

Lion's Voice

City & Guilds

Issue 5 September 2010



> Editor's Note

Dear Readers,

Just as the academic year 2010-2011 begins, I would like to welcome you all to the fifth issue of our Newsletter. We truly hope that this school year will be the most productive and creative yet.

Our feature article in this issue discusses the theme of aptitude and attitude in foreign language learning. Teachers are presented with the meaning of both notions and most importantly, with ways these two language learning factors can be used in class to improve learners' performance.

Our psychology column by school psychologist, Despoina Dimitraki, focuses on the relationship between teachers and parents and how it can affect and improve students' performance. Teachers are given practical advice on how to prepare, organise and deal with a frequently dreaded "teacher-parent" meeting.

Last but definitely not least, our cover story discusses the disabled access friendly campaign organised by Paul Shaw, a colleague in Thessaloniki. The philosophy and aims of the campaign can be found in this article along with ways each and every one of us, whether teacher, language school owner or publisher, can help disabled learners.

Do not miss our latest news which include the October examination and registration dates, information on the autumn 2010 IP exhibition events, as well as information and dates of the upcoming round of Teacher Development Seminar Days.

George Lampropoulos
Editor

CONTENTS

Teacher's Corner

> **Aptitude and Attitude: Which is which?** 2
by George Lampropoulos

Cover Story

> **Disabled Access Friendly Campaign** 3

Απλά Μαθήματα Σχολικής Ψυχολογίας

> **Σχέσεις γονέων εκπαιδευτικών** 4
by Despina Dimitraki

Inside City & Guilds

> **City & Guilds at the Spring 2010
IP Exhibition** 6

> **City & Guilds Teachers' Club
Exclusive Event** 7

Latest News 8

> **October Examination**

> **Website in English**

> **Autumn 2010 IP exhibition**

> **Teacher Development Seminar Days
Autumn 2010**

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Teacher's Corner

by George Lampropoulos

> Aptitude and Attitude: Which is which?

"John has a very good ear! He even picks up words he has not been taught."

"Irene just doesn't have the talent; and, boy, does she study all day!"

"I hate English! If it wasn't for my parents, I would stop classes right now and start tae kwon do!"

"If I pass C2 this year, my parents have promised to take me to London for a week. I can't wait to visit my dream city!"

These are just a few of the things teachers and students say when talking about the latter's performance in English or their reasons for learning it. So, at the end of the day which factors make up a good foreign language learner? Is there such thing as **aptitude**, i.e. a specific ability or "gift" for language learning, or is everything a matter of effort and studying? And if we take for granted that aptitude exists, how can learners with low aptitude be helped to do as well as those with high aptitude? Does the **attitude** the learner have towards the target language and culture play a decisive role in their performance? And if so, is it an irreversible factor? This article will not (for reasons of space!) look at the literature related to the topic in detail. It will, however, look into what the above terms mean and whether they can be applied to foreign language teaching as well as how teachers can exploit the above terms to help their students do better in the process of second language acquisition.

Attitude

Foreign language attitudes are the feelings people have about the languages of others and the people and culture of the target language. Below are some of the many ways in which teachers can foster a positive attitude to the foreign language in their students:

- ✓ At the beginning of the academic year hand your students a questionnaire (whether of a very simple or a complex form) on their knowledge of and attitude towards the country where the language is spoken and its people. Based on your students' answers try to form an initial, objective idea of how your students feel about the idea of attending your language classes.
- ✓ Depending on the level, try to promote the culture of the target language in class by providing students with information on the speakers of the target language.
- ✓ Ask students to produce small or large scale projects with emphasis on the country or speakers of the target language. Again, depending on the level this could be anything from simple topics such as food

and the weather to more advanced ones such as the current political situation of the country etc. In this way, learners will start to appreciate and, more importantly, learn about the culture of the language they are learning while at the same time using the target language itself.

- ✓ Be objective and show them what the speakers of the target language are really like! Photocopy a newspaper article or cite a web address with a funny but true story about the mentality of people in the foreign country.
- ✓ Suggest activities that learners can do outside the classroom which will not be explicitly linked to the language itself but the culture and the people. In other words, apart from the homework exercises learners are given, they could be provided with ideas on books and newspapers to read, films and TV channels to watch etc.

Aptitude

Foreign language aptitude does not refer to whether or not an individual can or cannot learn a foreign language (it is assumed that virtually everyone can learn a foreign language given adequate opportunity). **Language learning aptitude refers, rather, to the prediction of how well an individual can learn a foreign language in a given amount of time and under given conditions.** Below are some ways in which you can explore the concept of aptitude in the classroom so that you can help learners become more efficient:

- ✓ Use any valid aptitude test (easily found on the internet) with your students at the beginning of the year and try to predict their strengths and weaknesses so that you can adjust your lesson plans accordingly.
- ✓ Use the same aptitude test halfway through the academic year to note the progress students have made in each skill. Use aptitude test results to adapt your curriculum to match the level of your students, or to design assignments for students who differ widely.
- ✓ The use of aptitude tests will help you assess differences among students within



the same class. This will provide you, for example, with information on how students need to be split up in groups during tasks. Depending on the task, you could either opt for groups of more or less equal ability or aptitude or you could group together students with highly different abilities and ask them to cooperate.

- ✓ Aptitude test scores can also help you form realistic expectations of students. Knowing something about the aptitude level of students can help you identify which students are not learning as much as they could. For instance, if a whole class were performing less well than predicted from aptitude test results, then curriculum, objectives, teaching methods, or student characteristics might need to be questioned.
- ✓ Aptitude tests are generally divided into discrete skills, such as phonetic coding ability, grammatical inference skills, memory for words, etc. This suggests that it is possible to focus on areas where students need extra help by means of special tasks. For instance, students' pronunciation, a systematically neglected area in EFL teaching, can be improved at an early age if the ability of students to recognise and use sounds is predicted in time.

Foreign language **aptitude** and **attitude** have been two of the most controversial terms in Foreign Language Teaching. However, whether we decide to adopt their existence and usefulness or not, we always need to remember that as foreign language teachers, we are not only responsible for providing students with chunks of knowledge but we are also there to help students do their best using all available cognitive capacities as well as their powers of emotional engagement.

Bibliography

Carroll, J. B. and Sapon S., *Modern Language Aptitude Test: Manual 2002 Edition*. Bethesda, MD: *Second Language Testing*
Crystal, D., 1997. *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*. 2nd Ed. Cambridge: CUP

> Disabled Access Friendly Campaign

Lion's Voice and PEOPLECERT S.A. fully support the Disabled Access Friendly Campaign, which was started a few months ago by our colleague and friend Paul Shaw in Thessaloniki. Find out what this campaign is all about and how you can help!

Philosophy of the campaign

The best Foreign Language Centres already extend the work they do in language teaching to raise pupils' awareness of the society in which they live and try and make it a better place. This awareness of the world in which we live and the belief that through their own actions students have the ability to make improvements, is at the heart of education. The disabled are currently disabled more by infrastructure, other people and their attitudes than by their own physical situation. Only by showing children that persons with disabilities do not have to be an invisible minority, but vibrant and valued members of society, can we expect future generations to want changes. Only by providing children with the information necessary to allow them to put themselves in other people's shoes, to understand others and to feel what others feel can we expect those changes to be made. Only then can the future become a more enlightened one.

Scope of the campaign

This campaign targets privately owned Foreign Language Centres in Greece, where the vast majority of Greek children attend in order to learn foreign languages, usually English. The campaign is aimed primarily at children with difficulties in walking and in wheelchairs.



Aims of the campaign

foreign languages (not just of English), with material that can be used in teaching and skills building as well as examination practice, but that will at the same time raise awareness about issues affecting the physically disabled. Also, language centre owners will be encouraged to make small changes to their premises so that disabled students (and teachers) will be able to enter and leave their premises with dignity and ease, and participate in the centre's activities. These efforts will contribute to forging stronger bonds between the Foreign Language Centre and the community.

How is this done?

The campaign's website is addressed to both able and disabled-bodied persons as one community. It provides Foreign Language Centre owners with useful information on the needs of physically disabled students, provides teachers with material and worksheets for use in the classroom, and provides all of us with a forum to share our experiences either as, or with, the disabled.

e-mail:

disabledaccessfriendly@hotmail.com

Facebook group: Disabled Access Friendly

Food for Thought

School owners

- ✓ Could your school accommodate a physically disabled student?
- ✓ Is there a simple ramp at the door and a desk suitable for a wheelchair user?

Join the campaign and raise the social profile of your school in the community!

Teachers

- ✓ Do you want to help your students understand the needs of the physically disabled?
- ✓ Would you like to receive free teaching material that raises awareness on these issues?

Join the campaign and become a teacher that makes a difference for tomorrow!

Publishers

- ✓ Do you feel a social responsibility to guide young students to become responsible citizens?
- ✓ Is there material in your books that raises awareness about the physically disabled?

Join the campaign and gain respect as instigators of positive changes in social attitudes!

Απλά Μαθήματα Σχολικής Ψυχολογίας

by Despina Dimitraki

> Σχέσεις γονέων εκπαιδευτικών



Ο παραπάνω διάλογος, με μικρές ίσως παραλλαγές, είναι σίγουρα διάλογος τον οποίο έμπειροι εκπαιδευτικοί έχουν «υποχρεωθεί» να κάνουν. Ο εκπαιδευτικός βρίσκεται στη δύσκολη θέση να καλέσει το γονέα του μαθητή, ο μαθητής σε ακόμη δυσκολότερη θέση και ο γονέας σε αμυντικοεπιθετική στάση. Πώς μπορεί ο εκπαιδευτικός να δημιουργήσει μια ισορροπημένη σχέση εμπιστοσύνης ανάμεσα σε εκείνον και στο γονέα;

Helpful
Tips

Σε αυτό το τεύχος θα μιλήσουμε για τους τρόπους με τους οποίους ο εκπαιδευτικός πρέπει να προσεγγίζει το γονέα, τα πράγματα που πρέπει να μοιράζεται με τον μαθητή και το γονέα και όλα όσα θα βοηθούσαν στην πρόοδο του μαθητή.

Αρχικά πρέπει να έχουμε πάντα στο νου μας πως η επιτυχία που μπορεί να έχει μια συζήτηση ανάμεσα στον εκπαιδευτικό και το γονέα, εξαρτάται σε πολύ μεγάλο βαθμό από τον τρόπο που ο εκπαιδευτικός θα καλέσει τον γονέα στο σχολείο. Οι γονείς πολλές φορές νιώθουν ότι είναι κατηγορούμενοι και ο θυμός τους μπορεί να αποτελεί την αιτία μιας πολύ κακής αρχής.

A. Προετοιμασία για τη συνάντηση**1 Ζητάμε την συναίνεση του παιδιού**

Πριν καλέσουμε τους γονείς, ανακοινώνουμε την απόφασή μας στο παιδί. Ανάλογα με την ηλικία του παιδιού θα μπορούσαμε να του θέσουμε ερωτήσεις όπως: «Τι λες εσύ, θέλεις να τους καλέσουμε;», «Θέλεις να είσαι μαζί στη συζήτηση;», «Θέλεις να σε ενημερώσω για τα θέματα της συζήτησης;» Με αυτό τον τρόπο το παιδί αισθάνεται ότι το υπολογίζουμε και έτσι απομακρύνεται ο φόβος και το μίσος. Πολλά παιδιά κάνουν σκέψεις οι οποίες προέρχονται από μια αμυντική θέση επειδή δεν παίρνουν μέρος σε κάτι που τους αφορά άμεσα. («Όλο οι μεγάλοι αποφασίζουν για μένα... εμένα δεν με ρωτάει κανείς τι θέλω... ας βρουν αυτοί την άκρη...»).

2 Ενημερώνουμε το παιδί

Καθησυχάζουμε το παιδί ότι το σημείωμα /τηλέφωνο δεν είναι τιμωρία και πως καλούμε τους γονείς όχι για να τους κάνουμε παράπονα, αλλά για να βρούμε μαζί έναν τρόπο για να το βοηθήσουμε να περνάει καλύτερα.

3 Η παρουσία του παιδιού στη συζήτηση

Η παρουσία του παιδιού στη συζήτηση είναι πολύ χρήσιμη (υπάρχουν περιορισμοί

βέβαια ανάλογα με το θέμα και την ηλικία του παιδιού). Είναι πολύ σημαντικό να αντιληφθεί το παιδί ότι σε ένα μεγάλο βαθμό έχει τον έλεγχο της ζωής του.

B. Η συνάντηση με τους γονείς**1 Στόχος**

Δεν πρέπει ποτέ να ξεχνάμε πως βασικός στόχος μιας τέτοιας συνάντησης είναι η πρόοδος του παιδιού και πως αυτό μπορεί να επιτευχθεί με τη δημιουργία μιας καλής σχέσης με τους γονείς. Πρέπει να υπάρχει αμοιβαία εμπιστοσύνη και κοινός σκοπός.

2 Χρόνος

Απαραίτητη προϋπόθεση μιας εποικοδομητικής συζήτησης είναι να υπάρχει διαθέσιμος χρόνος και από τις δύο πλευρές. Οι συμπτωματικές συζητήσεις (π.χ. «πέρασα να πάρω τον μικρό και είπα να ρωτήσω») έχουν μικρότερη αξία.

3 Agenda

Πριν την συνάντηση καλό είναι να έχουμε καταρτίσει έναν κατάλογο με τα θέματα προς συζήτηση. Παρόλο που όπως είπαμε ο χρόνος είναι βασική προϋπόθεση, δεν μπορεί σίγουρα ποτέ να είναι αρκετός. Επικεντρωνόμαστε στο πιο σημαντικό θέμα και αν κρίνουμε πως χρειάζεται, κλείνουμε ένα νέο ραντεβού με το γονέα.

4 Δείγματα εργασίας του παιδιού

Κατά την διάρκεια της συνάντησης είναι σημαντικό να έχουμε δείγματα εργασίας του παιδιού (διαγωνίσματα, εκθέσεις κτλ.) ώστε να στοιχειοθετούνται όσα θέλουμε να πούμε. Αυτό δεν σημαίνει πως πρέπει να παραθέτουμε στο γονέα μια σειρά από βαθμολογίες χωρίς να τονίζουμε τα σημεία στα οποία το παιδί παρουσιάζει θετικά στοιχεία.

5 Δυνατά σημεία του παιδιού

Πολύ σημαντικό είναι να αρχίζουμε τονίζοντας τα ισχυρά σημεία του παιδιού, πριν αναφερθούμε στις αδυναμίες του. Όχι μόνο οι μαθητές αλλά και οι γονείς χρειάζονται ενθάρρυνση (π.χ. έχει πολύ ωραίο γραφικό χαρακτήρα, πλούσιο

λεξιλόγιο, φιλότιμο, είναι πολύ καλός φίλος...). Μην ξεχνάμε πως όλα τα παιδιά έχουν χαρίσματα.

Γ. Συζήτηση για την σχολική δουλειά του παιδιού στο σπίτι**1 Η σκοπιά του παιδιού**

Η σχολική δουλειά στο σπίτι μπορεί να αποτελέσει ένα ισχυρό όπλο στα χέρια του παιδιού και να το χρησιμοποιεί αποδοτικά για να αποσπά προνόμια, να εκμεταλλεύεται και να τιμωρεί τους φιλόδοξους γονείς. Συχνά το παιδί δε βλέπει καμιά αξία στη δουλειά που του ανατέθηκε και τη θεωρεί σαν περιττή απασχόληση. Έτσι φτάνει να αντιπαθεί το σχολείο και τον εκπαιδευτικό.

2 Η ουσία

Η αξία της σχολικής δουλειάς στο σπίτι είναι να εκπαιδευτεί το παιδί να εργάζεται μόνο του και να αναλαμβάνει ευθύνες. Η σχολική δουλειά στο σπίτι έχει αξία μόνο αν γίνεται από το παιδί με αίσθημα ευθύνης και επιθυμία προόδου. Η διαδικασία αυτή δεν θέλει κόπτο, θέλει τρόπο. Το παιδί πρέπει να μάθει να οργανώνει σωστά το χρόνο του (πχ. πόσος χρόνος χρειάζεται για τα μαθήματα, για παιχνίδι...). Ο γονέας πρέπει να σέβεται το παιδί όταν εργάζεται, χωρίς να διακόπτει ή να ελέγχει κάθε πέντε λεπτά τι έχει κάνει (εποπτευόμενη αυτονομία).

Συμπερασματικά...

Πολλοί εκπαιδευτικοί πιστεύουν ότι έργο τους είναι να ολοκληρώσουν τη διδακτέα ύλη και δεν θέλουν να φορτωθούν άλλες ευθύνες. Αυτή η αντίληψη προέρχεται από ένα αίσθημα ανασφάλειας, ότι δεν θα τα καταφέρουμε σε αυτόν τον ρόλο.

Εκείνο που χρειάζεται περισσότερο ο εκπαιδευτικός είναι το **θάρρος**, η **εμπιστοσύνη στον εαυτό του** και στην **αξία** του. Να αποδεχτεί τον εαυτό του όπως είναι, σαν ανθρώπινο πλάσμα που είναι προορισμένο να κάνει λάθη, αλλά και προικισμένο με μια απίστευτη δύναμη και ικανότητα να αλλάζει τη γύρω του ζωή.



Η **Δέσποινα Δημητράκη** είναι αριστούχος απόφοιτος του Τομέα Ψυχολογίας και του Τμήματος Φιλοσοφίας-Παιδαγωγικής-Ψυχολογίας του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών. Είναι κάτοχος του μεταπτυχιακού τίτλου Σχολικής Ψυχολογίας και υποψήφια διδάκτωρ του Πανεπιστημίου Αθηνών ως υπότροφος του ΙΚΥ. Αποτελεί μέλος του Πανελληνίου Ψυχολογικού Συλλόγου. Συνεργάζεται με εκπαιδευτικούς οργανισμούς και εκδοτικούς οίκους στον σχεδιασμό, οργάνωση και διεξαγωγή σεμιναρίων. Συμμετέχει σε ευρωπαϊκά και διεθνή επιστημονικά συνέδρια.

Inside City & Guilds

> City & Guilds at the Spring 2010 International Publishers Exhibition

The **IP Exhibition events** in **Athens & Thessaloniki** were the highlight of events in April. Members of the ELT community had the chance to meet up, get free material and attend academic seminars and workshops.

City & Guilds was present at both events with a stand full of information and news! The City & Guilds staff was there to inform teachers, language school owners, publishers and all other members of the community about the City & Guilds exams and offer free the new exam preparation material.

Visitors also had the chance to try out the computer-based version of the IESOL test, as computers and screens had been set up for that purpose at the City & Guilds stand.

Teachers and Language School owners who attended the presentation "Teaching to the Test" by Language Certification Director George Vassilakis, were given ideas on how to develop their students' skill without focusing exclusively on exam preparation material. Academic Associate, George Lampropoulos, presented the structure and content of the City & Guilds exams along with the benefits on the new, computer-based (CB) version of the exam.



The City & Guilds stand at IP Athens



ELT professionals trying out the CB IESOL Test

> City & Guilds Teachers' Club Exclusive Event

City & Guilds Teachers' Club members had the chance to attend a special event on computers, the web and computer-based testing. The first presentation in this event was given by well-known teacher educator Marisa Constantinides. Marisa talked about various ways of using Web 2.0 tools (such as facebook, twitter, blogs, etc) in the language classroom and how these web-based tools can offer learners holistic practice in the foreign language.

The second presentation was given by George Vassilakis, Language Certification Director, who talked about the principles and qualities of computer-based language testing. Both presentations were held exclusively for the **Teachers' Club** members in Athens and Thessaloniki. Participants exchanged ideas, had their questions answered and gained information and knowledge which will, hopefully, be used in practice.

City & Guilds has more exclusive seminars and academic workshops in store for the Teachers' Club members in the upcoming months so unless you are already a member, call us on 210 3729150 or visit www.cityandguilds.gr and find out how you can become one.

Register today and start enjoying the benefits!



*Teacher Educator,
Marisa Constantinides*



*Teachers and Language
School Owners
during the Teachers
Club event in Athens*

Latest News

October Examination

The October examination is getting closer and the registration period is already open. We would like to remind you that the **October examination** will be held in Athens, Herakleio, Larissa, Patra and Thessaloniki.

Visit **www.cityandguilds.gr** or call us on **210 3729150** to register your students and / or if you would like us to run exams in a city not included in the list above.

Exam Dates	Deadline for on-line registrations	Deadline for mailed registrations
23-24 October 2010	4 October 2010	27 September 2010

October 2010 Examination Cities

Athens, Herakleio, Larissa, Patra, Thessaloniki

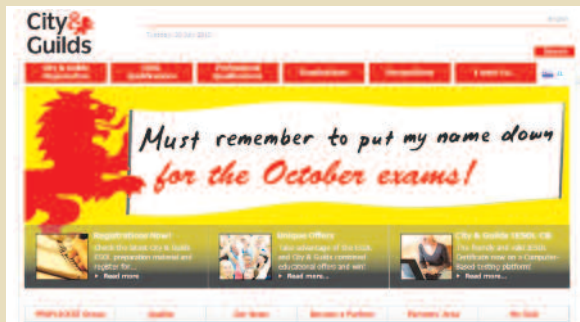
October 2010 Examination Schedule

IESOL Date	IESOL Time	Level	IESOL Dates
23 October 2010	09:00 - 12:00	C2	23 Oct. 2010 - 31 Oct. 2010
23 October 2010	13:00 - 16:00	C1	23 Oct. 2010 - 31 Oct. 2010
23 October 2010	17:00 - 19:00	A1	23 Oct. 2010 - 31 Oct. 2010
24 October 2010	09:00 - 11:30	B2	23 Oct. 2010 - 31 Oct. 2010
24 October 2010	12:30 - 15:00	B1	23 Oct. 2010 - 31 Oct. 2010
24 October 2010	16:00 - 18:00	A2	23 Oct. 2010 - 31 Oct. 2010

Website in English

We have launched our site in English with all the information available both in Greek and in English.

Do not forget that through our website **www.cityandguilds.gr** you can, among other things, get exam dates, register your students, download exam preparation material for free and get in touch with the City & Guilds staff in our headquarters in Athens.



Autumn 2010 IP Exhibition

The autumn 2010 IP Exhibition is here and City & Guilds is as well! The City & Guilds staff will once again be available for all teachers, school owners and publishers and ready to provide information and exam preparation material. If you are planning to attend the events, don't miss our presentations both in Athens and Thessaloniki. Language Certification Director, George Vassilakis, will discuss **"Class Management Problems and How to Solve Them"** while Academic Associate, George Lampropoulos, will discuss **"Writing in the City & Guilds IESOL Exams: Task Types, Demands, Assessment"**.

Also, City & Guilds Product Manager, Marios Molfetas, will be talking about **"City & Guilds International English Qualifications: Opportunities for Schools, Teachers and Students"**.

Teacher Development Seminar Days Autumn 2010

Following the great success of previous seminars, City & Guilds is organising a new round of Teacher Development Seminar Days in September and October 2010. George Lampropoulos, Academic Associate of the Language Certification Department, will give a presentation on **City and Guilds IESOL: Dealing with the Reading Section** while Language Certification Director, George Vassilakis will be talking about **Using communication tasks to enhance speaking performance**. Visit our website **www.cityandguilds.gr** regularly to be informed about the venues and schedule of the seminar days which will be held in the following towns:

Town	Date
Xanthi	Friday, 17 September 2010
Kavala	Saturday, 18 September 2010
Thessaloniki	Sunday, 19 September 2010
Larissa	Monday, 20 September 2010
Lamia	Tuesday, 21 September 2010
Chalkida	Wednesday, 22 September 2010
Herakleion	Saturday, 25 September 2010
Chios	Wednesday, 29 September 2010
Ioannina	Monday, 4 October 2010
Agrinio	Tuesday, 5 October 2010
Patra	Wednesday, 6 October 2010
Kalamata	Thursday, 7 October 2010
Tripoli	Friday, 8 October 2010
Athens	Sunday, 10 October 2010