# belta day 2017

## 5th anniversary edition

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## the belta bulletin

belta day 2017 special edition

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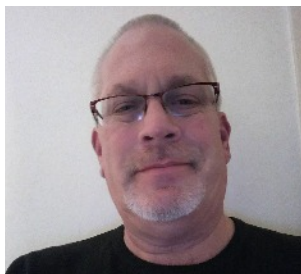## Theory in practice

### Saturday May 13

## Odisee Brussels

with plenary speaker David Crystal

# The belta bulletin Special Edition
# belta Day 2017

## President's welcome

**On behalf of the BELTA Board and myself, I would like to cordially welcome you to our 5th Annual BELTA Day!** We are thrilled that you have decided to spend this Saturday with us in our resilient capital – Brussels – and in this wonderful venue provided by Odisee University College.

To mark the occasion, there is a special 5th Anniversary celebration after lunch in the Exhibition Hall. It will consist of a very short presentation and dessert!

BELTA Day continues to grow in amazing ways. This year is no exception. As I write this (in the beginning of April), 175 participants have registered for BELTA Day 2017. We are hoping to reach that magic number of 200 before the conference begins! Each person who registers for BELTA Day automatically becomes a member of BELTA, which gives you access to our journal (The BELTA Bulletin), our newsletter, and advanced notice of webinars and other events.

We want to offer a huge THANK YOU to all of you whether you have an individual membership or an institutional membership. After all, there would no conference without your participation!

Also, we would like to personally thank our sponsors because without their support, BELTA Day could not happen. Make sure you visit the Exhibition Hall during the coffee breaks! Our thanks also goes out to all the presenters at BELTA Day. Many of them will be staying around all day, so make sure you have a chat. We would like to thank our volunteers, who are helping this conference to run smoothly. If you have a question throughout the day, they are your best source of information.

Finally, I would like to personally thank the BELTA Board. Without their support, I could not be writing this or presiding over this conference. They have been working tirelessly since the last BELTA Day to ensure this special 5th Anniversary Edition is a huge success. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Enjoy your BELTA Day!

John Arnold - **BELTA President**

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**Programme compiled by: Paulina Christiaens and John Arnold**

**Programme design by Ellen De Preter**

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Room 2109 | Room 1204 | Room 1104 | Room 2204 | Room 2104 | Room 2207 |
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| 10.15-10.45 | COFFEE BREAK: Exhibition Hall Visits | | | | | |
| 10.45-11.25 | ITILT2: Interactive teaching in languages with technologies<br><br>**Karen Van de Cruys**<br><br>**Margret Oberhofer** | Teaching English as a Lingua Franca: practical classroom ideas<br><br>**Marek Kiczkowiak** | Taking the Task-based Approach to the Extreme<br><br>**Daniel Zuchowski** | English goes outside the class<br><br>**Natascha Coene Bart Deferme** | Writing your way through English<br><br>**Paulina Christiaens** | Using Mind Maps in the EFL Classroom<br><br>**Ron Morrain** |
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| 12.15-12.55 | Create engaging and interactive exercises with Facebook Widgets<br><br>**Bart Buckinx**<br><br>BookWidgets | Language Q & A<br><br>**David Crystal** | Specialization for the 21st Century Workplace<br><br>**Patrick Painter**<br><br>Express Publishing | | Rules are nothing; practice is everything.<br><br>**Nerina Conte**<br><br>learn to teach brilliantly! | Building Confidence as a Means of Enhancing the Student-Centered Learning Environment **Meghan Briggs & Brandy Miller**<br><br>FULBRIGHT |
| 13.00-13.45 | LUNCH | | | | | |
| 13.45-14.15 | SPECIAL PRESENTATION: Celebration of the 5th annual BELTA Day<br><br>Exhibition Hall Visits | | | | | |

| | BELTA DAY 2017 SCHEDULE : AFTERNOON | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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# Meet the speakers

## *Plenary speaker: David Crystal*

**Interview with Professor David Crystal**

**by Paulina Christiaens (BELTA Editor)**

*Thank you, professor Crystal, for accepting our invitation and becoming the plenary speaker at our 5th anniversary BELTA Day – it is an honour and enormous pleasure.*

*I would like to start this interview with the very beginning of your career path. What made you decide to be involved in the English language and all its aspects?*

**Professor Crystal:** First, a general curiosity about languages and why they are different, arising from growing up in a bilingual community (North Wales). Later, a fascination with English literature, and a desire to be a writer. The combination of these two interests led me to look for a degree course that balanced language and literature, and I found this in the English Department at University College London. It was the range of the linguistic side of the subject - phonetics, place-names, the history of the language, stylistics, and much more - along with the brilliance of my teachers, especially Randolph Quirk, that convinced me that this was the subject for me.

*What challenges did you encounter as a teacher and lecturer that teachers nowadays do not face? Or maybe they still do?*

**Professor Crystal:** I began my teaching career in linguistics when the subject was in its university infancy, and there were few precedents to advise anyone how to teach the subject, and no introductory textbooks at all. Today, there are dozens of courses and books. The challenge now is perhaps the opposite: how to choose! *During the last 20 years the approach of teaching English as a foreign language has been evolving and developing in new directions. What changes do you consider as the most significant ones? And, in which direction is ELT heading?*

**Professor Crystal:** Well, I am not a teacher, in the usual EFL sense, so I don't have a real sense of the success or otherwise of new approaches in the classroom. I have never had the experience of teaching the language to learners. My role has always been in relation to teacher-training, either at postgraduate or diploma level in university or through in-service courses around the world. And there I see a significant move over the past couple of decades towards a more confident professionalism. Professionalism, to my mind, has to have a foundation in knowledge - which in my case means a sophisticated awareness of the English language, in all its forms and uses, and especially about its changing character in the light of global and digital influences. These forces will only increase, as time goes by, so keeping up with their linguistic effects is probably the main challenge facing teachers who want to maintain an up-to-date professional outlook.

*Do you think that there is a growing discrepancy between what a textbook says and how the 'street' talks?*

**Professor Crystal:** I don't know about 'growing'. There has always been a discrepancy. This became very clear back in the 1960s when the first really detailed surveys of conversational English took place. When Derek Davy and I wrote a book called

*Advanced Conversational English* (1975), the title was ironic. All we meant was 'normal conversational English' - but this was so far removed from the kind of dialogues that were routine in teaching materials in those days that whenever I talked about its features in lectures, teachers would tell me that this was 'really advanced' stuff. Things have moved on greatly. Many textbooks now include material on varieties of English that are much closer to natural everyday conversation (in the street and on the Internet) than ever before. Note I say 'include'. Formal varieties of English are as important today as they ever were. It isn't a question of one variety replacing another, but of the learner coming to appreciate their different roles and to develop a clear sense of their appropriateness.

**The English language is constantly changing. What can ESL teachers do to keep up to date and how can they evaluate what to focus on while teaching, for example, pronunciation?**

**Professor Crystal**: Yes, there is always change, but we mustn't exaggerate it. Most of the language stays the same, from one generation to the next. Vocabulary is obviously the area where there is most change. But if we compare the English grammar of today with that of a century ago it is very largely the same. And if we listen to the earliest recordings of spoken English - such as Florence Nightingale talking in the 1890s (available online), we hear a conservative but perfectly familiar Received Pronunciation. So the problem is not as great as it is sometimes thought to be. The main focus, to my mind, should be on the evolving varieties of global English, which should permeate work on listening and reading comprehension. I don't see much need to alter practices in teaching production, other than perhaps to develop a more flexible sense of what counts as 'correct', in the light of current change.

But when it comes to comprehension, then surely everything changes, as students are having to cope all the time with global linguistic variation through their own personal mobility, the multicultural societies in which they live, and the Internet (where they spend a great deal of their time outside the classroom). An experience of global linguistic variation in English isn't something that should be postponed to a late place in a syllabus. It should be there from the outset.

**In your book from 1997 "English as a global language" you provide the readers with a definition of pragmatics. Allow me to quote: "Pragmatics is the study of language from the point of view of users, especially of the choices they make, the constraints they encounter in using language in social interaction and the effects their use of language has on other participants in the act of communication" (p.301) Is there anything in this definition that you would change, or add now?**

**Professor Crystal**: My current definition is almost the same: 'the study of the choices people make in their use of language, the reasons for those choices, and the effects that those choices convey'. Nothing is more important than a pragmatic perspective, as it provides what is missing in traditional descriptive accounts: an explanation. Why do people use one form - a particular word, grammatical construction, intonation pattern... - rather than another? Pragmatics aims to answer this question. I find that students value this perspective, as it gives them *reasons* for usage, and a deeper sense of 'how the language works'.

**And lastly, what advice would you give to the new ESL teachers who are standing just on the threshold of their professional career?**

**Professor Crystal**: Never forget or underestimate the profound significance of your achievement in becoming an ESL teacher. I don't know of any more challenging intellectual task than getting to grips with language, as it enters into every domain of human experience, and there is nothing to match its behavioural scope - 40+ sounds organized into several hundred syllable types, which combine into tens of thousands of words, which are organized into sentence patterns constrained by several thousand rules and tendencies, which are then used in an indefinitely wide range of discourse situations, enabling people to interact, work, think, and play and, in short, grow as human beings. The language teacher, along with the interpreter and translator, has the hugely difficult job of instilling all of this into the minds of learners, listeners, and readers. It is simultaneously the most fearsome and the most rewarding challenge, and it is a challenge that is met every day in classrooms all over the world. I've observed the sense of achievement and delight that everyone feels when learners make progress in their new language. And as the scientific basis of the profession is still in its early years, there is plenty of scope for teachers to do research, develop original ideas, put them into practice, and write them up (either in traditional formats or online) for publication. I just wish that those in government who hold the purse-strings would recognise the nature of their achievement and appreciate the fundamental role that teachers play in enabling everyone (including the purse-string-holders themselves) to grow in a world where English is such an important means of giving countries and organizations an international presence, and individuals a better quality of life - and increase salaries accordingly!

*Bio*

David Crystal works from his home in Holyhead, North Wales, as a writer, editor, lecturer, and broadcaster. Born in Lisburn, Northern Ireland in 1941, he spent his early years in Holyhead. His family moved to Liverpool in 1951, and he received his secondary schooling at St Mary's College. He read English at University College London (1959-62), specialised in English language studies, did some research there at the Survey of English Usage under Randolph Quirk (1962-3), then joined academic life as a lecturer in linguistics, first at Bangor, then at Reading. He published the first of his 100 or so books in 1964, and became known chiefly for his research work in English language studies, in such fields as intonation and stylistics, and in the application of linguistics to religious, educational and clinical contexts, notably in the development of a range of linguistic profiling techniques for diagnostic and therapeutic purposes.

He held a chair at the University of Reading for 10 years, and is now Honorary Professor of Linguistics at the University of Wales, Bangor.

To list only a few of his books:

- The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language and The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language
- The Oxford Dictionary of Original Shakespearean Pronunciation (2016)
- The Disappearing Dictionary: a treasury of lost English dialect words (2015)
- Making a Point: the Pernickety Story of English Punctuation (2015)
- Words on Words (2000)
- Wordsmiths and Warriors: the English-Language Tourist's Guide to Britain (2013)

**Professor Crystal will be available for a book signing session later on today. Some of his works can be purchased at the Sterling stand in our Exhibition Hall.**

## iTILT2: Interactive Teaching in Languages

*Karen Van de Cruys, Margret Oberhofer*

*10.45-11.25   Room 2109*

### Presentation focus

How can you use interactive technologies such as smartphones, tablets or video for task-based language teaching (TBLT)? This is the central question of the iTILT2 project (Interactive Teaching in Languages with Technology), currently being implemented in six different European countries. In the BELTA session we will demonstrate and discuss some task-based scenarios using interactive classroom technologies implemented by teachers at secondary schools in Flanders. We will share our experiences and discuss the benefits and challenges when working with interactive technologies in a communicative language classroom.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

Concrete ideas on how to implement ICT in their language class , and exchange of views and experiences on interactive teaching with technologies.

### Bio

Karen Van de Cruys is a lifelong learner and enthusiastic teacher at Groenendaalcollege in Antwerp. She teaches ESL and Dutch to third level students in general secondary education (ASO). She has built a strong expertise in the development of professional learning networks, the integration of technology in the classroom and formative assessment.

Margret Oberhofer is an International Project Coordinator at the University of Antwerp (Linguapolis) and a research assistant for Language Teaching and ICT at the Antwerp School of Education. She has been involved in over 20 Eurpean projects on language learning. Margret coordinated the precursor project iTILT1 (interactive Technologies in Language Teaching), focusing on IWBs for teaching foreign languages.

## Teaching English as a Lingua Franca: Practical classroom ideas

*Marek Kiczowiak*

*10.45-11.25   Room 1204*

### Presentation focus

English is undergoing a profound change. Currently, over 80% of interactions in English take place between non-native speakers, in what is known as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). This means that we might need to rethink not only how English is taught, but also which English. By the end of the session you will have a greater understanding of what ELF is and how you can teach it. The session is focused on teaching practice, but will also make reference to theory when relevant, such as recent research into ELF or teaching pronunciation.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

Because ELF asks us to rethink many of the fundamental concepts in ELT and revisit how we see the English language and how we teach it.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

A better understanding of what ELF is and what implications this new paradigm has for all of us in ELT, and how to raise students' awareness of the global nature of the English language.

### Bio

Marek has taught in 7 countries and currently works at KU Leuven, Belgium. He holds a BA in English, CELTA, DELTA and is doing a PhD in TESOL. He co-authors podcasts at www.theteflshow.com and advocates professional equality between 'native' and 'non-native speakers' at www.teflequityadvocates.com. He frequently presents at international conferences and gives teacher training sessions both face-to-face and on-line focusing on English as a Lingua Franca and native speakerism.

## Taking the Task-based Approach to the Extreme

**Daniel Zuchowski**

**10.45-11.25   Room 1104**

### Presentation focus

The task-based approach has been applied by teachers around the world for decades – and it is still taught at most (if not all) pedagogical universities and teacher training courses. And rightly so, because the approach does work! However, as it is often confined to the classroom, its power to push learners out of their comfort zones into the areas of real challenge (i.e. learning) diminishes.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

In my talk, I would like to discuss a few of my ideas about how to make the most of the task-based approach in and out of the classroom by taking it to the extreme.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

Practical ideas on how to make the most of the task-based approach.

### Bio

Daniel is an English language consultant and trainer, as well as a teacher trainer, with keen interest in teaching methodologies, corpus linguistics and materials writing. He holds an MA in Corpus Linguistics and an MA in TESOL, and he is currently researching for his PhD in Applied Linguistics. His second book will be published in autumn 2017.
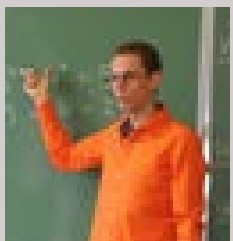


## English goes outside the class

**Natascha Coene, Bart Deferme**

**10.45-11.25   Room 2204**

### Presentation focus

After giving an overview of our European projects up till now, we would like to illustrate with a few examples how we use these projects within the English lessons. We will also speak about our CLIL classes. We teach religious education, history and mathematics (quite unique in Flanders) in the third form.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

The aim of teaching English is making sure students can use English in real life situations. European projects offer that opportunity. Even students that are not that good at English enjoy these projects and benefit from them in different ways. CLIL also helps the students to prepare for their future lives.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

We would like them to be enthusiastic about working together with other European countries and to start teaching CLIL classes as well.

### Bio

Natascha has been teaching since 1994, at first both English and Dutch, and at the moment only English. Ten years ago she started to get involved with the Comenius, now Erasmus+ projects. She tries to make a link between her lessons and the projects as often as possible.

Bart teaches mathematics in the third and fourth form. This year he has started teaching CLIL maths in the third form. He has been involved in the Comenius and Erasmus + projects for more than ten years.

## *Writing your way through English*

*Paulina Christiaens*

*10.45-12.10   Room 2104*

### Presentation focus

"What do you want me to write?" I say "What do you want to say?" (Guy Allen) Writing, as one of the skills taught while learning English is many times feared both by teachers and students. Students dread writing because they have to reproduce conventional forms. Teachers grunt on the thought of checking those 'productions'. In this workshop we will look at some helpful writing techniques and exercises as well as at the editing and evaluation processes that will empower both the teacher and the student, and turn the dreaded task into an empowered language expression experience.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

I would like the participants to take away ready-made activities and writing techniques that will help them in the classroom, develop their students' language skills and boost self-confidence in their writing.

I will also show evaluation techniques involving editing processes and assessment.

### Bio

Paulina Christiaens graduated from English Philology at the University in Lublin (MA) and at the University of Toronto (MA). For many years she was a teacher, teacher trainer and lecturer at the English Unlimited language school and Teachers' College, coordinator of a Language Chamber of Commerce and Industry Exam Centre. She is a co-author of teaching materials for a national Ministry of Education project developing key competencies School of Success. She is also a co-author of a handbook of activities from the Creativity in Language Learning Leonardo EU project. She lives in Gent where she works as a freelancer teaching English to adults.

## *Using Mind Maps in the EFL classroom*

*Ron Morrain*

*10.45-12.10   Room 2207*

### Presentation focus

Mind mapping and mind maps are only a few of the many alternatives available to teachers for today's modern classroom. Mind maps stimulate the L2 learning experience because learners begin to make cognitive associations with any given topic.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

Using course books does not serve some learners well, especially those who have problems dealing with heavy text-based materials. Using mind maps in language learning helps to create a meaningful and positive L2 learning experience.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

In this workshop, participants will get on-hands experience with using mind maps and take away several mind maps that they can effectively use in their English classroom or coaching sessions. This 85-minute session will be very interactive.

### Bio

Ron Morrain is an American and is currently living and working in Germany. He is co-founder and Managing Director of The Language Learning Center - Germany. He has a B.Ed. in ESL from St. Edwards University (Austin, Texas), an MBA with a concentration in HRM / HRD from San Francisco State University, and a PhD in Organizational Psychology from University College London.
He is currently very active in the Human Resource Development department of the University Duisburg-Essen, where he is responsible for staff development programs i.e. planning, implementation, and assessment of language training and EMI Coaching. (English as a Medium of Instruction) His active schedule also includes corporate training, executive coaching, and teacher training throughout Europe.

## The benefits of using technology in large classrooms: Tips to make your life easier

*Gemma Webber*

*11.30-12.10   Room 2109*

### Presentation focus

By sharing my own experiences, in this presentation I am going to talk about how I use technology in, and out of the classroom, in order to facilitate student learning in large classes. I will also talk about how the teachers' workload can be reduced by using easily accessible online tools.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

Although it may sound odd, I had never really been one to use technology in the classroom up until, more or less, a year ago. My turning point was when I found myself having to teach blended courses in classes of about 30 students. It made me realise how beneficial technology could be and how it can make the whole teaching experience easier.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

We are inundated by new products every day and I would like people to realise that using technology in the classroom is not as complex, nor as 'painful' as it looks. I want to share ideas and tips with the participants so they can go into class with some new ideas to implement without a lot of preparation.

### Bio

Gemma Webber has been an English teacher since 2001 and has worked for a number of private language schools including International House and British Council Milan. Gemma now works as an English teacher at NABA (Nuova Accademia di Belle Arti) and Domus Academy in Milan, Italy. Gemma enjoys creating her own materials and is interested in using digital resources in the classroom to facilitate learning.

## IMAG (out): Rethinking the Image on the Screen

*Rob Howard*

*11.30-12.10   Room 1204*

### Presentation focus

Most of us use images daily to elicit production. The question is: are we using and presenting the image properly? Most teachers have been overloading the screen for years and not only are we not achieving the objective, we may actually be hindering the outcome that we are seeking. This talk will show simple and more effective methods for using images in the classroom by rethinking how we are producing our classroom materials.

### Bio

Rob Howard is the owner of Online Language Center.  He is a teacher and writer for EFL and a consultant and speaker regarding online retention, using technology in and out of the classroom and the importance of the proper usage of images and film for learning. He is the founder of EFLtalks, building an online worldwide PLN+ for teachers, nominated for the 2016 British Council's ELTon Award for Innovation in Teacher Resources.

## Playing the Moment

*Daniel Sossi*

*11.30-12.10   Room 1104*

### Presentation focus

There are two areas of focus here. Firstly, roleplay in the classroom to reinforce grammar topics, especially tense use; and secondly, storytelling and anecdotal activities to practise sentence construction, along with use of past tenses. The main thing is to encourage instinctive use of language at the moment of speaking, while intervening at certain moments to make key grammatical teaching points.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

Students invariably have struggles with tense use and word order, and it is hard to break them out of incorrect habits. By adopting a sense of 'play', I hope to catch students at key moments to recognise and apply better grammatical habits.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

Firstly, to instill a sense of play and fun in the learning environment; and secondly, a mobilisation to try drama-based activity for precise linguistic focus points in their own classroom.

### Bio

Daniel has been working for Linguapolis, University of Antwerp, for 13 years. In the meantime he has been employed as an acting coach and as a classroom teacher. He has established a multi-cultural improvisation theatre group "Mixed & United" in Antwerp and is always looking for ways to bridge the gap between English language and impro theatre teaching.

## Ear Openers: Activities for bottom-up listening

*Mikhail Grinberg*

*11.30-12.55   Room 2204*

### Presentation focus

Listening activities can be found in most modern textbooks. However, as teachers we seldom go beyond playing an audio track, asking our students some questions and checking if their answers are correct. We test rather than teach. Students often complain that although they fully understand the transcript, when they listen to native speakers, all they hear is noise. We will be looking at activities that help learners develop their bottom-up listening skills and literally start hearing more.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

By the end of the workshop, you will learn to design your own 'ear-opening' workouts. For each of the 3 types of workouts we will be looking at, you will learn:

— where to find and how to produce the right kind of recordings
— how to stage the activities that make part of the workouts.

### Bio

Mikhail Grinberg is an independent Delta-qualified language and communication skills trainer based in Koblenz, Germany. He is a proud member of the teaching team at Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences where he works as a freelance ESP instructor. Mikhail's professional interests include teaching listening, second language acquisition, needs analysis and course design, technology in the classroom and marketing for independent language trainers.  He recently started the online Teacher Development Group — a place where language teachers can grow professionally and receive support.

## Create engaging and interactive exercises with Facebook Widgets

*Bart Buckinx*

*12.15-12.55  Room 2109*

### Presentation focus

During this workshop, you will learn how you can create interactive exercises for an iPad, a tablet and a PC. We will briefly review the capabilities of the Facebook Widgets software, targeting examples specifically for language teachers.

We will look at the exercises from the student's point of view, how do they experience these exercises? Then we see the results of the exercises, and how we can send feedback to our students.

To use this software, only some basic knowledge is required:
• computing (copy / paste, save, file, ...);
• Internet (browsing, filling out forms, downloading,

• mail (make sure you know your username and password, and know where you can pick up your mail online);
• enthusiasm and eagerness to learn

You will see that it really is not difficult, and if you can use Word and PowerPoint, you can use this too!

### Bio

Bart Buckinx is Managing Partner and Head of Sales at BookWidgets. He is responsible for business development and sales world wide.

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## Speciliazation  for the 21st Century Workplace

*Patrick Painter*

*12.15-12.55  Room 1104*

### Presentation focus

Every student  is unique and possesses different talents and abilities. We should take these into consideration, along with our students' different individual needs, backgrounds, learning profiles and preferences. Differentiated instruction does not change what is taught, but how it is taught. All students work towards the same standards and objectives; the key difference is that they are provided with multiple pathways to learning the same content, and are thus given equal opportunities to acquire knowledge.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

Through participating in this session, teachers will understand why differentiated instruction is an essential pedagogical tool and how it can be used to impro

ve students' engagement levels in language learning. Participants will become aware of the full value of the concept of "repetition through variation" by linking this established teaching method to the practice of differentiated instruction.

### Bio

Patrick Painter studied cultural history and pedagogy in Canada and the United States. He worked as a university lecturer and English language teacher for 7 years before joining Express Publishing as an ELT consultant. He has presented at a variety of ELT teacher training seminars in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. His current research involves the relationship between multi-modality, communicative competency, and 21st century pedagogy. He is particularly interested in innovative teaching approaches to developing more learner-centred, task-based classroom environments.

# Rules are nothing; practice is everything

*Nerina Conte*

*12.15-12.55   Room 2104*

### Presentation focus

This workshop will provide practical examples of successful as well as some of the less obvious yet essentials do's and don'ts of language practice tasks.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

Are rules the means or the aim of a lesson? Some teachers seem to like focusing extensively on rules or provide activities that have students running up and down and dictating things to each other. I wonder if the learners' English has improved as a result of these approaches. Sometimes I think we are doing the right things for the wrong reasons. In this session we'll be evaluating a broad selection of common classroom practices to ensure our students practise language and we can measure their progress.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

Participants will take away a better understanding of the principles behind restricted practice and a broad selection of techniques to enhance this.

### Bio

Nerina has been an English teacher since 1989. She has taught in different European countries. She has been a CELTA teacher trainer since 2000. She is director and centre administrator of Language Teacher Training in Belgium, the only Cambridge University authorised centre in Belgium that offers CELTA , Young Learner training courses, TKT and Delta courses.
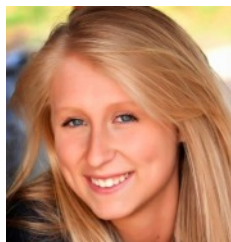
# Building Confidence as a Means of Enhancing the student-centered Learning Environment

*Meghan Briggs,*

*Brandy Miller*

*12.15-12.55   Room 2207*

### Presentation focus

This workshop introduces participants to the advantages of a student-centered classroom and explores techniques for creating this type of learning environment. After a brief overview of different techniques, the facilitators will focus specifically on increasing student confidence as a means of creating an engaging educational environment. An exploration of common pedagogical differences between the United States and Belgium will reveal different approaches.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

We are hoping to provide insightful tools and methods to educators that can be used to enhance their lessons and approaches to improving learning environments.

### Bio

Meghan Briggs is currently working as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at Thomas More Hogeschool in Mechelen. She graduated from the University of San Francisco in 2013 with degrees in European History and French Studies. Prior to receiving her Fulbright grant, Meghan served in the Peace Corps in Indonesia for two years. She is passionate about education, and she intends to devote her career to the development of educational opportunities for marginalized peoples.

Brandy Miller is currently splitting her time as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant at two Brussels secondary schools, Athénée des Pagodes and Institut de las Vierge Fidèle. Originally from Santa Maria, California, Brandy forged a non-traditional path by independently studying in Munich, Germany for 3 years. Through her involvement with an international education NGO called CISV in Germany, Israel and Japan, Brandy discovered her passion for peace education and multilingualism. In May 2016, she graduated from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon with a degree in German Studies.
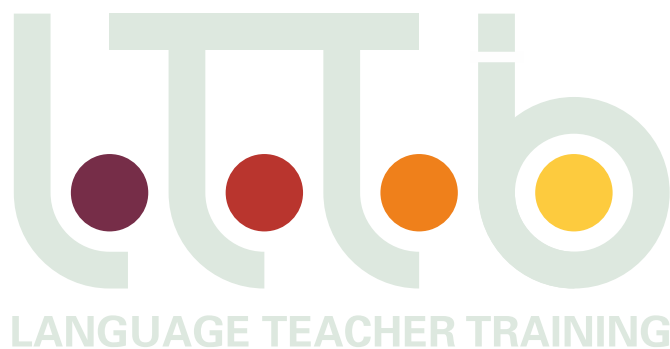
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Attendance Saturdays 8.45-15.00

**Full time face-to-face**
C4 June 06 - July 01
C5 July 03 - July 28 (Bank Holiday July 21)
C6 July 31 - August 25 (Bank Holiday August 15)
C7 September 04 - September 29
C8 November 06 - December 01

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## Small tasters from Oxford

### Mario Lecluyze

### 14.20-15.45   Room 2109

**Presentation focus**

With the financial support of Erasmus+, Mario Lecluyze was able to attend the Oxford Teachers' Academy Summer School at Worcester College in July 2015. In small tutorial groups and with teachers from all around the globe, different aspects of teaching English as a foreign language were covered. Mario has made a selection of ten practical and easy-to-use ideas that could be useful for your teaching practice. Participants will experience the ideas as if they were pupils. After each activity, they will reflect on it.

**Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?**

A good CPD-session should offer participants practical and easy-to-use ideas for the classroom practice. The ideas in this session are taken from the Oxford Teachers Academy Summer School.

**What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?**

Participants can use the ideas in their teaching practice. Experiencing the activities as the students do, will also encourage expert reflection and sharing ideas from their own teaching.

**Bio**

Mario Lecluyze  is a Belgian teacher of English with over 30 years of experience. For the last two years he has also been working as an educational adviser for TEFL and CLIL within the umbrella organisation of catholic schools in the Flanders region. He has already attended a lot of CPD initiatives, both in Belgium and abroad, a.o. in Cambridge and Oxford. In the latter, he got lots of practical and easy-to-use ideas for the classroom. He wants to share a few on BELTA Day.

## Pronunciation with children, and other learners (too)

### Sylvie Doláková

### 14.20-15.00   Room 1204

**Presentation focus**

Learners can speak English very well. However, if they are not able to pronounce properly, their English is "insufficient" and makes communication difficult. How can we teach pronunciation to (very) young learners and what to choose to practise? Let's just let them play and gain! The workshop will show various techniques that work for little kids as well as for older learners. Pronunciation exercises and activities such as Running sound dictation, Phonicolours, Chinese whisper, dominoes, card games, Sound shopping and Sound hunt are just a few among the activities that help children master unusual sounds of English pretty well.

**Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?**

Bad pronunciation techniques can spoil the impression of the best English speech. Moreover, it's we, teachers of English, who are responsible for transferring it to our learners.

**What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?**

My workshops are usually full of practical ideas. I want participants to be able to try some of them on the day they return to their schools.

**Bio**

Sylvie Doláková, MA, both university and freelance teacher trainer, focusing on teaching English to children aged 4 – 12. She specialises in teaching English through music, art and stories; has published a few language game books and CDs for children. She regularly leads webinars in the national educational platform in the Czech Republic and presents at international conferences (including TEA Austria).

## Using post method pedagogy to build intercultural competence:The Greek case

*Ourania Katsara*

*14.20-15.00   Room 1104*

### Presentation focus

This session will describe how language and culture can be integrated in an English for specific purposes classroom in a Greek university. The presenter will demonstrate ways -which can be adapted to any world language classroom- where the use of historical facts can be used as basis to design and incorporate additional embedded tasks in a set of given activities offered in a course book.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

Participants will receive strategies to deliver classroom activities that can allow students to recognize differences and variations within their own culture and within other cultures.

### Bio

Ourania Katsara is an EAP tutor at the University of Patras, Greece. She has been teaching specialised English since 2003 and has also taught on pre-sessional courses in UK universities in order to help international students get prepared for their academic studies. She holds a BA in English Language and English and European Literature,  an MA in Applied Linguistics,  and a PhD in International Education. She has published in peer reviewed journals and participated in International conferences. She is currently on one year sabbatical leave being a visiting researcher at Maastricht University, Netherlands.

## Collaborative error correction in Business English teaching: A showcase

*Milica Kresovic*

*14.20-15.00   Room 2204*

### Presentation focus

How to correct and not to hurt and most of all,  how to ensure uptake is the question I keep coming back to every now and then trying to tackle it in a new way depending on every specific teaching context I find myself in. Error correction remains one of the hottest topics sparking controversy among theorists, teachers, and finally, students on the receiving end. When teaching Business English we need to consider an additional variable and that is hierarchy. How to make sure all the necessary correcting is done in a stress-free way in a group of learners ranging from receptionists and sales staff to team leaders, heads of departments and even CEOs? Collaboration might be the answer.

In my workshop I would like to showcase a collaborative method of error correction which empowers learners by giving them the opportunity to identify and correct errors together. The uptake with this way of error correction is rather high as it is learners who are in charge.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

I will be very happy if participants of my presentation try this method of error correction, adapt it to their own teaching contexts and keep it evolving.

### Bio

Teaching English since 2001. Holds an MA in English Teaching Methodology and an Advanced Master in Linguistics and Language Acquisition.
Has been living and teaching in Belgium since 2012.
Professional fields of interest: Business English and creating materials.

*Kris Van de Poel, Ward Peeters*

*Marina Vulovic, Elke Ruelens*

*14.20-15.45   Room 2104*

# Mind the (Language) Gap

## Presentation focus

When students make the transition from secondary to tertiary education, they make the transition from a (more or less) controlled environment to an environment where they are expected to take responsibility in adjusting to new academic and social expectations. Students who fail to successfully make this transition will under-achieve throughout their studies or maybe even drop out. Teachers play a pivotal role in preparing and supporting students to adapt to the new environment, and in helping them bridge the gap between secondary and tertiary education.

In this workshop we will highlight the different challenges which students experience and exchange tips and tricks – paying special attention to social learning, autonomous learning and collaborative learning.

Filling the social learning gap: Who's afraid of social (media) talk?

Filling the autonomous learning gap: Supporting students' self-reflection and self-regulation skills

Filling the collaborative learning gap: Keeping learners focused in "The flipped classroom"

## Bio

Kris Van de Poel is an Applied Linguist (University of Antwerp & Edinburgh University) with a background in teaching and research in, among others, Scandinavia, Scotland, England and South Africa. She has coordinated and audited projects in Eastern and Central Europe, Asia and Africa and has coached many generations of young and mature language students.

Kris' research is data-driven and firmly embedded in the domain of Language for Specific Purposes with a primary focus on academic and professional contexts.

## Bio

Ward Peeters is a PhD researcher in Applied Linguistics at the University of Antwerp (Belgium) and is a teaching assistant at the department of English Studies at Ghent University (Belgium). He studies social network impact in foreign language learning and has conducted research projects in both Belgium and South Africa as part of an extensive study on computer-supported collaborative work. As part of his teaching experience, Ward teaches courses in linguistics at Ghent University, as well as courses in academic English and Dutch at the University Language Centre (UCT) at Ghent University.

## Bio

Marina Vulovic originates from Montenegro. She is a graduate of the University of Belgrade and, currently, she is doing a PhD in Applied Linguistics at the University of Antwerp (Belgium). Her research interests include raising first-year students' awareness of reading and writing in the context of their academic literacy development in L2. Moreover, Marina is interested in needs analysis, course design, and metacognitive development. She has presented papers at conferences held in Finland, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Marina has experience in the fields of both foreign language teaching and translation.

## Bio

Elke Ruelens is doing a PhD in Applied Linguistics at the University of Antwerp (Belgium). Initially, she trained to become a language teacher, and pedagogics remains one of her major interests. Elke's current research relates to the relationship between self-regulation and language learner autonomy; she is examining whether strategy-based instruction can be integrated in academic literacy courses to target both students' literacy skills and their autonomy.

## Teaching for Success: Planning your professional development

*Jody Hoekstra*

*14.20-15.00   Room 2207*

### Presentation focus

During this presentation we will tell you more about our focus on teacher resources and the British Council's Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Framework; our approach to help teachers to understand and plan their own professional development with a bit of our help along the way.

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

As British Council we launched our new Teaching for Success approach last year and are keen to inform English-language teachers of the possibilities we can offer them to work on their own professional development, which is an interesting and relevant topic in both Belgium and the Netherlands at the moment.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

We want to make participants aware of the work that we do as British Council within the field of English-language teaching and professional development opportunities we can offer them.

### Bio

Jody Hoekstra has been working as an Exams Coordinator for the British Council Amsterdam for almost 3 years. Before this, she worked as a policy advisor for the NRTO (the Dutch Council for Training and Education) where she was responsible for the portfolios of Higher Education, Languages, and Online Learning. In addition, she also has several years' experience as an English teacher and has given workshops/courses on IELTS, TOEFL and the Cambridge English exams.

## Differentiated instruction: What do best teachers do?

*Patrick Painter*

*15.05-15.45   Room 1204*

### Presentation focus

When it comes to teaching, one size does not fit all. Every student is unique and possesses different talents and abilities. We should take these into consideration, along with our students' different individual needs, backgrounds, learning profiles and preferences. It is imperative that schools foster every student's individuality through differentiated instruction. Differentiated instruction does not change what is taught, but how it is taught. All students work towards the same standards and objectives; the key difference is that they are provided with multiple pathways to learning the same content, and are thus given equal opportunities to acquire knowledge.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

Through participating in this session, teachers will understand why differentiated instruction is an essential pedagogical tool and how it can be used to improve stu dents' engagement levels in language learning. Participants will become aware of the full value of the concept of "repetition through variation" by linking this established teaching method to the practice of differentiated instruction.

### Bio

Patrick Painter studied cultural history and pedagogy in Canada and the United States. He worked as a university lecturer and English language teacher for 7 years before joining Express Publishing as an ELT consultant. He has presented at a variety of ELT teacher training seminars in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. His current research involves the relationship between multi-modality, communicative competency, and 21st century pedagogy. He is particularly interested in innovative teaching approaches to developing more learner-centred, task-based classroom environments.

### Stanislavski's System in the ESL Classroom

**Nikolay Nikolov**

**15.05-15.45   Room 1104**

*Presentation focus*

T.I.M.E. (Teenodrama Interactive Method in English) – a method of applying professional acting techniques instruction (based on Stanislavski's System) in the target language (English), enabling ESL teenage learners to enhance their oral communication skills, as well as become more motivated in the foreign language acquisition process, along with developing other related metalinguistic and/or paralinguistic skills – is the outcome of a PhD study, conducted with teenage ESL learners at levels B2 – C1 (CEFR).

*What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?*

The focus of the workshop will be a brief description of the method of enhancing ESL learners' interactive speaking skills through the instruction of professional acting techniques (based on Stanislavski's System) and demonstration (with audience volunteers) of some of the speech and acting practice exercises applied throughout the T.I.M.E. research professional-drama phase. Participants will be shown the magic and experience the effects of real drama in the ESL classroom.

*Bio*

Nikolay Nikolov holds a PhD in Modern Foreign Language Teaching Methodology, an MA in English Philology and an MA in Turkology. Since 2005 he has been managing his own school – Markoni's Language Centre. Dr. Nikolov is an oral assessor and examiner for two independent internationally-recognized ESL examination boards, a participant and presenter in various international ELT conferences in Europe, Asia and North America, and a British Council ELTons 2012 and 2015 nominee.
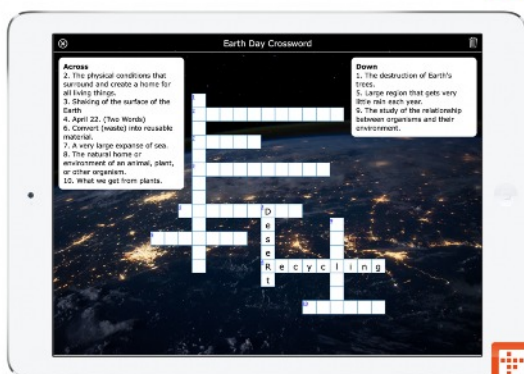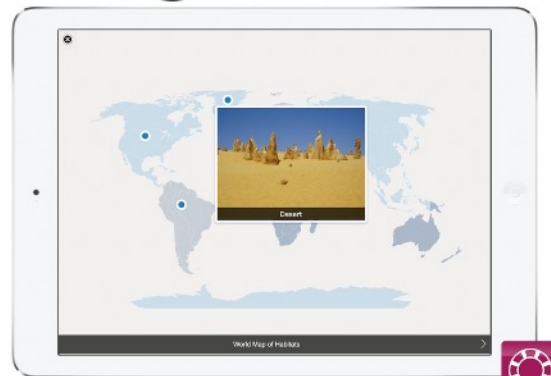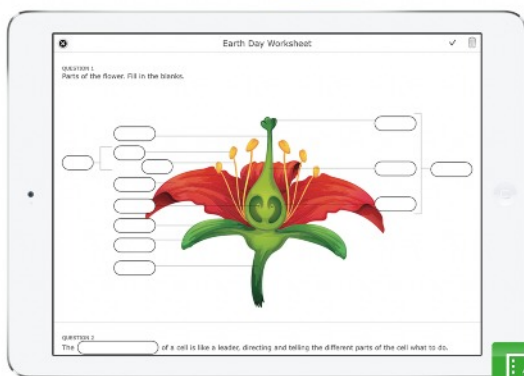
## Visual Story for Grammar Learning

*Mija Selič*

*15.05-15.45   Room 2204*

### Presentation focus

We will create a visual story using flashcards to demonstrate how such a story can be used in the classroom. Through the visual story, we will create affirmative, interrogative and negative sentences and introduce auxiliary verbs to show how grammar can be visualised, thus making it easy for children to understand, read and write. C00lSch00l teaching tools will be used.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

All of the activities will demonstrate how to establish a basis for the visual presentation of grammar (word order, question words, the use of articles, the plural of nouns), while at the same time providing a good opportunity for reading and writing, thus transforming an abstract concept of grammar into a concrete and visual concept.

The participants will be actively involved in all of the activities and will have an opportunity to ask questions during the activities and at the end of the session.

### Bio

Mija Selič is a teacher, teacher trainer and executive assistant to the CEO at the C00lSch00l private language school. She is an innovator in finding new ways of teaching and in developing teaching materials for very young language learners. She has a Master's degree in primary teaching and a degree in English. She also holds a certificate in convergent pedagogy.

## American English in the Classroom, Online, Everywhere

*Jameson L. DeBose*

*15.05-15.45   Room 2207*

### Presentation focus

Did you know that the Embassy of the United States can be your conduit for free English language resources for students and educators? Come learn more about how you can work with us to enhance the learning experience for you and your students. The facilitator will cover a full range of resources ranging from Massive Open Online Courses and webinars to multimedia tools that can make a difference in your classroom. If that's not enough, ask about our MeetUS speakers program to have a native speaker visit your classroom!

### Why have you chosen this topic for your presentation?

We chose this topic to expand our network of English language teachers by sharing the resources we can provide. It is also our hope that the presentation will be an eye-opening experience to develop a dialogue that improves the products we offer.

### What do you want participants to take away from your presentation?

We hope that our participants will walk away with ideas to incorporate our free products into their classroom teaching strategies as well as their professional development.

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# the be**l**a bulletin

## 2017 Spring Edition

**Featuring**

**Tyson Seburn**
**Academic Reading Circles**

**Pete Rutherford**
**On The Radar**

**Christina Chorianopoulou**
**Book Review**

**John Arnold**
**Technology Toolkit:**
**Bookwidgets**

# the belta bulletin

## 2017 SPRING EDITION

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belta

The Belgian English Language Teachers Association

monthly belta webinars

annual belta Day

regular belta blogs

quarterly belta bulletin

# A word from the President

Welcome, everyone, to the latest edition of the BELTA Bulletin. This year, we have decided to include the Spring issue of the Bulletin with your BELTA Day programme. By including the Bulletin with your programme, it is like receiving two continued professional development resources in one package! If you are not at BELTA Day, you are receiving it via the post.

As always, the Bulletin is filled with great articles that give you practical classroom tips and ideas to mull over.

This Bulletin is special for another reason as well. Vicky Loras, who edited the Bulletin from its inception five years ago, has stepped down as editor. Vicky is off pursuing additional professional opportunities, like working on receiving her Master's Degree. Vicky was always a tireless editor who searched the world over for great content for the Bulletin. The BELTA Board wishes her all the success in the world as she moves on to other challenging and exciting pursuits! One of Vicky's last acts as editor was to prepare and train the new editor, Paulina Christiaens.

Paulina has the same mindset as Vicky, which is one of the reasons we asked her to take over the reins from Vicky. She is fearless in her pursuit of engaging content for the Bulletin as you can tell by this – her first issue! Paulina lives and works here in Belgium, which allows her to be an integral member of our Board. If you are here at BELTA Day, make sure to introduce yourself to Paulina and let her know how you can contribute to the Bulletin. She is constantly on the look-out for great writers!

If you are at BELTA Day today, welcome! You are in for an amazing day that includes plenary speaker, David Crystal, amazing workshops/talks, and a special celebration for our 5th conference! If you are not here today, watch our retooled website for comments and pictures of BELTA Day 2017.

Thanks!

*John Arnold*
*BELTA President*

# A message from the Editor

It is my pleasure to present to you this issue of BELTA Bulletin, which for me, is a very special first issue as a BELTA Bulletin editor.

Vicky Loras, who served as the editorial officer of BELTA Bulletin for the last 5 years, has stepped down as she is taking on new challenges in her professional development. A big thank you to Vicky for her enthusiasm, hard work, engagement and support!

In this issue of the Bulletin you can read an interview with Tyson Seburn about his book *Academic Reading Circles* and how to apply his reading method in your classroom – a very stimulating approach which I have also started successfully using with my students.

Christina Chorianopoulou has read Tyson's book and used some of the techniques with her students. Read her article to find out about the results! Christina will also, for the coming issues, share a book review with us, so stay tuned!

BELTA President, John Arnold has immersed himself in technology toolkits and has written a very interesting hands-on article about BookWidgets. You want to know more about that tool and how to apply it in your classroom? Then you have to read John's review and find out.

*On the Radar* returns to BELTA Bulletin! Pete Rutherford has introduced lower-level learners to the idea of communicative competence and this is just a beginning, as the following issues will continue exploring the subject of communicative competence in Pete's regular column.

Last but not least, if you would like to contribute to the next issues of the Bulletin, or know someone who might be interested in sharing their articles with us, please contact me at paulinachristiaens@gmail.com and I will happily include you.

Enjoy the Bulletin!
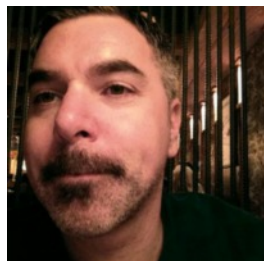
Warm wishes

*Paulina Christiaens*
*BELTA Bulletin Editor*

# Interview Tyson Seburn
## *Academic Reading Circles*

## *Tyson Seburn: Academic Reading Circles*

### Interview by Paulina Christiaens

**About the author**

**Tyson Seburn** is an EAP instructor at the University of Toronto and author of Academic Reading Circles. He holds an MA Educational Technology & TESOL from the University of Manchester. His main interest focuses on public spaces for exploring teacher identity and development. These include #tleap (bit.do/tleap), 4CinELT (fourc.ca), and IATEFL TDSIG (tdsig.org).

Academic Reading Circles by Tyson Seburn is a teacher-resource book that explains and exemplifies an intensive reading approach aimed at improving learner engagement with and understanding of concepts in non-fiction texts, like those encountered in higher education courses

Our BELTA Editor Paulina Christiaens had the good fortune to sit down with him and ask him about his book.

*P: Thank you for agreeing to this interview, Tyson. I would like to start with asking about the background for your interest in collaborative reading.*

T.: It stems largely from my time teaching at the university level, but even before my time at the university when I taught in general ELT contexts, the way most classes approached reading was very solitary. Learners read a text, then worked on comprehension questions alone, then perhaps ended with discussion questions as a small group. Nothing about this process promotes deep comprehension or group work, both fundamental in our society. This was only compounded from my experience with the course that I teach at the University of Toronto: Critical Reading & Writing. Preparing students for the reading they need to do to successfully complete university assignments, I'd noticed how superficial the reading tends to be, particularly as learners default to focus on unknown vocabulary over concept. When left to do these readings without skill building or cultural schematic guidance, it can be an overwhelming and isolated experience. My colleagues and I found that when we broke a text apart into different components, learners were able to dig more deeply into its concepts and vastly improve comprehension. This, however, is challenging to do alone. So working collaboratively in reading a text alleviates some of that burden, not to mention prepares them for group work that is common in many courses.

*P.: Could you tell us in more detail what ARC stands for and how it works ?*

T.: Academic Reading Circles (ARC) is an approach to intensively reading texts that is designed to guide learners towards a collaborative co-construction of text concepts by initially focusing on different aspects of the text. It breaks apart reading skills into specific techniques—things we all do simultaneously in our L1 reading—that learners focus on individually, then combines the efforts from the individuals in small groups to build a collaborative deep comprehension beyond what can be done alone. On successive texts, learners then rotate these duties so they become familiar with focusing on different aspects of a text, with the aim that once familiar with all ways to focus on meaning, they can more effectively read on their own when ARC is not practical to do in future class environments. In short, it begins with a common text all students are required to read; this follows with individuals reading it from one of five perspectives (Figure 1); after this, learners come together in groups of 4-5 to share and discuss what they've found from these five perspectives (Figure 2).
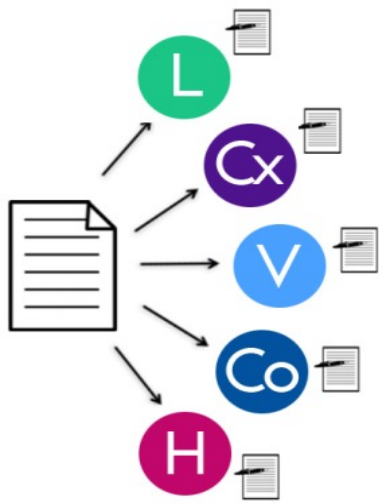
Figure 1


Figure 2

**P.: And what type of texts can you work with while applying ARC method?**

T.: Because of the teaching context where ARC was developed, it was created specifically with non-fiction texts in mind as these are the types of texts most often used in the programs undergraduate learners face in their university courses. This is why the more traditional literature circle activity is not effective or appropriate.

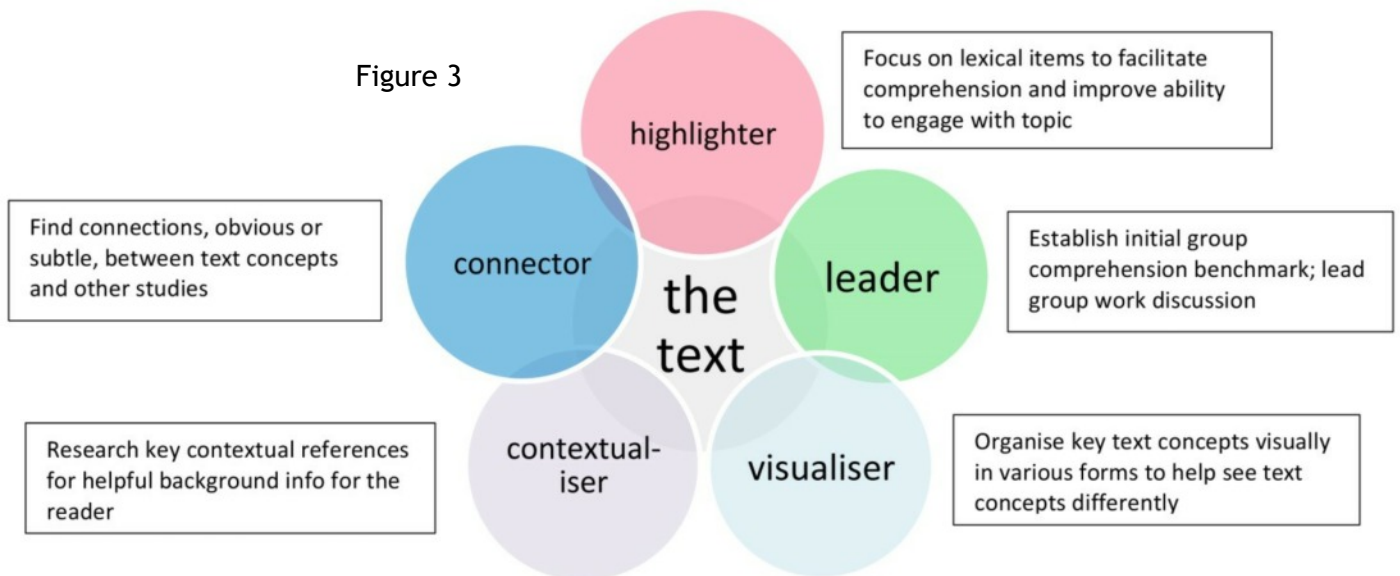As a result, it works best with magazine articles, journal articles, and reports on any topic. In Chapter 3, I discuss these types of texts and considerations to make when choosing a common text in more depth.
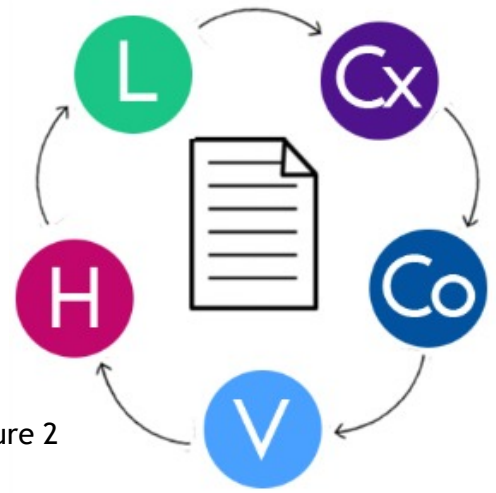
**P.: In your book *Academic Reading Circles* you describe five roles that constitute each circle. Can you tell us what these are and what purpose they serve?**


Figure 3

highlighter — Focus on lexical items to facilitate comprehension and improve ability to engage with topic

connector — Find connections, obvious or subtle, between text concepts and other studies

leader — Establish initial group comprehension benchmark; lead group work discussion

contextual-iser — Research key contextual references for helpful background info for the reader

visualiser — Organise key text concepts visually in various forms to help see text concepts differently

T.: This overview (Figure 3) shows the five roles included in ARC and their primary purpose. Of course, with regard to specific duties and how to implement them on an actual text, this is discussed in great detail with examples in Chapters 4-8.

**P.: And if an ESL teacher, after reading your book, wants to implement the idea and start using ARC with their students, what are the absolute first steps that they should start with?**

T.: First, I would highly recommend reading the book thoroughly and then trying out the different roles on a text yourself to see how a learner feels. Looking at the role summary or even various shared versions of role duties I've seen floating about online isn't enough. Different ARC roles lend themselves different weight depending on the content of the text you're using. This suggests that the choice of text can impact how useful ARC is. It's not always about length—some paragraphs alone can be packed with meaning. It's not always about content— some topics are fundamentally more easily understood than others.

# Interview Tyson Seburn
## *Academic Reading Circles*

It's about identifying where your learners default to superficial reading and applying ARC in those cases. Beyond this, I would strongly argue for scaffolding the ARC roles with learners on a sample text (or series of texts) together before letting them loose on a text themselves. Additionally, consider your course length. An ideal situation would be to afford each learner the opportunity to take on each ARC role at least once. Finally, keep in mind that ARC is not a replacement for other skill-building lessons. While it does introduce ways at looking at a text more deeply, it works best in conjunction with a syllabus, not replacing it.

**P.: In chapter 10 of your book you discuss Extensions. Can you give our readers some ideas what can be done with the text as a follow-up?**

T.: Chapter 10 divides ways to extend ARC beyond its basic process and components into three timelines: activities to do before, during, and after the group-work component (an ARC cycle is divided into selection of text, individual reading, group-work). What I find works most organically as a follow-up is for learners to use the text and the resulting comprehension they've constructed to a productive end. This could manifest itself as a reflective piece of writing on their reactions to text concepts, a summary of the text, an essay that synthesizes information from multiple texts used for ARC, or a group report which includes the findings of each role and reflection

of the utility of each role. Another productive skills possibility could include preparing a presentation about the ARC text and/or leading a discussion about it with the class. If we simply focus on using the text itself beyond the scope of ARC, I often incorporate it into other language lessons, like examining the author's use of grammatical structures, chunks of language by frequency as shown in corpora, or techniques such as hedging. These lessons are what I refer to as existing inside a syllabus where ARC supplements.

**P.: And what are the results of using ARC? How is it beneficial to the students? What improvements have you noticed?**

T.: I know of several research projects in different universities currently being conducted on the various affordances resulting from ARC use in academic programs, not the least of which is one I am organising on my own groups for next year. In each, I've heard mostly about the positive qualitative data from both instructors and students on their experiences so far. I'm excited to learn more about all their findings in the coming months and years. However, from a more anecdotal perspective, over the past six years, I've seen ARC largely achieve what it sets out to: a deeper and more accurate understanding of text concepts. This is demonstrated through learner ability to discuss, remember, and write about the text with deeper analysis than when done without ARC. It also improves awareness of digital

literacies, referencing convention, and vocabulary building strategies. This has been noticeable both in written product about any of the ARC texts we've studied, but also in learner use of ARC strategies on successive texts.

**P.: My last question relates to the applicability of the ARC techniques. Do you see Academic Reading Circles employed in an ESL classroom not necessarily related to Academia – be it a language school, or secondary school – where one of the subject is English?**

T.: I strongly believe that almost any approach or technique that illustrates an improvement in language learners' skills can be applied in some form across contexts. I do this whenever I go to conference talks, for example, that aren't specifically related to EAP contexts. It is important to keep in mind though that this does require adaptations. ARC is created with learners in an academic learning environment foremost, so the duties and expectations of each role do aim to build skills specifically in that area. Having said that, most any non-fiction text—be it a newspaper article, magazine, or even blog post—is embedded with many authorial techniques that are meant to convey meaning to a particular target audience. ARC roles, even taken outside the academic context, can be of benefit to a general language learning context to improve the ability to discover and uncover meaning.

# Pete Rutherford: On the Radar

After a brief hiatus, *On the Radar* returns to the BELTA Bulletin. As regular readers of the Bulletin will know, Rob Szabó and I have been writing a series of short articles reporting on our experiences using radar charts to represent a learner's communicative competence.

In 2014, we used the following short working definitions of communicative competence based on Celce-Murcia model published in 2007:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sociocultural competence | awareness of the social and cultural restrictions on language use |
| Strategic competence | the ability to compensate for breakdowns in communication and to enhance language learning |
| Interactional competence | paralinguistic knowledge such as pausing, silence, eye-contact, and proxemics |
| Linguistic competence | knowledge of grammar, the sound system, morphology and syntax |
| Formulaic competence | knowledge of collocation, idioms and lexical frames |

We also introduced readers to two fictitious learners to demonstrate how radar charts could be used.

**Learner 1**

Performs particularly well on structural tests, having paid attention in German secondary school English lessons, being driven by a low tolerance for error and a high standard of rigour. However, this learner struggles to communicate with English speaking people. She finds it difficult to follow small talk, cannot engage confidently in social or business settings, and has a poor record of achievement in intercultural situations at work. Her boss has decided to keep her in a back-office position - a decision that may affect her future prospects within the company.

**Learner 2**

Performs at a mediocre level on structural tests, having learned English mostly on holiday and from computer games and online chat forums. His output is fluent, but full of errors and tends to be informal and eccentrically idiomatic. He is often asked by colleagues to handle telephone conversations with foreign people, but his boss is wary of giving him more official responsibility.

One request that Rob and I have received on occasion since 2014, is for some ideas on how to use radar charts to introduce and explore the communicative competence with lower-level learners; learners who would find the terminology mystifying and the concepts difficult to discuss outside their first language (L1). Regrettably, in in this case, most of my work consists of one-to-one business English coaching to high-level learners. Luckily, with the accumulation of classroom hours over the past two years, I have had the odd opportunity to try some communicative competence activities with lower-level learners.

I should say that, to me, the most obvious solution to the abovementioned problem is to discuss the topic in the L1 of the learner or learners. Generally, learners have no immediate need to discuss the ideas outside the classroom, in English or otherwise. The priority is for them to understand the concepts, the components that constitute communicative competence, and use this knowledge to examine their strengths and weaknesses, and apply appropriate and effective remedies where necessary.

If this isn't possible - for example a teacher doesn't speak the relevant L1 competently or has a mixed L1 class - simplification of language, but preferably not content, and extensive exemplification have proved to be an effective way to introduce the world of communicative competence; a world that moves beyond an overly narrow focus on lexico-grammatical knowhow,

which is often surprisingly appealing to lower-level learners.

It is worth stating at this point, particularly as it is easily overlooked, that lower-level learners often have highly developed non-linguistic competences. These can be independent of their knowledge of English or due to a need to compensate for a lack of it. Formal assessment almost always focuses on measuring understanding of grammar and lexical ability, which would be represented by linguistic competence in our radar chart, and to a lesser degree, formulaic competence. Sociocultural, interactional and strategic competence are almost completely absent.
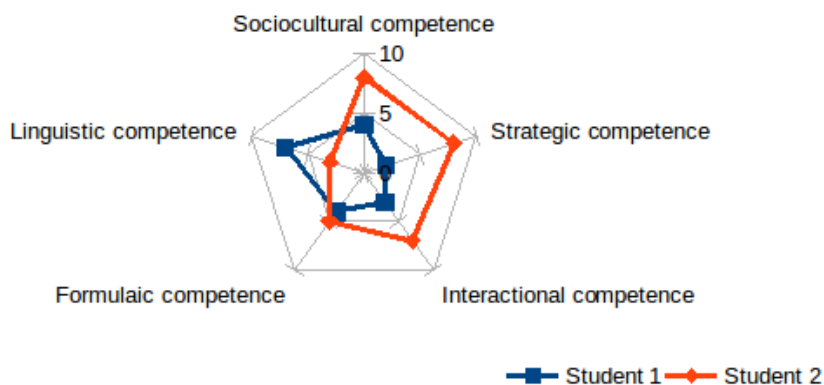


## Simplified definitions

| Sociocultural competence | social and cultural rules |
| --- | --- |
| Strategic competence | strategies for improving understanding and strategies for learning |
| Interactional competence | non-verbal communication |
| Linguistic competence | grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation |
| Formulaic competence | word combinations, standard phrases and idioms |

# Pete Rutherford: On the Radar

**Examples match**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sociocultural competence | Shaking hands at the beginning of a meeting. | Using first names with business partners in the USA. |
| Strategic competence | Saying: "Sorry, I didn't understand. Could you explain it again?" | Writing down and practising new vocabulary. |
| Interactional competence | Smiling and nodding when you agree. | Making eye contact. |
| Linguistic competence | Present simple: I work at this company. | Vocabulary: is 'intelligent' in English |
| Formulaic competence | Word combination: to *take* a *photo* | Idiom: to *break the ice* |

In a future edition of the Bulletin, I hope to publish some mini learner profile matches and a graded case study for lower-level learners, similar to the Remberg case study published in the Winter 2015 issue of this publication.

I am very much looking forward to hearing from the Bulletin's readers about their experiences introducing lower-level learners to the idea of communicative competence. Many will have far more experience and opportunity than I do.

## References

Celce-Murcia, M. 2007. "Rethinking the role of communicative competence language teaching" in Hall, JK, 2012. *Teaching and Researching Language and Culture*. Pearson Education.

**About the author**

Pete Rutherford is a business English and communication trainer based in the German city of Düsseldorf. Originally from Cape Town, South Africa, he now works with companies across Europe; both in person and online. Pete also works as a teacher trainer, conference speaker, and contributor to ELT

## *Christina Chorianopoulou on Academic Reading Circles*

One of my best, most fulfilling moments in teaching has been sitting in the middle of a class of teenagers, listening and observing while a Literature Circle takes place; watching them engage with a written piece in a way I could not possibly pre-plan or expect, noticing how words drive their curiosity and thought or, sometimes, impede their understanding - and how they address this. There are many keywords I could use here, but *collaboration* and *motivation* seem the most appropriate; the same keywords I would have described all language courses. Could such moments be experienced in other contexts?

I had never attempted this approach with groups of older learners and on non-fiction readings until recently - partly because I was unsure as to how to suggest it to students with little time on their hands and partly due to my distress of not having done this before with advanced learners. When I got my copy of Tyson Seburn's *Academic Reading Circles* and read it cover-to-cover as I usually do with every new book, my keywords were flashing out of the text in every chapter - I had to dig deeper into this approach and did so, both as a learner and as a teacher. During the five months of working on academic texts with a group of teachers in my MA and monitoring several sets of ARCs in one of my Young Adult IELTS courses, this book has been an incredibly inspirational manual. With precision and attention to every significant detail, *Academic Reading Circles* manages to not only present a

structured and solid approach to reading challenging texts, but also to cultivate and sustain high levels of motivation. By using a sample common text, the book takes the reader through each step of implementation - from setting the learning background, to choosing appropriate texts, to a detailed description of every ARC role. The checklists given throughout are a very useful feature, as are the numerous suggestions for extension assignments and projects. Simultaneously, much of the focus lies in the groups, as they are the building block of an ARC and progress derives from the interaction among them. What I particularly like is the several opportunities for reflection and recycling of successful practices, as well as that peer feedback and assessment stand at the foreground.

Here are some reflections from participants so far:

*"I realised that the way I visualized a concept was different to what the others in the group saw. It was hard to find a representation for all the group to agree on and understand, but they all helped me with their comments so next time I'll definitely do better"*

*"I thought it was an easy text but when [the leader] gave us the discussion questions I couldn't answer them. Not one of them. I had to read more carefully and every reference link too and again two (questions) I didn't know"*
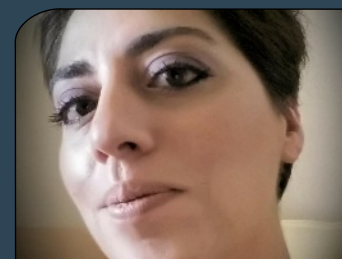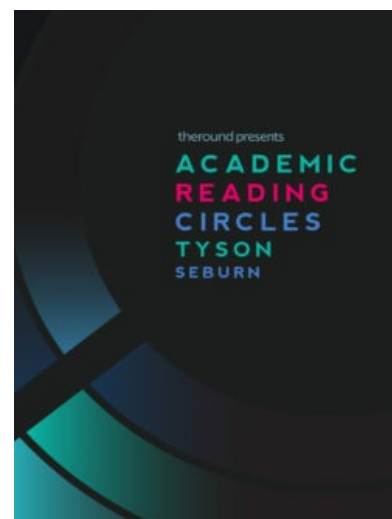
Christina is a freelance English and Greek language educator from Greece, working for over fifteen years with students of all ages, in a variety of contexts. After a few years in Primary education, her true passion came forward and she dedicated her life to teaching and learning languages. As a lifelong learner, her efforts are focused on creating a safe and productive environment for all her students, while passing on to them her own love for learning. She blogs at MyMathi-ma and shares on @kryftina.

# Book review

## *Christina Chorianopoulou on Academic Reading Circles*

*"Reading in the group has been a big challenge for me because I'm used to working on my own and not have to wait for others, but now it's much better because the other students say something I hadn't noticed. This happens every time in the group and I don't know how I miss these details yet but I'm trying"*

*"This has been very helpful, to work in the group and not by myself. It's very difficult to make a summary usually for example, but in the group we all add something to it and especially the pictures help us understand what we read so we can discuss and write about it"*

The heart of this approach remains collaboration and to quote the very introduction: "[…] language learners develop deep textual comprehension better through initial collaboration than if tackled alone". Tyson Seburn has excellently put together a book for language teachers, quite unlike others in its genre - a highly recommended read for educators both experienced in ARC and novice like myself.

# Technology Toolkit



## *John Arnold on Bookwidgets*

As someone who has been using educational technology for more years than I like to count, I was surprised by my interest in Bookwidgets (bookwidgets.com). Until I discovered the power of Bookwidgets, I thought I had sworn off sites that allow teachers to create practice exercises. My thought was simple: there is – especially for English language teachers – a myriad of sites that my students can use that allow them to practice (re: drill) vocabulary and/or grammar. For grammar practice, I often steer my students towards Perfect English Grammar (www.perfect-english-grammar.com); for vocabulary, towards flashcard sites like Quizlet (quizlet.com/latest). Both sites are good, but like any site, they have some limitations. Perfect English Grammar is a little too rules-focused for me while Quizlet is limited by the input the students want to add.

I didn't even think I needed a book widget in my life until I was introduced to Bookwidgets. One day – out of the blue – I received an email from my Unit Manager; she wanted me to join her at a meeting with a Belgian start-up company called Bookwidgets. The company was looking to make inroads in various teacher training departments in Belgium. I told my boss I would attend, but I was skeptical. Before the meeting, I spent some time investigating the site; I even subscripted so I could look at all the features. I was prepared to dislike the site. To my surprise, I easily found myself using and thinking of ways to implement the site into my courses.

BookWidgets is an online platform for creating material that can be used in a stand-alone web environment and material that can be used in e-book creation. Thus, the name 'widgets'. I had been doing some preliminary exploration into e-book creation and had been introduced to the term 'widget'. I thought that 'widgets' were only something that could be used in e-book creation, but a widget is 'an application, or a component of an interface, that enables a user to perform a function or access a service.' (Wikipedia)

BookWidget allows the user to create online exercises for students, like quizzes, worksheets, webquests, hangman, memory games, word searches and pair matching. Each activity you create with a widget produces a unique code and a unique web address. Using the code, the students can go to the BookWidgets site on any WIFI-enabled device and access the activity.

The students can go directly to the activity using the web address as well. (NOTE: BookWidgets works on any WIFI-enabled tablet, laptop or smart phone EXCEPT an iPhone, which – to me – is still a major drawback.)

I started by creating a simple quiz. I have always liked the idea of using online sites to create quizzes. Although I am not the most environmentally-friendly person (a flaw, I admit), I hate to carry around papers, whether quizzes or essays or journals. For the last few years, my students must submit all traditional paper-and-pencil assignments digitally. I have tried several other online quiz generator programs, but I had not found anything I or my students really like; all the others had limitations which turned me off. BookWidgets' quiz generator was the first that truly gave me the freedom to create the quizzes that I wanted to create – the ones I would have created if I had used paper.

First, the quiz generator came with a variety of question types. It contains the typical question types: multiple choice/single-answer, multiple choice/multiple answers, fill-in-the-blanks, short answers, and long answers. But, it also contains some other questions types that could be used by language teachers, including a picture annotation question type, a word order question

type, picture multiple choice question type, matching question types (word to word, word to picture, picture to picture) and text drag and drop question type. The variety alone was of great interest to me because many other sites offered only a fraction of these options. The fill-in-the-blank option allows several multiple answers, which is helpful when dealing with gap fill exercises.

Like other tools, BookWidgets will correct and generate scores for quizzes; if you include short or long answers, it waits to generate the score until you correct those answers. You can also easily override an answer, especially for a gap-fill exercise in which you did not anticipate all the possible answers. Once corrected, you can generate a PDF of the students' responses and have it emailed it to them via BookWidgets. For me, these extras have made the BookWidgets' quiz generator the most frequent widget that I use. My students love it as well. They do the quizzes usually on their own and not in class. There is a timing feature for the quizzes as well, so you can limit the time the students take to answer the quiz.

The other tool that I use is the Worksheet generator. For many of my classes, especially the English for Specific Purposes classes, I don't have a course book. I have a supply of authentic sources, like

newspaper articles, videos, audio fragments, etc. I can create pre-reading/listening, during activities and post activities easily with the worksheet generator. It works a lot like the quiz generator, so there is nothing to learn about using this tool. You can decide to have the students receive a score and the answers immediately or have the results sent to you instantly for review. There is even a side-by-side worksheet generator that allows you to put a text on one side and a series of questions on the other side.

BookWidgets is easy to use. Its interface is easy to follow. You can create a quiz or a worksheet in a matter of minutes. I recommend that you review the 'Title/Reporting' and 'General' settings before you start creating your own widget. My teacher training students had a free account generously supplied by the people at BookWidgets. They were tasked with creating an online reading quiz. I gave them no instructions and all of them could produce something within a day.

I should mention that BookWidgets does require a subscription after the initial trial period, but the yearly cost is worth it when you compare it to the time, effort and paper you utilize when creating paper-and-pencil materials, plus the links do not expire, so you can recycle them.

John is an American teacher working at Thomas More University College in Flanders, Belgium, teaching English in the Management department and TEFL Methodology, Language and Culture in the Teacher Training department. After 25+ years teaching all levels in New York State, including Queens in NYC, John fell in love with a Belgian and resettled in Antwerp. John is also the co-author of two secondary school English course books, Spark and Touchdown. He is an editor and contributor to Zeal, an English-language magazine for Belgian students.
He has been President of BELTA since 2016.