



Hrvatsko udruženje profesora engleskog jezika  
Croatian Association of Teachers of English



# HUPE *zine*

No. 7 • December 2016

# 25

Annual HUPE  
conference

Šibenik, Croatia  
24-26 March 2017



inspire  
& be inspired

# PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Dear colleagues, HUPE members and friends,

For most teachers in Croatia, December has a special place in their hearts and in their teaching – it is the time for testing and the thoughts of holidays come at the same time.

Teaching, testing and professional development events bring us together and HUPE has been trying hard once again this school year to create as many opportunities for learning and sharing for our members as possible.

The festive mood and the will to celebrate are strong, too, because this year is not a usual year in HUPE – this year we celebrate 25 years of HUPE.

We have partnered with the Teacher Training Agency again this year, as well as with our friends and partners in British Council and the publishers. We have asked for collaboration and partnership in all the embassies of the countries that have English as an official language. The Organizing Committee has been working hard for months to make our jubilee a conference to remember. I invite you to look at the HUPE web page to find the news about the plenary speakers, the cultural and other programmes, as we plan to announce them as they are confirmed.

The 25th conference is the time to celebrate and to reflect, but also the time to start new initiatives and create new opportunities for professional development for our members. The Executive Board members are dedicated and working hard to develop all the ideas and help organize the best possible professional development but HUPE is not the Executive Board, HUPE is all the members.

I use this opportunity to invite all the members to register for the conference as speakers to share their expertise and to help HUPE grow, to participate in the work of the branches, to promote HUPE in their schools, because HUPE is as great as our members make it.

Happy Holidays to all! All the best with your teaching, testing and sharing your best ideas with us all in HUPE!

Best wishes,  
Sanja

# EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear HUPEzine readers,

HUPE is proud to present the seventh issue of your magazine.

We hope you will appreciate the articles published in this issue, and, of course, special thanks to the contributors. We also look forward to receiving your feedback and article contributions for our next issue. This is an excellent opportunity to share your ideas and good practices with your colleagues in Croatia and abroad. The deadline for article submissions is May 1, 2017.

In this issue our Slovenian colleague, Mojca Gec, has shared her ideas on **Teaching listening to primary school students**. Give it a try in your classroom.

Melinda Tupek wrote about **Education in Canada** and presented a short comparison of the Canadian educational system with that of Croatia's.

In **ELT in Gulf** by Tihana Banko, read the thoughts of a Croatian EL teacher living in Kuwait.

**Irena Pavlović** described her US experience. She was chosen to be the SUSI 2016 participant. She also brought back many teaching ideas and we look forward to taking part in one of her workshops.

In our **ICT4ELT** section Arjana Blažić invited you to try **MENTIMETER**.

**SOL** (Sharing One Language) is celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Help them celebrate by reading about this organization whose mission is to support the teaching and learning of English in the countries of eastern and central Europe.

If you are interested in using videos in your classroom, we have a treat for you – **Learning Language Through Creative Process of Film-making** by Vanja Fazinić.

Monika Horki Pavrlišek wrote about working with students with **Asperger's Syndrome**. Follow her tips on what teachers can do.

If you are working with young learners you will find many wonderful ideas in **Where Is My Mind? Engaging the Lower-Primary Classroom** by Mia Šavrljuga.

In the end, I wish you and your family a very healthy and prosperous 2017.

Yours,  
Dajana

## Impressum

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### Contributions:

The best way to support your association and the HUPEzine is to write to us and send us your contributions. All contributions should be submitted on a CD or by e-mail. Please note the document name clearly on the CD. The deadline for the next issue is 1 May 2017.

Write and send your contributions to the HUPEzine editor. Please, be sure to write your name, surname and affiliation / institution and address at the beginning or end of the text

# LISTENING WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS WHEN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

I've been working as a teacher of English as a foreign language in a Primary School in Slovenia for more than 30 years. I can say that I have had a great deal of experience in teaching young learners and teenagers. My students are from 9 to 15 years old.

Teaching a foreign language is a very complex task. Pupils must learn to read, write, understand and listen. That's why I use different methods of teaching specific skills that help my students learn English quicker and in a nicer way.

Here are some examples of activities which I use with my pupils when practising listening.

In my article I deal with three different types of texts.

The first one is "ONE OF THOSE DAYS", because it is a text from our source-book Touchstone 3, written by Lori King-Videtič and Janez Skela.

The second one is the song "A SPIDER IN THE BATHROOM". I have chosen it because pupils like singing and it can be a very pleasant way of learning and great motivation to start a new lesson.

The third one is the fairy tale "LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD". Pupils like listening to fairy tales and with new texts that are not in their books, they extend their vocabulary and revise grammar.

## 1st text: ONE OF THOSE DAYS

### A) PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES:

#### 1. ARRANGING PICTURES INTO A STORY

Pupils get seven pictures from a story. In pairs they try to arrange them to make a story.

#### 2. WHAT THE STORY IS ABOUT

With the use of pictures pupils describe what was going on in the story.

### B) WHILE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

#### 1. CHECKING THE RIGHT ORDER OF THE PICTURES

Pupils listen to the story and check if they have arranged the pictures in the same way. They rearrange the pictures as they are described in the recorded story on the CD.

#### 2. COMPARING THEIR OWN STORIES WITH THE ONE THEY HAVE JUST HEARD

Pupils find out the differences between the two versions of the story.

#### 3. ARRANGING A JUMBLED TEXT

With the second listening pupils put the paragraphs of the story in the right order.

#### 4. PUTTING THE WORDS FROM THE STORY IN THE RIGHT ORDER

Pupils get isolated words from the story, written on small pieces of paper. If there are any words they don't understand, I try to explain them first in English and if necessary in Slovenian. While listening, they sort them out in the order as they appear in the story. They listen and check their arrangements of words (I tell them the right order.)

The words given are the following:

Dr.Brisk's hospital bicycle, knock down  
spill, coffee, friend  
café, surprised  
stranger, ambulance  
10 o'clock, bed, window-shopping  
birds, sun, stopped  
the shortest way, awful day

#### C) POST-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

##### 1. TRUE / FALSE STATEMENTS

Pupils decide if the given statements are true (T) or false (F) and later they discuss their answers with the neighbouring pair.

1. It was a cold Saturday morning. T F
2. The birds were singing and it was a nice day. T F
3. Ms Harrison was having breakfast when the phone rang. T F
4. A strange voice called her. T F
5. When she was in town, a stranger stopped her. T F
6. Ms Harrison met her old friend Rosy at the café. T F
7. The waiter spilled hot coffee over her shoulder. T F
8. On the way home a taxi knocked her down. T F

##### 2. RETELLING THE STORY

Pupils try to retell the story with the use of words they have arranged.

##### THE AIMS OF THE CHOSEN ACTIVITIES:

- Pupils are given an opportunity to describe pictures using their own ideas
- They practise the use of Past Continuous and Past Simple Tenses
- They learn to listen carefully to get the right order of pictures (events), paragraphs and key words
- They can distinguish between true and false facts about the story
- Pupils revise vocabulary and practice pronunciation

## 2nd text: A SPIDER IN THE BATHROOM

#### A) PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY

##### 1. DO YOU KNOW THE ANIMALS?

Pupils work in groups of four. There are different pictures of animals on the board. Pupils get the names of those animals on pieces of paper. They group the words into two columns: the words they know / the words they don't know.

With the use of pictures and my description of animals pupils guess the names of animals that they didn't know.

## B) WHILE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

### 1. THE ANIMALS AND THE ROOMS

The pupils in the groups are divided into two halves. They listen to the song. Two pupils write down the names of animals that they hear in the song. At the same time the others write down the names of rooms that are mentioned. (Pupils have been taught the expressions for rooms of the house in previous lessons.)

### 2. DIALOGUE

Pupils make a dialogue using the names of animals and rooms.

Example:           A: Where is the spider?  
                      B: It's in the bathroom.

### 3. PUT THE ANIMALS INTO THE RIGHT ROOMS

There is a poster of a house and its rooms on the board. Some pupils are given the pictures of animals that appear in the song. While listening to it, they come to the board as the animals are mentioned and stick them in the correct room of the house. At the same time all the pupils can see if they have done their previous tasks correctly.

### 2. SINGING

a) Pupils sing the song. If they are not sure about the text, they can read it from their books.

b) Pupils sing the song for the second time, but some of them have a special task. Those pupils are given pictures of animals. When a pupil hears the animal from his picture, she/he has to stand up, turn around and sit down. If they want, they can sing it once more, but they change their roles.

## C) POST-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

### 1. GUESSING

One of the pupils thinks of an animal. The others try to guess what animal he/she has got in his/her mind. They ask him/her YES/NO questions. The pupil who guesses the first, thinks of another animal for guessing.

Example:           A: I am thinking of an animal. What is it?  
                      B: Can it fly?  
                      A: No, it can't.

### 2. WORDSEARCH

Pupils get sheets of paper with a grid on them. They try to find as many names of animals and rooms as they can.

BEDROOMAL  
SNAKESTLY  
NPLXWAANT  
AKITCHENH  
IGODUCKQT  
LPNREZERO  
MBATHROOM

This activity can be done for homework as well.

### 3. BUZZ OFF

Pupils spell the words (names of animals and rooms).

#### THE AIMS OF CHOSEN ACTIVITIES:

- Pupils learn some new vocabulary (names of animals) and revise names of rooms
- They are able to ask questions and give simple answers in dialogue
- They learn a new song
- While singing they also practise pronunciation and writing
- They revise spelling
- They enjoy and learn English in a pleasant way

## 3rd text: LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD, a fairy tale

### A) PRE-LISTENING ACTIVITY

#### 1. THINKING OF THE TITLE AND THE CHARACTERS

There is a list of verbs that appear in the fairy tale on the blackboard in the infinitive. Pupils must guess the title and name the main characters. They are told that the fairy tale is well-known and popular among Slovenian children.

The list of verbs: LIVE

VISIT

MEET

PICK

KNOCK

COME IN

EAT UP

ASK

ANSWER

ENTER

KILL / SHOOT

JUMP OUT

BE HAPPY

### B) WHILE-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

#### 1. LISTENING

Pupils listen to the fairy tale on a cassette and enjoy the beautiful story.

#### 2. PAST TENSE OF VERBS

Pupils listen to the cassette for the second time and write down the Past Tense forms of the verbs that are written on the board. Those forms are later written on the board as well, so that they can check their spelling. All new words from the story are translated.

#### 3. CHOOSE THE CORRECT ANSWER

Pupils are given questions about the story with three possible answers. They choose an answer and compare it with their neighbours. Then they listen to the tape once more to check if they have chosen the correct ones.

### B) POST-LISTENING ACTIVITIES

#### 1. RETELLING THE STORY

Pupils try to retell the story with the given verbs in the Past Simple Tense.

## 2. THE MISSING WORDS

Pupils get the text of the story with some words missing. They have to fill them in using the Past Tense forms. They check the solutions by listening to the story. If there are still some unknown words from the text, we give the translation of them.

## 3. AN INTERVIEW

Some pupils take the roles of the main characters of the story. One pupil from the class is a reporter and makes an interview about what happened to them one spring day. (This activity should be given to the best pupils in the class.)

## 4. DRAWING THE STORY

Pupils draw the story in pictures. (They make comic strips.) They add some speech bubbles to make the story more interesting.

This activity can be done for homework and later pupils can make an exhibition of their pictures in the classroom.

### THE AIMS OF CHOSEN ACTIVITIES:

- Pupils revise the Past Simple tense of regular and irregular verbs (forms, spelling, pronunciation )
- They learn to listen to a longer text
- They are able to retell the story with their own words
- They make an interview
- They use their own drawing ideas to present the story in pictures

When doing different exercises, I always try to make English enjoyable. Most activities are suitable for mixed-level classes, but some of them can be used and extended during extra English lessons or enrichment.

I'm satisfied when, at the end of the lessons, I hear my pupil saying: "The lesson finished so quickly. We were really having fun. We were just playing today. Will we continue next time?"

Of course, we will. But next time we'll practise.... another skill.

Mojca Gec  
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# EDUCATION IN CANADA – A COMPARISON BETWEEN THE CROATIAN AND CANADIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS

Melinda Tupek, Primary English as a Second Language Teacher

## PART ONE:

Curriculum reform is in the air and as such, I would like to present a short comparison of the Canadian educational system with that of Croatia's. I give fair warning that most of the observations, facts and opinions presented are my own. What makes me qualified to do such a thing? I am born in Canada and so have gone through the Canadian educational system myself but more importantly, I have also worked there as an elementary school teacher for 12 years before moving to Croatia. I have now been teaching English as a second language at the elementary school level in Croatia for 14 years and my children have gone through the system as well. Thus, here is what I have noted about these two systems.

The educational system in Croatia is fully funded and begins with an optional year of pre-school which is available twice a week. Then elementary school begins at the age of 7 and lasts for eight years. In the first four years (*razredna nastava*) the pupils are kept together, similar to a family unit, with the same teacher who teaches all subjects except for the foreign language or Religion (which is optional). Twins are usually kept in the same class. I believe the reason for this is due to the close knit nature of Croatian society. There are close family ties, a good deal of cooperation between people, a degree of reliance on one another and the fact that most people don't move far away from their families. So that even as adults they can continue to rely on one another and help each other. The prevailing foreign languages are English, German and Italian. In grades five to eight, the students remain together as a class; however, they begin rotary and have a different specialized teacher for each subject. Each class is assigned a homeroom teacher who sees the class on a regular basis, deals with any problems the class may have, takes care of administrative duties and conferences with parents about student progress. The next step is secondary school.

The transition from elementary to secondary school is a very important step in the Croatian educational system because it often determines the student's potential future career path. There is a wide spectrum of schools to choose from: a variety of academic high schools which prepare students for university (*gimnazija*), vocational schools, technical schools and trade schools. At the age of 15 students apply to a number of schools on-line and then wait to see into which one they are accepted. Once accepted, most students will have to travel to a larger city which is 20 -30 km away from home on a daily basis, and a few will have to stay in student dorms or with relatives because the commuting is difficult. All in all it is a very stressful time for both the students and their parents. Secondary school can last from three to four years. Then it is off to university (3-4 year undergraduate degree, 2 year masters degree, doctorate), college (2-3 years) or into the work force.

The educational system in Canada is similar in some respects yet different in others. The pre-school program lasts for two years and is a half-day program which runs every day. Children are usually 4 to 5 years old when entering junior kindergarten and they are 5 to 6 years old at the beginning of senior kindergarten. It is not compulsory, but most children attend kindergarten due to the fact that both parents must work and this is a free, safe and caring environment for the children. Elementary school in Canada also begins at the age of 7 and lasts for eight years where one teacher teaches all subjects except the second language or Religion (which is also optional). While in Croatia this is the case for the first four years, in Canada it is the case for the first six years of education. Another key difference is the fact that the pupils do not have the same teacher for all four years, nor are they in the same class each year. Every year new classes are formed taking into consideration: pupil learning styles, teacher personality and teaching styles, pupils who work well together and those who don't and should be split up, balanced academic abilities (low, medium and high achievement levels), a balanced number of boys and girls, a limited number of pupils with special needs, types of special needs and thought as to which teacher could best help them, as well as a variety of other factors. Twins are often split up as soon as possible so that each can develop his or her own strengths and independence. (As adults there is no guarantee that they will live close to each other, or even in the same city.) Classes are compiled by a team including: the sending teacher,

the receiving teacher, the principal, and the resource staff. I believe the reason for this is due to the competitive and transient nature of Canadian society. In Canada families move frequently and children often change schools. As such it is important for students to develop the ability to adapt and change, as well as to develop independence from an early age. Since Canada is a bilingual country, the second language is French and it is taught from the first grade. In grades seven and eight, the students have partial rotary with different specialized teachers for some subjects depending on the size of the school and the availability of teachers who are specialized in a subject. Then it is off to secondary school.

Secondary school is divided into junior high school and senior high. Junior high is comprised of grades seven and eight, while senior high is comprised of grades nine through twelve. (There had been an additional O.A.C. year which was an additional preparatory year for university, but it was discontinued in 2003 due to government funding cut-backs.) In secondary school the students have full rotary with a different specialized teacher for each subject. Just as in Croatia, each class is assigned a homeroom teacher who sees the class on a regular basis, deals with any problems the class may have, takes care of administrative duties and conferences with parents about student progress. Students can also choose three electives or optional courses in grade nine. The main difference is that students don't need to apply to a high school. They simply enrol in the one that is the closest to them because they are all very similar (like opća gimnazija). Free transportation is also provided to these schools. Students can go to other high schools if they have supporting reasons, but it is then the parent's responsibility to arrange and pay for transportation. Vocational and trade schools are also available, but there are few and it is usually the preferred choice for students with learning difficulties or more severe special needs. Both elementary and secondary education are fully funded in both countries, meaning that it is free, so that there is equal access for all.

After secondary school students are usually 18 years old and have a variety of career choices. They can go directly into the work force and become construction workers, factory workers, work in a supermarket, work in a department store or at a gas station among other things. They may choose to go to a trade school for 1-3 years where they can become hair stylists, make-up artists, mechanics or tool and die makers to name just a few of the many skilled occupations. They may choose to spend 2-4 years at a community college in order to become a vet, a police officer, work in the forestry industry or other such professions. Others may choose to go on to university. With a 3-4 year undergraduate degree they can become an accountant, a lab worker, a nurse or the manager of a business. A master's degree takes an additional 2-3 years. This is the case for teachers, doctors, lawyers and dentists, while a post-graduate doctorate degree is an additional 2-3 years after that. The post-secondary opportunities are limitless, however the government does not fund this level of education in Canada as is usually the case in Croatia. The average cost of college in Canada is about \$3000 - \$8000 per year, while the average cost of university is about \$5000 - \$9000 per year depending on the institution and the program. It is quite common for many students to take out a loan to pay for their education which they must start to repay once they finish school.

Many schools in Croatia are shared so that the students have classes in two shifts, morning and afternoon. Some very crowded schools may even have three shifts. The start and end times vary according to student schedules. If a school works in two shifts, the morning classes may begin at 8:00 and end around noon, while the afternoon classes may begin at 1:00 or 2:00 and end at about 5:00. However, the grade level dictates the maximum number of hours permitted per day. Grades one to four usually have 4 hours a day while the grades five to eight can have up to 7 hours. Classes last 45 minutes and there is a 5 minute break between classes. There is one larger 10 minute break for the school snack which is eaten in the school canteen. Classrooms are shared, students travel to school by public transit or on foot and there are a yearly required number of hours per subject which is regulated by the Ministry of Education.

In Canada, schools and classrooms are not shared and so there are no shifts. Schools usually begin at 8:30 and finish at 3:30, or they start at 9:00 and end at 4:00. This is due to the sharing of school buses in an effort to cut down on costs. Students are at school 8 hours a day and teachers must be at school 15 minutes before the first bell and 15 to 30 minutes after the last one. There are no 5 minute breaks between classes in elementary school so that transition between subjects is more flexible, but there are two 15 minute breaks where the children go outside to play. One of these is in the morning at around 10:00 while the other is in the afternoon at about 2:00. Very few schools have a snack or a lunch program. Most students who live further from the school bring a boxed lunch from home, while those who live close enough can go home for lunch. The lunch break lasts one hour. Students have 20 minutes to eat their lunch in their classrooms (there are no canteens in elementary schools) and 40 minutes to play outside or to participate in teacher lead sports, clubs, or other activities like drama, art or choir. Teachers are usually available for half an hour after school for extra help, staff meetings, parent-teacher conferences, detention supervision, projects, competitive sports and competitions with other schools. There are yearly and weekly required number of hours per subject which is regulated by the Ministry of Education but schedules are flexible and there are no bells between subjects in elementary school. There are however, 5 minute breaks and bells in high school due to rotary.

Here is an example of the way things work at schools in Canada. In the primary grades every day is very similar.

Here is an example of a weekly schedule:

TIME	WEEKLY TIMETABLE
8:30-8:55	<b>National anthem, announcements:</b> over the P.A. loud speaker <b>Calendar:</b> date, weather, pupils' news, group writing (phonics, grammar...), story time
8:55-9:15 9:15-10:00	<b>Journal</b> pupils' daily writing (beginning sounds, invented spelling process, mistakes are not corrected as such but guided towards the standard, the ideas and process are stressed) <b>English:</b> grammar, spelling, reading, writing, listening, speaking...
10:00-10:15	RECESS – outdoor break
10:15-11:05 11:05-11:30	<b>Maths:</b> concrete materials, pictorial representation, number sentences, show all steps, no oral, marks for the process as well as for the results <b>English:</b> reading, writing, novel studies, library visits weekly, centers, book club...
11:30-12:30	<b>LUNCH</b> – 20 min. in the classroom, food from home, 40 min. outside ... (clubs, activities, intramural sports ...)
12:30-12:50 12:50- 1:20 1:20- 2:00	<b>French</b> daily with another teacher <b>Religion</b> in Catholic schools, <b>Ethics</b> in Public schools <b>Science</b> four times a week, <b>Technology</b> once a week
2:00- 2:15	RECESS – outdoor brea
2:15- 3:00	<b>Music, Art, Computers</b> once a week <b>Physical Education</b> twice a week, sports <b>Dismissal:</b> pupils go home ( <b>3:00-3:30</b> – sports, clubs, extra help, detention...)

As you can see, there are some notable differences in the structure of these two systems of education. The big question however, is related to the curriculum and the expectations of each system and the results they bring. These will be presented in PART TWO.

# Teaching in the Gulf – Thoughts of a Croatian EL Teacher Living in Kuwait

A few months ago, when our editor and my dear colleague, Dajana, asked me if I would consider writing an article about my teaching experience in Kuwait, I was more than happy to accept the challenge. Little did I know then, that it would take me ages to finish it, somewhat due to my procrastination habits, but mainly because there is so little to write about, and yet so much. What I mean by that is, while it is completely true that ELT in the Gulf is just the same as ELT in the rest of the world, at least concerning its main principles and approaches, the world in which ELT is happening here is millions of light years away, in both directions.

In February 2015, I was your typical Croatian, student-loving, enthusiastic, overworked, and hugely underpaid English teacher with 13+ years of experience, in a dire need of a personal and professional challenge. I had a full-time job in one of the nation capital's top primary schools, I had excellent students winning state-level competitions, I belonged to a circle of well-established ELT professionals, yet, I craved for more. It was a comfortable life in every aspect (except financial, obviously, but, hey, who becomes a teacher to earn money, anyways?). However, there was still something missing. It was this ominous and creepy thought, lurking from the shadows of my existence, saying "Your life will go by in a flash and you will find yourself stuck in the same place." As

you know, a thought or an idea is a powerful weapon: once you say it aloud, it materializes and becomes your reality. Oddly enough, a couple of months after this astounding thought-materialization process, I received an e-mail from an American university in Kuwait, saying they would love to Skype-interview me for the position of ELT instructor at one of their colleges. In other words, I knocked, the door opened, and I plunged in.

So, here I am, teaching English to Arab students at an American college in Kuwait, at this point well into my fourth semester here. My students are mainly Kuwaiti nationals, whose first language is Arabic and majority of whom were actually schooled in Arabic. English is present everywhere, as it functions as a second language, but this is the single



worst variant of English I have ever heard in my entire life, ranking somewhere hand in hand with Indian English. The words are distorted, the pronunciation is really bad, and grammar is simplified to the point of no return. The sounds p and b are used interchangeably, so you will hear stuff like "This is a perfect baber to write on." This is obviously not standard, but spoken English, the one my students have been exposed to all their lives, unless they were schooled in expensive, private American or British school. English standards there are a bit higher, as these schools seek to employ native speakers, but the quality of teaching is still questionable, if for no other reason, then for many culturally-bound limitations imposed on the teachers.



What I have heard from my students is that methods of teaching in the majority of their high schools are pretty traditional and teacher-centered. Students are not encouraged to think critically or to apply their knowledge to other life-related situations. The main goal of learning is memorizing the given material and achieving a good test score. Life-long learning? Holistic approach? Reflective learning practices? Student-centered classrooms? In your dreams! Having said that, I must admit that here, in my college, we honestly do try to shift from traditional teaching methods and engage in student-centered teaching. After all, our college slogan is "We are as good as our students", which, of course, can be interpreted in many ways, but for the sake of argument here, I will assume it refers to student-centered approach. In our classrooms, students work on group projects and engage in problem-based learning. They are encouraged to reflect on their own learning, to self-evaluate and peer-assess. Oftentimes, it is a bumpy road, because it requires a complete change of perception of the learning process in the minds of our students, but slow progress can be seen with time.

There is also another dimension to this whole traditional learning environment thing – Arab culture is deeply embedded in tradition and unquestionable authority. They do things here the same way, as their ancestors have been doing for hundreds of years before. Arabs generally fear change. Undoubtedly, and particularly in this digital, Internet age, there are influences from the western world that open some doors to change, but still there are things never to be questioned, such as religious devotion and family patriarchy, which function as pillars of this society. Some topics are never to be talked about and some images are never to be shown, because they are deemed culturally inappropriate. Censorship is a big thing here, as authorities do not want to "corrupt" the minds of people (as they put it) or to open their minds to anything that can challenge the way they are taught to think. So, my classroom is not exactly what I would like it to be, though I do try to make it as open-minded and as censor-free as possible. However, topics of human rights and social justice always get to me, so I do need a daily personal reminder that I teach in the Middle East after all, and that some things can simply not be discussed here.

The story of teaching in the Gulf wouldn't be complete if I didn't mention the top-notch facilities we have at our disposal here. Every teacher has an office, complete with a desktop computer, phone, printer with unrestricted access to cartridge and paper, as well as unlimited stationary and book supplies (yaaaay!). The classrooms are equipped with OHPs and whiteboards. There are special computer labs designated to various study programs. This term, for example, I am teaching a course in academic writing, exclusively in the computer lab. This means that the course material is delivered through an online learning platform, which, being a digital geek that I am, is a big WOW. Every student has a user account on the college system called Moodle. As the course progresses, I create and customize the website for students to use daily.

They use the Moodle to download exercises, do interactive language games and quizzes, submit their writing assignments, and so forth. Another state-of-the-art feature of this college is its digital library, which contains over 16,000 journals and 55,000 e-books, accessible through various online databases.

All in all, teaching in the Gulf is millions of light years ahead, as far as digital tools and opportunities are concerned, and, at the same time, millions of light years back, as far as the freedom of mind is concerned. Being a teacher here means finding a fine balance amidst all that, as well as trying to tackle the prime requirements of our



profession as educators and the actual limitations imposed on us. And by tackling, I mean adjusting to a different cultural environment and making a lot of compromises. From my perspective, the biggest compromise I had to make is actually giving up on my censorship-free classroom equipped with chalk, blackboard and brilliant students for the sake of top-notch digital classroom, equipped with mainly mediocre and not particularly ambitious students. Do I still believe I can inspire them to rise from their comfort zone of financial security and achieve something great and not money-related with their minds? I do - otherwise I would not be here.

**Tihana Banko**

# My US Experience

Honored and proud. That was how I felt when I was informed I was chosen to be the SUSI 2016 participant. And I felt even prouder having met all the participants, from the previous years and this year, online, prior to departure. What a distinguished company to be in!

But first things first. As you can see from their website, <https://exchanges.state.gov/non-us/program/study-us-institutes-scholars>, Study of the U.S. Institutes (SUSIs) for Scholars and Secondary Educators are post-graduate level academic programs for mid-career foreign scholars, faculty, practitioners, and secondary educators whose purpose is to strengthen curricula and to improve the teaching about the United States in academic institutions abroad. These Institutes are comprised of a four to five week academic residency and a one to two week educational study tour to a different region of the United States. During the Institutes, scholars engage in rigorous academic coursework and panel discussions, interact and establish networks with American scholars, meet with experts in respective disciplines, visit civic institutions, and in some cases, participate in research symposia and conferences.

The program I participated in is called *Access and Equity in US Education*. My 'base' institution was California State University, Chico or Chico State, as everyone calls it. For a month, I went to campus every day, once again going through the best days of everyone's life – college days. From lectures and seminars to individual and group study and the inevitable library...

The topics we discussed on Chico State were interesting, relevant to my personal and professional context and very contemporary, addressing the key issues related to education worldwide nowadays. The majority of professors who worked with us truly care about sharing knowledge and exchanging ideas. They were carefully selected not only because of their competences but also based on feedback from previous participants so we had a chance to work with professionals who are keen on interacting with people from different cultures. The seminars we had went in-depth, showing that Chico State recognized the participants' competences and really wanted us to learn something new and grow, both as people and as professionals. This was the especially nice part since, very often, professional development sessions turn out to be more of stagnation and less of development since they are organized for the sole purpose of being organized, without actually caring about who benefits from it.

Based on the interest we expressed before the beginning of the program, we were offered a number of potential research topics and organized into groups of four to conduct the research we presented to our colleagues and teachers during our last week in Chico. The presentations were made in such a way to open doors for additional research into a number of more specific topics within the general one groups researched. The whole academic experience – the seminars, interaction with the lecturers, collaboration with other participants during the research and the support from the program staff we had along the way – was incredible. It was so different from anything I have seen and experienced in Europe and made me hope for another similar experience and another possibility to be some kind of a student in the U.S.



The academic program was reinforced with site visits to various institutions: different kinds of schools, summer camps, government departments and NGOs dealing with education and so on. Those visits influenced me deeply, putting into practice the things we listened about and discussed during many formal and even more informal conversations with various professionals program staff introduced us with. Seeing these places and feeling the atmosphere will be the thing that will probably trigger the first changes in our countries – each participant has found something they like a lot and want to do in their school or workplace.

The cultural part also exceeded my expectations. First of all, we met locals apart from our program staff and Chico State staff. Each of us spent a day with an American family and saw these people a few more times which led to making new friends and discovering a whole new aspect of American life and culture. Another aspect is the touristy part. One of the things I had hoped for when I found out I would take part in the program was to have some time off in various cities to get to see the sights – I thought it would be a pity to go to San Francisco and not to walk on the Golden Gate Bridge or drive in a cable car or to miss the Architecture Boat Tour or not to go to Navy Pier while in Chicago. Not to mention the National Mall, the White House and the rest of the sights in D.C. However, not only we were given enough time to do all that (and much, much more), these were all parts of the program! Just as it should be, we had been given information about all the sights before we went somewhere, we had local guides and really had a chance 'to feel' the place we visited. All in all, my first visit to the States ended with visiting three states – California, Illinois and Virginia, plus Washington DC. Oh, yes, one more thing. I was in Washington for the Independence Day. It doesn't get better than that.

The final aspect I want to talk about is what I am taking from the program. First of all, there is a professional network I have created. It is comprised primarily of other participants in the Institute which is 20 people from 19 different countries and also from professionals we met during our stay in the US: program staff, Chico State staff, school teachers and principals we were introduced to, government and NGO employees who all have one thing in common – they deeply care about students and their education. Some of those people, especially among the participants and the program staff have become more than just professional contact, they have become friends who I have been in contact on a daily basis ever since I have arrived home. The research we have begun at Chico State is sure to go on, including some other topics we heard about. Plus, we are already making plans about finding ways to see each other again – some of which had already been put into practice. Seeing so many different places and different approaches to work and to education cannot but make you want to introduce some changes yourself. Those students who knew me before say I'm slightly different and I see for myself that I tend to focus on different things in the classroom now. I also brought many teacher training ideas and examples of good practice so my colleagues are 'forced' to listen to me and take part in workshops. There are probably some things I have forgotten to mention so I will end trying to describe my participation in the program in the shortest way possible but covering the essence of it: Being the SUSI 2016 participant was a life-changing experience.



Sanja Bozinovic & Sasa Gorjanec  
for making it possible...



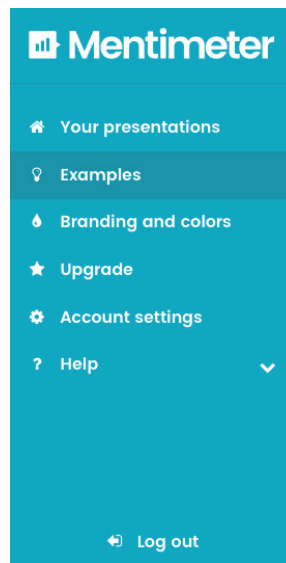
Diana, Bob, Bethany & Karissa  
for making it unforgettable...

Irena Pavlović, prof. savjetnik  
Srednja škola Čazma  
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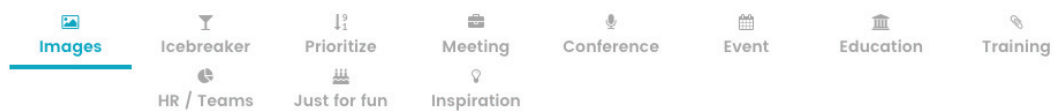
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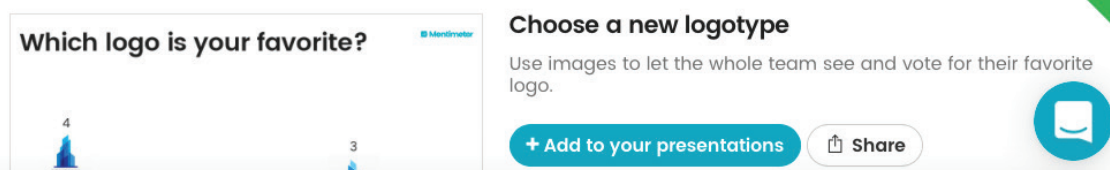
## Examples



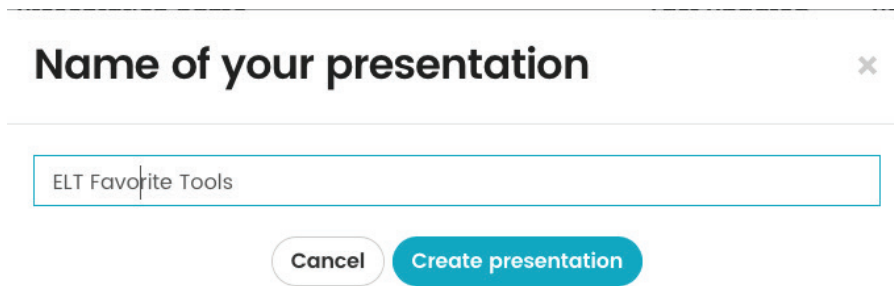
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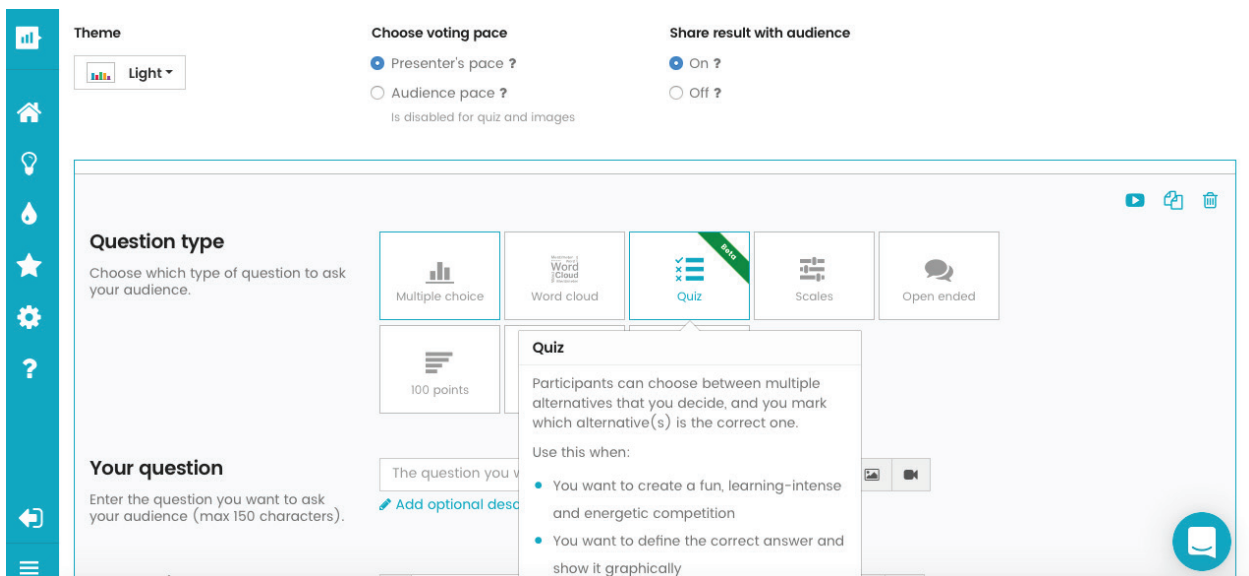
Audience size: 5-500 participants



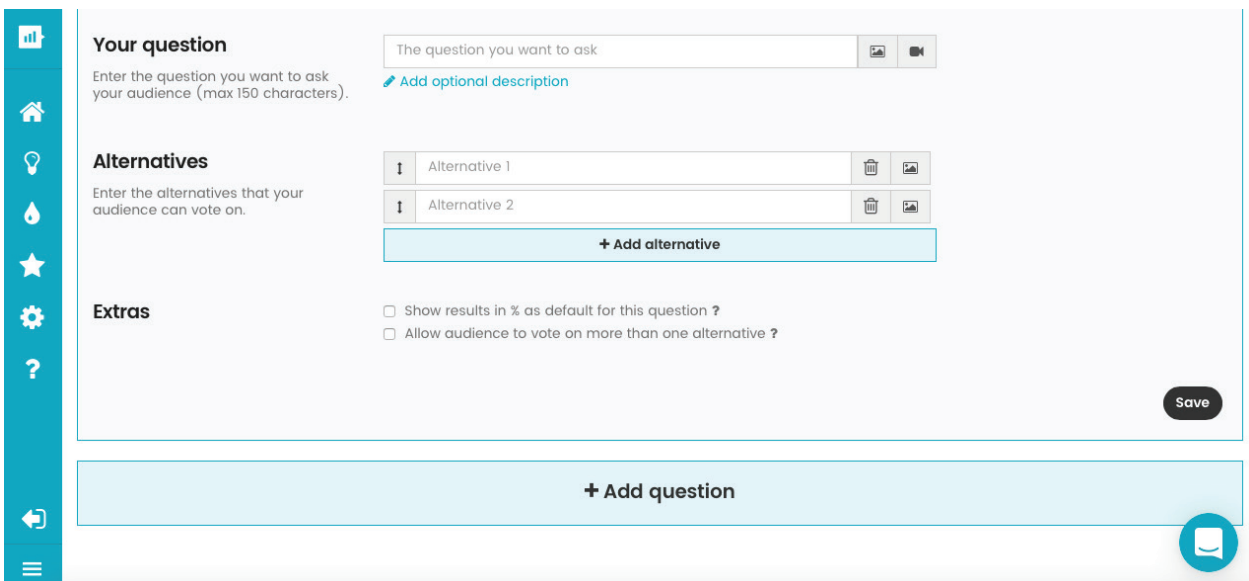
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In the next step we can choose the theme and the voting pace (e.g. students can answer at their own pace or they have to wait for each question to be shown on the screen.) We can also decide if we want to share the quiz results with our students. In case we do, they will get the results per email. After that we choose which type of question to ask our audience: multiple choice, open ended, word cloud, quiz, scales, 100 points, 2 by 2 matrix and who will win. If you hover your mouse over each of these presentation options you will find a detailed explanation on when and why use this particular option.



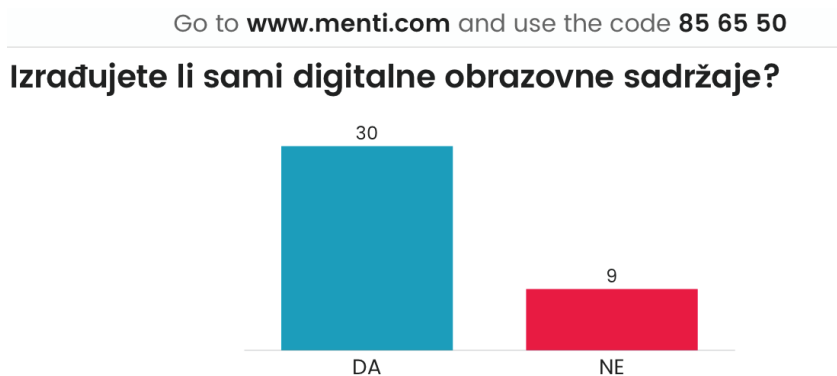
After we have chosen the question type we can enter the question. The maximum number of characters is 150.



By clicking Show presentation, we get a pin number that our students will need to type in on [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) to be able to answer the question. They are not asked to write their names because students' responses are anonymous to increase their active participation and engagement.

The feedback we get from our audience is immediately visualized. Here's a visual of a multiple choice question:

and of a word cloud:



We can close voting and clear the results by clicking the cog button at the bottom of the presentation.

Go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) and use the code **22 66 71**

### Koje oblike digitalnih sadržaja biste rado koristili u nastavi?

33

To try it out I have created a word cloud for you. Go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com), type in the code **19 97 09** and write the name of your favorite tool.

Go to [www.menti.com](http://www.menti.com) and use the code **19 97 09**

### What is your favorite web 2.0 tool?

- Fullscreen
- Hide results
- Close voting
- Clear result
- Countdown
- Segmentation
- Ask questions again
- History & trends
- More
- Share
- Home
- Edit

The word cloud will be published on HUPE's Facebook page.

Arjana Blazic  
IX. gimnazija, Zagreb, Croatia  
2014-2015 Hubert H. Humphrey  
Fellow  
azb245@psu.edu

# SOL and HUPE – a good relationship over 24 years



April 1994.... and my decision to attend the HUPE conference in Zagreb was an important one for me and for SOL. Two years earlier I had resigned my post as a Deputy Head of a large comprehensive school in Barnstaple, Devon to start this unique organisation whose mission was and still is to support the teaching and learning of English in the countries of eastern and central Europe.

Motivated initially by the desperate need for English in Hungary and Czechoslovakia after their release from Soviet control in 1989 and 40 years of being deprived of the English language, SOL began its work in September 1991 and so, like HUPE, enjoys its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this academic year.

In Barnstaple in 1987 I had set up a Hungarian exchange in my school – unique at the time, yet so common now with Erasmus funds to help. In 1989 and 1990, when I visited Hungary I was inundated with requests from teachers to help set links with English schools whose exchanges were almost completely limited to France and Germany.

It proved impossible so I took a leap of faith to set up SOL which could provide a “one-way exchange” of language experience in Devon for students and teachers from Hungary (and potentially other countries). Several miracles

happened in meeting key people at the right time to give me the courage to resign my safe and well-paid job for the complete unknown. 45,000 students and 6,000 teachers have been to SOL in Devon since.

In my search for support before resigning from school, I was very encouraged by meeting **Roy Cross** at the British Council in London (although no funding support was possible). Roy continued to be a great support especially a few years later when he was appointed as Deputy Director of British Council, Romania and SOL ended up recruiting 10 teachers a year to Romanian schools.

However, in practical terms at the start, I was very much helped by **Jim Wingate** who was the person who ran my own TEFL training course (I was a science teacher) back in 1991. Jim was both well known by The British Council but was very keen to be involved in the eastern half of Europe. British Council were interested in Jim Wingate running training courses in Devon and, once SOL was set up, paid for two coaches to bring 40 teachers from Hungary and 40 from Czechoslovakia to Devon in 1992 and 1993. It gave us contact with teachers who were impressed with the beauty of Devon and the friendliness of its people.

Meanwhile, a travel agency in Budapest gave me the logistical help to access teachers and schools in Hungary. In the first year we received just 300 students to Devon – not enough to be viable, but we carried on...!

Slowly we increased the number of teachers we knew and many of them realised this was what was needed for their students, as well as for themselves. As a non-profit organisation with a focus on this “eastern” region where salaries were so low, our only income was through our courses. Registered as a charity our attempts to get grants were unsuccessful – English after all, for most people, was a big commercial industry - but no one else was catering for the European countries where salaries were so low.

So for me, teacher associations were important to make contact with and hence my visit to Zagreb and HUPE in 1994 and one year later to Brela – where I met **Mark Andrews** for the first time!!! I had also met **Mirjana Hrvatin**, from Labin, who agreed to be our link person in Croatia and she set about alerting teachers to what we were offering and from then on each year we had several coaches a year come to Devon.

In August 1995 we shared with the whole of Croatia the tension and concern during Operation Storm. With us at the time, in North Devon, was a group from Šibenik, led by Vinka Klarić and, with the borders closed and husbands being called up, Vinka's calm approach was wonderful and she insisted on running an evening for our host families to show them what a beautiful place Šibenik was and what wonderful wine Prošek was!!!! J

At the same time the next group had been planning to come – made up from two schools one in Split and one in Sisak. Whilst we could talk to both of them, they were unable to connect with each other. Eventually, as the situation clarified, the group was able to travel a few days later and Vinka could return with her group to Croatia, although only knowing the border was open when they reached Austria.

With Jim Wingate running our summer teacher training courses we decided to offer a free place in the conference draws. The only hitch at HUPE was in 1998 when Robin Mackenzie won it in a tombola draw! Living in Scotland he declined the prize!! J With no tickets left the prize was eventually won through a name badge draw at the evening disco!

Since then the draw has been made from entry forms and, fortune has shone on us as well as on the winners because in 2008 the disbelieving winner was **Irena Holik** and three years later **Lana Duka Zupanc**. Both have been great ambassadors for SOL and have brought many teachers and students to Devon, and confirming our way of ‘selling’ our courses is best by bringing the teachers to see for themselves what it is about Devon that is so special and our way of working is a very personal and friendly one!

Just to track back a little, one of the major tasks I undertook in the 1990's was the recruitment of native speaker teachers for many of the countries we had a presence in. In 1996 we prepared to introduce such teachers to State schools in Croatia which were requesting them. I visited many schools at that time across the country. 8 teachers were recruited for 8 schools but in July 1996, Minister of Education **Ljilja Vokić** revoked the agreement – it seemed because the Government wanted control of the decisions and to place our teachers mainly in Zagreb, which already had more than its fair share of resources, like most capital cities. So, our teacher placements in Croatia did not really work out apart from two private schools in Cres and Vinkovci for a couple of years.

One of the teachers recruited elsewhere was **Geoff Hardcastle** who came to teach in Zalaegerszeg. He had been a career teacher who had retired as Head of expressive arts in a Leicester school. During his 5 years in Hungary, he attended 3 HUPE conferences including Dubrovnik in 2005 and Šibenik the following year where his workshop on Drama in English attracted 70 teachers. He also ran three workshops in Slavonia before returning to Hungary.

In July that year, a student group from Pazin had planned to have 4 days in London before coming down to Devon. By this time groups were flying rather than coming by coach. They had booked into a hotel on Tavistock Square. On their first day they had to delay their departure from their hotel as 3 bombs had gone off on the Underground. At 09.47, the fourth bomb detonated in a bus just a few metres from their own hotel. No visits that day! The students were taken down to the basement of the hotel where they had to spend the whole day. With London in semi-lockdown, there was little chance of them having useful time in London so the following day we sent our coach to collect them - although they had to exit from the rear of the hotel and then walk 1 km to find it.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mark Andrews had been an increasing part of the SOL presence from 2010 and after taking a sabbatical from his university in Budapest, he finally joined SOL on a permanent basis in 2012 and he has been a massive part of our mission ever since and a regular at HUPE conferences. In addition, he has run workshops in several places, and as many know he is addicted to Lovran!! J

In 2012 one of our own host family fathers, **Fred Ovey**, who was a retired primary school teacher and never travelled by air, was enticed by Lana to the HUPE conference in Opatija where he gave a presentation. Lana had stayed with him when she was in Devon the year before and after the conference, she arranged some two weeks of school visits which, despite his less than 100% health he managed very well and to this day he says that that fortnight was the most wonderful experience of his life!!! Lana visited Fred in Devon again this summer and his humour remained the same as ever, even though he has had a series of hospital stays since his visit to Croatia.

So SOL's involvement with Croatian teachers and HUPE in particular yields quite a story and we believe there is a lot more to come. After all, our mission to support the teaching and learning of English matches HUPE's objectives and we believe that our unique knowledge of the country and the region gives us a better understanding of what is needed. Mark, more than any other trainer will run workshops which show his knowledge and understanding of the places the teachers come from. This ensures he delivers ideas in a very personal way as well as giving very useable ideas for the classroom, especially opening teachers eyes to the resources which are around them wherever they are. His influence has had considerable impact on the way we run our own courses. He will be doing some more workshops in Croatia in 2017.

Whilst our summer teacher training courses in Devon are very special, one thing that we are certain of is that there is no teacher training course like the **SO(u)L camps** which Mark leads!!! In 2017 both will be on (or by the side of) the River Danube. Unique locations in Slovakia (on a boat on the river, used by us for the first time) and in Serbia (an ecological centre a few km south of Novi Sad where we have run 3 amazing courses) provide an experience which the teachers last summer said could not be put into words but was unforgettable! We'd love more Croatian teachers to share these experiences (Marinko Uremović can tell you more!).

In summary and having been asked to write an article on our shared 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, I can only say again that we share the same purposes as HUPE – to support teachers of English in Croatia. Being a non-profit organisation I believe is an important aspect of this and our philosophy has always been never to make any profit out of a teacher, and we know none of you are paid what you deserve.

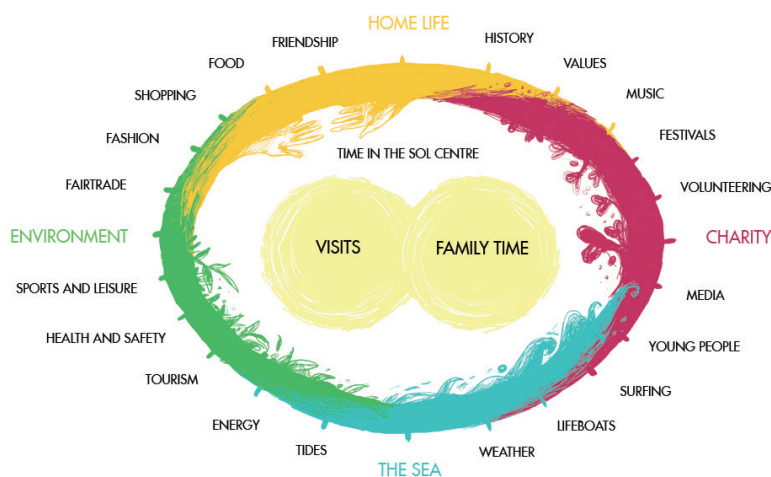
If a teacher has an Erasmus+ grant then we are very happy for that. Otherwise we try to minimise the costs of the teacher courses which are half or less than anything else in the UK - whilst remaining a top quality programme. With Mark being joined either by **Uwe Pohl** or **Fiona Mauchline** you would expect nothing less. This summer, even Péter Medgyes joined us.... and he has been our patron since 1995.

When a teacher brings students (and almost any age is possible) we want it to be a valuable professional experience for the teacher too!! We especially delight in the several future teacher courses we have run with the Faculty of Education in Osijek - when the students also have time in an English school. University courses can be planned to fit the curricular

needs of the group as we have done with a tourism group from Zadar as well as business groups from The Czech Republic and Hungary.

Our regular courses for students in Devon are based very much on what the students themselves bring to the class. They are encouraged to observe and record in whatever way they wish, what they see or hear or ask people about during the day and when they are with their families. They then bring this to the classroom - so mobile phones are welcomed for this reason as well as for researching topics. The result of all this **real** interaction with the local environment and with the local people gives them a level of confidence which cannot be given back in their normal classes. The graphic shows how the visits and time in the family are as important as within the 4 walls of the classrooms!

#### CONTEXTS FOR LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND FIELDWORK



So whether helping teachers in Devon or in Croatia we look forward to on-going cooperation for many years to come and are happy to discuss any projects or ideas which can help. The only thing we cannot do is exchanges as we have no students of our own!! All details of what we do and our contacts in England and Croatia are on our website [www.sol.org.uk](http://www.sol.org.uk).

Grenville Yeo



# Learning language through creative process of film-making

By Vanja Fazinić

Osnovna škola don Lovre Katića, Solin

Making videos with digital cameras and editing software is not only a great way for students to create innovative products using technology but also a powerful tool to increase students' motivation, creativity and autonomy. Teenage students of any ability are engaged in collaborative projects where learning becomes the result of a released creative power, involvement and participation in a positive and motivating environment where teachers become facilitators and mentors rather than instructors.

Learning through film-making projects supports all important components of learning: active engagement, creativity, problem solving, working in groups, interaction and feedback, offering the teacher at the same time an opportunity to reach all types of learners and to involve each and every student.

Video can be put into use in order to enhance language learning. Several processes are involved in the creation of stories: students improve their writing and speaking skills, and they use vocabulary in context, and they apply grammatical rules. Film-making also provides numerous opportunities for expressing understanding through images, sound, and text.

I incorporate film-making regularly into my lessons as I have found that there are many educational and pedagogical benefits to storytelling in videos and that some of the most engaging classroom activities are those where students are making something they can be proud of and show to others.

## Incorporating film-making into the curriculum

When integrating collaborative film-making projects into the language classroom, a key concern is that making short films will take too much time, especially when it must be aligned with curricular and other goals. However, student created videos can be used in order to assist the teaching process and they can help reaching curricular objectives.

In my teaching practices, I use film-making as a lesson extension, that is, I set focus on a specific topic or a grammatical unit and use technology to support instructional events within that unit.

What does it mean? If a lesson objective is understanding and use of tenses, making a short film can be a great creative tool for reaching this particular objective. This is how one of my first film-making projects "The story of Change" started. I asked my students to imagine that they were an item, something that is now old and forgotten, but used to be very important in a child's life. Students' task was to write their story using the following tense guide:

Early life: past simple

Experiences: present perfect

What will happen next: the future with will

Students worked in small groups and each group created a story which was a basis for a short film. As a final result, the project groups created short films starring a book, a teddy and a bike. Having student-created films as an outcome helped improve the students' ability to master the tenses they were learning.

In another film-making project the focus was on word formation. I selected the vocabulary and students had to create new words on the basis of the existing ones and incorporate them into their short film. The final outcome was the film titled 'School bag love story'. The film follows two school bags falling in love, but behind a simple story there was an English lesson where students changed the words given into new adjectives, verbs and nouns by adding prefix or suffix and applied the new vocabulary into the suitable context. In this way, film-making can work in any topic and almost any grade level.

Film-making can be extended to enhance cross-curricular teaching and learning. My students have created a film titled "A day in a life of a School Bag" in which a school bag is the main character describing one day in its life. The film integrates English, History, ICT, Geography and Music curriculum. It has become an eTwinning project where students get closer to each other and learn about their partners' daily lives, interests, schools, hometowns and culture through a short film in which a school bag is the main character telling a story.

## Film-making as student- centered learning environment

Learning language through creative process of film-making puts students at the centre of their learning: The emphasis is on activity – based learning rather than on teaching and on teacher –student collaboration rather than instruction.

In many schools and school systems power and responsibility are held by the teacher who plays the role of the instructor and decision maker. In contrast to traditional methods, where the authority to make and carry out decisions is placed almost entirely in the hands of the teacher, collaborative film-making projects support most of the principles of student-centred learning: active student role, intrinsic motivation, accent on cooperative group work and creative expression. Such projects could be a way of initiating change towards a student –centered approach in the classroom.

Students do the whole work: they create their original story, evaluate and select information sources, choose digital tools, make decisions, film scenes, edit video, add music, make voiceover narration, report results and evaluate the process and the final product. The teacher’s role is transformed into a role of a facilitator and mentor who understands how students learn and what motivates them and tailors the instruction accordingly.

Even though there is specific curricular content the teacher is required to teach, and even though he or she must provide classroom structure or some basic direction, the focus of the teacher is to organize and administer their classes to facilitate student autonomy, rather than teacher control. Student- centred teachers put their students first allowing them to express themselves in their own, unique way because students’ freedom of expression is what motivates them and makes it easy for them to focus on learning.

### Six easy steps to developing a collaborative film-making project:

#### **Step 1: Introduction to the film-making process**

Students are introduced to the idea. They are organised in small groups (four or five members) and the roles are assigned. These roles may include job titles such as: Director, Script Writer, Actor, Camera Operator, Film Editor, Production Designer and Producer. It is important to make sure that the exact responsibilities for each team member are clear before teams start making their films.

#### **Step 2: Script writing**

Students write a script that will form the basis of their short films. They can develop their own story that will form a basis for their short film or they can complete a script framework provided by the teacher. It can be a short text or a dialogue which are students allowed to change. Using teacher’s script framework students infuse their own creativity and imagination such as genre, location, characters or atmosphere to make teacher’s words come alive in whatever story.

#### **Step 3: Storyboarding**

Students brainstorm and collaborate planning scenes and shot composition.

#### **Step 4: Film Recording**

Students film scenes for their short film and create their own sound effects. At this point filmmaking can be integrated with the music curriculum.

#### **Step 5: Video Editing.**

Students assess their video footage. They take raw footage through to finished product, using video editing software.

#### **Step 6: Film Review (Students’ feedback)**

Students finish and review the finished short films. They evaluate the film making process and the final product.

Film-making is an important tool in 21<sup>st</sup> century classrooms; it inspires both learning and teaching. The filmmaking process fosters the development of various life skills, such as creativity, communication, collaboration, critical thinking and decision making. Moreover, it enhances language learning, offering students an opportunity to improve their oral and written communication skills.

#### **References**

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# ASD students in mainstream schools – what can teachers do?

Autism, Asperger's Syndrome (AS) and Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) were all previously considered separately, but from 2013 onwards they have all been identified as different categories of the same condition now called Autism Spectrum Disorder, or ASD.

ASD is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder which impacts a person's social interaction skills, verbal and non-verbal communication skills, and induces restricted and / or repetitive behavior. It is called a 'spectrum' because in each individual it manifests itself differently. In recent years the act of inclusion puts more and more ASD students into mainstream classrooms, but unfortunately, this act is not followed by adequate teacher training on how to teach these students.

So what can teachers do?

Here are some of the things that can help your ASD student:

## 1. Individual Education Plan – IEP

First and most important is to make a good Individual Education Plan (IEP). Although teachers make IEPs for all Special Education Needs (SEN) students, for ASD students they need to be particularly careful and include all of the people who have previously worked and who are currently working with them: teachers, school board personnel, doctors, other specialists, and especially parents. Providing all the relevant information about the student will help the teacher make an effective educational program which is based on the student's strengths and abilities and which will gradually increase in its complexity as the student's skills develop.

## 2. Structure and Consistency

ASD students function best when they know what is expected from them. They need rules and guidelines for everything they do and they need fixed routines as they can get easily distracted and very anxious if something changes. The rules and guidelines should be short and clear (accompanied by visuals if possible) and the ASD student should have them somewhere close to him so he could follow them easily. The seating arrangement is also very important as well as the organization of the things within the classroom and around his working space. If changes are about to happen they should be announced and explained in advance. Transitions from one activity to another, from one subject / classroom to another can be particularly difficult but if the student knows the schedule he will have less or no stress at all.

## 3. Clarity

ASD students cannot understand a long and complex set of instructions that you give them, especially if you give them verbally. They need you to keep it short, simple and clear. Use their first name when addressing the ASD students and tell them exactly what they need to do (e.g. John, colour the apple red.) If the instructions are long – simplify them and make them shorter, and it is always good to have them in writing (accompanied by visuals) close to the student. They also have trouble understanding the tone of your voice, especially irony, sarcasm or even jokes. So you need to be careful and always be direct and explicit.

Also, open-ended questions and questions requiring long explanations should be avoided. Instead, you should give your ASD student a choice: e.g. instead of giving him a picture with 10 different coloured pencils and asking him to identify the colours, try giving him a picture of 2-3 pencils and ask him to show you a red pencil, a blue one etc.

## 4. Visual Support and Colour Coding

ASD students are visual learners and having visual support for the things and concepts they have to learn is of great help. Visual timetables, rules, instructions, schedules, procedures and worksheets help the ASD student learn and increase his independence. According to the student's comprehension level, visual support will vary from real objects, simple black-and-white drawings representing concrete things to more complex pictures, symbols and / or written sentences representing not only concretes but also some abstract notions as well. Using comics and social stories work great in explaining and promoting acceptable behavior and social skills. Apart from these you can also use videos if the motion pictures and flashing images do not affect and disturb the ASD student.

Colour Coding is another strategy to help your ASD student with structure and organization. You can use colour coding

for almost anything – in his timetable you can assign each subject its colour and mark the students books needed for that subject the same colour (e.g. English is red – English student's book, workbook, notebook have a red mark as well); or if the student has to move around school to different classrooms then you can colour code the subjects and the classrooms (e.g. Geography in his timetable is green – the Geography classroom has a green mark on the door.)

### **5. Buddy System**

Many researchers have proven that ASD students can benefit more when they are educated in the mainstream classrooms. A good idea is to assign a peer buddy to your ASD student to help him around school and with classroom activities, like opening a book at the right page, checking if all the tasks from the list are done, etc. They can both benefit from this relationship as they learn about friendship, tolerance, understanding and responsibility.

### **6. Literacy**

*Reading* – ASD students will often have difficulties with reading and reading comprehension. Since they are visual learners it might be easier for them to learn how to read using a whole word sight recognition approach. Also the words should be paired with visual support whenever possible. If the words are meaningful to the student, they are likely to be learned more easily than those he has no knowledge or experience of. Once taught, the words should be practiced and used repeatedly in exercises such as matching, gap filling, grouping etc. They could also be grouped according to the subject and the student could make his own dictionary or theme book (e.g. My classroom words). After learning these isolated words they should be put into stories about student's life which he is familiar with rather than giving him a story about people, places, and things he has no knowledge of. Using picture cards together with word / sentence cards can help increase student's understanding and sequencing of the events and information.

*Writing* – Although some ASD students can have no or little problems with handwriting, it is not the case with many others. Unfortunately, the lack of fine motor skills cause difficulties in writing, making it one of the biggest problems in academic participation of ASD students. What can help them is the use of computers, different writing software and word processors.

### **7. Sensory and Behavioral Issues**

ASD students can be hypo- or hyper-sensitive to different elements in the environment around them. It is important to know what those elements are and how the ASD student reacts in order to prevent or at least minimize their impact on one hand or to stimulate the student on the other: e.g. the school bell can cause fear which could lead to screaming, while bright lights could hurt the student's eyes, however some students will respond better if the light is brighter or if they have something in their hands (like a squeeze ball).

Sometimes, due to frustration and anxiety, ASD students can exhibit behaviors that are inappropriate and the teacher must react to it. Before the behavior occurs the teacher should use social stories and comics to teach the student what is appropriate and what's not. In this way we can try to prevent the behavior from happening. Together with the student, his parents and other specialists, teachers should create a strategy to be used if and / or when the inappropriate behavior occurs as well as a reward or praise system for when the student successfully responds to the early prevention of the inappropriate behavior.

Teaching ASD students is definitely challenging but when you see the progress and when the student feels a sense of achievement, it is quite rewarding. It is important to remember that every ASD student (or SEN student in general) is different and what works for one may not work for another. Keep in mind that here 'less is more' – keep it simple and clear and find the strategy that works best for your student.

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# Where Is My Mind? Engaging the Lower-Primary Classroom

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Going back to the first time I found myself teaching the youngest of the lower-primary classes I have a clear vision where my mind was before and after each lesson: everywhere and nowhere. I was overwhelmed and overpowered and I kept piling on resources whose usability was limited and, to be honest, a complete waste of my time. Not to mention my students'.

Then, at one of those moments of clarity and spurred on by Pixies playing on in the background, I decided to make a list of all of the materials, techniques and tips which I actually loved using and which brought visible results. Because at the end of the day one must milk each and every second of each precious lesson in order to make up for all the time lost on classroom management, runny noses, fallen out teeth, bathroom runs, hugs and kisses, questions on the origins of life and the universe, and various other non-ELT related joys of lower-primary classes.

The questions that occupied my worried and wandering mind were as follows:

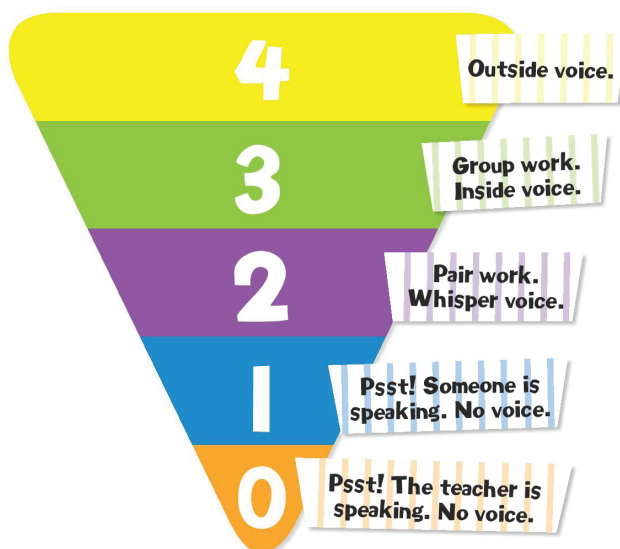
- 1 How to manage my class?
- 2 How to make the most of my flashcards and word cards?
- 3 How to push posters to their limits?
- 4 How to make my worksheets work for my class specifically?
- 5 How to sing our hearts out with the help of songs and karaoke?
- 6 What about my SEN students?

And the answers to all those fundamental ELT questions? Those were a bit harder to come by but with the help of Carol Read, some great resources and inspirational teachers all around me it was less difficult to shortlist the activities and resources which work in my classroom. Since this research resulted in a workshop, I will not divulge too much since there still might be someone interested in finding out in person, but I would like to share some of the top tips and answers for the troublesome six questions above.

## How to manage my class?

One of the most, at least for me, challenging tasks with every class is how to manage them well and properly. Since their malleability and work ethic depends on those skills implanted by their class teacher, there are various techniques I have been trying out. One of those which gives results, albeit after a certain time since your students need to get accustomed to the idea, was the **Noise-O-Metre**. A simple enough idea of getting your students accustomed to a system of hand signals to show them what the level of noise was and which type of activity they should be working on. It works even better when there is a simple rewards system for the students' good behaviour, such as stickers which they collect on a class poster and which are then turned into marks at the end of each month.

## NOISE-O-METRE



Idea by Martina Ferić, prof.



To find out more about this classroom management tool, download it [here](#).

### How to make the most of my flashcards and word cards?

Since flashcard and picture cards activities work best when shown in person, here I would like to direct your attention to the ultimate collection of most useful activities all of which have been compiled and prepared by fantastic Croatian teachers. Find a guide on using flashcards and word cards [here](#).

In case you already know everything there is to know about making your flashcards and word cards work for you, here are some incredibly useful (and free! Let's not forget free!) websites if you would like to make your own:

[http://www.cambridgeenglishonline.com/Flashcard\\_maker/](http://www.cambridgeenglishonline.com/Flashcard_maker/)

<http://www.kitzkikz.com/flashcards/>

<https://quizlet.com/>

### How to push posters to their limits?

Now, as any English teacher working the lower-primary circuit is well aware, pinboard and wall space are precious commodities and are hard to come by. Therefore, getting your own piece of wall in a lower-primary classroom to hang your poster might usually turn out to be just a dream. Here is where a teacher has to be extremely creative to make the most of any poster. That means doing numerous

activities with every poster since it will make its way out of the classroom at the end of the lesson with you.

## Clothes



So you could, for example, show the poster above and play...

1-minute Memory Game – give students one minute to memorise as much as they can on the poster.

I Spy... – remove the poster and ask students questions about the items on the poster

True/False – say sentences about the poster and ask your students to stand up if they are true or remain sitting if they are false.

Touch the Answer – ask your students to pair up and give two pieces of paper to each pair, one labelled Y (for Yes or true answers) and N (for No or false answers). Play the True/False game in which students need to touch the correct answer.

Body Spelling – ask your students to be a bodily alphabet and group them to spell the items on the poster.

Poster Race – group your students and ask them to run to the poster and touch the items on it.

If there is no single poster to your liking, why not make your own? You are just one click away from some great websites for making the best poster for your class.

<https://www.befunky.com/>

<http://www.postermywall.com/index.php/p/school-posters>

<http://www.muzy.com/1/110681498978502/hfrzylvpms>

<http://www.posterini.com/>

## How to make my worksheets work for my class specifically?

Everyone knows how worksheets work. You can trace, write, match, group, colour, draw, correct, and numerous other tasks on your worksheets. The trick then is to have the worksheets which cater to your exact needs and helps your students focus on exactly those areas you would like them to focus. Click [here](#) for some great ready-made worksheets for Years 1 through 8.

**RONNIE'S WORKSHOP RONNIE'S WARDROBE**

✂ Cut out the clothes cards.
 ✂ Cut out the word cards.
 🔗 Match the clothes and the word cards.
 📌 Use pegs to hang the matched pairs on a clothes line.

a hat	a coat	a pullover	a scarf	a cap	a jacket
a raincoat	pyjamas	a skirt	a tracksuit	jeans	a T-shirt
shorts	a dress	socks	boots	shoes	trainers

**PROFIL Klett**

**NEW BUILDING BLOCKS 1** **NEW BUILDING BLOCKS 2**

### MY FAVOURITE LETTERS

QUACK, QUACK!

Q as in QUACK

Q

Q

q

q

W is for WINDOW

W

W

w

w

**PROFIL Klett**

**NEW BUILDING BLOCKS 1**

### UNCLE PHIL'S MAGIC HAT

FIND THE DIFFERENCES!

LOOK! MAGIC HAT!

LOOK! MY MAGIC HAT!

🔍 FIND AND CIRCLE 15 DIFFERENCES.
 👉 POINT TO: A BAT, A BUTTERFLY, A BUNNY, A FROG.

**PROFIL Klett**

**NEW BUILDING BLOCKS 1** **NEW BUILDING BLOCKS 2**

### MY FAVOURITE LETTERS No. 2

1 Track, then colour all the letters "Q".

QUEEN

queen

QUESTION MARK

question mark

Or if you prefer your own, a great tip for preparing worksheets for Year 1 is using a dotted font to help your students learn the shape of words by tracing them. Find some great free fonts below:

<http://www.1001freefonts.com/dotted-fonts.php>

2 Track, then colour all the letters "W".

CLOWN

clown

COW

cow

MY WORD WITH "W":

\_\_\_\_\_

<http://www.1001fonts.com/dotted-fonts.html>

<http://www.fontspace.com/category/dotted>

## How to sing our hearts out with the help of songs and karaoke?

Singing is such a fundamental activity in the lower-primary world that whether you are vocally gifted or not, you will need to make do and make it work for you. And with some helpful songs, videos and karaoke activities your students will be dumbfounded by your fantastic singing skills, your students will never have to sing out of tune. Click [here](#) to find a useful collection of song videos and their karaoke versions.

For those who still need more sounds of music in their classroom, the [Super Simple Learning](#) website offers a plethora of videos and listening activities.

And if your classroom offers no 21st-century amenities, such as Internet, you can always easily transform your YouTube links into portable videos with the help of websites such as [Online Video Converter](#).

## What about my SEN students?

Teaching the growing SEN student population can be extremely challenging and time consuming and yielding results may become an insurmountable source of frustration for both your students and you. For those students with reading difficulties try using the [reading focus card](#) to help them read more easily.

**NEW BUILDING BLOCKS 4** **NEW BRIDGES** **New Building Bridges**

### SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS WORKBOOKS

Help your SEN students read better with the help of the reading focus card. Simply follow the instructions and prepare it yourself or assist your students in preparing it themselves.

**YOU NEED:**

- A copy of the reading focus card outline
- Cardboard or thicker paper
- Glue
- Scissors
- Hole punch

**HOW TO MAKE THE READING FOCUS CARD?**

- Cut out the reading focus card outline below.
- Paste it on a piece of cardboard or thicker paper.
- Cut it out along the outer lines.
- Use a hole punch to create a binder ring hole.

**HOW TO USE THE READING FOCUS CARD?**

- Put the reading focus card on the text you would like to read.
- The longer sides of the card should be positioned horizontally.
- Align the left and right sides with the margins of the textbook.
- Move it through the text with your fingertips.

**READING NOTCH**  
Use it to focus on the title or the topic of the text.

LESSON 4 - FOOD FOR THOUGHT

2) Read the text. Find and colour the words from Task F1).  
Pročitaj tekst. Pronađi i oboji riječi iz zadatka F1).

**READING FOCUS CARD**

In his TV show, Jamie's School Dinners, he went back to school to serve healthy

**READING WINDOW**  
Use it for reading one sentence or part of text at a time.

**BINDER RING HOLE**  
Use it to store the reading focus card.





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