

Iraklis Lampadariou

A Classroom  
Full of Imagination  
and Innovation





**Iraklis Lampadariou** was born in Katerini in 1988, but grew up in Kavala. He has been dealing faithfully with volunteering, both organising and participating in various collective actions, since the age of 10. He has studied classic literature in the Democritus University of Thrace (2005-2009). He loves learning foreign languages; he already speaks English, French, Spanish and he has started learning Slovak and Chinese. He has travelled in many places in Europe, involving himself in a multicultural dialogue that has certainly affected his way of thinking. He writes stories for the child each one of us hides inside and constantly tries to figure out ways in which schools could cultivate students' creativity and imagination.

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IRAKLIS LAMPADARIOU

# A Classroom Full of Imagination and Innovation

Translation from Greek:  
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Iraklis Lampadariou, A Classroom Full of Imagination and Innovation

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To **Students** who  
Savour the fruit of knowledge with patience and insistence,  
To **Teachers** who  
Grow this fruit with passion, vision and care,  
To **Parents** who  
Plant the seed conscientiously.



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## INTRODUCTION

“Good morning. Open your books, please, on that page and let’s start our lesson. Who would like to read out loud first? Great. George, you can start, but please remember that we read slowly and clearly, not in haste.” After reading the strictly specified five lines, it’s another student’s turn, and it goes that way until all the students finish reading the passage that the teacher wants. Should a student try to read but not perform that well or pause to remember those tricky digraphs that distress not only students but also sometimes adults, the teacher gets anxious trying to keep to the one-teaching-hour restricted time limit. “Very Good” says the teacher in relief as they managed to complete the reading that the teacher had in mind with their students’ help and they go on: “I’m certain that you have understood that today we’re learning this, more rarely that and that.” After the teacher explains what they want their students to learn, they ask if there are any questions, which will be answered briefly and curtly, and assign homework assertively and in a monotonous manner: “Your homework is: exercises 1, 2, 3

from that page and exercises 5, 6, 7 from that page.” The bell rings calling students for a break, who are still trying to circle the numbers of their exercises and fold the pages in order to be sure they’ll do the correct exercises and not any others. The teacher is relieved because once again they have managed to finish what they had in mind and fill in the course outline book in triumph.

Now imagine the same classroom with the teacher entering and holding a ball. Even though they haven’t spoken yet, they have managed to stir their students’ imagination and at the same time attract their interest and attention. Each student from the very first moment of the lesson participates actively as they pose questions to themselves: “But, it’s not time for Physical Education. Why is the teacher holding a ball?” The teacher says Good Morning to students in an animated voice and helps them find an answer to their questions: “You must be wondering why I’m holding a ball. You may find the answer if you have a look at your book on the page we stopped in our previous lesson.” With this short puzzler students become players in a game similar to the hidden treasure game. Once the last words come out from the teacher’s mouth all students in a flash open their books on the last lesson’s page hunting for the answer. Every student is looking for as fast as they can in order to be the first who finds the answer, and win their classmates’ admiration and also the teacher’s merit. Finally, one student jumps to their feet with joy and says after having cast a glance to the following lesson – the one they’ll be dealing with today: “We’ ll talk about our home, the Earth!” “That’s correct! Well done!” says the teacher and starts giving some clues of what students should learn in that specific lesson. The teacher doesn’t follow the book’s text by assigning one student after the other to read it, so that it looks like a train. They give clues of the text by just describing the ball: it is round, it rotates around its axis, just like when a footballer kicks it and they continue describing the ball as if it were our planet on a small scale; there are different temperatures in its surface, there is a core in the centre etc. If students have to learn about the continents, the teacher draws their outline with a marker or a pencil on the ball. If students have to learn about the Earth in relation to other planets and the Sun, then by holding the ball-Sun the teacher chooses some of the students to impersonate planets and the Sun: student-Saturn, student-Neptune, student-Sun etc., and each student looks for their place in relation to the teacher-ball-Earth. The students help the

teacher by scanning their text for some features of the Earth that the teacher hasn't mentioned yet on purpose. In the end they all together refer back to the book to name one by one all the features of the Earth and in this way they practise, since practice makes perfect. Before the teacher assigns homework from the book, they say to their students that each one should draw the Earth, and then they should occupy themselves with exercises 1, 2, 4 from that page. That way the teacher helps their students sufficiently do their exercises adequately since they boost their self-confidence. After drawing the Earth, they'll get more acquainted with the objectives of the lesson so it'll be easier for them to do their homework. After assigning homework and just before the bell rings, the teacher may pass the ball-Earth to every student, passing figuratively the knowledge to their hands, bringing them closer to what they should learn.

Now think of these two classrooms and the way that each teacher has chosen to present their lesson. Which would you opt for and why? If you were a student which of the two teachers' class would you choose to attend and why? I'm sure you won't find it difficult to answer either of the above questions.

Yet, it's not enough to provide answers; you need to pose new questions that will lead you as teachers and as parents to design activities through which the students' way of thinking will be nourished creatively with imagination, critical thinking and fun.

With the book you're holding in your hands I hope to lead you towards that direction and share with you techniques, ideas, thoughts and activities that do not belong to the scope of imagination but are easily and readily applicable to school and classroom, and also outside the classroom or even at home. My goal is that all this material triggers your systematic involvement with the amelioration of your teaching approaches and with the design of your own innovative activities combined with multimedia, and based on your students' distinctive characteristics, nourishing mainly their creativity, interest in learning and love for reading.

What you are about to read on the following pages has been applied successfully to educational programmes and activities have been realised by Greek and Slovak students aged 6-17 from September 2005 to June 2011. Along with the Greek students, who I was fortunate to meet through countless informative school visits, we focused on issues about climate

change, biodiversity, multilingualism, children's rights and multiculturalism in the EU, when I worked mainly as a volunteer for an EU Office from September 2005 to August 2010. As far as the Slovak students are concerned, who were remarkably friendly and enthusiastic, I worked with them and carried out more than 20 educational programmes and actions during my participation in the European programme Comenius Assistantships from March to June 2011.

You may visit, if you like, the specialised website I have created for this programme in the IP address: <https://sites.google.com/site/lamirakliscask>, and you can read the action journal, watch photos from the educational programmes and many more exciting things that took place in the School Dr Janskeho c.2 in the town of Ziar nad Hronom in Slovakia.

So, the idea that drove me to write this book was very simple: since I managed as a young classics teacher to “unlock” my students, then it's certain that others can accomplish the same thing as well – teachers who are attributed the bigger share of responsibility for the children's standard education but also parents who have the responsibility for non-standard education.

I would be particularly delighted to read your comments, impressions, thoughts and anything else that you would like to share with me relevant or less relevant to the main idea of this book. As you will read in the relevant chapter, the value of collaboration and exchange of thoughts and ideas is substantial and its benefits are numerous for those involved.

I hope you have a good time reading this book, and I am looking forward to receiving your emails on my e-mail address: [iraklis@lampadariou.eu](mailto:iraklis@lampadariou.eu)





## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE INGREDIENTS OF THE RECIPE**

The secret ingredients in a modern classroom are creativity, imagination, innovation, teaching by using new technologies, the miracles of technology with the Internet and multimedia applications prevailing, the active participation of all students, even those sitting by choice on the last seat by the window. If these factors are present then knowledge may be substantial, everlasting – a true power to the learner.

Each teacher is capable of creating a favourable atmosphere for the development of the above elements in their classroom with their students' help. With their aid the teacher looks for materials, creates activities, designs programmes through which they will pass knowledge and love for learning to their students. The student is at the same time the co-creator and recipient of all whimsical activities taking place inside a classroom.

Just imagine a teacher who didn't get their students involved in the designing process of the creative ways of learning. In that case students would find it difficult to cope or, even worse, they would be unwilling to participate in as that wouldn't arouse their interest. Therefore, they would reject it by admiring the ceiling's colour, the schoolyard where they would

play during recess, the chalk dust as it falls from the blackboard, the eraser at the back of their pencil, the colourful pencil case of the classmate sitting next to them while starting a brief exploration of its contents, keeping at the same time their minds on their watch, counting the seconds that separate them from the redemptive ringing of the bell, and wondering how slowly time passes by. They would also be trying to work on finding the answer about how time is calculated, how long a second can last and if a second lasts more than a minute.

Since no teacher wishes to attend a classroom where students ignore them, they ought to follow some steps to spot their students' interests and find ways to stimulate their interest in their teaching objectives so as to liven up their classroom, by planning a constructive, pleasant and student-friendly course outline.

### **Step 1: The Teacher Gets in the Students' Shoes.**

Have you ever considered how students perceive lesson? While teaching have you ever wondered about your students' thoughts? Having a classroom with composed students, doesn't always mean that you have gained their attention, that they comprehend whatever you say or that you are such a competent teacher that there is no single question. They may have been bored to sleep as well.

Get in your students shoes before you enter the classroom, bearing in mind their interests and concerns. Think, while planning your course outline, how each student will react during every phase of your plan. Will they be fond of it? Will it intrigue them? Don't you think that it would be better if you let their imagination free or after giving them a tiny clue then help them find by themselves the goals of your lesson as in the ball-earth example? Shouldn't you omit part of your lesson that demands some extra knowledge that your students haven't acquired yet and it will take longer to develop so that everybody will comprehend it and not just the minority of the classroom? Shouldn't you bring along some supportive material which will not only enlighten but also excite your students, rendering the lesson more interesting and less boring?

Now think of all the things that you would like to hear from a teacher so that you comprehend in a pleasant and diverting way the objectives of the lesson that you wish to teach. At this point be aware of the trap. When



writing your lesson plan make thoughts and express wishes made and expressed by your students, not by you. This lesson is not about you but it's from you for your students and with your students. You will understand how successful your lesson plan is from the active participation and your students' smiles in a pleasant classroom atmosphere.

### **Step 2: The Student Gets in the Teacher's Shoes.**

Most of you will probably be wondering how it is possible for a student to get in the teacher's shoes. What and how will they teach, and how can something like this be applied in a classroom under time pressure for following the curriculum? Now remember that even from the beginning of reading this book you have set your imagination free and you don't restrict yourself according to traditional teaching models. Thus everything is possible and realised instantly and efficiently in the benefit of both your students and learning.

Urge your students to read the following lesson, to put aside how you present your own lesson and after setting their imagination free to prepare their own ideas on how to present the lesson to their classmates (that is, prepare the lesson plan). Point out that they can come up with anything they like and bring along whatever materials they can think of to run a more alluring and interesting show. Directly and without them realising it you have led them into showing you how they imagine their ideal lesson, how they would like you to perform your next lessons, what materials you can bring, many of which you have never even thought about, and to improve your teaching methods in order to meet the needs of the particular classroom.

Should you believe that your students will have difficulty in coping with this mission, something that rarely happens, you can put them in your shoes for a shorter period of time. You can ask them instead of copying an exercise in their notebook, to look for ways to present the solution of an exercise to their classmates. So just by spending a few seconds with some of your students, you will get an idea about what they'll be expecting from you for the lessons to come.

Congratulations! You and your students have managed to design an acceptable and intriguing lesson plan! The results from the next test will make you realise how significant this change is in your teaching method.

### **Step 3: Let Your Imagination Go Wild.**

Bring in mind a horse galloping free in a green valley. Could somebody or something stop it, an obstacle for example? The answer is no. This horse is your imagination which you must set free to gallop and lead you to new innovative, creative, radical, subversive ideas. Do not attempt to restrain the galloping of your imagination with obstacles, like the concise teaching time, the time to bring the teaching material together or the creation of a multimedia programme or just a simple PowerPoint presentation.

In many instances after the school year is over, your students' deficiency in knowledge may cause hardship for the next year. You may have succeeded in covering all the teaching material as you have been stressed and stuffy throughout the year in your lessons but you have not managed to communicate knowledge effectively, thus your students have gaps in knowledge or queries about some of the taught chapters. So a teaching hour isn't limited, on the contrary, it is actually more than enough when it has been put to good use and has been spent with creative activities and educational games.

What's more, the time to gather or design your materials puts extra pressure on you. But it is totally worth it because your students will comprehend everything that you mean to teach them. Besides, you don't need to spend much of your time. It will be trickier and definitely more time-consuming the first time. Then it will be as easy as ABC and you will be looking for opportunities to gather material and design your own, which is definitely a more constructive and exciting experience.

Some of you may be facing the obstacle of how to use new technologies properly. Think of it not only as a challenge but also as a confirmation that learning is a non-stop and lifelong procedure. There are many instructive manuals and videos online with simple, easy and brief instructions which will enable you to create your own multimedia application! There are even some manuals addressed exclusively to all-level teachers.

If you set your imagination free, far from obstacles, you will come to realise how easy it is to design a highly attractive lesson for your students. Keep a notebook and a pen at hand to record any innovative thought for an upgraded lesson. It would be such a waste to miss some ideas, especially when overwhelmed by an abundance of innovative thoughts you will be getting accustomed to the process of setting your imagination free. Bear in mind that

all the problems have their own solution. It only takes some patience to find it.

#### **Step 4: Get Inspired From the Internet.**

You are not inventing the wheel. It has already been invented and its applications have been successfully integrated in our everyday lives. What you are going to do is to find different ways to shape the wheel (the wheel for you is the teaching method). Will it be colourful, plain, with ribbons, bows or Christmas lights? The Internet and the powerful search engines will help you shape it.

Browse using the most general and abstract concepts for your teaching objectives. Focus your interest mainly on images and what can help your imagination unfold. Give a chance to colours, movement, and the emotions of images on your computer screen to sweep you away on an enchanting trip of which destination is the design of a student-friendly educational programme.

Do not hesitate to use the Internet to find programmes realised from other teachers throughout the world which you could adapt to your students' needs, to the reality of your classroom. Do not present them as yours but try to elevate them or by using them as a springboard to be driven to the designing of a state-of-the-art educational programme.

#### **Step 5: Exchange and Discuss Your Ideas.**

No matter how many ideas you have managed to accumulate, or for how long you have set your imagination free rewarding you with bountiful thoughts, it is not enough. You will finally arrive at the best form of your idea or thought only by sharing it with someone else, whether it is a family member, a friend or a colleague. They will finish it off with a word, supplement it and lead you to an amazing idea: the best possible form that your idea could have taken.

With your idea you have found one path, but by exchanging and discussing it with someone else you can find all the other paths connected to the original one, your own path. Of course, the more paths there are, the better; there is the possibility of choice and the design of a much more interesting and effortless journey. So choose the paths you will follow to reach the most attractive and highly beneficial idea for your students.



## CHAPTER TWO

### NEXT STOP: CREATIVITY

For most of you there have been many instances where you have heard the word creativity aligned with education. Upon hearing it most people expect from the teacher-magician to bring a bunny out of the classroom's blackboard. Or, for the most daring in thought, to hold some magic wand which will transmit knowledge and also transform their students into little prodigies ready to serve in the labour market.

Yet in many instances creativity conceals the teacher's inability to develop truly creative and original teaching programmes. Allow me to give you a brief example: I am a teacher stuck in traditional learning models. In order to convince parents and my colleagues that I am capable of taking the big step to integrate creativity in my lesson plans and in whatever I have in stock concerning my students' education, I just use the word creativity and I am done. Who can tell that whatever I create from now on is not creative, original or imaginative? Who else? My students, of course.

When in the classroom applying your, in name only, creative teaching techniques, sooner or later you are bound to face your students' rejection. If you think you can fool them, you will need to think twice. They may not have

attended pedagogical courses at university, as you have, but your students constitute the classroom's heart. For those who think that the classroom's heart is the teaching objective, you should consider how important it is in a classroom to have disinterested students, eager to hear the bell ring. As for those who wonder if the teacher is the heart of the classroom, just keep in mind that the teacher is just an assistant, a conductor in an orchestra totally useless with no musicians, instruments and orchestral scores.

Therefore, the answer to the question of whether all the things you have thought, planned and brought into classroom to realise with your students are truly creative and fruitful, will come merely from your students. They will give it to you eagerly with their smiles, the questions that will pose to become further acquainted with your aiming objective, their course in tests and the rest evaluation methods.

You have made the decision to be creative and help your students get to knowledge with less anxiety and more fun. There are many ways to reach your target. Some of you will manage to develop your own ways to get to the creativity level that corresponds better to the individual, special, unique characters of your students. At this point I will give you the two most fundamental ways and the blessing to set your imagination free so that you can discover more!

### **1st way: From the Forest to the Trees**

You are at home, far away from school premises thinking of a way to develop an educational programme for the European Union considering Europe Day celebrated annually on 9th May as the same day in 1950, when the first step towards what we all know as the European Union was made. During that day in Paris, while the threat of a Third World War which would engage all Europe was hovering over everybody's heads, the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Robert Schuman, read in the international press a statement inviting France, Germany and other European countries to unite their coal and steel production as 'the first specified foundation of a European federation.'

Through this programme you want your students to learn:

- The Union's diversity, its symbols and the common monetary system,
- The countries that constitute it, their geographical and demographic data,

- The civilisation, the culture and famous personalities of the countries,
  - The flora and fauna of each country,
  - Some historical elements for the countries,
  - The European citizens' rights and programmes that are of concern to your students,
  - How decisions concerning Europe's future are made, that is, the way that the Community Institutions and Regional Agencies of the EU function.
- You have already figured out that this is a programme combining many school subjects to choose from: History, Art History, Geography, Environmental Studies, Music etc. Now that you have clarified the topic of your educational programme and the objectives you are aiming at, you need to follow your imagination in an enchanting journey which will lead you to that very day when you will be addressing to your students. What would you like your lesson to be like? What do you think would trigger your students' interest? Now think as if you are writing that day's lesson plan, it goes like this....

*For your journey you will need a school bag filled with papers, colourful pencils, rulers, erasers, pens, scissors, wooden sticks and some string. You will not need to be inspired as your rights as a European citizen are everywhere around you, you just need to open your eyes. Then you can choose your most favourite place at school and create your plan on one of the most significant rights to you.*

*If a group of students asks you about your rights, do not be alarmed – they are probably carrying out a research on the particular topic and they need your opinion. Please do not feel embarrassed when you will be asking your questions and sharing your thoughts with a Commissioner or an official from the Community Institutions and Regional Agencies of the EU. They will do their best to provide accurate answers in a clear, understandable manner.*

*Since colours are never enough, you can open your school bag once again and start drawing your face, your clothes, your shoes, even the pavement and the benches! It is totally up to you whether you wish to be inspired by diverse cultures!*

*If you are a techie, then you can test your knowledge about Europe and the European Union by playing many interactive games! Good luck! Do not forget: knowledge is power!*

*I sense that you want to relax. Go ahead, enjoy a multicultural concert, you should even sing or dance! It is worth the effort! It is incredible how many similarities you can find in the sounds – it is magic!*

*What about the European flag? Have you ever tried to create the biggest European flag? Well, you can count on your students showing you the way!*

So far you have ended up from the forest to the tree - in 7 trees to be more exact - engaging yourselves in activities overflowing with creativity since they are far from being common practice. Now let's see what kind of action lies behind every tree and how you keep on using your imagination until you finish planning the programme.

*1<sup>st</sup> Action: For your journey you will need a school bag filled with papers, colourful pencils, rulers, erasers, pens, scissors, wooden sticks and some string. You will not need to be inspired as your rights as a European citizen are everywhere around you, you just need to open your eyes. Then, you can choose your most favourite place at school and create your plan on one of the most significant rights to you.*

In the light of a brief presentation you can previously prepare, whether gathering and photocopying images from the Internet, or even better creating a PowerPoint presentation about civil rights focusing mainly on the young citizens (protection: from any kind of exploitation, abuse, discrimination, racism – benefits: the right to education, health, welfare, entertainment – participation: the right to freedom of expression, information, free time etc.) and you can introduce your students both the world of the European Union and the arising benefits for its citizens. After providing the stimulus, you motivate them to plan on a sheet of paper one of the rights they feel as the most important. If you want to make your students even happier, you can ask them for the next lesson to bring along some string or thread and small twigs without divulging the reason. Let their curiosity stimulate their imagination so they start working on figuring out the reason. After presenting their rights, you can instruct them to draw which one they think is the most important on a sheet of paper in a rectangular or whatever shape they choose and then adjust it on a happy kite that will decorate their



classroom's walls or even better the uninviting classroom ceiling! What's more, why should they be restrained in a school classroom and not take a stroll carrying everything necessary in the schoolyard, being inspired at the same time by nature? Consider all the benefits that your students have acquired from this first, simple action!

*2<sup>nd</sup> Action: In case a group of students asks you about your rights, do not be alarmed. They are probably carrying out a research about this topic and they need your opinion.*

For your older students, after the presentation, an encouragement may follow so they can search for more information in the Internet on their rights and draw up a questionnaire that they will use not only to learn if their classmates are aware of their own rights but also to raise their awareness about them. They can compose one questionnaire for each classroom bearing in mind the interest and expectations of their classmates or even compose another questionnaire for their parents investigating how much they know about their own rights.

*3<sup>rd</sup> Action: Please do not feel embarrassed when you will be asking your questions and sharing your thoughts with a Commissioner or an official from the Community Institutions and Regional Agencies of the EU. They will do their best to provide accurate answers in a clear, understandable manner.*

Is it possible that your students imagine the European Union, like most of you do, as a group of technocrats, immersed in their offices in Brussels and Luxembourg? Have you ever thought to meet some of them to find out on your own what is the decision making process that concerns about 500 million citizens in 28 European cities? Why not invite them to your school to discuss with your students online and answer their questions? Technology is miraculous and ready to serve you. Contact MEPs (Members of the European Parliament), officials from the Community Institutions and Regional Agencies of the EU and give your students the opportunity to pose their questions directly to them. You will be surprised by their questions and the context of the conversation coming out from this online meeting.

4<sup>th</sup> Action: *Since colours are never enough, you can open your school bag once again and start drawing your face, your clothes, your shoes, even the pavement and the benches! It is totally up to you whether you wish to be inspired by diverse cultures!*

You can move even further from drawing the most important right by encouraging your students to bring old T-shirts or items and reform them inspired by elements from different European cultures. You can hand out colourful chinks to draw in your schoolyard. You can allow them to use one dull school wall to decorate it with graffiti relevant to the diversity of the European cultures.

5<sup>th</sup> Action: *If you are a techie, then you can test your knowledge about Europe and the European Union by playing many interactive games! Good luck! Do not forget: knowledge is power!*

I am certain that the majority of your students love PC games and sit for hours on end playing and having fun. Why not satisfy their wish to play interactive games discovering Europe's history, the common monetary system, elements of its culture and geography? You can look up many European Union websites with which you can combine games and knowledge for your students. They are just waiting to be discovered.

6<sup>th</sup> Action: *I sense that you want to relax. Go ahead, enjoy a multicultural concert, you should even sing or dance! It is worth the effort! It is incredible how many similarities you can find in the sounds - it is magic!*

Music soothes us, and makes us feel free and our mind travel far away, leaving behind anything annoying that will not let us enjoy ourselves. Try organising with your students a concert with musical notes, sounds and various types of music from state-members of the EU. If your students are not ready to organise such a concert, you can encourage them to compile their favourite songs (emerging from an in-class vote – nothing could be more democratic than that) from different European countries to create a musical digital disc, a Europe special disc!

7<sup>th</sup> Action: *What about the European flag? Have you ever tried to create the biggest European flag? Well, you can count on your students showing you the way!*

However ambitious or far-reaching this idea may seem, you should know that there are multiple ways to overcome problems and realise it successfully. Why not let your students try to form with their bodies the European flag, whichever way they choose, in the schoolyard? They will comprehend in practice that the flag's star number, number 12, symbolises the fulfillment, the completion; something we encounter very often in our watches, the months, the Apostles and so on. We should not omit the circle formed by the flag's stars which among all else represent the symbol of unity.

You can enrich your programme with activities which will possibly arise later on, for example a photo contest on a European topic, sending emails bearing students' questions to European officials, a brief story for the European countries which can combine each country's unique characteristics or provide students with the beginning of the story inciting their imagination since they will have to continue the story as in the example:

*After exploring some castles in Slovakia, we are thinking of flying to Belgium to taste some mouth-watering waffles with chocolate and strawberries. Then, we can read one of the lovely Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales in Denmark and finally we could go on relaxing holidays to the Greek beaches to enjoy the sun and the crystal clear waters.*

Bear in mind that during both designing the actions and materialising them you should not allow your imagination not even for a minute to come to a halt. It may bring you face to face with an exciting idea or may help you design your future actions employing even more creativity, thus even more success! Imagination neither operates with buttons nor works in predefined time. It may reveal its secrets anywhere and at any time of the day. Remember to keep your antennas in place and always carry both a notebook and a pen.

For those who find it difficult to keep in track with the first way, you can try to get to creativity via the second way; the one that we go to by bearing in mind only one action at a time and then add more as we continue our quest alongside our imagination, our permanent assistant and consultant.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Way: From the Trees to the Forest**

This time your goal is to design an educational programme for climate change. You want to teach your students how climate change is created, if this change of climate conditions in our planet is normal, what the ramifications for the environment are and what your students can do either by themselves or with the aid of their parents to decrease their individual energetic imprint.

Even though it is about an observable topic by everyone in our every day life, we face problems describing and presenting it to our students who also face problems assimilating it. Maybe they get scared when they hear about climate change because they feel that this change is far from pleasant for the planet's future.

You have your notebook with the pen in front and you try to find a way to present whatever you think about climate change to your students. You wait for some time, scanning the pages of your textbook in case you get inspired, and try to set your imagination free but you end up with a blank page. Maybe you have not thought the simple way.

Start designing a presentation by writing down first the headings in a reasonable order, something like that:

- Climate Change: What Is It?
- What's the Weather Like Today?
- Is It Normal for the Climate to Change?
- What Are the Ramifications for Climate Change?
- This Is a Grave Problem! How Can We Deal with It?

Then, start writing some notes for every section of your presentation in a simple, comprehensible manner so that all your students can follow your train of thought and participate. Do not hesitate at all . You will carry out this presentation with them. You can write down some words or show them images that will be stimulus leading you to the next slide or section of your presentation. Here is an example:

“So what happens to our planet in terms of climate change? What does global warming mean? Can an alteration take place to some places of our planet?” This is what you ask in the section: “What Are the Ramifications for Climate Change?” and you hear a roar: “Me Mr/Mrs, me, me.” When you allow one

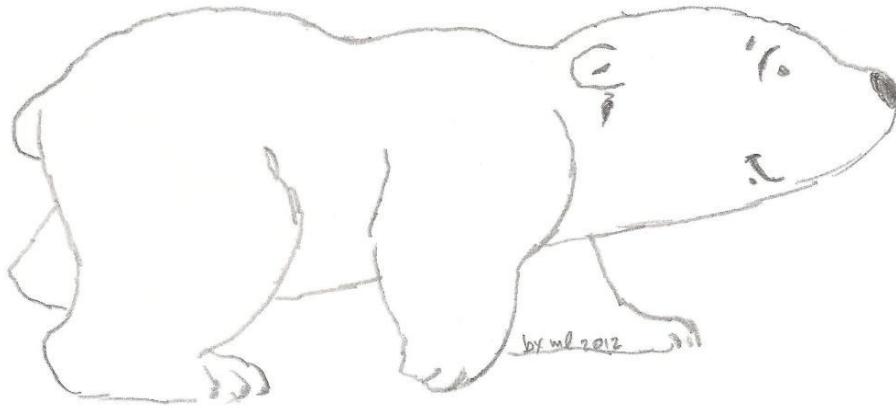
student to speak: “There are definitely changes in our planet due to climate change: the ice will melt, the polar bears will be homeless, the sea level will rise...” you may even listen to more. Just help them find the rest by assembling the puzzle pieces: “The temperature will rise enough, so what will happen to the forests?” The students will be thrilled about having come up with the answer by themselves: “There will be disastrous forest fires and many animals will lose their homes”; then you go on: “While to some other places of the planet what will happen due to lack of rainfall?” the students answer as follows: “Draught!” while to other places of the planet: “Floods!”

This way your students will be waiting for your next question, the next slide and nothing will distract them until the end of the presentation. What is more, they will dare to answer without the fear of being wrong - which sadly is a reality that should be eliminated from the classrooms because its results are devastating.

You want to make your presentation even more interesting and to excite your students’ interest even more. During your presentation you can come up with a way and suddenly interrupt it! Allow me to share a way with you:

You have located and described with your students all the climate change ramifications and wish to continue with the next session of your presentation, the ways to deal with such a grave and important problem. At that point exactly you add a section that could be called “Message from the North Pole” brought by a young polar bear. You act surprised as if you know nothing about this section. You allow your students to deliver the message, reading the bubbles above the bear’s little head.

1<sup>st</sup> slide: The polar bear is running and the speech bubble says “I’m sorry to interrupt your presentation but I have an urgent message from the North Pole! The bears and our friends are in danger because of climate change!”



2<sup>nd</sup> slide: The polar bear is sleeping and a penguin is trying to wake her up with cymbals while the speech bubble says “While I was snuggling on the fluffy snow, my friends came, woke me up and shared with me their problem...”



3<sup>rd</sup> slide: The polar bear has its back on us staring little icebergs wandering in the sea and the speech bubble says “I was shown the ice melting slowly every day....”

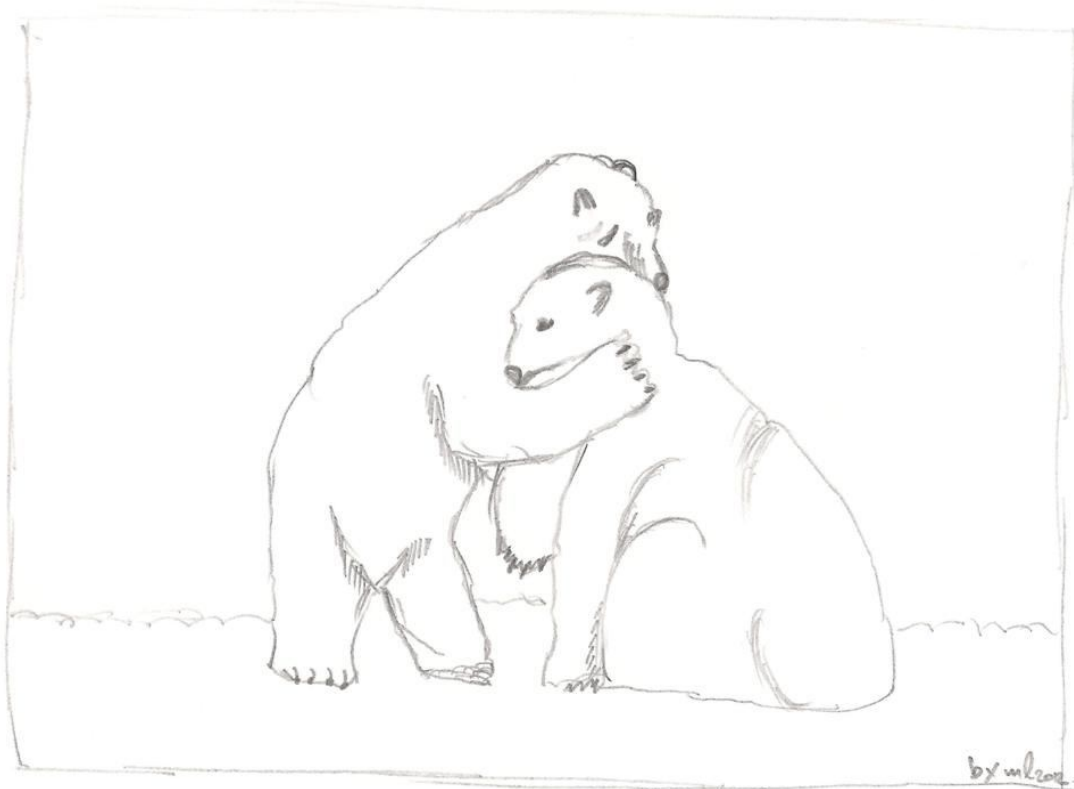


4<sup>th</sup> slide: The bear is sitting on an iceberg, half her body is on it and is hanging on the air and the speech bubble says “ And the missing part from my favourite iceberg...”



5<sup>th</sup> slide: Two bears are hugging each other and seem to be whispering and the speech bubble says “From the moment I realised that this problem is of concern to everybody on the North Pole, I notified anyone, I ran until everybody has been notified!”





6<sup>th</sup> slide: A young bear winks at us and the speech bubble says “We need your help!” Then it is your turn to start speaking again and ask your students: “Will we help the little bear and their friends in the North Pole?” and after all your students answer loudly “YES!” you go on to the next section saying: “Let’s see how we can help them.”



So you have ended up designing a creative presentation and succeeded in keeping your students, who have learnt a lot about climate change, on the edge of their seat. Now you are next to the trees. How are you going to create a forest from here? A forest has many trees and we all like the forest more than a single tree. So plant more trees – come up with more creative activities so that you can complete your educational programme on climate change! Your next trees could be, among others, the following:

- The students creating stickers bearing messages like “Don’t let me be on in vain”, “Don’t you need me? Switch me off!” which they could stick on the light switches of their classroom or other classrooms, the PC screens in their PC lab as in many other spots.
- Drawing pictures depicting objects related to climate change and mainly to ways of how to deal with it (e.g. energy saving lamps, wind generators, bicycles etc.).
- “The Climate Change Album”: You can write some questions relevant to climate change on A4 coloured papers e.g. “What is a polar bear in the North Pole thinking?”, “If you could be a super hero for one day, what would you do for the environment?”, “How do you imagine our planet in 50 years time?”, “What would you advise a friend of yours to do every day to protect the environment?”, “If a tree could talk to you, what do you think it would say?” The students could answer or decorate their drawings and then you could gather all these drawings to create a singular album with your students.
- “The Climate Change Story”: You can guide your students to form teams and get involved in writing, illustrating and publishing an original story about climate change.
- Educational videos which you can find in abundance on the Internet about climate change, biodiversity, recycling, energy, energy saving lamps.
- Interactive games from various websites about climate change, saving energy at home etc.

So now you can enjoy with your students your beautiful forest, you can sit in the shade of the trees you have planted and relish the satisfaction of creation, originality and passing of knowledge to your students in an unforgettable and unique way.





## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE MISSION: TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES (ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE)**

Which school subject is considered to be the most demanding as far as teaching and students' comprehension is concerned? The answer is foreign languages. With a relative convenience concerning mother tongue, the mission of teaching foreign languages is rather a hardship. Even dangerous in case students face difficulties and quit the learning process giving as a pretext "I'm not good at it, so why bother, I give up." A wrong ascertainment often made by students.

That is exactly what the teacher should avoid at first hand: their students reaching that point. So how can the teacher convince them and prove to them that learning foreign languages is an exciting game with multiple benefits for all? Precisely! By using imagination, creativity, originality and technology: the contemporary teacher's fundamental key-words.

Let's see the way to combine these key-words with teaching languages so that we create a unique educational programme adapted to our students' needs. What do younger and older children like? Stories of course! Reading about heroes performing incredible actions, stories taking place beyond the

boundaries of the world they live in and grow up daily, funny mix-ups, twists, magical adventures. This very story could be your onset and on account of this story you can continue throughout the school year teaching your students grammar, syntax, vocabulary and whatever pleases you. Not as a text for only reading but as a reference text, keeping up with the books indicated by the Ministry of Education. Have your heroes teach the children with your help and guidance! Here is a model story I wrote to help you achieve your goals and use it on your students:

*In this story anybody a hero could be in fact,  
No matter how well or badly he may act.  
A hero could be one of the knights,  
Who hard to win this lovely girl's heart fights,  
A girl who sits right high up there in the castle's tower  
Combing her long hair with a gentle power,  
She is the thief of his heart, and that's a fact.*

*A hero could also be a sly fox, not missing a chance to catch a hen in a box.  
A hero could be an invisible man, a very dear one,  
Since he wouldn't be seen by anyone.*

*It could have already happened this story  
Transferring smile and knowledge with a lorry.  
Or maybe now that you are reading  
You are pulling the skein changing everything from the beginning?  
Could it lie over there in the distant tomorrow,  
That everybody imagines it being without any sorrow?  
But little does it matter,  
Since we all wherever we like scatter.  
If one can take it, at the top  
With only one step he'll stop,  
But careless should he be,  
In trouble he'll be.*

*There, in that towering castle or in a magical alien land,  
The stage could be set, even on an imaginary island,*

*Rather famous  
To a pirate generous.  
Or in a wide sea far,  
Where a smiley mermaid calls the sailors to come by.  
Or maybe on a glittering star  
That embellishes the sky,  
That looks so bright  
With a colour full of delight...  
But let the story begin,  
So that our interest does not sink in.  
Our heroes should be in place,  
They have already put their attire on with grace  
And the objects their tongues have untied at a rapid pace.  
No instructions have been previously given,  
Nor from the plot do they know where they'll be driven.  
For this simple reason they keep their speech true  
And their thought clear already from the very first clue.  
For you to read they are waiting with immense anxiety  
For they want to know quick  
What the plot for them is going to pick.  
It is very difficult but needs to fit in paper all this variety.  
In this story, as it has already been known,  
Anyone as a hero could have been grown.  
There is no limit in time  
But there is a choice when it comes to the rhyme.  
And the impressive set goes wherever it is fine.  
Don't look for the answer below,  
Cheating is not the right way to go.  
Think what could be happening at last  
And you will get the answer fast.*

*Why at any time a hero anyone could be,  
And why the set anywhere could be?*

*Yes! I am sure you can discover  
The correct answer.*

Each one of the letters (a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z)  
Its place of honour enjoys,  
In this story full of ploys.  
There are only 26 but with a little Bibbidi-Bobbidi-Boo,  
Endless words they form in a row,  
With meaning ecstatic, and feelings a ton.  
All the heroes we know well,  
And those who we can hardly tell,  
Are made of letters and maybe some spell.  
Time may fast depart,  
But the letters are always in its heart;  
They are placed at the top of the chart  
Always incessant.  
The awesome sets, some decorated excessively,  
Are made by letters and hard work exclusively.

Let's get a statement from every performer:

A, a: I am an amazing letter first in line in the alphabet,  
I am very famous and they all love me you bet!  
Because I make up an awesome phrase with z(ed).

B, b: I am a bit round,  
But I can't go on a diet, neither do I need to lose any pound.

C, c: I am rather charming  
But not as much as my cousin, the capital G who is more gangling.

D, d: I am a bit different  
But why should A always be reverent?

E, e: I could easily be mistaken for capital F  
But I have one extra self.

F, f: I am the fantastic letter f,



*With a great musical talent as I am also called F-clef.*

*G, g: I am the most gorgeous letter in the alphabet  
So nobody can easily about me forget.*

*H, h: I am a highly proud letter, with a lot of power  
Standing on my two solid legs on a beautiful flower.*

*I, i: Grammar loves me because I increase in height  
And I always the lovely endings of -ight create.*

*J, j: I represent January, the first month of the year;  
Let's everybody cheer!*

*K, k: I am a key letter since I take part in many words  
And I with my little brother k have the same strong swords.*

*L, l: I have a long boot and I can be a real hoot.  
I can easily be confused with capital i but I'm a techie and I love wifi!*

*M, m: I am a marvelous letter because  
Every single young baby uses me first without any cause;  
I am simple and I can cause on a smiley cheek dimple.*

*N, n: I say Nighty- night and start counting sheep  
So already from the start every child listens to me when they need to go to sleep.*

*O, o: I am an odd letter since the roundest of all  
And I could be mistaken for zero (0) the small.  
That's why try hard to write me carefully like a ball.*

*P, p: I am the prettiest letter and I hide a white animal. Can you in mind bear?  
Of course it's a polar bear!  
I love pizza with pepperoni and my favourite fruit is a pear!*

*Q, q: I am the queen of the alphabet*

*And I can rule the whole planet.*

*R, r: I can run like water on a boat  
And whatever word I enter I giggle the throat.*

*S, s: I get all my bad reputation from an animal that bites as fast as a flash.  
Which one? s..  
When you need quiet, call me at once; sh....*

*T, t: I am rather tall and full of glory;  
I am part of the most usual word: the and everybody knows me!*

*U, u: Usually I run and try but I can't reach the other letters in close-up.  
They leave me behind but I don't give up.*

*V, v: I have a strong voice so everybody is afraid of me.  
They shouldn't panic when they pronounce me!*

*W, w: I am a wonderful letter with two sharp teeth  
So I can eat anything and stand on my feet.*

*X, x: I'm hidden in a box and I look alike my little brother;  
You can use me when you do not agree, don't bother!*

*Y, y: I keep asking all the time why?  
You can answer, don't be shy!*

*Z, z: Even though I am the last letter, I am a zany one.  
But now I need to go to sleep; Zzzz....  
Do all these letters have one leader,  
Or as a powerful team from daylight do they have fun together?*

*They love each other, they are world-famous,  
They always work in a team and they create works beauteous.  
Yet they could be split in two teams apart, in case they didn't want to be mixed up.  
Or else the words would not exist,*

*Among people communication would be missed,  
And a lot of confusion would be the gist.*

*With a 'v' starts the first team's name and it always plays wearing a smile on its face.  
Its members are a, e, i, o and u, and they are as famous as the earth's distance from space.*

*Could you still be looking for the name?*

*"Vowels" is the name; some help to remain.*

*Any ideas about the other team left with its own power?  
Its first letter is 'c' and its members are all the rest except for every vowel.  
They may outnumber the vowels in every sentence  
But without the vowels words make no sense.  
In spelling they seldom cause any concern and they are easy to learn.  
These letters "Consonants" are called and by many are loved.*

*The proof is simple of what could happen should one team left.  
Should in a magic way all the vowels left,  
This is how words would remain bereft...*

*\_h\_n\_, wh\_t \_n\_s\_nc!  
Th\_v\_w\_ls d\_s\_pp\_r\_d\_t\_nc\_.  
Th\_r\_s\_l\_t\_f\_mb\_rr\_ssm\_nt\_nd b\_w\_ld\_rm\_nt.  
Wh\_t\_w\_ll h\_pp\_n\_n\_n\_c\_n\_s\_y,  
\_fth\_v\_w\_ls\_n th\_s p\_r\_gr\_ph d\_n't r\_t\_rn t\_ th\_r pl\_c\_.*

*(Oh no, what a nuisance!  
The vowels disappeared at once.  
There is a lot of embarrassment and bewilderment.  
What will happen no one can say,  
If the vowels in this paragraph don't return to their place.)*

*Should the consonants were out of sight,  
The words would look like sounds from a tribe wild.  
There would only be exclamations and fuss.  
Which means that each team on its own needs a plus.*

They need to cooperate with each other  
 If they form an impressive and profound word would rather.  
 After following the letters for long, a hound  
 This secret found out,  
 And one sunny bright day, when all the letters together were sitting,  
 New words to form after a lot of thinking,  
 It entered their conversation  
 (Without any invitation)  
 And started machinating,  
 And with it as many letters as possible taking.  
 With a sweet harmonious voice, it invited A to make a choice:

“If you weren’t put in many places, many would follow you,  
 Since they wouldn’t have a place not even in a simple cue.”

A answers in a loud voice:

“That makes me happy and that’s what true friends are for.  
 They are always in good times and bad times inseparable and strong for ever more.  
 Everybody here values me.  
 Maybe this is why in the first place I am chosen to be.”

“These over here love each other, they are on good terms and kind,  
 Like two penguins in love in the Antarctica and that’s difficult to find.”  
 The hound quickly like lightning reflected fraught.  
 This was far beyond what it had thought.  
 This was a difficult case.

Wishing for the best, it can do nothing but with its next argument retrace...

“Yes but don’t you have the upper hand in this team?

Just think in how many words you lead:

Arrogant, angry, annoying, awkward, awful, avaricious, aggressive, addicted...

All these words do not describe features of a dream.

(Note to those who are not aware of these words: arrogant: behaving in a rude way,  
 angry: feeling strong emotions which make you want to hurt someone, annoying:  
 making you slightly angry, awkward: making you feel embarrassed, awful: very bad  
 and unpleasant, avaricious: someone who has a strong desire to have a lot of money,

*aggressive: behaving in an angry way, addicted: unable to stop taking a harmful substance)*

*“That is correct*

*But haven’t you kept your ears open to good effect?*

*I don’t linger in one word on my own but I dance around*

*With other letters both on the paper and in the sound.*

*On my own I could barely utter my admiration;*

*But that’s a simple, dull, tiresome and monotonous abbreviation.”*

*“Should I give up now? I am only at the start!*

*But I can’t give up. If people begin to chat?*

*I need to make some decisions, I shouldn’t speak in haste.*

*I shall even spend my night in this place.”*

*Thought the hound without a cheerful face.*

*“Hey, you impressing O, come here!*

*How can you of all allow A to have control, my dear?*

*Aren’t you afraid that these very same letters put you aside?*

*You are not thinking wide.”*

*O who was silent, started singing gaily.*

*“It is true that we make the difference united.*

*There are no distinctions among us, we are not prejudiced.*

*There is no vanity, and we form a team strong and unbreakable all along.*

*As for A, think for a while the short word you said before*

*When we were all together: control.*

*Is there an A in any of the syllables of this word that we haven’t observed at all?*

*Each and every letter has its own part to perform,*

*Its own place to hold,*

*And there is no other letter like us in the norm.*

*You should also learn this in case you ignore:*

*Simply we all play*

*And take our place at the top ever.*

*Every morning skillfully the game “Communication” we play,*

*Every minute and every second of the day.  
We form words on paper, we colour sounds,  
We compose vivace songs, we shine through the clouds,  
We laugh out loud, we take away the pain from the heart,  
We give wings, we fly in spirit, we dance with our eyes shut,  
We fall in love more deeply and madly at every start."*

*"Oh no what a disaster!" the hound thought,  
Keeping its ears low.  
Yet again it does not stop.  
More loudly and imposingly says to U who is peeking at it:*

*"With such a simple shape you are so small,  
How are you helpful when you are put in a word?  
Why are you still here and why haven't you left them for long?"  
"I love your jokes, I really do, but they are too much overstated.  
A letter can be small but that does not mean that it should be underestimated.  
Every letter is unique, it is not heavily formulaic  
And its work is vital for the linguistic mosaic.  
To prove this to you, I bring your name in mind: hound.  
I put myself out of the scene and let's see what happens: hond.  
This word does not exist. Just like that it isn't a word anymore.  
Let's just say that I feel lonely and I want a friend.  
What will we get: hoeund. But this gives us two words in the end;  
Hoe the tool with und the twin brother of and in German.  
A letter is small but so powerful and capable of more than any man.  
Not for one moment should you underestimate the letters' magic plan  
Both on the paper and in the sound; You can be a fan!"  
Making the hound go red of anger U answered back full of pride.  
Once again in its misfortunes the hound was boiling inside.  
It doesn't miss a chance and it goes after E criticizing it aside:*

*"Oh, E you are grand! What is a letter like you doing here,  
In a group so diverse, my dear?  
You are destined for more than that,  
For grandeur and jokes, and from these twenty-five letters apart.*

*Think a lot before you answer, because you are confused with other vowels.  
You can be pronounced with /e/ and /I/ or remain in silence;  
So why don't you start afresh based on your own powers?"*

*"Your way of thinking is a little frustrating and different.  
My shape may be simple, my friend,  
And I may remind the sound 'I' somehow  
But what would happen when I had to only one sound allow?  
Nobody could understand.  
Let me think of a word that gives an example in hand.  
Good, I think I have found it, the colour of action.  
And right now I am whispering it to you: red.  
But if I am pronounced differently - /I/ - , I change the meaning: read.  
What does this mean?  
That each letter and each sound are unique.  
You need to be patient enough into the world of words to sneak.  
Now can you see  
Why each letter has a unique place and cannot be replaced or cannot leave?"*

*"This story has taken too long.  
I'll take my chances with the I and try another song,  
And then I am out of here in a second"  
The hound sadly reckoned.  
"I understand all that but can you explain  
Why should you, the letter I, so many sounds gain?  
You can be called /aI/, /e/ or /I/ but it's not only that.  
In spelling everybody needs to memorise by heart  
If they want to get an agreeable grade at school.  
Why are they so many and they sometimes make children feel like a fool?  
Has a mischief been done at school?"*

*"Everything in grammar and spelling has their set rules  
And logic above all else rules.  
The same thing goes for the sounds of me;  
They are exactly as many as there should be  
To pronounce the words properly.*

*Our mission is to promote communication  
Through magic and not give children a hard time about application.  
Should there be only one sound,  
Students and teachers could not have the correct otherwise found.  
Would have been intermingled all the words  
And I would pity anyone who would be in that place of the world.  
Verbs, articles, nouns, adjectives, cardinals and many others  
Would not have been pronounced properly, but would reign over one another.  
Now I hope you understand why there are so many sounds of me  
And they can make the difference for free,”  
The I answered so loudly that sounded to every little branch.*

*The hound disappointed from the disarming answer,  
Takes the high way leading far away from the amusing group like a sad dancer.  
But just before the bend of the road,  
It says to the letters who were forming words once more:*

*“There are plenty of you, you are smart and fortunate,  
For every day you work together and in harmony cooperate,  
No grudges, no secrets and no decisions separate.  
It seems to me that these are the magic keys  
That get the doors wide open and foster dreams.  
Happiness is so close around  
That you can savour it with a hug jumping up and down.”  
The letters after hearing this without to interrupt  
Felt a sting in the heart,  
For sorrow and loneliness have taken part.  
After a vivacious few-minute talk  
About those important words above,  
They understood what the hound was lacking of,  
Thus making it so sad, lonely and afraid of.  
A true friend to share its feelings, thoughts and words was the one  
Who in an instant would change the hound’s lifespan,  
As in a drawing providing colour and fun.*



You can come up with some images of this story and what emotions they evoke when you have them in mind. Follow the same process from the student's point of view. So many positive messages they can get from this story, among else, about cooperation, teamwork, friendship.

You can write your own story or process mine, which definitely needs modification according to the target classroom, and you can play with your students throughout the school year.

For example, those of you who teach younger learners could take the statements of the letters and prepare with the students' help classroom decorations, drawings or whatever comes to your mind so that you not only decorate your classroom but also teach the English alphabet. Other teachers can pick out paragraphs of the story and have their students draw images writing on them the illustrated words (e.g. from the first paragraph: knight, girl, tower, hair, heart, fox). For those teachers who have older students, you can ask your students to continue the story or fill in a paragraph with missing some of or all the vowels or even consonants. There is a wealth of activities and games you can come up with as long as you set your imagination free and keep in mind what your students want.

For those of you who teach a foreign language you can teach based on a story or you can also try this: combine creativity and originality with technology! The result is a web educational programme aimed at your students who will be able:

- To learn or improve their knowledge of the foreign language.
- To become aware of various important issues such as the environment, climate change, development aid, nutrition etc.
- To enhance their knowledge of computer science.
- To enhance the love for reading.
- To decrease not only their energy imprint but also their school's one.

You can look up digital editions through the Internet or scan and upload short stories (pay attention to copyright!) in the target language to create a blog with the following units:

### **“Let's Read!”**

This unit can have all the uploaded stories you have gathered. You can always add new ones throughout the school year and divide them into

sections according to their topic. You can read these stories in the classroom or assign them for homework.

### **“Let’s See!”**

You can prepare PowerPoint presentations for each story to make it easier not only for your students to read them (two pages instead of one that usually takes up one computer screen) but also yourselves when you are in class.

### **“Let’s Listen!”**

You can record the stories on your own or even better with other colleagues so that your students can improve their accent and develop their listening skills in the target language.

### **“Vocabulary”**

Or as it is also known as Companion. You can pick out some words from the stories that you think will make comprehension difficult and provide their meaning or even translation. If you cooperate with a colleague who teaches another foreign language, you can ask them to translate these words in the other foreign language so that your students will enrich their vocabulary in two foreign languages.

### **“Let’s Play!”**

After your students have read a story, they have listened to and learnt the chosen by you unknown words, they can play comprehension games prepared by you, thus combining knowledge with games that students are so fond of. Let your imagination free to create any activities you want from multiple choice and gap filling to taboo cards and pictionary! Let me give you the rules for the last two mentioned games in case you ignore them or you may have never played yourselves:

**Taboo:** You copy on a sheet of paper an interesting word of your choice from the story – it’s the Guess word. Below this word you write the TABOO words, words that students are not allowed to use while describing the Guess word to their classmates. Aim of the game is for the classmates to guess correctly the Guess word in the time limit. The student describing the word usually has one minute available to provide a correct description to their

classmates. If they can't find the word in the time limit, the student loses points but the class has already won since they have tried to describe or guess the word in the target language without using the TABOO words.

**Pictionary:** You choose a combination of interesting words or even a sentence and you give it to your students. The winner is the student who makes the fastest drawing of it, including all the words of the sentence in their drawing.

### **“e-Class”**

In this unit you can add exercises that are not about the stories you have uploaded for “Let’s Read!”. These stories can come from books, from other sources or even be yours.

### **“Websites to Discover”**

You can add a list with useful websites for your students related to the target language. Focus mainly on those with educational material for your students that would intrigue them for a lingering visit, not a short one.

Now come up with ways to enhance these units to become more interesting and appealing to your students. Let me give you an example: in the unit “Let’s Play!” you could create special web application forms for their answers instead of your students writing them on their notebooks. Think of all the joy they will get from that little intervention. Your students’ answers can be saved in a special file accessed only by you, so that it will be effortless, fast and simple to correct them and send your students the results via email. You can even add some comments on their answers to help them improve and comprehend their mistakes. Getting your students’ feedback can be beneficial for your skills as well.

Should you, led by suspicion, think that your students share the correct answers you can send them after they all have answered the questions or filled in the forms. Remember: there are many solutions as long as you are willing to look for them!



## CHAPTER FOUR

### A CLASSROOM ASSISTANT

I believe it is common true that the teacher's role is undeniably demanding, reserving many hardships and obstacles vital to overcome in order for their mission to be successful the best way possible. A mission that would be much easier if there was an assistant ready to offer their help with any part of the educational process! So why shouldn't you have your own assistant?

I have already made a brief reference to this assistant in the previous chapter: pick one of the story heroes to be your assistant. For instance, the story's hound could help you teach some units of grammar, syntax, vocabulary, even French or whichever unit your imagination dictates.

After picking your assistant, pass the ball to your students to form and sketch them altogether as a group work. Thus you give life to your assistant and at the same time you provide a friend to your students willing to help them attain knowledge. This assistant can appear in exercises, activity papers, games and anywhere else you can think of.

It would be even more creative and original if your students came up with their image and drew it. Let me give you a brief example, your lesson's topic is nutrition and among all else you want your students to know how they can

follow a balanced diet, how to consume more fruit and vegetables, drink milk every morning and eat yoghurt or cheese at least once a day. In other words they need to know to choose wisely what to eat, providing to their body all the necessary nutrients. The most important thing about the lesson's objective is that each one of our eating habits has an impact not only on our body and health but also on our good humour. Students should always bear in mind that if they become accustomed to a balanced diet at an early age, they will probably adopt this way of eating for life.

It is about a rather simple objective as it deals with the students' every day habits. The only difficulty is that it entails eating habits greatly affected by their parents, classmates and friends.

So as you introduce this topic to your class, make sure you have empty packets of diverse types of food with you such as milk, yoghurt, lentils, cereal, pasta etc. Ask your students to think of types of food that offer an abundance of nutrients to their bodies and others that offer less or no nutrients at all. After they spot them, you make two lists on the whiteboard (one with a happy face and the other with a sad face on top) and ask your students to imagine a type of food that if they brought to life and drew, it would talk to them about all the other types of food.

So now let's say they have chosen milk. The first thing to do is to praise them for milk is highly beneficial to their health. If they choose a type of food with less or no benefits to their health (e.g. a fizzy drink), make sure not to mention anything. Keep in mind that it is their choice to make which type of food they will bring to life in the classroom and you do not have a say.

After choosing the type of food, they will need to draw it the way they wish to see it in a comic book. Then they name it with a name of their choice and after that it is time to think of the messages about nutrition this type of food can give them. They record these messages with your help and you have managed in an amusing way to steer their imagination into learning about healthy nutritional choices.

Don't stop here: Combine objects (cross-curricular teaching) to help your students further. Make a Facebook page for your hero and allow your students to write messages on the hero's behalf to their classmates to make them aware of alimentation or even write their own messages or pose questions to the hero (they will be answered by you of course via your hero-assistant).

Moreover, you and your students can design a poster communicating, for example, the milk's benefits or guiding them towards a healthy diet. This poster can be placed near the main entrance to your school or in the classrooms. What about a 3 page A4 folded brochure with brief and useful ideas about balanced and healthy diet? You can also have your students' milk-hero present the production process of their friends: the butter, the yoghurt, the cheese, the cream, the ice-cream or more distant friends: the egg, the apple, the strawberry and many more!

For your English lesson you can use the brochure's content to teach modal verbs: "We should eat vegetables because they are beneficial to our system and contain a variety of nutrients like vitamins, minerals, fibers and many other constituents." After you create this guidance list, your students can give it a title and hand it out to their classmates.

Your students can also open, with your aid of course, their own restaurant! They can come up with a name, create the menu according to the objective of the lesson (types of food or merely their ingredients) and place orders to one another:

Student A: "What would you like to have?" or a more simple one "What's your favourite food?"

Student B: After scanning the student-made menu, the 'customer' answers "I would like pasta with cheese" or "I love pasta with cheese."

Student A: "Excellent choice. Would you like something to drink?" or "Would you like some water or a refreshment? Would you like salad?"

Student B: "Yes, an orange juice, please" or "I don't drink refreshments because they are harmful but I would love one salad with tomatoes, cucumber and onion, please."

The dialogue can go on with students switching roles.

They could even create their own farm! You can gather farm pictures for classroom presentation to excite their imagination about the topic. Encourage them to think and design a farm as big or small as they want with a lot of or few animals, with a lot of or little machinery. In case you have older students you can lecture them on organic agriculture elaborating on organic farms, thus giving them the opportunity to choose between an organic or a conventional farm.

The next day or whenever you tell them to, your students can use their farm sketches to decorate their classroom and also present them to their

classmates describing all the animals, the machinery, the workers, the production process, the package and logo of the products, even advertising ideas and marketing strategies to promote their products!

Just give your assistant the opportunity to share with you and your students their talents and to set the foundation for a pleasant and educational lesson.







## CHAPTER FIVE

### TECHNOLOGY IS YOUR ALLY

Whether you are a computer science teacher or not you are definitely aware of the numerous benefits that new technologies can offer to the educational process. Why don't you take advantage of your students' vast interest in technology, computers and the Internet for your lesson's benefit?

First make sure you delve deeply into how to use a computer but even if you don't have the time to do so, just get really acquainted with using the Internet and social media like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. Thus, it will be easier for you to listen efficiently to your students' needs and interests. It will also help you design your educational programmes more successfully.

Should you have students who are just making their first steps in the Internet and email, while previously they have acquired some knowledge of text processing (e.g. Microsoft Word), you can coordinate a how-to-use-a-website seminar during your (an allotted) teaching hour. Thus you will be able to combine two, three or more objectives of your own desire. Your students' interest in technology will be further aroused. Write down your notes on your notebook and put them into practice!

Let's start with the idea of a 10-minute seminar at the end or the beginning of a lesson: the prepared material on how to create and manage a blog can be divided into sections and presented to the students in the form of a seminar while answering at the same time their questions. Get in your students' shoes and think of what teacher-taught material would become handy to create your own blog. Note down some possible questions by your students:

How can I create a blog?

How can I organise a blog?

How can I change my blog's template?

How can I promote my blog?

How can I write creative announcements in my blog?

How can I upload pictures, audio files or videos in my blog?

How can I protect myself?

How can I be safe while making my announcements public?

How can I make my announcements public successfully?

How can I make my announcements public effectively?

How can I increase the visitors?

How can I introduce forms?

Try to give brief answers. Then just go to your classroom and have fun with your students! What you have managed to do is to create a lesson combining not only the Ministry-designed teaching material, but also the already taught material, now being effectively revised, the safest and more accomplished way of surfing the Net and your students' interest, imagination and creativity.

It has already been mentioned that you can use technology to the advantage of teaching other lessons, for example foreign languages. Each and every lesson craves to be taught in various ways. Let's take for example History.

After gathering the teaching material and thinking of a way to present it to your students, you upload it to your blog or to your school's website, thus creating an e-class marked by cross-curricular teaching and originality. So your students have discovered a more engaging way of learning and at the same time they are able to post their projects on this webpage, as young explorers-historians.

Now let's talk about the structure of a History blog and more particularly one discussing the Balkan Wars (1912-1913).

**The Facts:** This unit contains the most significant information from the student's book about the Balkan Wars (the cause, Balkan alliances, the First Balkan War, the Treaty of London, the assassination of King George I, the Second Balkan War). In a couple of lines you can develop the lesson's most important key-points providing your students with the basic information. In this way you are guiding them towards what to pay attention to and the line of sequence followed by the lesson.

**The Pictures:** The student's book usually comes along with pictures that visualise some facts and promote comprehension. Unfortunately, as these pictures are insufficient most of the times, it would be a good idea to look up for some more in the Internet or scan others from relevant books and upload them to your blog. Don't forget to add captions.

**The Historical Sources:** They play a rather significant part in the illumination of obscure points but they are also scarce in the student's book. Look up and gather more to help your students comprehend more efficiently the lesson's facts.

**The Journal:** You can create a useful educational guidebook either by placing eminent dates on a time line, or by framing them one after the other. For example:

1911: El. Venizelos adopts the strategy of a Balkan conciliation, judging that a military clash is imminent.

1912: (spring) Alliance treaties among Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro (October) the First Balkan War, the occupation of Thessaloniki

1913: (February) The occupation of Ioannina, (May) the Treaty of London, (July) Albania is recognized as an independent country, the assassination of King George I, (June-July) the Second Balkan War.

**Activities:** In this unit you can come up with some activities for you students. They will be given the opportunity to post them on the Internet and not write them on their notebook. They could also create a newspaper of that time. What piece of information would be presented in the front page, which would be the most important article headings, what would be the articles' writing style in the light of the facts?

Don't let my proposal be the beginning and the end. Change it, modify it, and transform it into your own proposal! Your students will relish the innovative teaching approach of History, such a difficult-to-digest lesson. "But why should we care about things that have happened and can't be changed?" This is their most usual reaction when they are facing difficulties comprehending the historical facts. It is not about the context but it is all about the way you teach anything. There is no such thing as an easy, difficult or medium lesson. They are all easy as long as you have managed to dig up a captivating teaching method.

I can still remember when I was at secondary school how much a teacher had helped us become acquainted with meteorological phenomena. The majority were facing an unexplainable difficulty in comprehending the particular subject and in applying it in our everyday life. "Since the weather will be like that tomorrow and it can't be changed, do we need to know or get involved in this? We already have more than enough to learn with all the other subjects," I remember telling our teacher. After having explained the theory and described the northwest winds, temperatures fluctuating from 5 to 9 degrees Celsius, clouds and powerful storms, he assigned us a very interesting project: we should present the weather forecast as a meteorologist would do the following day in the classroom. We got so enthusiastic that we couldn't wait to go home, look for information, watch diligently the weather forecast on TV and prepare our own one. We have had such a great time with those weather forecasts having the map of Greece as a background. The meteorological phenomena didn't seem to trouble us anymore and we were finally able to comprehend all these strange quickly spoken mumbo jumbo that meteorologists said on TV.

Imagine now what would have happened if the teacher instead of the paper map had used a digital one (on the computer screen or a projector screen) with symbols changing with each student's presentation. Maybe some of us would have changed our studies and you would be watching us from the news updating you on tomorrow's weather.

Now let's move on a little further keeping our imagination close by. You want to assign a group project but due to lack of time you can't supervise how they manage to gather all the necessary information and write the assigned project. At the same time you want to help them boost their confidence by avoiding making mistakes or misinterpreting the project's topic. So how will

you manage to assign such a project since the conditions are not complied with? The answer is... with technology!

Create a blog where your students will meet online, they will look for information faster and more efficiently through the Internet or from pre-chosen by you websites, they will discuss and they will make decisions together about their next steps that will lead them to the project's successful completion. While in the meantime you will be able to offer to them your advice and also your guidance simulating a classroom environment. You can achieve all these things outside the limited school time frame. Simply, fast, and for free you have managed to create an e-class, easily monitored and interacted.

In this classroom you can even get bolder in a not that applicable way as in a conventional classroom. Let's say, for example, that you are teaching the importance of the rainforest or the detrimental ramifications of logging, especially of the illegal one, or the exploit of resources. What you want is not only to arouse their imagination but also give them some time to enjoy themselves while at the same time learning one or more of the above mentioned topics.

So after spending a lot of time writing down on your notebook your thoughts, you end up holding a debate dividing your classroom into two teams: an Amazon tribe and a group of farmers wanting to exploit not only the trees of a vast area that belongs to the Amazon tribe, but also the land for cultivation. You want both teams to write their arguments and contradict the arguments of the other team. One thing is for sure, if you held such a debate in the classroom, it would get highly intense, the uproar would be annoying and it is possible that eventually you would not be able to control it. So you are thinking of creating a blog that will host this heated debate.

The students write different posts with their arguments, accessible to every member who can read and contradict. So you end up with an e-structured dialogue with arguments from both teams, not merely from the louder students, with the students' collaboration and juxtaposition of arguments.

If you wish, you can further enrich this creative activity with steps. For instance:

1st step: Each student writes the arguments of their team.

2nd step: Each team's students choose the top 10 of the most powerful arguments and the ones that combine two or three arguments.

3rd step: The students read the arguments of the opposing team which they try to contradict with a majority-prevalent counter-argument.

4th step: You offer to them your advice and you guide them for future debates.

Once more you have combined technology with fun and learning. You have managed to create an activity that it would have been impossible to apply at school. What you are required to do is rather simple: add technology to imagination and creativity, subtract self-imposed obstacles, multiply knowledge for your students and divide anachronistic teaching methods.







## CHAPTER SIX

### THE TRAP OF THE ROTE LEARNING

“Play”: Journalists often compromise the objectivity and pluralism of opinions, turning themselves into “pause”, “play”: outlets of politicians and other prominent people offering financial favours “stop”.

Briefly this is how learning by rote works in the students’ minds, like a CD in a Cd player. They waste a lot of their time and energy memorising numbers of pages from various subjects, mainly History and Essay Writing, failing context comprehension and the inter connection of what they are trying to memorise for a limited time span.

A student who has taken the rote learning path does not want to comprehend what they read, to come up with questions to pose to their teacher, to combine facts and develop their critical thinking, they are interested in how fast they can memorise a paragraph, then a page and a whole chapter. Their joy derives from the results they get from their ability to record texts in their memory, not from learning and comprehending the contexts of their school book. On the other hand, the teacher is pleased because their student performs satisfactorily in their tests and makes sure not to include any critical thinking questions, that would only spoil the secret to success.

This is one of the reasons that has led some of the Greek students to celebrate as national days the Greek Revolution for Independence of 1821 on 28<sup>th</sup> October and Ioannis Metaxas' refusal on 25<sup>th</sup> March (the dates are in reverse order). That is of course if they haven't completely wiped out from their memory these two significant events that have altered decisively the history of Greece and everything comes down to an "I don't remember"... But why should anyone get irritated and many times wonder about the students' answers every time there is a question before the Greek parade starts?

Something similar occurs to other countries as well, since students confuse important historical facts of their country. This result is perfectly normal when there are no questions that demand from the student to combine their knowledge and mainly their own critical thinking to form their answer, then a mechanism functions that just stores pieces of knowledge for a limited time span.

Rote learning, to all appearances only, helps on the one hand the student to attain satisfactory grades and on the other hand the teacher to prove the high quality work they perform, since their students get high scores. Yet many problems stem from this point, problems that interfere with the individual's assimilation into society and the perceptual skills in problems that emerge from everyday life. It is clear that rote learning should be frowned upon and not awarded.

How will the teacher be able to spot and deal with rote learning instances from their students? Spotting rote learning can be achieved by means of both oral and written answers from students. The student who builds rote learning tends to find easy the questions that can be answered by copying blindly unchanged paragraphs from the textbook. When tested orally they sometimes pause as they try to remember the exact word from the textbook that will guide them to the next sentence or the next paragraph of the text. So the answer is given directly identical as the one in the book.

It is noticeable that in their written answers they follow the punctuation of the book in such a degree that it gives the impression they were hiding a cheat sheet. They are unwilling to participate in questions combining different parts of the text and do not pay attention during the lesson since they will be able to memorise the text at home. They will be ready to answer any questions posed by the teacher the following day orally or written in a test. They go to school just because they have to and due to the

science/workshop courses that demand their active engagement and they can't be learnt by heart. Their sole problem is to enhance their memorising techniques and how to store more information in memory in less time.

It is the teacher's responsibility to deal with rote learning by changing their teaching and assessment methods. While explaining the lesson they should keep students alert with questions that combine different parts of the already taught material. They shouldn't just settle for questions taken only from one chapter but from many ones. In order to answer such a question the students need to comprehend thoroughly the taught material, thus rote learning will not provide adequate knowledge. What is more, the teacher, while the student is answering a question, should cut in to ask a relevant question. That way they will detect if the student has fully comprehended the lesson or just remembers what was in the text.

As far as the written tests are concerned, the teacher should come up with questions that would ask students to use their critical thinking and their ability to combine knowledge from various subjects. We shouldn't be surprised by the fact that in some universities students sit for their finals with their books open. Keeping the book open means that the student fully comprehends what they have studied, furthermore, in case they have practised for rote learning they won't be able to answer correctly as the carefully chosen questions depend upon: the student's thorough comprehension of the lesson, their critical thinking, their combining way of thinking and their perceptual skills.

An insurmountable problem, as far as the written exams are concerned, is Essay Writing assessment and the unfavourable dimensions of rote learning in this subject. Students are already familiar with the issues they will be asked to write their opinion about, so what could be more simple and relaxing than adopting another person's opinion, memorising causes, consequences and solutions to problems for a wide variety of topics. There are many essays almost identical as far as the ideas are concerned - the agreement on such delicate issues is so amazing! So throughout the school year students store in their memory as many diverse issues as they can up until the final exams day, when unfolding their talent, they get high grades securing thus a place in the university of their choice. Work fast and easily with complete disregard for knowledge. But why bother? It is just a subject and we learn by heart once in a while; it doesn't matter. This path has been chosen by so many...

Yet real life demands that we think correctly, take grave decisions, control all the input we get from TV, practise critical thinking for what we hear on the radio, choose what to read on the Internet based on sound criteria, collaborate at work with our colleagues, combine speech with politicians' actions, vote using our critical thinking and morals, and that we don't become victims of irresponsible choices.

Rote learning just can't offer all the above and it may seem innocent in the subject of Essay Writing or the rest, but it is guilty for the course of society in general, and for any weaknesses in critical thinking, making decisions and choices, asserting rights, being bold and thinking.

Each teacher must fight against rote learning and discourage their students from practising it. Creativity, imagination and innovation are attributes that can nourish the students' critical thinking and ability to perceive what surrounds them, as well as the messages bombarded by contemporary Sirens.



# ASSESSMENT



*Surname:* Hoooo

*Name:* Owlle

*Class:* Year 4

*School Year:* 2015-2016





## CHAPTER SEVEN

### ASSESSMENT

This is a taboo topic for most of you. A topic highly debated by experts and non-experts. Your student's assessment is thereby your own assessment.

At the end of the year your students have completed all the tests, projects and exercises, and now it is time to give them their final grades. So you are required to grade their overall performance in your lesson or lessons, something neither easy nor simple. One misjudged assessment could result in letting down your student, making them feel wronged and losing their interest on the particular subject. It is only reasonable for you to wonder how to dodge these uncomfortable situations and how you can grade your students in a fair way.

It is truly not an easy task but you can once again resort to your imagination. Think of the grades you got as a student. Were the grades you had satisfactory? Did you ever get the feeling that your grades in a particular subject did not meet your expectations for your efforts in class? What do you believe was misjudged or not taken into consideration by your teachers? Your answers will help you assess your own students.

It is true that many things have changed since you were children but many other things have not been touched by time. What is more, try to think of some ways to assess their efforts without taking into consideration merely their scores in tests or exams. The following ways could be of some help:

#### **- Make Your Students' Profile**

You could write on a sheet of paper each student's positive and negative aspects and as time passes to update it regularly. For instance: John is better at theoretical subjects and not that good at science subjects. He prefers open-ended questions to close-ended questions. Mary is interested in Maths but she finds it difficult to memorise facts in History. She loves reading literary texts and she excels in reading and spelling. Be careful! Never compare one student with another (John is better than Mary at History but he is not as good as Mary at Maths). The comparison does not help you at all and is a rather risky habit that some teachers have to evaluate their students (Mary is better at Maths so all the students will be assessed in relation to Mary's performance). If you know your student's profile you will also know ways to assess their performance more suitably.

#### **- Exercises Adjusted to Each Student's Abilities**

Try to create for some subjects exercises adjusted to each student's interests. It is a painstaking and time-consuming effort but the outcome will show you that you have many competent students. Keeping as a reference point each student's profile, think about which aspect they would like the most and what would impress them regarding the comprehension of an ancient Greek text. Boys usually love the segments that talk about war preparations, conflicts, guns and military equipment while girls prefer texts about women beautification, the customs and traditions in ancient times, the heroes' and especially heroines' sentiments. So why don't you prepare a set of questions for boys and another set for girls? If you can't do it for each student individually then you can just divide the question for boys and girls.

#### **- Combining Subject-based Exercises**

Come up with homework exercises that will demand the combination of different fragments from what you have already taught. Offer them the opportunity to comprehend your lesson as a whole unit and not just

fragments. This action will help you identify and explain again anything they seem to have difficulty with long before they take a test.

### **- Combining Learning-based Exercises**

Opt for exercises that combine learning today's lesson with the help of yesterday's. It will help you keep track of what your students have managed to learn so far, help those who are facing difficulties or are too reluctant to ask for help.

### **- Let Your Own Students Assess You**

Create a game with your students aiming to elicit what you could do to improve your teaching and the points you should focus on. For example, you can have a little box in which at the end of the lesson the students anonymously will leave a piece of paper with the general sensation of the lesson and anything else they feel like sharing with you. So you will have a first-class feedback which will help you improve your lesson and make it more student-centred. It is an excellent opportunity to get the students in the examiner's shoes and understand what they need to pay attention to and how your assessment is performed.

### **- Student's Self-Assessment**

Design activities through which the student is given the opportunity to assess themselves, for example creative projects, the participation and actualisation of a group plan. Help them by observing regularly their course and show them ways to improve themselves.

### **- The Assessment Criteria List**

Prepare and hand out a list with the assessment criteria. For example,

- Participation in the classroom
- Commitment and responsibility for assigned homework
- Individual effort to comprehend the objectives of the lessons
- Collaboration with classmates
- Contribution to group projects
- Ability to combine taught material to complete an exercise
- Using innovative and creative ways to draw up a project (for example new technologies)

Hold a talk with your students about these criteria letting them know why you think they are important and what exactly you expect of them. Make sure they understand that your assessment will not be based solely on tests and exams but mainly on their overall performance, the effort they are making throughout the year, and also their inclinations and individual interests.

The goal of the assessment is not to grade students but to check to what extent the student has comprehended and assimilated the teaching material. What is more, it aims to help the teacher check for any gaps in knowledge so as to teach them again, improving at the same time their teaching abilities. The students should be aware of this from the beginning of the school year. The teacher ought to establish an atmosphere of mutual constructive trust as the students will seek their advice on how to improve themselves and become better. They could even discuss with the teacher personal issues that affect their performance at school. How are you going to achieve that?

- Act naturally and in an honest way. Talk to them as you would talk to your children and remember that you are a teacher, not a politician.
- Do not pretend that you know everything. Should you come across a question that you can't answer or you are not certain of, tell them that you will look it up and provide the answer the following lesson. Your students will appreciate your candour.
- Don't use difficult words unknown to your students to impress them. What they get is that you are setting an unbridgeable gap between them and you.
- Don't assign an excessive amount of homework. The students will think that you have no consideration for their already overloaded schedule with their other lessons and other extra-curricular activities and that you don't stand by them.
- Hold open and calm discussions with them. Make them feel that they can confide in you their problems and that you will be there for them when they ask it for.
- Don't betray them and don't do anything that will end up as an unnecessary change.
- Don't change the way you behave. They will sense it immediately and they will doubt you.

Generally speaking, think of which characteristics of a person would not make you trust them, who you would never share your thoughts with and

who you would not ask for help from. These are exactly the characteristics that you should avoid. Be careful though, because your students have a sixth sense and can tell the difference between real and fake interest. They can also sense whether you want to help them every time that is needed or only once. You can earn their trust with your honesty and confidence. Would you ever like to have a friend for only a week or a month? Neither would your students.



Volunteer, Responsibility, Consistency

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### VOLUNTEERS IN ACTION

Some teachers urge their students to get involved in volunteering, for example, they clean their schoolyard, the city's beaches, their neighbourhood and the groves where they go on one-day excursions. These actions are worthwhile mentioning and the students participating in them are lucky. They understand from a young age the meaning of voluntarism and the citizen's active part in society.

Their contact with voluntarism and their participation in voluntary actions should not be restricted to some, most of the time, symbolic actions. On the contrary, teachers throughout the school year should make sure that students always make decisions based on voluntary and altruistic behaviour.

Think of ways that you can achieve this goal in. It is not an easy task as on the one hand it will have to be long-term and on the other hand the students' interest and commitment should remain aroused. Once again set your imagination free and come up with ways to combine duration, students' interest and teaching objectives.

Note down on your notebook your ideas and discuss them with your family, your colleagues, and your friends and you are bound to outdo yourselves. What follows are some examples:

**Toys/Clothes Bank:** Your students can create a special “bank” at school where they will gather all their personal things they no longer need, like old toys and clothes, to give away to their underprivileged peers of the local area.

Steps to actualise this action:

1. Choose the place where all the offered things will be stored.
2. Posters and invitations for this action to sensitise their classmates from other local schools, parents and the local society.
3. Two students from each classroom should be charged to collect and record the offered things in the bank.

**Helping Children to Read and Write:** Students can help younger children learn how to read and write using their books and offering them everything necessary (workbooks, pencils, pens, erasers, rulers,)

Steps to actualise this action:

1. Students can come up with or design a logo (e.g. a ribbon, a sticker etc.) for each participating student-volunteer so that they can be identified with by their classmates and be approached to ask for their help.
2. Student-volunteers help other students during recess or at the end of the school day for as long as the teacher wishes to sit and supervise the process or even offer their help.

**Planting Vegetables:** Students will plant some vegetables (tomatoes, carrots etc.) at the school yard. When these vegetables grow, they will offer them to underprivileged members of the local society or institutions.

Steps to actualise this action:

1. Students can buy seeds or ask from their parents.
2. The school should provide everything necessary for planting (gloves, shovels, hoes etc.).
3. The school should provide a part of the yard with soil or special tanks with soil where the students will plant their seeds.



**Integrating Students with Special Needs:** Students can visit a school for students with special needs and occupy them with a number of activities (playing a game, reading, writing a short letter, taking pictures, doing jigsaw puzzles etc.). Students can keep going to this school once or twice a week until the end of the school year.

Steps to actualise this action:

1. Students should come up with interesting games/ activities and play with the students with special needs.
2. Students can buy useful presents for them (colour pencils and markers, pencils etc.).

**Sharing Computer Knowledge with the Elderly:** Students can teach retired people or older teachers or anybody with a little or no knowledge at all of computers and mainly using the Internet, e-mails and blogs.

Steps to actualise this action:

1. Students should draw up the course outline using their teacher's help.
2. The school should provide all the necessary equipment (boards, laptops, projector, notebooks).

**Helping in an Animal Centre:** Students can support some of the animals of the local animal centre. This support means that not only they have to gather food for them but also that they have to visit them, feed them, play with them and spend a lot of their time.

Steps to actualise this action:

1. Students will have to gather food (mainly cans) for their furry friends somewhere in their classroom or at school and if they wish some toys as well.
2. What's next, students visit the animal centre and ask the person in charge information about how many times a week they are allowed to visit the animals, if they can walk them etc. You can imagine their first day at the animal centre ...

15:00 – Students are gathered at the meeting point, the main entrance of their school, and put the collected food and toys for the animals of the animal centre in bags.

15:20 – The person in charge answers students' questions and gives them advice on how to feed the dogs, where to stroke them, and how to keep them safe while walking. Students give them their presents and get the leashes to walk them. They are so thrilled about walking the dogs!

15:30 – All the leashes are fastened to the dog's collars and students take them for a walk in a mountain near the animal centre. During this walk they stroke the dogs and play with them. It is a memorable walk not only for the students but also for the dogs.

17:00 – After the walk, during which students had two stops to admire the breathtaking view, they return the dogs to the animal centre to feed them.

It was a unique, unforgettable experience. Just like in every activity that time and help are offered by an individual for free to benefit the society.

Another way to combine the long-term voluntary activity with your students' interest is to create one action that requires the active participation of many people. Cleaning up a hill or a small forest in the city could be one. Have a look at the journal...

60 Days Before the Action: Students are gathered to find places in the city facing rubbish issues especially the forest close to the city.

50 Days Before the Action: Students draw up a catalogue with the most rubbish-infected parts of the forest and add some photos taken by themselves.

45 days Before the Action: They communicate with the registered office of the city council to inform it about their initiative, the place they are going to work on and the necessary equipment (big plastic bags, gloves, a truck to gather the rubbish).

35 days Before the Action: They inform their schoolmates, parents, teachers and members of the local council with posters, invitations, posts on social networks about their initiative. They also try to gather up all the needed equipment.

20 days Before the Action: A meeting is held with the parents so that students along with their teacher can brief them on the next steps they are to take and how they are going to ensure their safety during the action. The benefits that rise from their involvement in a voluntary action and their active participation are highlighted.

8 days Before the Action: The teacher in charge of the action visits once again with their students the chosen place to take the last pictures. They take into consideration the way to collect the rubbish and the safest course to follow in order to avoid any injuries.

2 days Before the Action: Students check the equipment and hand out a list of what each student should carry with them (a bottle of water, a hat, a mobile phone etc.).

On the day of the action:

At 15:00 students meet at the entrance of the school, they hand out the equipment and form small teams based on what they are going to gather (the aluminium team, the plastic team, the glass team etc.).

At 15:45 the students' mission begins. They collect rubbish safely wearing gloves and holding plastic bags.

At 17:00 a small truck from the city council comes to gather the plastic bags divided according to their containing material.

Next mission: Students can arrange a similar action engaging more participants – all students of their school or, an even more ambitious plan, the students from all the schools of their city.

Encourage your students and mainly allow them to use their critical thinking to express their true feelings, to discuss free, to dream often and to travel mentally. Help and guide them when they ask you to or when you sense that they need a little push-up to reach their goal and to create unimaginable things. Help them understand this and do their utmost to nourish it. Help them have faith in themselves, their dreams, their plans and stand on their own feet in order to fight for their conquest. Everything is possible and attainable for your students, just make sure you constantly remind them of this through your teaching.



## CHAPTER NINE

### THE CLASSROOM OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Learning is not restricted inside the walls of a classroom, to educational programmes and other activities. It is lifelong and goes on in many places such as at home, the museum, the archaeological site, the football field, the city's square, even the supermarket or the grocery of the neighbourhood. Learning outside the classroom completes learning inside the classroom, illuminates it, supports it and makes it more approachable to the student.

The most important of the above “classrooms” is by far the house, the life inside the family's embrace, the parents who contribute to their children's development. The parents' part is of equal importance as the teacher's and their collaboration is highly beneficial for the students. Each one holds a piece from the child's education puzzle in their hands, the teacher has the piece of formal education while the parent the piece of non-formal education. Should these pieces be united, the child will be educated the best way possible. If you want to help your children to nurture their critical thinking and creativity as parents, a simple, yet crucial, question should be posed: “What do they need me to do?”

There is only one thing that all children throughout the world want from their parents: time. If you sit for a while to reflect on this, you will see that if you have no time you can do nothing in your life let alone focus on the development and cultivation of your child – the most important person to you. If you do give them time, then give them some more.

By writing this book I am fully aware of the existing socio-economic condition that affects all of us and not only parents on a daily basis. I am also a member of our society challenged to survive in the same society as you, the readers of this book. I am writing this brief note for those wondering if I am addressing to parents who have no real problems but ample time at their disposal to focus on their children's development. If you made this conscious decision to perform your duty as parents, then you should revisit your attitude and devote as much time as possible playing and learning with your children.

Just like the teacher has to make the great leap to their imagination and creativity, the parent should also follow the teacher's example by making changes to their schedule to save more time for their children. So, are you ready? I guess the answer is yes since you continue reading. I will share with you the next steps and some pieces of advice directly applicable.

Your child comes back home after an exhausting day at school bearing homework, problems, projects to be completed along with anxiety of whether they will manage once again to live up to the challenge of the next day. What do they expect from parents? A smile for starters. What could be the best way to welcome your child back at home if not with a warm-hearted smile? Its immediate effect is relief, it will make the child forget anything disagreeable from school and ready to share it with you.

You serve them food reminding them at the same time some crucial hygiene rules (don't command them "wash your hands" rather remind them gracefully "have you washed your hands?"), then you invite them to the table. You eat with them and try not to keep looking at your watch making them anxious as they won't have time to do their homework if they don't hurry up. Mealtime is very important and you should respect it. Ask them questions about their day at school, what was the highlight of the day or an unpleasant moment, if they had a test or if they made a new friend. Try not to bombard them with questions and don't be judgemental. By being their parent you can't be objective, no matter how hard you try.

Then, give them some time to relax and digest food. It would be ideal to have a fixed time everyday, let's say for example one hour or an hour and a half after mealtime, when you can stay with them while they do their homework; again a fixed time every day so as not to get distracted. Try to make their room brighter and eliminate any unwelcome sounds that could distract them. What you have managed is to make your child feel safe as they know you are close by and you can answer any questions that come up or boost their confidence as you have taken care of the room lighting, keeping their attention and eliminating any disturbing sounds.

As far as early-primary school students' parents are concerned, it would be ideal to sit in a chair next to them guiding them how to do their homework. For older students merely your presence would suffice. You could keep yourself distracted by reading a book, knitting, drawing or even performing office chores since not a minute goes by without you getting anxious for your job. Come up with a strategy, present it to your child and help them apply it. As the days go by you can supervise its proper application. Here is an example of a studying strategy for early primary school students:

- List down every subject and next to them write the appointed exercises (for example: English: student's book, ex ..... from pg....., Workbook: ex..... from pg....., Maths: ex..... from pg....., History: ex..... from pg.....).
- Ask your child their favourite subject from the ones listed.
- Start with that subject guiding them how to do their homework. For example, let's take English: first they will have to read the text to remember what it was about, then you can discuss the text with them making sure that there are not unknown words. Then supervise while they do their homework intervening when you think it's necessary. Make sure you give them some time before you help them. If you hurry to help them, your child will stay with the impression that this exercise was too difficult for them to do and they would never be able to complete any other exercise without your intervention; or even worse they will get lazy because they will know that in the end you will help them do all their exercises successfully and without mistakes.
- Every time your child finishes with the assigned homework of a subject, hand them the list to cross out this subject or mark it as completed. Then they will continue with their next favourite subject fully aware of their progress.

- After finishing all their homework you can ask them if they have encountered any difficulties in some exercises or if they feel that they have any queries you could help them with.

- Make sure you supervise them, not help them, putting all their books, notebooks and whatever necessary for the next day in their school bag. They zip the school bag shut and place it far away from their desk.

You are ready to begin their education through funny, imaginative and creative activities! Give them some time to regain their strength and continue your journey to learning. Apart from the time you have decided to spend with your child to help them with their homework, you should find some time to devote on recreational activities. Forget about the troublesome problems, chill out, take a deep breath and become children again, innocent and carefree. You will be able to spend some quality time with your children if you come up with entertaining innovative activities.

Think of not ordinary team games which you can take part in. Create your own games with your child, something unique designed only for your family and friends. There are so many ideas to help your child discover their inclinations by means of combining knowledge with learning. Here are some of the sparks I would love to share with you hoping that they will incite your imagination to come up with new ones:

- Create Your Own Puzzle

Present some family photos and ask your child to choose which one they would like to see and also work on as a puzzle. Pose questions that will guide them and promote their critical thinking “How can we make this photo a puzzle?” or “How can we make (the plural pronoun is very important) a durable puzzle that will not fade after many usages?” After they answer your questions help them stick at the back of the photo a sheet of cardboard and draw the puzzle pieces on the photo. Then help them cut with caution the puzzle pieces and start working on the handmade puzzle. The child should complete the puzzle almost entirely by themselves, you just step aside by giving encouraging feedback.

- Create a Story with Particular Objects

You can choose 4 to 5 familiar to your child objects (the child should know not only about their word but also their usage, for example, if you opt for a pencil, the child should not only know how to utter “pencil” but they should also be aware of what a pencil can do and where it can be used), present these



objects on the floor and ask them to combine these objects to come up with a story. This is a way to nurture not only their vocabulary but also their imagination. Should you ask them to write this also, you will be nurturing their writing skills enhancing their spelling too.

- Create Handicrafts with Diverse Materials Mainly from Nature

Visit the park of your neighbourhood to collect branches, leaves (mainly dry ones), small stones and whatever you find appealing – once again your child has the final say, you just help them providing only feedback. Once you get home put everything on the floor and spend a few minutes thinking the possibilities, what to do with all these – something for your home, maybe an ornament for your child's bedroom. Give your child the opportunity to imagine what they can create with the collected materials. Ask them to come up with a way to work with all these materials (using glue, scissors, rope, ribbons etc.) and supervise the process without interfering unless of course there is the possibility of an accident from a careless move. Place their creation in a prominent position and talk about it with your friends. Your child's satisfaction will be great and their joy from the laudatory remarks immense.

- Form Figures with Play Dough.

Everybody loves to form imaginary little people, animals and odd constructions with play dough. You can think of a theme or recount a short story and your child can try to form all the images created in their mind with play dough. Ask them to focus on 2 or 3 thoughts during your recounting. Supply them with extra materials, for example, buttons, threads, pasta etc.

- Create Unique Bookmarks

There is no need for your child to fold the book pages or abuse them with metallic paperclips. Help them make their own special bookmarks, a product of their talent and artistic effort. Let them on their own to think of the dimensions of the bookmark and the needed materials. Once again you will remain passive through the whole procedure.

- Create Your Own Poster

Why use standard posters to decorate their room? Create your own ones! Allow your child's imagination to transform a sheet of A3 paper size into a work of art for their bedroom or any other part of the house. One idea is to draw their favourite food with its ingredients at the bottom and put it on your fridge door or any empty wall space in the kitchen.

#### - Make Your Own Magazine

Nurture your child's imagination, writing skills and critical thinking by putting forward the idea of a few-page magazine. Designing the cover, choosing the articles, writing short texts, choosing the pictures, routine paging are some of the benefits arising from your child's total effort to create their own magazine. Should their idea be found interesting from their classmates, they could also take part in it.

#### - Write Your Own Puppetry Script

It may sound challenging, but you can write your own script for puppetry or shadow play and what is more you can perform your own special show for friends and family. You will be surprised from what your child's imagination can create, something you should learn from.

#### - Organise Your Weekly Healthy Diet Plan

Make sure all the designed at home activities are closely related to what the child has acquired from school. One such activity on alimentation could be the organisation of a weekly healthy diet plan. Whether this diet will be healthy or not it will depend on your own participation. Take a white A4 or even better A3 paper sheet. First of all the child designs a table identical to the one at school, adding Saturdays and Sundays in the columns and leaving only 5 lines (breakfast, brunch, lunch, afternoon snack, dinner). Elicit from your child what they have learnt at school about various types of food posing some questions (which types of food are beneficial, which are detrimental, how often we should eat fruit and vegetables, how many times a week we should eat meat etc.). Ask them to list down their favourite and their least favourite food (one list with a happy face on top and the other with a sad one). Talk with them about the food pyramid and the benefits to our system deriving from types of food that are not savoury and thus placed in the sad face list (most of the times these are pulses, green vegetables and vegetables in general). Then help them draw up their weekly diet plan which you will help them follow. A predefined day of the week (for example on Sundays) you can devote some time to your child and together you can organise the next week's diet plan.

#### - Pen Pals

For those parents who have older children, you could combine their development of writing skills along with what they have already known about computers and the use of e-mails. You can look for friends for your child with

the teacher's assistance so that your child can not only practise the currently learning foreign languages but also share their thoughts. After finishing their homework you can help them write e-mails to their foreign friends.

- Create a Blog with/ without a Specific Subject

You can enhance your child's computer skills by creating and coordinating a blog with or without a specific subject and taking into consideration your child's interests and talents. There are many how-to videos online that help those who want to carry out such an activity along with the child but lack knowledge. With your every day assistance your child can write a text, a large or brief one, and post it to their blog (at first they will do this with your help and later on their own). The texts could be written in English or any other foreign language your child can speak. In this way they practise speaking foreign languages and also they make their blog accessible to other peers from around the world.

When you have finished with this section of learning and creating, it should be on the child to decide how to spend their remaining free time before they go to bed. They can engage themselves to whatever they wish without you pressuring them or pointing to them what to do. They can watch TV, play their favourite PC games or chat on Facebook with their friends. You can only set together the time limit for these activities, so they have dinner, brush their teeth and go to bed. A good idea could be to read to them an illustrated story before they fall asleep. Their imagination will be working even during sleeping.

For those of you who want to get away from your house with your child, you can choose together a destination and organise your visit there. That place could be the museum of the city, even the supermarket to do your everyday shopping. Should opt for the museum you can use their knowledge about the exhibits from the school book. You can bring the school book with you to revise all those interesting things that they have learnt. Let the magic of the museum's atmosphere have its effect on their imagination. You can become their tour guide in both space and time.

For those who choose the Public or Children's Library of your city, make sure, in case this is your first visit there, to get the library card for your child with the librarian's help and after skimming through many colourful stories you could borrow 2 or 3 ones. Once you return home you can start reading it and

performing creative activities that you can come up with while reading the story.

If you have chosen the supermarket, you can bring the math book with you and while going through the shelves you can look at the prices and form rapid math problems. Make sure you check what your child is currently learning in Maths at school or you won't be able to help at all. On the contrary you will make them question their knowledge about this subject. A simple activity could be to make them read aloud the prices while a more challenging one could be the following: while shopping you ask your child to write down on a sheet of paper all the prices. Once you have finished, just before you pay you ask them what the sum of your purchases is. When they give you their answer you praise them for their effort, if they have made the wrong calculations you help them trace their mistake and come up with the correct answer. Finally you go to the checkout and once the assistant gives the same amount as your child did then you praise them once again.

Think of more activities that can take place in the supermarket, for example putting the purchased items in the shopping bag (opt for cloth or plastic reusable bags) after separating them into categories: bathroom, refrigerator, detergents etc. The potentials of learning with fun derived from every place are unlimited, like your imagination!

The above steps from the time the child enters home after school to getting ready for the night's sleep are adjustable according to age, gender, the interests and character of each child. The ideal person to modify these steps and adjust them to their child is every parent. They are the ones who know the best.

What you have read so far address to parents with children in early primary school (with the exception of the creative activities after homework), who should be extremely careful since from the early classes of primary school the foundations of learning start to be formed. It is vital for the child, always with the parent's help, to comprehend from the beginning the learning strategy, the way to solve an exercise, responsibility, the schedule, consistency, the development of skills and the power of collaboration and group work.

In this effort the parent should act as a role model for their child and make sure their actions and their behaviour go along with what they advise and say to their child. If this is not the case then the child will end up confused trying

in vain to find a way to respond to stimuli or to any situation that will encounter at home or in society in general.

# Index

## Learning Foreign Languages Through the Internet

### MLearning Languages Though the Internet for Free

101languages (<http://www.101languages.net/>): It is probably the best website to learn a foreign language. Free categorised material (accent, phrases and vocabulary, information in the target language, even travel guides!) for 51 languages! What is more this website allows you to watch online a number of TV channels in the target language.

Book2 (<http://www.goethe-verlag.com/book2/>): This website contains 100 lessons offering beginners fundamental vocabulary in more than 40 languages and in about 1600 language combinations. Even if you don't know anything, you will learn to say short phrases with the correct accent in real every day conditions. This method combines successfully the sound with the text in the benefit of foreign language learning.

BBC - Languages (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/>): BBC's excellent initiative for learning a foreign language. You can have audio and visual video lessons, phrase of the day, advice, stories, TV channels and newsletter for some fundamental expressions in 36 languages.

Forvo (<http://www.forvo.com/languages/>): In my opinion the motto of the website "All the words in the world. Pronounced." fits its context. You can find 850.129 words and 846.815 accents in 257 languages.

My Languages (<http://www.mylanguages.org/>): If you are thinking of learning a new language and you need some boost to grammar and vocabulary, then this is the ideal website. You can find useful and free sources as lessons, linguistic tools, downloadable sound files and articles.

Surface Languages (<http://www.surfacelanguages.com/>): An online portal with sources to learn more than 35 languages. The goal of the website is to offer free, independent and accurate information on learning foreign languages and sources for linguists. You can find a wealth of phrases and hours of sound files from native speakers along with interactive cards and learning methods following the multiple choice system. You don't need to download anything and plus it is free.

Digital Dialects (<http://www.digitaldialects.com/>): A website with free online games aiming at learning a foreign language. You play games in 60 languages and earn a substantial knowledge (numbers, colours, fruit, vegetables, animals, vocabulary, etc.) of the chosen language.

Linguanaut (<http://www.linguanaut.com?>): A website with phrases, videos, and the alphabet in more than 50 languages. More than 101 phrases and videos cover a multitude of diverse topics such as greetings, directions and other everyday phrases are waiting to be discovered.

From Language to Language (<http://www.langtolang.com/>): A multilingual dictionary where you can translate 26.343.049 words from 2.162 bilingual dictionaries. But it is more than just a common dictionary as you can find: the word of the day, a rather inventive word quiz, a word formation game and useful phrases for tourists (basic phrases, greetings, questions, days, months and numbers) in the unit "Traveler." A user-friendly webpage where you can have lots of fun.

Babbel (<http://www.babbel.com/>): Babbel offers a new way to learn a foreign language. The learning system combines effective learning methods and technology. Interactive courses will boost your grammar skills, vocabulary and accent. You will advance fast and enjoy it in the meantime. It is available only in 7 languages.

Word2word (<http://www.word2word.com/course.html>): Here you can find websites aiming at people's mutual understanding when using a language. These websites offer courses to help people teach each other a language.

Babelnation (<http://www.babelnation.com/>): A free service offering online courses to learn 5 languages (Spanish, French, German, Italian, Portuguese). Whether you want to travel the world or boost your linguistic skills on account of your profession or merely to learn a language you like, this website offers free online courses.

Speak7 (<http://speak7.com/>): You can find free courses in 7 languages (Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian and German). That's why it's called "speak7". The material of the website could be a good way to start or improve your skills in one of the above mentioned languages.

Elanguageschool.net (<http://www.elanguage-school.net/>): This is thought to be the best website to learn many languages online. In my opinion this could be true as there is an assortment of the best tools from a variety of sources that makes learning a language as easy as possible. You just choose the preferable to you language and you start. Just like that.

Language Online (<http://webgerman.com/languages/>): A website that focuses on free online language learning including many tools.

Lexilogos (<http://www.lexilogos.com/english/index.htm>): It is about an extensive group of sources studying the languages around the world. You can even learn to speak Zulu.

Language-base (<http://language-base.com/>): A website on learning foreign languages through videos. What can you learn? Whatever a beginner needs: the alphabet, body parts, counting, colours, some types of food, greetings, adjectives, clothes, places, expressions, the time, verbs.

How to Learn Any Language (<http://how-to-learn-any-language.com/e/index.html>): This website was created by people who love to learn languages. It is independent and focuses mainly on Mr. Francois Micheloud's personal experiences with languages – he is a Swiss entrepreneur – and the other forum members. You can find many interesting texts and information about the language you are interested in. Should you have any questions feel free to use the forum of the website.



Omniglot (<http://www.omniglot.com/>): This is a writing and language system encyclopaedia, created in 1998 by Mr. Simon Ager. It includes details on more than 180 writing systems, information about more than 500 languages, more than 300 collaborative writing systems invented by the website's visitors, advice on language learning, articles on the language, useful expressions recorded in many languages, texts, names of countries, a book store on languages and links on learning foreign language sources.

### **Learning Languages on Tandem Courses**

My Language Exchange (<http://www.mylanguageexchange.com/>): You can sign up for free on this website, locate a native speaker of the language of your choice and practise with them in anyone of the 115 dispensable languages. What is more you can teach them your own language and return the favour. There are more than one million members from 133 countries learning languages through this website. What about you?

Livemocha (<http://www.livemocha.com/>): In the main page it is described as the “biggest online community in the world”. I can't tell you if this is true but in a few seconds you can sign up and gain access to educational material, practise writing and oral skills and help others learn your native language. Sounds interesting? Why not try your livemocha?

Babelyou (<http://www.babelyou.com/>): After registering you can find linguistic partners and native speakers, learn easily foreign languages with videos and exercises, create your own online teaching classrooms, look for language learning schools, discover foreign civilisations and stories and make new friends. All this can take place in one website!

### **Software on Learning a Language**

Byki (<http://www.byki.com/>): Byki is a powerful individualised language learning system. It helps you memorise words and phrases in such a way that you can revoke them whenever you need them and you can always remember them. It is very easy to use: you engage in an interesting card game. You can

download them for free and start learning the preferable language immediately. It is available in more than 70 languages.

### **Dictionaries and Translation**

Dicts.info (<http://www.dicts.info/>): A project on dictionaries with an immense amount of materials such as photo-dictionaries, jargon, test, quizzes, encyclopaedias.

Freelang (<http://www.freelang.net/>): Freelang includes dictionaries, free not automatic translation, rather by a person and many other useful sources for language learners or others who need translation service. You can download any of the 263 available dictionaries for free.

IATE – Interactive Terminology for Europe (<http://iate.europa.eu/>): IATE is the European interinstitutional database of jargon and it has been applied by European organisations since the summer of 2004 for the collection, dissemination and shared management of the European special terminology.

Lingvosoft (<http://www.lingvosoft.com/?refid=-1>): Lingvosoft houses talented and experienced programmers and linguists creating a diversity of translation tools and other special software targeting language learning. The goal of the website is to gain from the profits of selling the lingvosoft products but there are many available online dictionaries for free.

Ectaco (<http://www.ectaco.uk.co/>): Another company aiming at gaining money but you find many free online dictionaries to play with.

### **Practising Languages Through TV/Radio**

Squidtv (<http://squidtv.net/>): A unique tool to watch live TV shows and videos on demand from every corner of the planet.

Live Internet TV (<http://www.liveinternettv.net/>): TV channels from many places in the world.

Internet-online (<http://internet-online.org/>): Through this webpage you can have free access to online TV, radio and newspapers.

BeelineTV (<http://beelinetv.com/>): Free online TV from around the world. This webpage offers a selection of the best broadband TV channels.

Surf Music (<http://www.surfmusic.de/>): You can access online TV and radio channels around the globe.





The idea of **Saita publications** emerged in July 2012, having as a primary goal to create a web space where new authors can interact with the readers directly and free.

**Saita publications'** aim is to redefine the publisher-author-reader relationship, by cultivating a true dialogue and by establishing an effective communication channel for authors and readers alike. Saita publications stay far away from profit, exploitation and commercialization of literary property.

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the sirocco of **imagination**,  
the levanter of **persistence**,  
the deep power of **vision**  
guide the saita (paper plane) of our publications.

We invite you to let books fly free!

Iraklis Lampadariou  
A Classroom  
Full of Imagination  
and Innovation

Techniques, ideas, thoughts and activities that are not just part of imagination but rather easy and directly applicable into the frame of a classroom, at home or for the classroom outside the classroom.

With all this material the author's aim is to trigger both teachers and parents to work on the improvement of their teaching approaches in a systematic way and the design of their own original activities together with multimedia applications, based on their students' uniqueness. These actions will promote mainly the creativity of the latter and their interest in learning and loving reading books.



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