

FELT Newsletter

The Journal of the Forum for English Language Teachers in Ireland

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Año Europeo de las Lenguas 2001
 Det Europæiske Sprogår 2001
 Europäisches Jahr der Sprachen 2001
 Ευρωπαϊκό έτος των γλωσσών 2001
 European Year of Languages 2001
 Année européenne des langues 2001
 Anno europeo delle lingue 2001
 Europees Jaar van de talen 2001
 Ano Europeu das Línguas 2001
 Euroopan kielten teemavuosi 2001
 Europeiska året för språk 2001
 Blúain Eorpach na dTeangacha 2001

An Associate of



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Conference Overview 2001

Brighton Conference Centre 17th-21st April

www.iatefl.org

IATEFL, 3 Kingsdown Chambers, Whitstable, CT5 2FL, UK.

The programme of presentations for the 35th International Annual IATEFL Conference has been prepared and it appears in the latest IATEFL brochure. Conference delegates will be in for a treat in Brighton. The brochure was sent to all members in December and copies are available from the IATEFL office.

Please note that the preview of presentations is provisional. In the following months approaching the conference, cancellations and changes will occur. The updated and more informative listing of presentations will appear in the final conference programme, given to all delegates on arrival at the conference.

Registration

The Executive Committee has decided to reinstate the conference Day Rate registration. Delegate feedback from the Dublin Conference last year indicated that single day registration was still a valuable service to some local members, and it has therefore been reinstated for this conference in order to look more closely at the benefits and drawbacks.

The Conference/PCE Registration Form can be viewed on our website, or can be requested from IATEFL. Any persons wishing to join IATEFL in order to take advantage of the member rate should contact IATEFL, or FELT, for a membership pack.

Plenary Speakers

There will be a Video Conference Opening Plenary by Carol Chapelle on the morning of Wednesday April 18th.

The Video Conference has been made possible by sponsorship from the TOEFL program at Educational Testing Service. IATEFL is grateful to the TOEFL program for providing the financial support to offer this innovative opening plenary.

Other plenary sessions will be given by

Gabriela Matei and Peter Medgyes
Susan Stempleski and Barry Tomalin
Kari Smith and Grethe Hooper-Hansen
David Crystal (IATEFL Patron) will give the Final Plenary on Saturday 21 April.

Pre-Conference Events (PCEs) - Tuesday 17 April

The conference week will begin with a choice of eight Pre-Conference Events on Tuesday for delegates who wish to concentrate on a particular topic. The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) who are holding a PCE are:

Learner Independence and Teacher Development SIGs
Media and Teacher Trainers SIGs
Young Learners and Testing, Evaluation & Assessment SIGs
Literature & Cultural Studies and Computers SIGs
ELT Management SIG
English for Specific Purposes SIG
Pronunciation SIG
Global Issues SIG and MATSDA

Wednesday 18 April - Saturday 21 April

The conference will run from Wednesday morning until Saturday afternoon, consisting of plenary sessions, talks, workshops, panel discussions, SIG Open Forums - over 300 sessions! At the same time, enjoy the many Poster Presentations and visit the ELT Resources Exhibition.

Entertainment

A social programme will be arranged for delegates, beginning with a Civic Reception for all registered participants on the evening of Tuesday April 17th. During the week, entertainment will include: Wednesday - Brain Gym, Circle Dancing and a Quiz Night. Thursday - Prince Regent, Mrs Hoover and a Blues Band. Friday - Stories from Wales and a Joke Exchange Evening. Saturday - sightseeing for those staying in Brighton after the final plenary session.



European Year of Languages 2001
Bliain Eorpach na dTeangacha 2001

FELT was invited to the official Irish launch of EYL in Dublin castle on February 13th last. A host of celebrities were present and representatives from the very many language industry sectors. A selection of *Guinea Pigs*, including Marian Finnucane, volunteered to learn a language and report publicly on their progress via the media.

Apart from FELT representatives of ACELS, MEI/RELSA and various universities were present. Minister of Education & Science, Dr. Michael Woods TD, gave a short speech underlining the importance of language and languages to Ireland on both an economic and cultural level.

A video feed from Brussels then connected us to Viviane Reding, the European Commissioner for Education & Culture who outlined a vision for the European Year of Languages and challenged us to become actively involved. You may recall the letter from her on the back page of the last FELT Newsletter (Vol.2, No.4).

Congratulations must surely go to the Irish EYL co-ordinator, Marie Heraghty of Léargas, formerly of the TEFL section of the University of Limerick, for a superb launch. Marie has kindly supplied the EYL event guides that accompany this Newsletter.

Finally, Otto Dibelius, Director of the European Commission, addressed the audience and gave a vision of the European project viewed from a human, cultural and linguistic perspective. His words are reproduced here for you to consider.

“ **M**INISTER, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

You have heard and seen my Commissioner, Mrs. Reding, the European Commissioner for Education and Culture. Her message, the message of the European Year of Languages, is perfectly clear. It is not for me to add *grandes choses*, as the French say. But, I would like to tell you a little story:

Somewhere in a remote rural region, let's say in Finland or northern Germany, two farmers are leaning on a gate, communing with each other silently. A car comes down the road and stops beside the gate and the driver winds down the window. “*Do you speak English?*”. The two farmers look at each other significantly and shrug their shoulders. “*Parlez-vous français?*” “*Spreekt u Nederlands?*” Same reaction. “*¿Hablan ustedes español?*” “*Parlate italiano?*” No reaction. The man drives off. The two farmers remain in contemplative silence for a few minutes, then one turns to the other and says: “You know there's really no point in learning languages. You see that fellow there a minute ago. He could speak at least five languages and it didn't do him any good at all.”

Real communication is not about using the same words, it is about understanding and respecting other cultures and their values and customs.

Like most jokes, this story has a serious point. And it is this: how do we cope -linguistically -in an increasingly multilingual and multicultural world? The process of European integration, the creation of the single market, economic and monetary union -and world-wide developments/too like the communications revolution, the global economy and mass tourism -these all mean that Europeans increasingly need to communicate with people from other countries and cultures. And not just on special occasions, but in their everyday lives, at home, at work, as part of their education and training.

The European Union is not just about politicians and civil servants getting together in conferences and negotiations. It is about the right of ordinary people to live and work anywhere in Europe. It is about the right of businesses to operate throughout the Single Market. It is about the right of young people to pursue all or part of their education or their professional training in another country and have the qualifications and credits they earn there recognised in their home country. It is about Europeans of all ages and professions - individuals, public and private enterprises, local and regional authorities, professional organisations, the voluntary sector - getting together within a whole range of European programmes and policies to work together, to exchange ideas and to learn from each other's experiences.

So how do we make this really work, in a Europe with over 50 indigenous languages, including lesser used languages like Irish, as well as all the non-indigenous languages spoken by our immigrant communities?

It is up to you, and to your energy, ideas and imagination to make sure the European Year of Languages has a big and lasting impact here in Ireland, and throughout Europe.

Some people believe it's easy: we all learn one language and then we can all communicate with each other. And this is, to some extent, what is happening. Nearly 50% of European citizens know English -16% speak it as their mother tongue, and 31% as a second language, and this percentage is set to grow over the coming decades. But, we have to recognise that having a *Lingua Franca* is definitely not enough, because language is more than just a medium of communication.

Language is intimately connected with our perception and interpretation of the world,

with our identity as individuals and as members of a community, with self-expression and the expression of our culture and values. Real communication is not about using the same words, it is about understanding and respecting other cultures and their values and customs. And to do that you need to be able to speak - or at least understand - the languages in which other cultures are expressed.

That is what the European Year of Languages is all about. Learning languages do not require some special gift. We are all born into this world with an innate capacity for languages. Everyone can do it. It's never too early or too late in life to start. And the more you do it the easier, it becomes. Above all it can be a lot of fun.

Minority languages have a special place in all this. Wherever you have a minority language, you have a bilingual community. And the best preparation for learning languages is, well, learning languages. We know that people who are used to dealing with two languages from an early age find it much easier to learn other languages later on. This presents bilingual communities with an opportunity - and a challenge - to use their bilingualism as a springboard to multilingualism. And it gives young Irish people who have learned the Irish language alongside English from their earliest years an important head start.

In order to make this European Year of Languages 2001 a success, the European Union is financing a Europe-wide information campaign, it is supporting the European and national launch events and it is financing a number of European, national, regional and local projects. But this is essentially seed capital. It is up to you, and to your energy, ideas and imagination to make sure the European Year of Languages has a big and lasting impact - here in Ireland, and throughout Europe."

<http://www.eyl2001eire.com>

<http://www.eurolang2001.org>



UNIVERSITY *of* CAMBRIDGE
Local Examinations Syndicate

presents

Liz Gallivan

PET, KET and the ^{on}Young Learners' Tests

Saturday, June 9th from 2 till 5

The Teachers' Club, 36 Parnell Sq., Dublin 2.

Admission is Free

All Participants will Receive a Certificate of Attendance from the Cambridge Board

Interested Teachers should contact Derek Langan
Telephone or Fax (01) 4901917 or email drlang60@hotmail.com

IRAAL

IRISH ASSOCIATION FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

CUMANN NA TEANGEOLAÍOCHTA FEIDHMÍ

Lecture Announcement

Joan Williams

National Coordinator for the European Year of Languages
will speak about the

European Year of Languages.

Venue: Usher Lecture Theatre, Arts Building,
Trinity College, Dublin.

Date: Wednesday 6th June, 2001

Time: 8.00 pm

Conference Review: PASE & IATEFL Management SIG

Kraków, Poland, March 16th-18th, 2001

Review by Ciarán McCarthy

The last time I was in Poland was in 1991, having spent the best part of 48 hours cooped up in a bus, with 40 or so other hairy students. I was fascinated then by the beauty of the country, and the spirit of the people, who, at the time, had only known democracy a few short years.

Little has changed on those fronts, but I was not prepared for the level of change that I saw - this time I flew in to Kraków, via Gatwick in the UK and was greeted at the airport by a sign inviting me to shop at *Tesco Polska*. This made me wonder whether my *Tesco Ireland* card could rack me up any points. The big bad world had suddenly become the small globalised world and Tesco was there to welcome me. This saddened me, knowing that McDonalds, Coca Cola, Nike and friends would be waiting around the corner. I note that my word processor doesn't recognise the word *luddite*. But, picking up my spirits, I soldiered on and hoped that Poland had as much to offer as I remembered. And it certainly does! Kraków is one of the most beautiful cities I have ever seen and is easily the equal of Prague or Budapest.

On to the serious business... the conference was a joint event of the IATEFL Management SIG and PASE, the Polish Association for Standards in English. It is, perhaps, fitting that a conference entitled "*New Trends and Developments in ELT Management*" should take place in Poland - a country that has known incredible change in the last decade, and seems to have managed it very well indeed. Poland is on the cusp of EU membership and is likely to make its entry in 2003.

I quickly discovered that I was one of the few foreign delegates at this conference of almost 300 participants and was surrounded by the rather pleasing lilt of English spoken with a Polish twist. The occasional English accent was heard too, though, in the case of "Anna Kay", who must have come from somewhere near Surrey judging by her accent, I was way off the

mark - she was actually Anna Kolbuszewska from Kraków... so much for the EL teacher being able to spot a foreigner! The event was run over three days and a number of familiar names were billed. I have compiled very brief summaries of the sessions to give you a taste of what was to pass...

IMPROVEMENT MEANS CHANGE – THE BEST KIND OF CHANGE

- Liz Clarkson

The teaching that goes on in a language school is the last stage in a complex set of actions and events. Before the books are opened and teacher and students greet each other, many other people have done their jobs. Course programmes have been decided, promotional campaigns carried out, customer enquiries responded to, placement test and registration procedures put into action, course books selected, teachers selected and classrooms prepared.



ELT Management SIG

Every stage and meeting point in this complex dance can be improved. The EAQUALS Code of Practice was suggested as a valuable instrument improving all aspects of running a language school. Improvement, however, also means change and innovation - this is the manager's challenge. The management of change and innovation in a language school can only take place if everyone is involved from the managing director, and director of studies to the administrator, the accountant and the cleaner. Liz' second session followed neatly on from this...

MANAGING TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE

- Liz Clarkson

Why are we even talking about change in the context of language schools? What needs to change? Students come in, teachers teach, they all go home again. Students

pay course fees, teachers are paid salaries, owners make money, everybody's happy. Or are they? This presentation suggested that this mechanistic view of a language school would ensure that no-one is happy (except perhaps the school owner or shareholders). She argued that striving to improve, and in doing so, gaining satisfaction from the learning and teaching and managing processes, is essential to the success of all these activities.

Striving to improve means changing what we do and the way we do it. Changing what we do and how we do it means changing ourselves. Changing ourselves means transforming our image of ourselves and our function in the working context. This implies changing feelings and attitudes, especially for those whose jobs change as schools improve. The audience was asked to examine this process as it applies to teachers and office staff who are required to take on responsibilities and in doing so start to become "*managers*". Self-reflection is a necessary part of managing change, and sharing ideas a necessary second step, thus, examples from those who have successfully managed themselves through such transformations were shared.

FROM PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT TO PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT

- *Jan Kingsley*

Over the past years, many organisations have implemented performance management schemes. Whilst there appears to be general acceptance at a managerial level that performance management is beneficial, the goal of improved organisational performance has remained elusive, especially in the education sector. This talk described a project for implementing performance development, along with the resulting outcomes.

The first part of the talk described some of the historical and theoretical background to performance management with some associated results, especially in the educational and services sector. Traditionally, this has been a thorny issue, with managers lined up on one side, and academic staff on the other.

Then Jan presented how ESADE Idiomas, his institution, has developed an innovative process of performance management, termed the Job Development Scheme. This involved all the academic staff in defining and agreeing the principles and methodology for such a scheme, and has resulted in some very interesting and rewarding outcomes. Effectively 17 volunteers were trained as reviewers for all the staff members to allow them to review their personal and professional development in a non-threatening way. A report is then negotiated by the reviewer and reviewee and passed on to the manager who should then create linkages to the strategic process of the organisation.

THE 10 ASSUMPTIONS OF CHANGE

- *Jan Kingsley*

Management magazines and articles are full of "just do it this way?", but how easy is it to design, lead and implement the change process? Do the hundreds of theories and hints on leadership provide a real practical basis on which to act? Perhaps so, but how should we know which ones to use and when?

In this presentation, Jan proposed 10 shortcuts that are almost universally true and that can be used by any change agent, whether leaders, managers or consultants. The 10 assumptions made were:



Conference delegates relax at the Ariel Jewish restaurant to the sound of traditional Jewish folk music... helped along by bottles of Kosher Polish vodka!

- Your initial ideas will (& should) be adapted
- Resources for change are always scarce
- Conflict and disagreement are fundamental to change
- Change takes time
- Change within groups is incremental
- Change is about *culture* and *strategy*
- Significant change comes through practice
- Re-learning requires pressure
- You will never have enough knowledge
- You will be perceived as being both a threat and an opportunity

It's easy when you know how, isn't it!

HOW TO CREATE A LEARNING ORGANISATION

- *George Pickering*

"The organisations that will truly excel in the future will be the organisations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels within an organisation."

- *Peter Senge*

Only those organisations that can learn, unlearn and relearn will be able to survive and thrive in the changing market conditions of the future. This participatory talk explored the idea of the learning organisation, and why it is relevant to ELT professionals today. The session covered:

- The Power of Metaphors
- What is a Learning Organisation?
- Reasons for Creating a Learning Organisation
- The Characteristics of an ELT Learning Organisation
- 10 Step Process to a Learning Organisation

Which, again, leads very nicely in to George's second presentation...



The conference speakers pose for a cheesy photo for the FELT Newsletter. L-R Miroslaw, Jan, Liz, George and Anna.

10 QUALITY IDEAS THAT WORK!

- *George Pickering*

"It is easy to make a profit in the short term if you forget about quality, and it is easy to keep down costs if you forget about quality."

The challenge we all face today is how to provide high quality products and services at a price that the customer can afford. In this session we explored, briefly, the development of quality systems and procedures from quality control through quality assurance and beyond. This was the way to quality street...

George handed out a large box of *Quality Street* sweets to the audience which won over those sitting at the front, but irritated those at the back, who were left with the coffee creams, and so, the point was well made! The 10 steps discussed were:

- Customer feedback mechanisms
- Customer service
- Moments of truth
- Observations
- Benchmarking
- Self assessment
- Balanced scorecards
- Performance management
- TQM tools
- EFQM framework

PRINCIPLES OF SELF-ASSESSMENT

- *Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop*

Those who attended Hilary's session in Dublin in March will know how powerful what she has to say is. The presentation considered the role of self-assessment and discussed its potential contribution to ongoing staff training and development, as well as to overall school improvement. There were suggestions for setting up and implementing a self-assessment programme, evaluating the programme, and acting on its findings.

FROM AN ENGLISH SCHOOL TOWARD A NETWORK OF ENGLISH SCHOOLS

- *Lluís Estebe*

In the TEFL sector there are very few organisations with a multinational character, nor is it even customary to find companies with

an extended presence in a given country. In order to reach such a dimension, a company must be able to organise itself sufficiently in order to be certain that it can offer a high level of quality and homogeneity of service in a large number of centres that operate under the same brand name. In this talk, the organisational model used by *Opening School* to establish itself in a region of Spain, was presented.

This organisational model was designed to accommodate both hierarchical and functional relations while giving support to a network of centres to ensure that they operate correctly and uniformly: in selecting and training personnel; in maintaining the quality of the teaching, sales and marketing tasks; in managing the administration and finances of the centre; and so on.

THE MANAGEMENT OF LARGE-SCALE CHANGE IN A MULTI-CENTRE ELT ORGANISATION

- *Stuart Matthews*

"An organisation which fails to adapt and move with the times is one which will fall behind and eventually expire"

Ron White, 1991

This talk outlined in greater detail how and why a large-scale change was made to the teaching method of *Opening School* in Spain. The school had only existed for 1 year, but incredibly they already had a network of 40 schools when it was detected that some of its objectives were not being achieved due to incorrect implementation of its method.

A major change was made to the method over the following year, a process that involved substantial investigation, testing and feedback before it was considered final. This experience displayed the importance that the organisation placed on being able to predict the need to change and respond to these needs in time in order to be able to offer improved services to its students and to maintain a competitive edge in the ELT world.

Apart from explaining what changes were made and describing the processes involved, a number of important questions

were raised and answered in a talk that would be of interest to any ELT organisation which is thinking of, or are in the process of, undergoing large-scale change:

- How can the need to change be detected?
- How can the exact changes that are necessary to make be identified?
- How should changes be reported to the stakeholders, and what part should they play in the process of change?
- How can changes be made so as not to disrupt the services being offered to large numbers of students in an extensive network of schools?
- Why bother to undergo significant changes to the way we work?

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR ELT INSTITUTIONS IN POLAND: PASE & ITS RECOGNITION SCHEME

- *Anna Kolbuszewska*

This session was particularly interesting for me, as ACELS has just implemented a new model of its recognition scheme for schools here in Ireland. The PASE recognition scheme, like our own, draws heavily on the EAQUALS model. However, the PASE scheme is based on a points system.

The system is scored on three categories: **Academic Standards** - 70% based on systems of tuition, professional guidance for teachers and quality of actual teaching **Management** - 20% based on administration and organisation, PR and marketing ethics **Facilities** - 10% based on facilities for students, teachers and statutory requirements in hygiene and safety.



The PASE/IATEFL Management SIG Conference organisers breathe a sigh of relief after the final session...



*FELT, The Forum for
English Language Teachers in Ireland
and
ACELS, The Advisory Council for
English Language Schools*



are proud to announce details of the

ELT Authors' Conference

June 14th - 16th, 2001

University Industry Centre, UCD

Speakers Will Include...

Michael Swan • Clive Oxendon

Amanda Jeffries • Adrian Underhill

Gwyneth Fox • Peter Moor • Terry Dolan

Mike McCarthy • Leo Jones • Patrick Gillard

FELT will be sponsoring an audience debate on

Professionalisation in Irish ELT

Other speakers to be confirmed

Dick Allwright • Philip Prowse • Jeremy Harmer

Andy Hopkins • Linda Richardson



FELT Editorial

2001 has begun and is well under way by now and profound apologies for the lateness of this latest *FELT Newsletter*.

The standard moan follows... the Newsletter can only survive if it receives submissions from its members. The delay was, as always, caused by the lack of material and this is why the Newsletter is a slender 16 pages, instead of the usual 20.

Teacher Recognition

This is a little surprising given that the ACELS *ELT Teacher Recognition & Qualifications Accreditation Scheme* is now well and truly under way. The next national meeting, which is open to absolutely everybody in Irish ELT, will take place in The Teachers' Club, on Parnell Sq., in Dublin on May 25th from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m. You should probably mark that in your diary. A summary of what transpires at that meeting, and progress to date, will appear in the next FELT Newsletter, which should appear in late May or early June.

The ELT Authors' Conference

The large whole page advert on the facing page won't have escaped the reader's bdi, I'm sure! In what we hope will be a regular event, the ELT Authors' Conference (ELTAC) will allow us mortals to mix with the big names from time to time. The funny thing about big names is that they are mere mortals too.

After the IATEFL conference in Dublin last year, there has been such an interest in Ireland, that very little arm-twisting was required to get these people to come to Dublin and share their experiences with us. So, you should probably put these dates in your diary too. The last ELTAC was held over Easter 1998, so this time it was decided to hold it closer to the summer period to allow the part-time and summer-only teachers access to an event such as this.

Professionalisation in Irish ELT

A big concept this one... where to even begin? Well the ACELS *ELT Teacher Recognition & Qualifications Accreditation Scheme* is a good place to start. Are you even aware of the scheme? The picture emerging is that the ordinary teacher in the classroom is not even vaguely aware of the monumental change that is taking place.

In a nutshell, teachers will have the opportunity to join an official Dept. of Education & Science register of EL teachers, maintained by ACELS, which will effectively be a dossier of their professional lives. It will contain not only the details of your university degree and TEFL diploma, (or alternative pathways to qualification) but, will also allow you to build up credits for other worthy pursuits, such as presenting at a conference (such as the FELT conference in 2002), articles published in journals or professional magazines (such as the FELT Newsletter) and so on.

The whole area of professionalisation will be discussed at the forthcoming ELTAC (as advertised on the opposite page) in a special panel & floor debate. A number of figures in the area of teacher development will make comment on the Irish situation and the floor will be asked to debate and discuss, what is after all, the most important development ever in the Irish ELT arena.

The MEI/RELSA Skillnets Initiative

MEI/RELSA has taken the lead this year by piloting a great scheme that should have a tremendous drip-down effect on the professional development of teachers over the coming years. Effectively a number of experienced teachers will be trained to a level that will allow them to mentor less experienced teachers, and to build up a culture of professionalism among teachers.

And finally...

Membership of FELT has fallen sharply this year as expected, as many people joined last year just to get cheap access to the IATEFL conference. I would appeal to FELT members to distribute the enclosed Application Forms among their colleagues.



News from ACELS

It's been a busy start to the year with many of you expressing an interest in becoming involved with the various projects happening here at ACELS. This has been very encouraging and is a very positive reflection on all of you and your commitment to the development of ELT in Ireland.

Given below is an update on each of projects we are currently involved in running – we hope you find it interesting reading and do please contact us if you would like to learn more or become involved... In the meantime, the ACELS website is now up and running with lots of information on all sorts of things, so do log on and find out more about developments in ELT in Ireland.

<http://www.iol.ie/~acels>

To give a quick overview of projects currently taking place at ACELS, these are –

The ELT Teacher Recognition and Qualifications Accreditation Project

As you will know from this, and past FELT Newsletters, there is a project being worked on to develop baseline standards for ELT teacher training courses in Ireland and for this, as mentioned in the December issue, (Vol.2, No.4) we are very lucky to have Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer working on the project as an independent consultant. This project has generated a huge amount of interest and participation from many people involved in various sectors of the ELT industry across the country. The broad aims of the project are twofold:

- the development of a registration system for teachers based on the principles of credit accumulation and transfer;

- a system for the accreditation of qualifications.

Phase 1 of the project has just come to an end with the collation and analysis of the questionnaire responses (*The Consultation and Review of Good Practice Questionnaire*) sent in by you. Completed questionnaires were received from a wide range of people – school directors, TEFL course providers, teacher trainers, but as is fitting, the vast majority of responses came from classroom teachers.

In the light of the responses, the plan for Phase 2 (the Development Phase) is currently being finalised and there is a series of meetings planned, the next of which will be the 3rd National Meeting on Saturday, 25th of May. Feedback from these meetings will be put up on the project website (accessed via the ACELS website) so, if you are unable to attend any of the meetings, you can read the report of the questionnaire analysis and find out more about the current direction of the project for Phase 2.

Any of you who responded to the questionnaire and expressed a wish to contribute further to the project, are now on the project mailing list and will be receiving regular updates, requests for feedback, comment and participation in various parts of the project – if you would like to be included on this mailing list, please let us know and you too can be centrally involved in this process.

The Test of Interactive English (TIE)

As with the other project, TIE is moving quickly! Since Christmas, schools in the Dublin area have been visited and a new TIE Examiner Training Course started at the beginning of March. This exam represents a real innovation within testing and is particularly designed to suit the needs of the ELT community in Ireland. TIE is offered in 2 formats – Junior TIE for secondary school students; and TIE for Adults, *i.e.* post school age students. It is very closely linked in terms of design, delivery and assessment with the Council of Europe's current initiatives re language learning and

evaluation of learning, and uses the C of E scale to provide a grade and feedback on performance to each candidate. As 2001 is the European Year of Languages as organised by the Council of Europe in collaboration with the European Union, you could easily hear more about these initiatives before the year is out.

If you would like to learn more about the test, please e-mail us and we can send you information.

As with the ELT Registration and Qualifications Accreditation Project, there is information about TIE up on the website, so if you read that, it should provide with a comprehensive initial introduction to TIE.

Consultation is also continuing with regard to the development of schools' curriculum frameworks. Meetings have been going on between recognised schools and our Chief Executive, Jim Ferguson. To further support this process, an all day workshop was given by Hilary Maxwell-Hyslop, arranged by ACELS, on approaches to school self-evaluation and how to carry it out effectively. This was very well-attended and feedback from participants was that it had been very helpful in suggestions on how to

approach this, how to establish procedures within the school and how to use the resulting information most productively. We are hoping to be able to put on more workshops covering a whole range of topics and areas of interest so watch this space for information on that.

Finally, the ELT Authors' Conference, jointly organised by FELT and ACELS, is in the process of being organised and already it looks as if the conference will be over-subscribed to by some top names in ELT giving papers and workshops on current issues and areas of development. This is to take place on June 14th - 16th as announced in the last FELT Newsletter, so make a note of it in your diaries!

This year looks as if it is all set to be a very dynamic one ... as usual, given below are our contact details - please do contact us if you have any comments to make or questions to ask....

**ACELS - The Advisory Council
for English Language Schools,**
44 Leeson Place, Dublin 2.
Tel.: (01) 676 7374
Fax: (01) 676 3321
e-mail: acels@iol.ie

Next time you think you're having a bad day recall...

The average cost of rehabilitating a seal after the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska was \$80,000. At a special ceremony, two of the most expensively saved animals were released back into the wild amid cheers and applause from onlookers. A minute later they were both eaten by a killer whale.

A psychology student in New York rented out her spare room to a carpenter in order to nag him constantly and study his reactions. After weeks of needling, he snapped and beat her repeatedly with an axe leaving her mentally retarded.

In 1992, Frank Perkins of Los Angeles made an attempt on the world flagpole-sitting record. Suffering from the flu he came down eight hours short of the 400 day record, his sponsor had gone bust, his girlfriend had left him and his phone and electricity had been cut off.

A woman came home to find her husband in the kitchen, shaking frantically with what looked like a wire running from his waist towards the electric kettle. Intending to jolt him away from the deadly current she whacked him with a handy plank of wood by the back door, breaking his arm in two places. Till that moment he had been happily listening to his Walkman.

Two animal rights protesters were protesting at the cruelty of sending pigs to a slaughterhouse in Bonn. Suddenly the pigs, all two thousand of them, escaped through a broken fence and stampeded, trampling the two hapless protesters to death.

And the capper.....

Iraqi terrorist, Khay Rahnajet, didn't pay enough postage on a letter bomb. It came back with "return to sender" stamped on it. Forgetting it was the bomb, he opened it and was blown to bits.

Here's hoping your day is better than any of these.

Received by e-mail...

ESP: EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION?

by Maura Gallagher

The development of teaching English for Special Purposes (ESP; in this brief overview it includes English for Business Purposes and English for Academic purposes) has sometimes been tumultuous, frequently generated more heat than light but now seems to have reached a general level of acceptance as to the principal characteristics, which distinguish it from general English language acquisition.

There is general agreement that English for Special Purposes tuition is a fact of life and needs a more professional approach. While particular details may differ there are as many common features as there are differences when considering English for:

- *vocational situations; mostly at secondary levels of education*
- *academic purposes; mostly at tertiary levels of education*
- *for the workplace; mostly for those already in a work situation.*

Thankfully, common factors in language learning generally nowadays are receiving greater attention than the differences; this was not always the case! The ESP Special Interest Groups in the international teacher bodies, IATEFL and TESOL, have helped to develop the thinking regarding what is needed. Recently an attempt was made to bring together in an international context the thinking which has emerged separately in these two organisations. The possibility of developing internationally accepted “best practice” is being exploited. This will undoubtedly help to promote further developments in ESP.

A distinguishing feature is that ESP tuition takes place almost exclusively in the realm of adult education and training. ESP leaning is now recognised as requiring a focused approach. This influences the types of teaching techniques which are appropriate and imposes additional demands on the teacher particularly in regard to programme preparation and the

use of authentic materials. Published materials are also catching up. Computers and multimedia etc. will enhance the range of materials available to teachers/trainers and provide greater flexibility in approaches to teaching and learning ESP.

The demands on teachers/trainers can vary considerably in the world of ESP. There is a significant difference between teaching those who have not yet left the mainstream education systems and those who are already at work. In the case of the former, the students' lack of knowledge and experience must be fully taken into account and the ESP teaching must compensate for this. The ESP teacher can be expected to understand more easily the learning situation and more readily adapt to it. Also the ESP teacher can draw on peers for assistance in gaining an appreciation of the subject matter or the particular education programmes for which the student needs the language. Increasingly the better ESP programmes for those student groups are the result of such collaboration in programme design.

Those teaching ESP to people already in the workplace face special challenges. They include:

- *establishing the real linguistic needs of the particular work place; the person attending the language class is not the only one to be considered.*
- *a participant's superior or colleagues the organisation's suppliers or customers may be the real determinants of what is required.*
- *providing language programmes which are highly focused towards meeting defined needs; this is very different from general language teaching.*
- *using the learner as a resource regarding subject matter; a new experience for many teachers.*
- *recognising that ESP learners frequently have limited time available for language learning; developing appropriate teaching approaches and learning strategies designed to make best use of the time available are essential to success.*

These are now more readily understood. For those wishing to specialise in teaching ESP in a business context there is now a greater recognition that while the focus is on language training, “business” must also be the business of ESP practitioners to a much greater extent than heretofore.

The ESP scene offers challenging work and interesting opportunities to those prepared to make the effort necessary to acquire appropriate skills. It is also possible that in the future ESP may offer research opportunities. Significant research into the ESP scene still remains to be done. Empirical research based on credible substantive evidence regarding ESP requirements in major work situations is lacking. A more professional approach to ESP can help remedy this and create a climate in which business, the professions and public service will more readily co-operate with researchers.

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Maura Gallagher, Director of *Langtrain International* in Dublin, has been involved in EFL for over thirty years in Ireland, Switzerland and the UK. She was a founding member of the IATEFL BESIG (Business English Special Interest Group) and was on the committee for both BESIG and the ESP SIG. She has been editor of the IATEFL BESIG and ESP SIG newsletters.

Development Opportunities for New and Experienced English Teachers

by Gill Nother
Education & Training Officer
MEI/RELSA

MEI-RELSA has shown its continuing commitment to quality teaching standards by recently appointing an Education and Training Officer. Gill Nother, who took up her new post at the beginning of January, will spend the year developing a framework for in-service teacher development for member schools.

The Framework will be aimed at two general levels of EFL teachers:

- Recently employed teachers who require support and guidance in their early teaching (this includes state qualified teachers who work seasonally in summer schools); and
- Qualified and experienced teachers who require the necessary skills to deliver in service training to newly employed teachers

More specific details about these teacher groups will be available following a nationwide needs analysis, which is being carried out this April. The project is currently in its research phase and will progress through

analysis and development stages before piloting commences in September.

MEI-RELSA, the promoter of this project, would like to see a framework with a cascade effect that ensures that teacher development is self-perpetuating and has long-term effects on the standard of teaching and training beyond the lifetime of the project.

While the framework will be recognised by RELSA, Gill is working closely with ACELS, who are currently developing the ELT Teacher Registration and Qualifications Accreditation Scheme, to ensure its inclusion in the new scheme.

Irish Government and European Union funding, through Skillnets, in addition to matched funds from sponsor schools, is making the project financially possible.

For more information and regular updates on the Skillnets project, watch this space or contact Gill at gill@mei.ie



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The Americans have a Way with Words

The Washington Post recently published a contest for readers in which they were asked to supply alternative meanings for various words. The following were some of the winning entries.

Abdicate (v.), to give up all hope of ever having a flat stomach.

Carcinoma (n.), a valley in California, notable for its heavy smog.

Esplanade (v.), to attempt an explanation while drunk.

Willy-nilly (adj.), impotent

Flabbergasted (adj.), appalled over how much weight you have gained.

Negligent (adj.) describes a condition in which you absentmindedly answer the door in your nighty.

Lymph (v.), to walk with a lisp.

Coffee (n.), a person who is coughed upon.

Balderdash (n.), a rapidly receding hairline.

Testicle (n.), a humorous question on an exam.

Rectitude (n.), the formal, dignified demeanour assumed by a proctologist immediately before he examines you.

Oyster (n.), a person who sprinkles his con-

versation with Yiddish expressions.

Circumvent (n.), the opening in the front of boxer shorts.

Frisbatarianism (n.), The belief that, when you die, your soul goes up on the roof and gets stuck there.

The Washington Post's Style Invitational also asked readers to take any word from the dictionary, alter it by adding, subtracting or changing one letter, and supply a new definition. Here are some recent winners:

Sarchasm: The gulf between the author of sarcastic wit and the reader who doesn't get it.

Reintarnation: Coming back to life as a hill-billy.

Foreploy: Any misrepresentation about yourself for the purpose of obtaining sex.

Inoculate: To take coffee intravenously.

Karmageddon: It's like, when everybody is sending off all these really bad vibes, right? And then, like, the Earth explodes and it's like a serious bummer.

Glibido: All talk and no action.

Dopeler effect: The tendency of stupid ideas to seem smarter when they come at you rapidly.

Intaxication: Euphoria at getting a refund from the tax man, which lasts until you realise that it was your money to start with.

Ignoranus: A person who's both stupid and an asshole.

Submission Guidelines & How to Contact FELT

Submissions for the Newsletter are always welcome and badly needed. Please send anything at all...

* By E-mail to: felt@ireland.com

* By Post to: FELT Ireland,
c/o 102 Meadow Park, Churchtown,
Dublin 14, Ireland.

We accept the following, among numerous other things, for our newsletter: theoretical articles, practical reports, jokes, brain-teasers, news, opinions, letters to the Editor, class-plans, cartoons, advertisements, questions, answers, book-reviews, reports on life teaching abroad, amusing stories about your students or trainees and so on... pretty much anything, really.

Please do not send e-mail submissions as Microsoft Word Documents (.doc) as they may carry macro-virus-

es; the Text-Only (.txt) format is the safest. If you are using Word, press F12 and select 'Text-Only' as the file type. Macintosh formats are fine too! Nonetheless, please use your virus checker anyway.

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