha and The Bear - that's where we took the name of the café. We like the nature or the vibe of it. Besides, everyone likes the food," says Ingely. Other students

cooking the soups and the pastries were Maris Meelimäe , Kerli Aleksejev , Erica Hinno, Triini Lille and Anetta Vaikna, with a few boys as helping hands as well.

"We always come together the previous night to prepare everything and then we stay at the school-house for the night. We're all good friends, we have all studied at this basic school together, graduated from it and are away in different high schools by now but it hasn't stopped us. We were particularly interested in doing the cafe project this year because we hadn't had much choice to get out of the houses to meet up and hang out together," said Ingely.

Setting up a pop-up cafe is a team effort. The girls talked to each other all the time. My only condition was that there had to be more than one or two students participating. They decided upon the items on the menu first and later we discussed it together. Russian cuisine is very diverse and rich. We picked out the recipes divided them between the teams and started cooking. Everything took extra time since the recipes were in Russian and the girls had to first make sure they understood what was written. It was nice to observe their genuine joy when they realized they had got it right. Of course, there was some words I had to translate for them.

We also offered tea using samovars. Drinking tea is not just to quench one's thirst, it is always about making conversation, exchanging news etc. This was the case in our cafe as well. In the evening we were tired but happy. The girls heard lots of praising words from the visitors, many people asked for the recipes. By the end of the day the girls said their feet were killing them but that exhaustion passes, leaving only good memories .

The Russian pop-up cafe gave the girls, once again, an opportunity to better learn one part of Russian culture -the cuisine and its traditions and manners - through specific activities. Photographs bellow from the The Russian pop-up cafe event.





NEWS from LKPA LITHUANIA

**Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of
Philology of Vilnius University Continues Cooperation
with University of Göttingen, Germany**

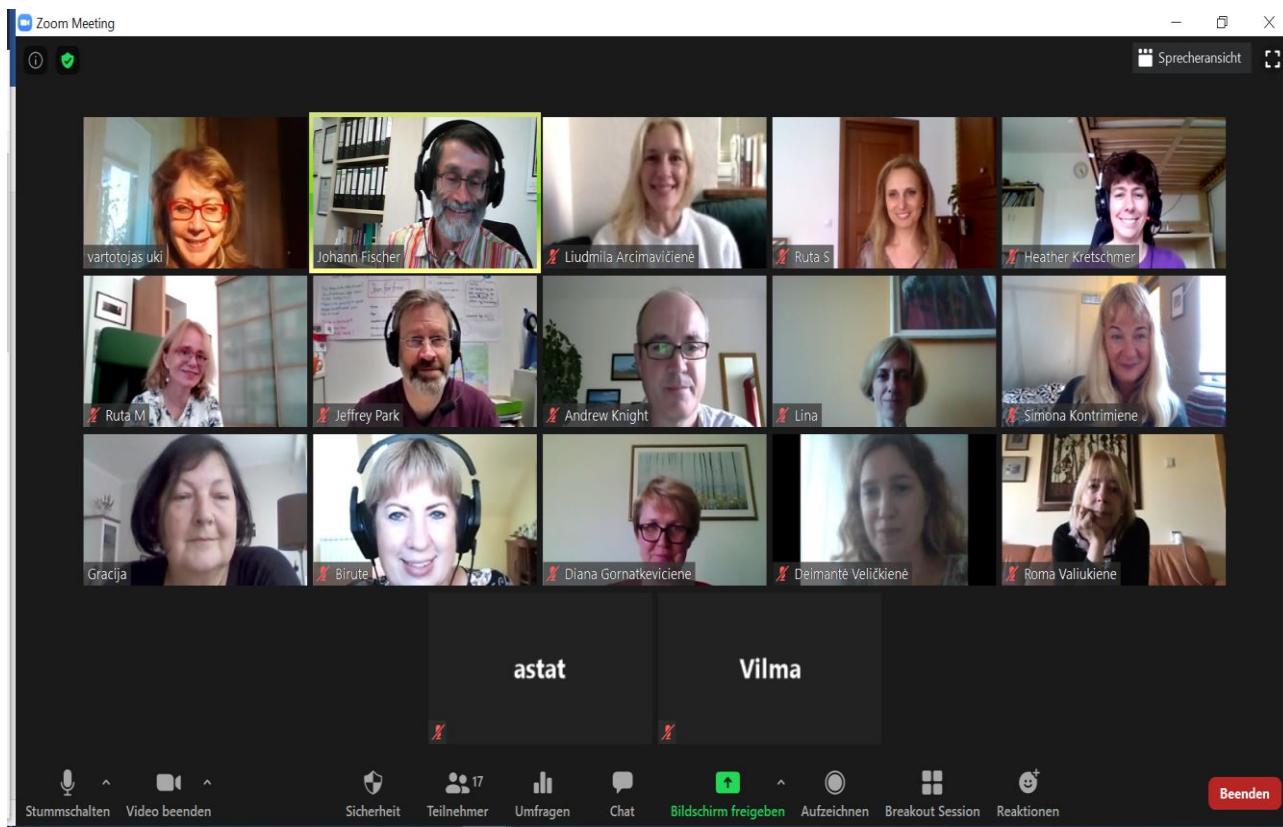


**Dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė, former president of LKPA, Institute of Foreign
Languages, Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University**

This summer, as last year, the lecturers of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology were intensively preparing for a new academic year. On June 15-16 and on September 2-3 online workshops for the lecturers of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University were delivered by Director of the Center for the Development of Languages and Transferable Skills of the University of Göttingen (Germany), Dr. Johann Fischer (Zentrale Einrichtung für Sprachen und Schlüsselqualifikationen, Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, Deutschland). This is the fourth continuous training on the application of the Action-oriented Approach language teaching methodology in university language studies. Dr. J. Fischer was invited by the Board member of Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA) Dr. Evelina Jeleniauskiene and the former President of Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA) Dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė. Last year, intensive training course took place in the usual face-to-face way, and this year due to COVID-19 pandemic online learning mode was chosen. This year's online workshops were attended by about 30 lecturers of the Institute of Foreign Languages, who teach English courses to students of various university study programs.

The participants of the workshops continued the analysis of the theoretical guidelines for language teaching / learning, testing and assessment of the latest updated volume of 2018 and 2020 of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and discussed practical application of CEFR in university language studies. This year the main focus of online workshops was on the practical application of the Action-oriented Approach to language teaching methodology, once again emphasizing its advantages and suitability for language teaching / learning at contemporary universities.

After last summer's workshops delivered by Dr. J. Fischer, the lecturers of the Institute of Foreign Languages had updated the ESP English Language Course Descriptions for students of various study programs according to Action-oriented Approach methodology, and in the academic year of 2019/2020 they had already taught ESP courses, entitled as English for Academic Purposes and Research according to the updated programs. In June online workshops this year, moderated by Dr. J. Fischer, teachers reflected upon their experience and conducted an evaluation of their work under the updated programs, discussed students' feedback and shared their insights.



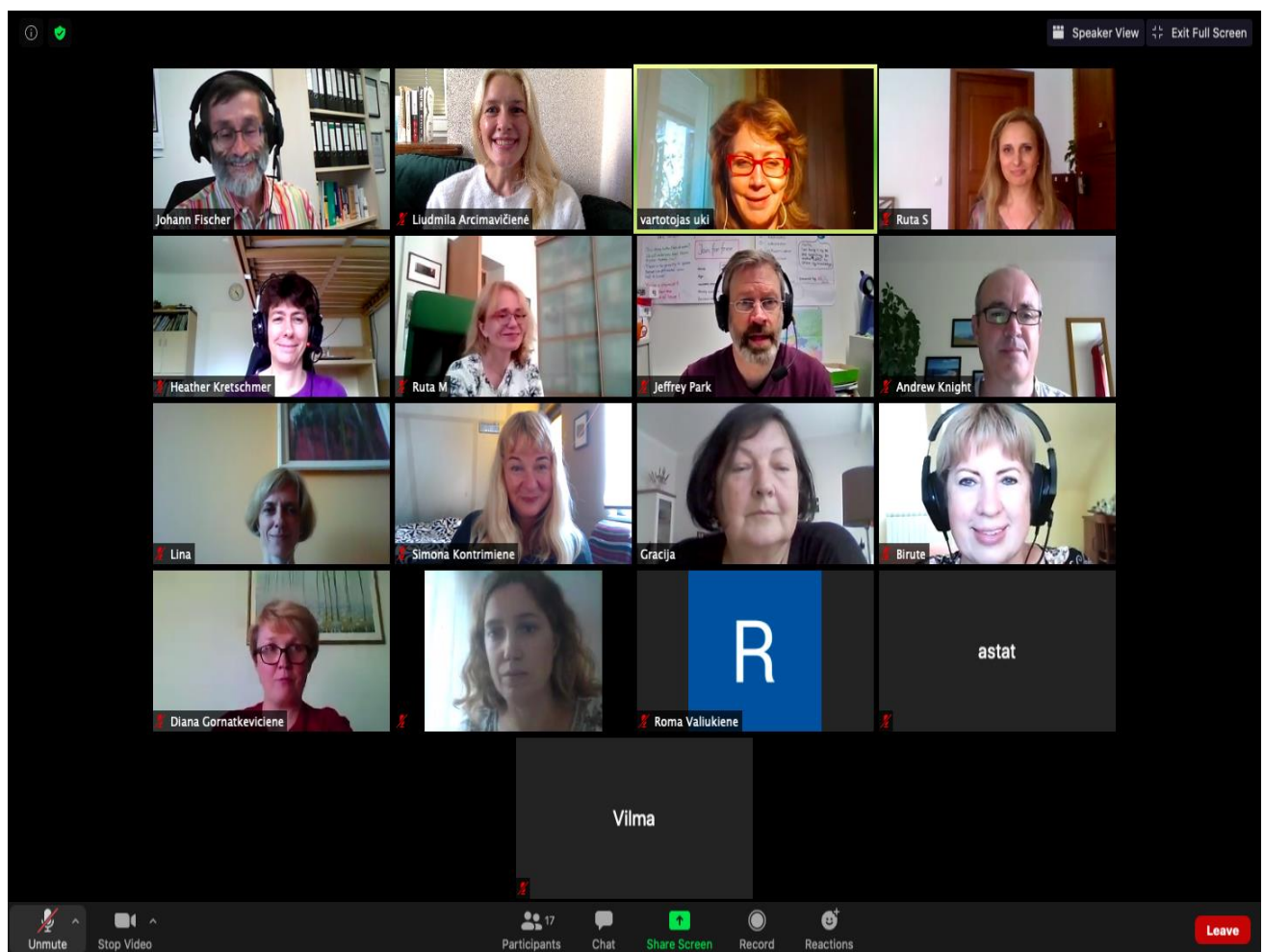
On September 2-3 Dr. J. Fischer invited the lecturers of the Center for the Development of Languages and Transferable Skills of the University of Göttingen to participate in the workshop together with the lecturers of the Institute of Foreign Languages of our Faculty of Philology of VU and to share their experience. During the workshop, colleagues from the University of Göttingen presented their teaching and testing materials, discussed with the lecturers of Vilnius University English language course scenarios of various study programs and their coherence with the exam scenarios, all working together in groups improved English language course descriptions, thus sharing their experience and preparing for a new academic year.

The beneficial cooperation of the lecturers of the University of Göttingen with the lecturers of the institute will continue by organizing joint seminars in the future.

The results of this successful collaboration were presented at the 16th International Scientific CercleS (European Confederation of Language Centers in Higher Education) conference: Language Centers at a Crossroads: Open Directions for New Generations of Learners, held on September 10-12 in Brno,

Masaryk University (Czech Republic), where a joint presentation was delivered by Dr. Johann Fischer (University of Göttingen, Germany) and Director of the Institute of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University Dr. Roma Kriauciūnienė.

The Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University will continue to strive for a high quality of language teaching, following the example of and aligning with the University of Göttingen and other European universities, which have been successfully and effectively applying the Action-oriented Approach methodology in their language teaching courses.



European Languages Day in Lithuania



Audronė Auškelienė, Director of Public Service Language Centre, Institutional member of Association of Language Teachers of Lithuania

On 25 September, 2020, traditionally Public Service Language Centre (Lithuania) together with the Lithuanian Association of Language Teachers organized several events celebrating the European Day of Languages. Most of the events have been sponsored by the European Commission.

At the Visitors' Centre of the Lithuanian Parliament the ceremony of awards to the winners of two contests - European songs' translation and songs' illustrations' - took place with the participation and welcome speech of the Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Mr. Jonas Liesis, who greeted the young participants and thanked their teachers for promoting their students' multiculturalism, fostering creativity and motivating them to learn different languages in schools.



Traditional language workshops "Dating with Languages" took place at the Public Service Language Centre. Nine different languages - Greek, Irish, Finnish, Japanese, Georgian, Czech, Croatian, Turkish and Lithuanian - were represented by foreign Embassies and culture centers and other institutions. Jūratė Patackaitė Vicepresident of the Lithuanian Association of Language Teachers helped to organize these language workshops and participated in them with a group of students - volunteers from Vilnius College. What a great opportunity for college students, studying event management!

This year the Battle of Brains "European Language Maze" due to Covid-19 pandemic limitations was organized online on Youtube platform. The winning team from Alytus High School named after Adolfas Ramanauskas Vanagas won the grand prix - a trip to European Parliament - this year presented by member of European Parliament Ms Rasa Juknevičienė.

We congratulate all the winners and all the participants of EDL contests, wishing them successful school year and exciting experience discovering new cultures and learning new languages that open doors to new opportunities!



THINK4JOBS as an Attempt to Enhance University and Business Collaboration



Two institutional member of the Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania (LKPA) the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University and the Public Service Language Centre are taking part in Erasmus KA203 project THINK4JOBS. The project is endorsed by a consortium of five universities and five labour market organizations from five countries (Germany, Greece, Lithuania, Portugal and Romania). It stems from the consolidated experience of the partnership in Critical Thinking (CT) teaching, training and research, and their commitment to empowering University-Business Cooperation (UBC) in Europe as a need to the successful employment and transition of new graduates from the university to the labour market. To that end, it aims to develop relevant tools and unprecedented opportunities (due to their potential in terms of innovation, applicability, impact and transferability) for the effective development, support and assessment of students' CT in the transition into a professional context using apprenticeships as a privileged interface.

The Coordinator of the Project is University of Western Macedonia, Greece. The coordinators of the project in Lithuania are: dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė, director of the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University and Audronė Auškelienė, director of the Public Service Language Centre.

This is an interview with the Coordinator of Project THINK4JOBS dr. Dimitris Pnevmatikos, professor of Developmental Psychology, Department of Primary Education, Head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Western Macedonia, Greece, conducted by Audronė Auškelienė, director of the Public Service Language Centre.



Dimitris Pnevmatikos

Audronė Auškelienė: How did you come up with the idea of the project THINK4JOBS?

Dimitris Pnevmatikos: Stakeholders across the EU report the shortage of skilled workforce and graduates that could meet the needs of the labour market. The “skills gap” or “skills mismatch” as identified in the literature, usually is located on the deficit of soft skills such as critical and creative thinking, communication and collaboration. Three of the THINK4JOBS consortium partners worked within another Erasmus + project (CRITHINKEDU) which was focused on the development of curricula at Higher education. These partners gained experience and knowledge of how Critical Thinking can be promoted in Higher Education. One of the findings in this project was that the curricula in Higher Education aiming to promote critical thinking to their graduates should follow some general principles and consider the particularities of each profession. Professionals in health care have different challenges to think critically than professionals in education, banks, information technology or translations. Therefore, higher education curricula should take into account these particularities and adapt their efforts to the specific needs of the labour market. Hence, we invited two more partners we had a previous collaboration in European projects to join the

consortium. These partners work at different, from the three partners, professional disciplines. Then, each university partner invited one partner from the labour market who employs graduates from their university and hosts undergraduates for their practicum. These partners will describe the particular needs they do have in soft skills such as critical and creative thinking skills. Then they will host graduates for their practicum and they will evaluate whether the new curricula provided with these skills to their graduates.

Therefore, the previously fruitful collaboration among the consortium partners motivated us to take a step forward and prepare the Critical Thinking for Successful Jobs proposal, or in short THINK4JOBS. THINK4JOBS is an attempt to enhance University - Business Collaboration and bridge the skills gap regarding Critical Thinking through blended apprenticeship curricula.

Audronė Auškelienė: Who are the project partners and how did you select them?

Dimitris Pnevmatikos: Think4Jobs partnership consists of ten organizations across the EU, namely five Higher Education Institutions (HEI) and five well established in their fields labour market stakeholders. The University of Western Macedonia is the Project Coordinator collaborating with the Experimental Primary Education School of Florina, Greece. Other participating organizations are the University of Evora and the Atlantic Veterinary Hospital from Portugal, the University of Applied Sciences Emden/Leer and Orgadata AG from Germany, the Bucharest University of Economic Studies and the BRD Groupe Societe Generale Bank from Romania, Vilnius University and the Public Service Language Centre from Lithuania.

The selection of the partners was based on the expertise they do have in the field and the previous records and collaboration in European projects. From the pool of potential partners, we invited to join the consortium those who educate different professions for the market. The selection of the labour market partners was grounded on the previously established collaboration among them and the HEIs through the implementation of apprenticeships.

Audronė Auškelienė: What are the key competences for a successful career nowadays?

Dimitris Pnevmatikos: Having a successful career nowadays is like an equation with multiple variables. Apart from carrying out bachelor and master studies on

a discipline developing many competencies could be considered essential. Stakeholders named these key competencies as 21st-century skills. Critical and Creative thinking, Collaboration, Communication, digital skills, problem-solving, adaptability and time management skills are only a few of the vital soft skills that future graduates and workforce should master in order to succeed in their careers.

Audronė Auškelienė: How important critical thinking is when choosing a profession/ a job or dealing with different tasks at work, etc.?

Dimitris Pnevmatikos: Critical Thinking can facilitate individuals in choosing a profession as it puts forward deliberate and conscious thinking, which takes under consideration existing evidence, and it attempts to resist to biases. Additionally, critical thinking fosters individuals in outgrowing emotional and intuitive decisions. At the same time, critical thinking assists individuals and teams more effectively in diagnosing problems and identifying solutions. Additionally, critical thinking can prove an essential asset for conflict resolution. Also, employees who take under consideration a range of possible approaches to solve a problem rather than rely either on bias or fast, unconscious and intuitive judgments, they are more likely to arrive at a better solution. Thus, an organization with a skilful workforce in critical thinking can excel and stand out from their competitors.

Audronė Auškelienė: What role does the life-long-learning play in the labour market nowadays?

Dimitris Pnevmatikos: Lifelong learning is a form of self-initiated voluntary education that is focused on personal development and self-fulfilment. However, labour market organizations consider lifelong learning as the keystone for continuously upgrading the skills and knowledge of their employees promoting their careers' success and the labour market organizations' overall development. Primarily, they invest time and money in training workshops regarding the development of soft skills into their employees in order to satisfy the needs of the changing world better.

Audronė Auškelienė: How important is language learning nowadays and how is it related to critical thinking and career opportunities?

Dimitris Pnevmatikos: Language skills can be a significant competitive advantage for graduates and the future workforce. Employers are looking for professionals who can communicate coherently and smoothly with customers in new and expanding markets as well as collaborate with experts and partners across the world. Learners with critical thinking skills can monitor and evaluate their learning more successfully. Furthermore, critical thinking expands the learning experience rendering the language as more meaningful for learners. Moreover, it fosters perspective taking, understanding and tolerance of people from various cultures and backgrounds.

Audronė Auškelienė: *Can the COVID-19 pandemic alternate project activities and how are you going to manage it?*

Dimitris Pnevmatikos: The COVID-19 pandemic will not compromise the quality of the activities and intellectual outputs produced during the project. The project foresaw the necessity for implementing new technologies and digital tools in Higher Education and practice. Thus, THINK4JOBS is a project that will cope successfully with the COVID-19 pandemic through the design, implementation and evaluation of Critical Thinking blended apprenticeship curricula.

Audronė Auškelienė: *Thank you for your ideas. Good luck with managing THINK4JOBS project.*



International Teachers Day

World Teachers' Day, also known as International Teachers Day, is an international day held annually on October 5. Established in 1994, it

commemorates the signing of the 1966 UNESCO/ILO Recommendation concerning the Status of Teachers, which is a standard-setting instrument that addresses the status and situations of teachers around the world. This recommendation outlines standards relating to education personnel policy, recruitment, and initial training as well as the continuing education of teachers, their employment, and working conditions. World Teachers' Day aims to focus on "appreciating, assessing and improving the educators of the world" and to provide an opportunity to consider issues related to teachers and teaching.

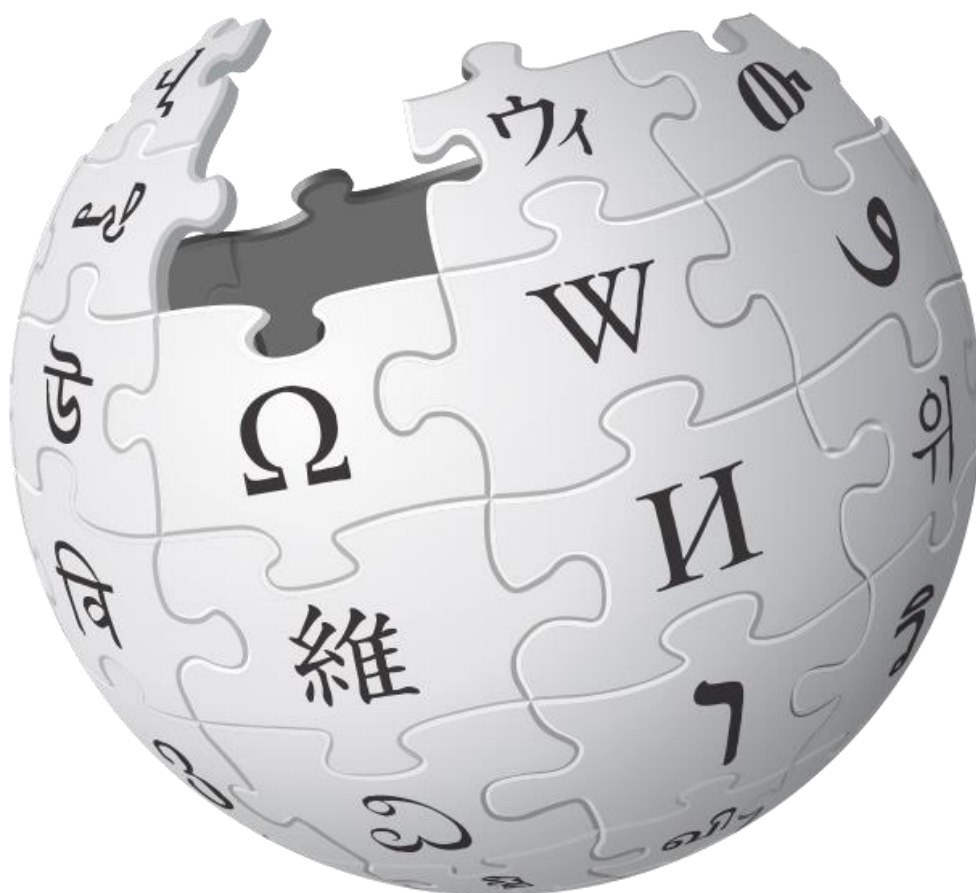
To celebrate World Teachers' Day, the UNESCO and Education International (EI) mounts a campaign each year to help give the world better understanding of teachers and the role they play in the development of students and society. They partner with the private sector such as media organizations to achieve this purpose. The campaign focus on different themes for every year. For instance, "Empowering Teachers" is the theme for 2017. This was the year World Teachers' Day commemorated the 20th anniversary of the 1997 UNESCO Recommendation concerning the Status of Higher-Education Teaching Personnel, bringing the sometimes-neglected area of teaching personnel at Higher Education institutions into the conversation about the status of teachers.

For 2018, the UNESCO adopted the theme: "The right to education means the right to a qualified teacher." It commemorates the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and serves as a reminder that the right to education cannot be realized without trained and qualified teachers.

The UNESCO cites that everyone can help by celebrating the profession, by generating awareness about teacher issues and by ensuring that teacher respect is part of the natural order of things. Schools and students, for instance, prepare an occasion for teachers during this day. More than 100 countries commemorate World Teachers' Day and each holds its own celebrations such as the case of India, which has been commemorating Teachers' Day every 5th September.

As the day usually falls during Australian school holidays, Australian States celebrate on the last Friday of September each year instead.

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