

Lion's Voice



Issue 7 September 2011

2nd Teacher Development Symposium Critical Approaches to Teaching and Testing

Speakers

Sara Hannam
Lindsay Clandfield
George Vassilakis

ATHENS Saturday, 8 October
Athens Imperial Hotel, New York Hall
@ 10:30 - 16:00

THESSALONIKI Sunday, 9 October
Makedonia Palace Hotel, Aristotelis I Hall
@ 10:30 - 16:00

> Editor's Note

Dear All

On behalf of PEOPLECERT Group I would like to wish you a very happy new school year and welcome you to the seventh issue of our Newsletter.

We are proud to announce that the **2nd Teacher Development Symposium** will be taking place next month! The theme of the symposium is **Critical Approaches to Language Teaching and Testing** and our three speakers, Lindsay Clandfield, Sara Hannam and George Vassilakis, will discuss aspects of critical thinking in materials design, teaching and testing. You can find details of the Symposium programme on pages 6 and 7.

In this issue you can also read our featured article by **Dr Dimitris Thanasoulas**, ELT teacher and author. Dr Thanasoulas discusses three approaches to teaching, the relationship between them and the implications for teachers. The benefits and problems of each teaching approach are analysed.

Maria Christakou, English & Greek Language teacher, discusses exam stress. She gives a definition of the term, looks at possible causes and suggests ways of dealing with it. As teachers and/or parents you will find useful practical tips on how to help your students and/or children overcome their stress.

Paul Shaw, Thessaloniki based English Language teacher and teacher trainer, discusses wheelchair etiquette in the Disabled Access Friendly Campaign column, giving all of us useful advice on how to behave around wheelchair users.

Finally, you can find our latest news on the City & Guilds exam dates for the academic year 2011-2012, an update on the Athens and Thessaloniki IP Exhibition events and information on the new City & Guilds exam preparation material.

George Lampropoulos
Editor

CONTENTS

Featured Article

- > **Three Views of Teaching** 2
by Dimitris Thanasoulas

Disabled Access Friendly Campaign

- > **Wheelchair Etiquette** 4
by Paul Shaw

Teacher's Corner

- > **Dealing with Exam Stress** 5
by Maria Christakou

Cover Story

- > **City & Guilds 2nd Teacher Development Symposium** 6

Latest News

- > **December Examination** 8
- > **New exam dates 2011-2012**
- > **New Official Practice Papers**
- > **Free of charge**
- > **Athens & Thessaloniki IP Exhibition Autumn 2011**

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Featured Articleby *Dimitris Thanasoulas***> Three views of teaching****Teaching as doing: the behavioural view**

Generally speaking, teaching is seen as doing - as behaviours and actions which supposedly lead to learning. According to Rosenholtz (1989), teaching is *mainly* instructional (my emphasis). However, in the current state of education, especially in the United States, teaching is to a great extent custodial. Teaching is doing, and “doing” entails taking care of learners (Freedman, Jackson, and Boles, 1983; Lightfoot, 1983a). For some (Apple, 1985; Liston and Zeichner, 1990), this behavioural view is resultant in ‘de-skilling’ (Freeman, 1996), as it breaks teaching down into routinised activities leading to intensification in teachers’ work lives when their jobs become like the repetitive performance of routine tasks (Apple and Jungck, 1990).

As far as language teaching is concerned, much classroom-based research adopts a process-product view, which tries to relate teacher behaviours to outcomes in student learning (Long, 1980). Studies of wait time, which examine how long teachers wait after asking a question before calling on a student to reply, provide a good example of this type of research. Importantly, when the wait time goes beyond the teacher’s usual “gut” reaction time, students’ answers improve in content and complexity (Rowe, 1974; Tobin, 1987).

Nevertheless, the behavioural view of teaching codifies complex processes, ignoring the role that teachers and learners play. For example, to study wait time, one might ask: Why does the teacher choose to ask that particular question? Why does he or she call on that student?

When teaching is viewed as doing things, it can easily be divorced from the teacher who does it. It is explained in behavioural and impersonal terms, and beyond the contexts in which it occurs. At this juncture, we should consider the cognitive dimension of teaching and learning.

Teaching as thinking and doing: the cognitive view

When viewed from a cognitive perspective, teaching can include the crucial cognitive and affective elements which accompany, and shape, the behaviours and actions of teachers and learners. Besides, if teaching has a cognitive component, it is quite reasonable to ask, How is that knowledge organised, and how does it inform their actions? (Freeman, 1996)



Such questions have motivated the domain of educational inquiry known as teacher-cognition research. To understand how teachers cope with the complexities of their work, those who align themselves with this type of research hold a view that takes account not only of what teachers are doing, but also of what they are thinking about as they do it. This view places teachers’ perceptions—their reasoning, beliefs, and intentions—at the centre of any research account.

Recent research on lesson planning provides an example of this cognitive orientation to teaching. When teachers are trained to plan lessons, they are introduced to the notion of objectives, of content-specification, and of blending that content with appropriate activities. In the late 1970s, some interesting findings emerged. In twenty-two different studies, researchers examined how teachers actually planned lessons, in order to expose the complex interaction between planning and execution. More specifically, this research investigated the relationship between what teachers had thought about ahead of time for the lesson (their pre-active decisions), and what they were thinking about as they taught it (their interactive decisions). Inter alia, what emerged was that teachers tended to plan lessons as ways of doing things for given groups of students rather than to meet particular objectives (Clark and Peterson, 1986: 260-268). Teaching is not simply an activity bridging thought and action; it is usually intricately rooted in a particular context.

Teaching as knowing what to do: the interpretivist view

Teachers, like everyone else, are involved in interpreting their worlds. They interpret their subject matter, their classroom context, and the people operating in it. As Freeman (1996: 98) notes,

“Classrooms and students are not just settings for implementing ideas; they are frameworks of interpretation that teachers use for knowing: knowing when and how to act and react, what information to present or explain and how, when to respond or correct individual students, how to assess and reformulate what they have just taught [...]”

All teachers learn very early in their careers that teaching and learning have a seasonal rhythm. Thus, in North American classrooms, September is different from December and January, especially just before and after holidays, March is different from June, and so on. In a similar vein, 8:30 A. M. is different from lunch time, which is different from 2:45 P.M., which is different from an evening class. Although this seasonality has been trivialised as common sense, it is integral to how teachers plan, conduct lessons, and manage various groups of learners.

Knowing how to teach does not simply consist in behavioural knowledge of how to go about doing things in the classroom; it involves a cognitive dimension that links thought with activity, focusing on the context-embedded, interpretive process of knowing what to do. This know-how is learnt over time. The kind of teaching that ignores any one of these three components—behaviour, cognition, and interpretation—is lamentably limited and shortsighted.

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Dimitris Thanasoulas was born in Athens in 1974 and graduated from the English Department of Athens University in 1998. He then went on to do an MA in Applied Linguistics at Sussex University, UK. In 2006, he finished his PhD in Linguistics and the Psychology of Education at King's College, London. He has been teaching English across the board for many years, writing books and articles, translating a wide variety of genres and compiling dictionaries. On another note, he has written two novels, one of which has already been published with his own Publishing House, Thryallis Editions (www.ekdoseisthryallis.com), and other short stories and poetry. His research interests include the Theory of Translation, Student Motivation, Learner Autonomy, Psycholinguistics, as well as Literary Theory and Criticism. He lives in Gerakas, Athens, and aspires to expand his publishing venture abroad. **E-mail:** akasa74@hotmail.com, **Website:** www.dimitrithanasoulas.com

Disabled Access Friendly Campaign

by Paul Shaw



> Wheelchair Etiquette



Is there anybody at your school who uses a wheelchair? Have you ever met someone who does? The Disabled Access Friendly campaign offers the following tips.

You can be pretty sure that no one uses a wheelchair through choice. People use wheelchairs for many different reasons, and you should avoid making assumptions and having preconceived ideas of why they use a wheelchair and what

they can and can't do. If you're interacting with a wheelchair user for the first time, it can be difficult to know how to act. You don't want to cross any boundaries or accidentally offend someone, but at the same time you want to be helpful and understanding. Here's how to find a good balance.

1. Avoid presumptions about a person's physical abilities.

You don't know what this person's physical abilities are. Just because someone uses a wheelchair it does not mean that they are paralyzed or that they are incapable of taking a few steps. Some people only use a wheelchair because they cannot stand for long, or have a mobility problem. Do not test whether a person is genuinely paralyzed. If you see someone who uses a wheelchair moving their legs or standing up, do not question their ability or disability, and try not to act surprised.

2. Greet the wheelchair user the same as you would anyone.

Extend your hand, even if they have limited use of their hands or an artificial limb. Generally, it's appropriate to offer to shake hands regardless of their condition.

3. Speak directly to the person who uses the wheelchair.

If someone is accompanying that person (pushing the wheelchair, for example), don't talk to this companion about the person in the wheelchair - for example, "Will he/she be needing help with..?" to figure out how to help. This is insulting for someone who uses a wheelchair as it implies that he/she is not able to answer on his/her own. Always address him or her directly and respectfully. When you find that you are going to continue the conversation for a bit longer than you had thought, suggest you go somewhere where you can take a seat so that your faces are at a similar height. If you can't relocate to a seating area, then stand a few feet away, so that the person does not have to lift their head to look at you.

4. Don't feel shy about using expressions like "running along" or "let's go for a walk".

The phrases are figurative, not literal, and someone who uses a wheelchair understands that. It can be more uncomfortable if you blunder the conversation to avoid such phrases, because it shows that you are focusing on the person's disability.

5. Keep your observations to yourself.

Comments like "So what was it? An accident or...?" are intrusive

and upsetting; someone who uses a wheelchair will offer this information if they feel like it. Drawing attention to the person's disability is negative so don't focus the conversation around how difficult it must be to get around the town and the limitations imposed. Anyone who uses a wheelchair will have heard this conversation many times before and feels as if they are being defined by their disability, not by character. Stories about other people who use wheelchairs, other illnesses and mobility problems are also not really welcome, as again they focus the conversation on disability. So conduct a conversation in the same way as you would with any new acquaintance. You may be burning with many questions but it might not be appropriate to ask them, so think first.

6. Do not pat or touch the person who uses a wheelchair (or the wheelchair) unless you have their permission.

Because they are 'down low' at the height of children, people seem to instinctively pat, touch or tap and for anyone with spinal or back problems, this may be painful; in addition, it is a gesture that can feel patronizing. The same goes for leaning on or touching the wheelchair itself. Always ask permission before leaning on the wheelchair as it can be seen as an intrusion on the user's space and many people who use wheelchairs see the wheelchair as an extension of themselves.

7. Offer to help when appropriate.

Knowing when to offer a helping hand can be tricky. Remember that because a person uses a wheelchair, this does not necessarily mean that they are in need of assistance. Usually they will prefer to remain independent, and are proud of the fact that they have learned to adapt well enough to remain so. If you see a situation where they could use your help, ask. Don't insist on helping as this can be frustrating and awkward. Try to remember not to walk behind the chair as this means it is difficult to have a natural conversation and seems like you are waiting for that opportunity when they can't do something for themselves. Don't be afraid to ask a wheelchair user to slow down so you can keep up with them and walk side by side. Whatever you do, don't move the wheelchair without permission. Even if someone is not using their wheelchair, moving it out of their reach without consulting them first is not a good idea. Moving it with them in it without their permission is even worse!

8. Respect people who use wheelchairs at all times, even when you're not interacting with them.

Don't be one of those people who makes life difficult for people who use a wheelchair. You wouldn't want to come across someone who uses a wheelchair while your car is parked in one of the spots reserved for people with disabilities. The more you make it a habit in everyday life to be aware of people who have physical disabilities, the more comfortable you'll be when you're face to face with someone who happens to use a wheelchair.

Why not pass some of these ideas onto your students, because:

"The best schools have always done more than just prepare students for tests. They raise awareness of the world in which we live and try to make it a better place."

Website: www.disabled-accessfriendly.com, **Facebook Group:** Disabled Access Friendly, **E-mail:** disabledaccessfriendly@hotmail.com

by Maria Christakou

> Dealing with Exam Stress

Many students are often faced with a series of exams and tests at the end of term or semester, which are usually scheduled closely together. This can lead to great stress for the students and those who live with them. Both the exams and the anticipation of results can be a stressful time. Exam stress is usually associated with the fear that students will disappoint their parents with their performance and with the expectations they have of them.

Stress is a reaction people have to excessive demands or



pressures which affects their physical health¹. It is a subjective response and something that varies from person to person. It is caused by negative thoughts created and grown inside our mind and in the worst case, it can completely block it and lead us to abandon our effort. All these negative thoughts prepare the way to our failure, because unconsciously we think and behave in such a way as to fail. Getting out of control, stress can negatively affect our actual performance and make us suffer both physically and mentally.

Very often stress is caused by pressure from parents and relatives, the need to get high grades, the uncertainty about what to do next, the feeling of everything changing in our life, the lack of confidence and the comparison with others.

Symptoms and signs of the presence of stress include difficulty getting to sleep or waking up in the morning, constant fatigue, forgetfulness, poor appetite, aches and pains for no apparent reason, social withdrawal, loss of interests and activities, increased anxiety and irritability, increased heart rate, blurred vision, dizziness and confusion, increased smoking and drinking, habits such as nail biting, panic attacks and morbid thoughts².

1. <http://www.hse.gov.uk/stress/furtheradvice/whatisstress.htm>. Retrieved August 5th, 2011

2. http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/advice/factfile_az/exams_stress. Retrieved August 5th, 2011

3. <http://www.yourteenager.co.uk/helping-with-school-and-exam-stress.html>. Retrieved August 5th, 2011

Trying to deal with stress the first thing students should do is learn to recognise when they are stressing out. They should be realistic and prepare for the exam day so as to get familiar with the exam itself as much as they can. They should make time for themselves and relax mind and body. They should not skip meals because doing that will deplete their energy and leave them drained. They can also benefit from talking to family and friends about their feelings and thoughts.

In their effort for a good preparation they can try some study ideas such as exam revisions, skills and knowledge tests with other friends, organise time and create a pleasant study environment, make everything that is possible to empty their minds of any other thoughts.

As for the exam day, they should organise everything they need to take with them and keep away from people who may agitate them before the test or may make stressful comments. After the exam they should think positive, relax as much as possible and prepare themselves for the next day.

Parents can help their children by choosing to hear all their fears before giving any advice and, when they do so, they should give realistic advice. Parents should raise their children's confidence and show their support because children need to know that they have the support of the family³.

All the members of the family should keep encouraging children by reminding them that self-control and a good mood are their best friends and the days of exams are only a small part of their life and won't last forever. There is life after exams!

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Maria Christakou is a Greek Language and Literature teacher. She holds a Degree in History and Archaeology and an M.A. in the History of Religion, but has also completed methodology courses in TESOL and is an accredited English Language teacher, as well.

Cover Story

> City & Guilds 2nd Teacher Development Symposium

Following the success of our first Teacher Development Symposium last February, which was attended by more than 800 teachers in Athens and Thessaloniki, we have found we could not wait until February for the second Symposium: **the second City & Guilds Teacher Development Symposium** will take place on the **8th and 9th of October**, in **Athens** and **Thessaloniki** respectively, to coincide with the start of the new academic year.

The theme of the Symposium is **Critical Approaches to Teaching and Testing**. We are very excited to have with us two excellent speakers on critical language teaching, in addition to our very own George Vassilakis: **Dr Sara Hannam**, of City College, Thessaloniki, will set the scene for the day by exploring what being 'critical' means (and doesn't mean) when applied to English Language Teaching. Well known ELT author and presenter **Lindsay**



Clandfield will talk about developing critical thinking skills in the classroom and demonstrate activities that foster critical thinking which you can begin using with your students right away. **George Vassilakis** will take a critical look at the world of language teaching, discussing issues of test fairness and ethics with relation to both test preparation and the test taking experience.



A number of ELT publishers who have brought out teaching materials that help prepare learners for the City & Guilds exams will also be present. Coffee, refreshments and lunch will be provided courtesy of City & Guilds, while a number of our staff and associates will be presenting Pecha Kuchas related to test preparation as well as the content and structure of the City & Guilds exams.

To register, all you have to do is visit www.cityandguilds.gr or call **2103729150**. We are all looking forward to seeing you there.

Symposium Programme

10:30-11:00	Registration & Coffee / Book Exhibition
11:00-12:00	<p>Critical ELT - Making It Real Dr Sara Hannam This session will look at what being 'critical' means (and doesn't mean) when applied to ELT. It will explore the language classroom as a critical microcosm through the relationship between teachers-students, respective beliefs, the impact of outside events and what it means to be learning English in the modern world.</p>
<p><i>Dr Sara Hannam is the Director of the English Unit at City College, Thessaloniki. She has extensive experience of teaching and testing in a Greek and Balkan environment. Sara is interested in the importance of teachers playing a more active role in shaping educational policy and practice and regularly writes, presents and blogs about Critical ELT.</i></p>	
12:00-12:15	Pecha Kuchas Session
12:15-13:15	<p>Critical Thinking in Action Lindsay Clandfield If, as some claim, we are living in an age of information then it's very important that students think critically about the information they are exposed to. Developing learners' critical thinking skills has become a hot topic. What exactly does this mean? This talk looks at practical ways that teachers can help learners think critically. We will look at topic and task design as well as a series of activities that you can begin using with your students right away.</p>
<p><i>Lindsay Clandfield is a teacher, teacher trainer and international author from Canada. He is the main author of Macmillan's new award-winning and critically acclaimed adult course Global (2010). His work has appeared in numerous magazines and journals relating to ELT and he has written a column on language teaching for the Guardian Weekly newspaper. He was the founder of Pecha Kucha ELT (a form of short presentation) and creator of the popular blog www.sixthings.net, a collection of miscellany from the world of English Language Teaching.</i></p>	
13:15-14:15	Lunch Break / Book Exhibition
14:15-15:15	<p>Critical Language Testing: Revisiting our Assumptions George Vassilakis With a focus on the consequences of language tests and test preparation courses, this session will problematise what language testers and teachers often take for granted: the hegemony of the CEFR, the uses that are made of language tests and the ethics of exam preparation.</p>
<p><i>George Vassilakis has worked in the field of English Language Teaching for twenty-five years. He is currently Director of Language Certification with PEOPLECERT Group. George has written more than twenty ELT books and is an approved CELTA and DELTA tutor. His blog, detefling, often explores ethical and political issues in ELT.</i></p>	
15:15-15:30	Pecha Kuchas Session

Latest News

December Examination

We are well into the school year 2011-2012 and the City & Guilds December exam session is getting closer. As always students can register for the December IESOL and ISESOL exams either online or by mail. The December examination will be held in 35 locations all over Greece. Should you wish exams to be administered in a location other than the ones on the right, contact the Exams Administration Department on 210 3729150 or email us at info@cityandguilds.gr.

December Exams 2011

Exam Dates	Deadline for on-line registrations	Deadline for mailed registrations
17-18 December 2011	22 November 2011	15 November 2011

December 2011 Examination Locations

Agrinio, Athens, Alexandroupoli, Arta, Veroia, Volos, Giannitsa, Drama, Heraklio, Thessaloniki, Ierapetra, Ioannina, Kavala, Kalamata, Katerini, Corfu, Kozani, Korinthos, Lamia, Larisa, Livadia, Mytilene, Naxos, Nafplio, Xanthi, Patra, Preveza, Pirgos, Rhodes, Serres, Sparti, Trikala, Tripoli, Halkida, Chios.

December 2011 Examination Schedule

IESOL Date	IESOL Time	Level	ISESOL Dates
17 December 2011	09:00 - 12:00	C2	17 Dec. - 22 Dec. 2011
17 December 2011	13:30 - 16:30	C1	17 Dec. - 22 Dec. 2011
17 December 2011	17:30 - 19:30	A1	17 Dec. - 22 Dec. 2011
18 December 2011	09:00 - 11:30	B2	17 Dec. - 22 Dec. 2011
18 December 2011	13:00 - 15:30	B1	17 Dec. - 22 Dec. 2011
18 December 2011	16:30 - 18:30	A2	17 Dec. - 22 Dec. 2011

New exam dates 2011-2012

City & Guilds has announced the exam dates for the school year 2011-2012 up to July 2012 inclusive. Details of the IESOL/ISESOL exam dates as well as the registration procedure can be found on our website www.cityandguilds.gr.

New Official Practice Papers

City & Guilds has released new IESOL/ISESOL Practice Papers for all levels. There is now a wealth of Practice Papers that teachers can use for the preparation of their students. For example, for level B2 Communicator there are currently 5 IESOL Practice Papers and 8 ISESOL ones. All Practice Papers and other academic and exam support material can be downloaded for free from www.cityandguilds.gr.

Free of charge

City & Guilds has announced the extension of the "Free of charge" offer for the year 2012: Candidates who only pass one of the two exams, IESOL or ISESOL, are entitled to a free resit of the exam they didn't pass within the following 12 months. The offer is valid for candidates who register for both exams (IESOL/ ISESOL) at the same level in the same examination period in 2011 or 2012.

Athens & Thessaloniki IP Exhibition Autumn 2011

City & Guilds was once again present at the IP Exhibitions in Athens & Thessaloniki. At the start of the new school year teachers had the chance to get information from different publishers and examination bodies, get exam support material and attend talks on various ELT issues. Teachers who visited the City & Guilds stand had the chance to meet the staff, receive free exam support material and have all their questions regarding the City & Guilds exams answered. Teachers also had the chance to attend a professional presentation by George Vassilakis, Language Certification Director, on "Choosing and using teaching materials for exam prep classes" and a commercial talk by George Vassilakis and Marios Molfetas, City & Guilds Product Manager, on "Quality in language assessment: How to select an exam for your students."

