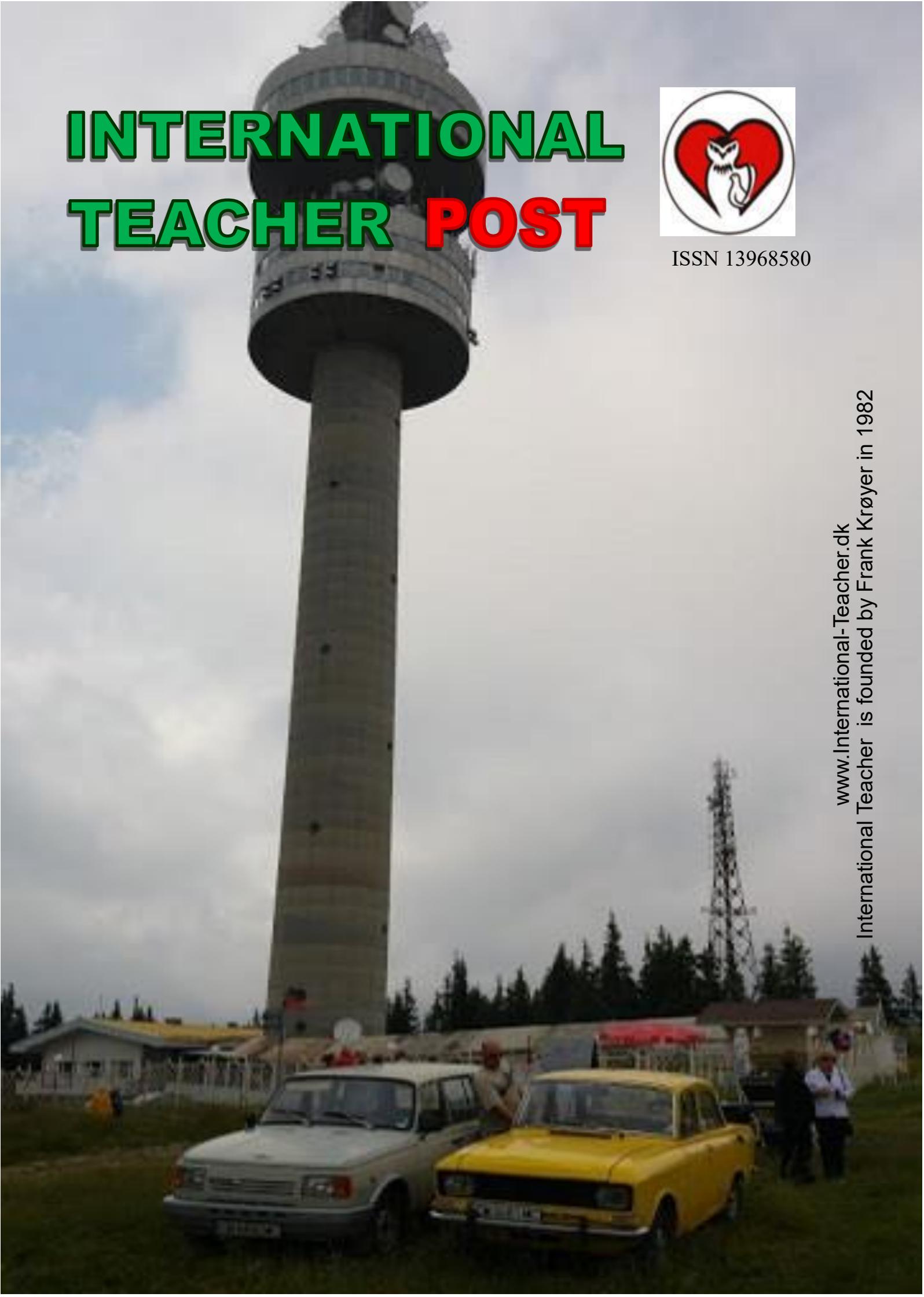


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We encourage International members to form local associations to which you deposit a contingent. IT-Post is free of charge for international colleagues - please mail a letter and your name and address to **Oksana Khomutenko Jørgensen** page 3

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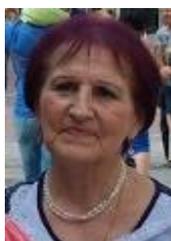
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The purpose of INTERNATIONAL TEACHER - Post

Edited by an international board is to be the international quarterly magazine for “International Teacher Association”, - a network of teachers and pedagogues in order to promote a culture of peace and non-violence, which UN has defined as “*respect for human rights, democracy and tolerance, the promotion of development, education for peace, the free flow of information and the wider participation of women as an integral approach to preventing violence [and creating] conditions for peace and its consolidation.*” (UN Resolution A/58/11)

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THE EDITORIAL BOARD is open to all interested and active colleagues who want to support international understanding through educational work.

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We are looking forward receiving your letter to the editor, an interesting article, pictures, students' work, pedagogical projects, information of common interest, “advertisements”, poems etc.!

Notice please: *Our English language might not always be perfectly correct, but we hope that the sincere intentions will be clear!*

Also notice please: Opinions expressed in the articles don't need to reflect the views of ITA or the editorial board!





International Teacher Association Denmark 2016



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Årsmøde og generalforsamling afholdes på Helms Skole i Korsør marts eller april. Vi vender tilbage med dato og program. Har du en ide til et oplæg, så sig endelig til.



Støt skolerne i Nepal

Indbetal fx 100 kr. pr måned eller et engangsbeløb
Indbetal pengene på ITA's Nepalkonto: 8500 0003572137

Mange tak
for bidrag



Kontingent til ITA

Har du husket at betale kontingent 200 kr. (unge og studerende 50 kr.) bedes indbetalt pr 1. april 2016 på ITA's konto: 1551 16454494 eller indbetal på giro: +01< +16454494<

Theme of the year 2016—2017

Great personalities' of your country contribution in peace, democracy, human rights and educational and cultural development

Last year our theme was How to include the parents in the school. After a fruitfull discussion at the general assembly we made a decision about what is going to be the theme for the comming year.

International Teacher Association is an international intercultural, pedagogical organisation which purpose is to promote human rights, democracy and peace.

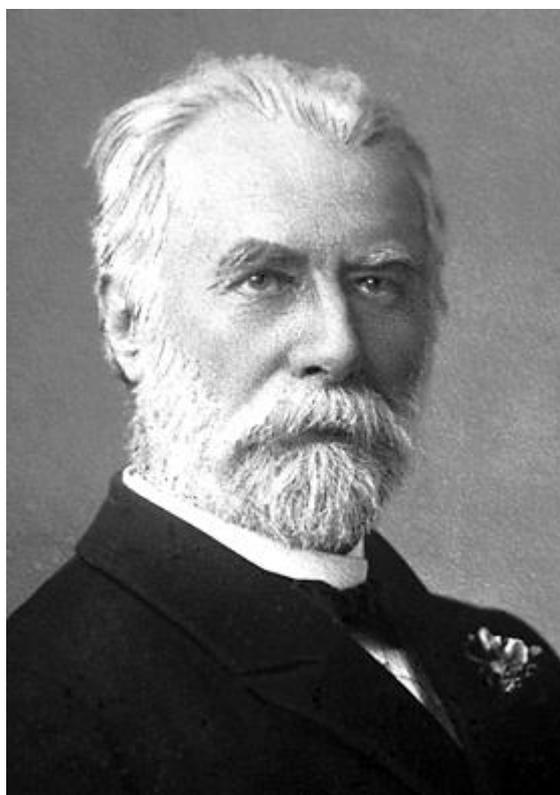
At the general assembly in Bulgaria in July this year, we came to an agreement, that this year, we want to look back to our roots. We want to find great personalities' of your country contribution in peace, democracy, human rights and educational and cultural development

We let our students read about these persons, their ideas and how the ideas became important for the society. They can write about it in a report, make a film about the person, make a radio documentary, make a lecture, make some artwork inspired by the chosen important person.

We are looking forward to hear about the work in different countries next year in Belarus. We are very anxious to learn about your heros. I can already tell you, that my students are going to work with the Danish winner of the Peace Nobel price in 1908 Frederik Bajer and our founder Frank Krøyer. Frederik Bajer's work was the teoretical base for the work Frank started.



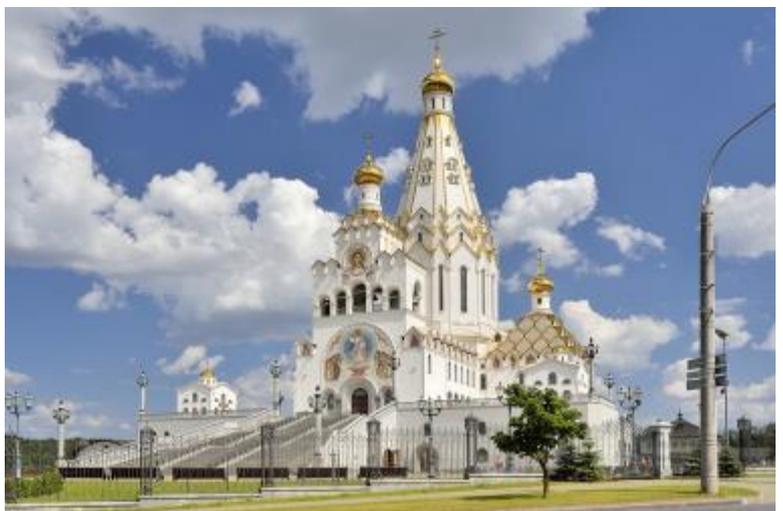
Frank Krøyer 1937—2010



Frederik Bajer 1837—1922

Annual meeting in Belarus 2017

1	Sunday 2nd juli	Arriving Minsk
2	Monday 3rd juli	Minsk
3	Tuesday 4th Juli	Leave for Vitebsk in the evening
4	Wednesday 5 th of July	Vitebsk
5	Thursday 6 th of July	Vitebsk
6	Friday 7 th of July	Celebration for Chagall in Vitebsk
7	Saturday 8 th of July	Polotsk
8	Sunday 9 th of July There might be an extra day in Belarus.	Departure from Minsk



Valentina Yuchenkova

Valentina Yuchenkova ia inviting us to Belarus next year. The program will look like this. The program is not finished yet, but we will have it ready in the next issue of ITA-Post.

Annual meeting in Bulgaria 2016



Lise, Denmark, Petia Giozova, Bulgaria, Sonja, Denmark, Aisia, Magarita and Margaret, Bulgaria. Teh great Bulgarian team.

Thank you to Petia Giozova

Thank you very much to our hardworking and dedicated organizer Petia Giozova for a very nice annual meeting in Bulgaria. Petya is our new vice-president of ITA executive committee. We had very interesting touristic visits in Plovdiv, the old city, and the city which is going to be European Cultural Capital in 2019, and a nice stay in the mountains, Pomporova,

where we had our conference and had visits to caves in the area. It was a great experience to see this beautiful country, but the best of all was to meet all our dear friends from all over the world. This year we were 25 participants from 8 different countries, and it was very interesting, entertaining and nice to meet you all. We had a tremendous week in Bulgaria. Thank you to Petia and her staff.



Bulgarian Folkmusic and dancing to our celebration dinner. A very entertaining and nice evening in good compagny.

ITA visit in Plovdiv at Centre for family-type Children`s Home “ UHCT MANKA TEPE3A”



By Lisbeth Djurhuus, Denmark

After a couple of hours` drive in our comfy blue bus between capital Sofia and historical Plovdiv, we stopped for a visit at a family-type Children`s Home in Plovdiv, and were met by members of staff, social workers and 4 of the older children staying at the “Mother Teresa Center” from 2015.

We were welcomed by the Headmistress of the Center and seated in a room big enough for the ITA group of about 25 members, our translator Daniel, the 4 young people living in the Center, staff members and a couple of tables with cakes and water. Also there were a computer, a projector and a screen, which media were being operated by a very dedicated social worker, or maybe teacher, who talked about and showed us slides on the work in the Center.

As the text on the slides was in Bulgarian and consequently written in the Cyrillic alphabet, the following summary is my understanding of Daniel`s competent translation into English, concerning the aim of the professional work in the Center. Also we were let in on the particular expectations, necessary for the staff to bear I mind, in order to work successfully with the children in the Center.

The children were organized in 2 age groups One for the 3-12 year old children and the other for the 12-15 year old youngsters.

The child's arrival to the center

When a child was included in the social work in the Center, the first 3 months were spent on the staff and the individual child actually coming to know each other properly.

But why spend 3 months this way?

We were informed that the following

mindsets were characteristic of the “new” child:

- a. loss of self confidence
- b. experience of crisis,
- c. mental state of having nothing to lose,
- d. no future dreams,
- e. no regular contact with caring adults
- f. no reason to trust another adult
- g. no schooling

The perspective of the work for and with the child on a short term could be:

Re-integrating the child in his / her own family.....

the child moving to foster parents ...

the child staying at the institution

In all three cases the staff would always cooperate with parents as much as possible.

The mission of the staff could in brief be pinpointed as follows:

- teach the kids to behave like children
 - teach the kids to look after themselves, instead of e.g. siblings, parents
 - shelter the kids from violence
- assist the children to dream by the help of social workers and nurses.
- assist the children in the process of becoming ordinary members of society

How to be successful

And how are social workers supposed to be successful in such a mission?

The first challenge for the social workers was to accept the work-slogan ... “All we plan for today is, that we go to work”.

This was a saying among the staff, a mindset, in order not to have specific “demands” on the child`s behalf even before having met each other in the mornings.

The following “work points” or guidelines had been developed to support the staff:

Accept the children as they are (and help them accept themselves)

Bear in mind, that the children are not used to being treated well

Give the children reason to trust you

Join the children in an effort

Support the children in building a stronger self confidence

Treat him/ or her as an individual

Give the child a smile

Have the children do manual things, action-style

The class teacher, and others, must make the children trust that they can do nice things, or do them nicely

Help the children to learn to read

Before 2016 the children in the Center had gone to the same local school, but it turned out to be a disadvantage to the children in their effort to make friends in school, as these children were thought of as a “special group” and not individuals. So the Center decided that the 15 children now go to 8 separate schools, even if this choice makes communication between the staff and the class-teacher more demanding timewise.

How to help the children

But which points are important for the teachers in helping the children to become ordinary members of society?

This is what we heard:

- Teach the children to read Bulgarian
- Teach them mathematics
- Make the children do physical training
- Bring the children out on excursions, so that they can see and experience matters of importance in their surroundings
- Teach the children to express themselves emotionally through dance or music
- Ask the students to throw a performance using their talent to a limited audience as the goal of a work-period

And how is the work of the Center financed?

The Children`s Home is basically sup-



Magarita Kostova and Petia Giozova (in the middle) talking to the staff of the childrens house.

ported by the Bulgarian state, but also local business people sponsor e.g. summer camps, so that the children can go to the seaside or to the mountains during the summer holidays.

We learnt, that sometimes when the Center was offered a donation of e.g. a haircut or a pair of shoes for a child, the offer was kindly turned down, because the donation of material "items" as such, did not strengthen the confidence of the child. The staff would put their guideline like this: "We don't accept donations as such, because we don't need them. What the children lack is communication". If a donor on the other hand would contact the Children's Home and offer a donation, which included a personal contact between a child and some local citizens, the donation was very welcome.

The children earn money themselves

The children sometimes raised money themselves for their "special" activities by working together with people from lo-

cal firms. We saw photos from one instance of this "local contact" The photos were from the "clean-the-Pharmacia-day", when the oldest children were busy cleaning all the shelves in the Pharmacia together with the everyday staff of the local drugstore.

The young people had wishes for the future

The 4 young people, who had also attended the meeting, were a bit shy in talking to us, but we understood, that they had already formed wishes for their future in the way of which job they would like to perform later ... e.g. becoming a hairdresser.

When leaving after actually only 1 hour, we ITA members were full of information, optimistic on behalf of the future of the children, and impressed by the professional and personal skills and the enthusiasm of the staff connected to the Center.

Our visit at Margarita's school in Plovdiv



By Lisbeth Djurhuus, Denmark

Margarita Kostova, one of Petya's geography-teacher-friends, had kindly arranged a visit at her school in Plovdiv for us.

By the entrance we were welcomed by 2 young pupils of about 7-8 years in traditional Bulgarian outfit, offering us bread with a tasty spicy-powder to go with it.

We were then taken to the staff-room, where, I believe, all of Margarita's colleagues, maybe 40-50 women and a couple of men J, were present and prepared for

communication with us.

Two of the Bulgarian teachers told us about their experiences of integrating parents in the pedagogical projects with pupils and students.

Among many other interesting activities, the parents were regularly invited to attend the presentations and maybe enjoy an exhibition, which the students produced by the deadline of their topics during the school year.

Also parents were involved in conflict resolution, contributing with their personal advice or idea, if their child had experienced problems in the school.

Later we were taken round the school, and visited the computer room, the English room nicely done up with language posters and workbooks and saw the mint-green / greyish school uniform. By the end of the visit we were presented with a handy-craft gift, which was created by one of the pupils from wood, wool and a small doll in the traditional costume.

Personally I was impressed by the teacher's enthusiasm, the personal dedication and creative motivation, which was a genuine inspiration between us teachers.

Our communication was made possible by the translators, our own Daniel, the





“Lady in Orange”, the “French-style Lady” and yet another of Petya’s friends Penka, who all did a terrific job in making us understand how the Bulgarian school system works, and which challenges the teachers and society face.

We appreciate this invitation to Magari-

ta’s school very much, because it enables us to actually KNOW about the Bulgarian school-system, and are grateful that so many colleges and staff put so much effort into enlightening us.

On behalf of all of us in the ITA
Yours

Lisbeth
Djurhuus,
ITA mem-
ber, Den-
mark



*Schooluni-
form at
Margaritas
School*

ITA conference 2016

Hotel Murlitsa, Pamporovo, Bulgaria

By Helle Steffen, Denmark



Chairman Sue, Australia and President Marina, Saint Petersburg, are ready for the meeting to begin.

Sue from Australia is chairman of the meeting.

Petia welcomes us.

We are second time in Bulgaria, comes from many different countries with different options and shall now share experiences and learnings.

Daniel will be our interpreter as last time from Bulgarian to English and Pinka from Bulgarian to Russian. Daniel was brilliant, and I am sure, that Pinka was the same.

Sue told about Frank as one of the most extraordinary persons, she has known. Peace was what he lived and worked for. We have now a network among borders and nationalities, and peace starting in the way, we are with each other's, with tolerance of different peoples views. Consensus versus conflicts. A peaceful path to a successful meeting is to respect each other's views.

Sue ask us to stand up and remember Frank!

After that everyone should introduce oneself and tell why they want to be a member of ITA, and everyone from the eight nations did that.

Galina from Georgia told about the importance of the Newsletter. Not everyone is able to get visa to everywhere, but is able to read the Newsletter.

How to include the parents in the work of the school

Jytte introduced the topic of this meeting: How to include the parents in the work of the school, and she was the first to tell about her school in Denmark:

It is a private school with 220 pupils, 15 teachers, 0 to 10 grade.

She told about the intranet, and how it is used of both teachers, pupils and parents every day.

The days always begins with songs for the whole school, three songs: a national, a Christian and a children song, and very often many of the parents will participate in this morning meeting.

During the year there are a lot af projects including the parents.

Eg. a film project: how to talk to each



Tamara, St Petersburg to the right was talking about teaching history in the field. Along with her is Galina, Vladivostok.

other in a proper way.

Marina (Sct. Petersburg) has many superior suspects of education in school and family:

Family in class, class in family
A model for education every day. Our life is always under construction. We are building ourselves. She talks about values - our real practice of living - in families, in nations. Hearing - feeling - sharing!

After a coffee break **Tamara** told about St. Petersburg excursions. Useful in history lessons. Subjects could be brought to the classroom by parents, who tells about them or you could take a walk in the streets and tell about everything: who built the street? Who lived there ? etc.

There is a lot to tell about in St. Petersburg: cemeteries, palaces, Churches and so on, and in Pavlovsk about Pushkin eg. But it is difficult to get time to excursions because of the authorities. Every year an excursions guide is edited. A very fine one.

Sue from Australia is the next to tell about parents in the education.

By law every school must have a P and C association (parents and citizens) The P and C association have different duties, fx selling school uniforms, run a cantina and things like that.

A Development Officer can train the parents to get involved in a P and C association.

Also they can have a school council to cooperate with employment of principal and others. How effective the P and C association will be de-

pends of the school.

Gry told about her school in **Denmark** (Enghavegaard Skole in Copenhagen).

Heart, brain and body- everything has to respond, and if the cooperation with the parents is bad, they have so called family classes, where the parents must come once in a week learning to get things bet-



ter among their kids.

Valentina from Belarus talked about teaching values to families through edu-



cation of children. As an example they could have a project about animal welfare. Children likes animals, and they are not afraid of them. After lunch and excursion to the caves, **Irfan from Turkey** (Karabuk University) told about the many difficulties and problems with education in Turkey. The biggest problem is that the classes is overcrowded, mainly because of refugees. It is not easy to take care of everyone, when there are maybe 50 stu-

have an extra job. Every week and in every class there is a lesson, where you can meet the parents. Parents, students and teachers come close, and the parents very often take part in the school with different activities, fx excursions.

Raisa from Moscow tells how the education in Russia is under a great change is this years.

There are many problems in school and many problems with the parents. The government wants to know everything about the education, every students become marks and absence will be registreted. There are no meetings with parents in Moscow, everything is on Internet from Moscow to Vladivistok. Everything can be controlled, and the parents has duty every day to read, what has been written.

Sue remarks that face to face meeting with parents is important.

Raisa says that in her school in Moscow there are open class days, where parents can come.

It is Marinas opinion that it is dangerous to be limited through Marks and very bad only to communicate though IT.

At last in the conference Jytte invited every one, who has spoken to write about it in the Newsletter.

dents in a class.

Galina Dugasvila from Georgia tells about the many reforms, who has taken place in the last years in Georgia She has been a teacher for 46 years. The teachers in Georgia works very hard, and because the salary is low, many of them need to

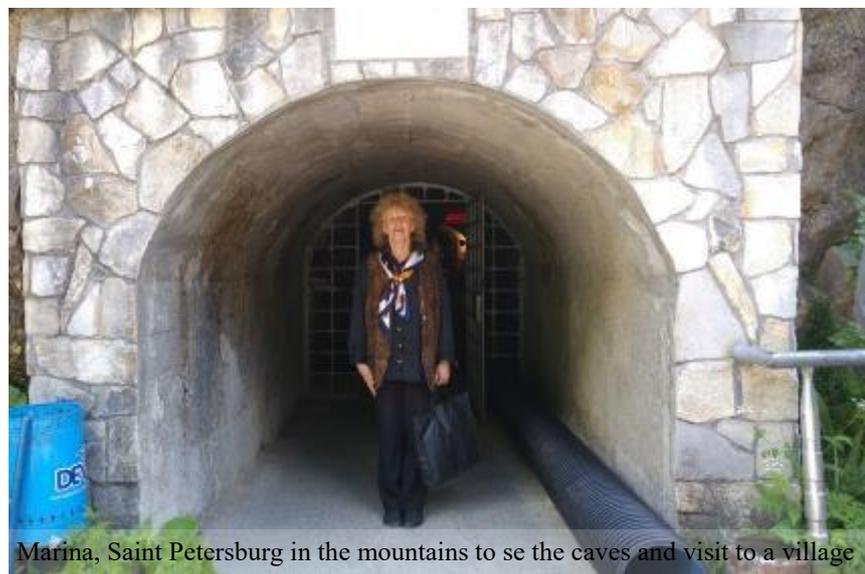




Celebration dinner in Pomporova. After dinner followed Bulgarian folkmusic and dancing. Very festive



Valkentina, Belarus and Raisa Moscow in Plovdiv



Marina, Saint Petersburg in the mountains to see the caves and visit to a village





ITA coordinator Jimmy Lama and his wife Dhiki Lama and their little daughter Yasmin visited us in Denmark this summer. They met former volunteers and members of ITA



Jimmy Lama, former volunteers Anne Svendsen, Linn Skov and Dhiki

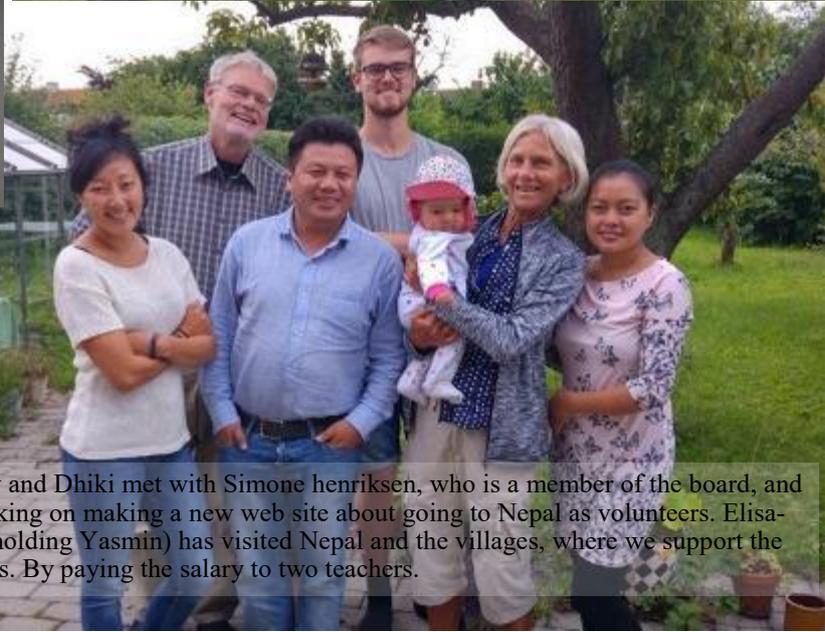


A short visit to the buddhist Center in Korson

A lot of schools has been rebuilt after the earth quake. Now they are redy to welcome volunteers to the villages. Please contact us, if you are interested in having this great experience, to stay in an village and to help the teachers in the local school.



Jimmy and Dhiki met with Frank Krøyers son Per Krøyer and his wife. Ellen Goting had made a very nice dinner for us, and we had a good talk



Jimmy and Dhiki met with Simone Henriksen, who is a member of the board, and is working on making a new web site about going to Nepal as volunteers. Elisabeth (holding Yasmin) has visited Nepal and the villages, where we support the schools. By paying the salary to two teachers.



Volunteer in rural Helambu village, Nepal

2017

JOIN TO HELP REBUILD AND RESTORE LIVES AND COMMUNITIES IN EARTHQUAKE STRICKEN VILLAGES IN RURAL NEPAL.

Requirements

- Minimum age 18.
- Enthusiasm and interest to work in the various projects on offer
- Minimum 4 week commitment
- Necessary flights & visas
- Full travel & medical insurance

The International Teachers Association (ITA) and Helambu Education and Livelihood Partnership (HELP, a local NGO in Nepal) have been partnering to enable Danish students and graduates to work as volunteer teachers in Helambu region of Nepal. While this opportunity improves academic credentials or career skills for volunteers, it brings much needed care and support for the underprivileged children in Nepal. Our integrated approach of community development will assure the whole community mobility where volunteers of various education and cultural background can exchange their culture freely. Volunteers will also have opportunity to immerse into Nepali culture and build friendships thus allowing mutual benefits.

Timeframe

Placements are available all year round and we welcome applications at any time. We are particularly seeking volunteers to fill in placements starting February 2017. The placement last a minimum of two month with combination of teach and trek.

Costs

Our volunteering programme is free of charge but volunteers should have a commitment to fundraise. All costs in Nepal are met by participants themselves. The cost of teach and trek range between DKK 12k to 13K.

For more information contact us on:
Jytte.Svendsen@skolekom.dk or
simone243@hotmail.com

www.international-teacher.dk/ or
www.helb-nepal.org



Greetings from the HELP Director

By Jimmy Lama

Namaste friends,

Not much to say except for how indebted we are to you all for your continuous support. 'Now' is a very challenging time for us as we have embarked on to rebuild 7 schools on earthquake resistant standards. As a local organization, we try to do our best without being wavered from our values that we can build back strong and better.

This signals that the past three months at HELP have been mostly occupied by preparation into the permanent construction of schools where we are faced by humongous tasks to speed our work and that with good quality at a time when bigger players often undermine the capacity of local NGOs.

We feel we have been able to build a robust team. As you read this, around 50+ locals who have now received training on earthquake resistant building techniques are working hard to rebuild schools alongside several other locals. A team of engineers and supervisors are keeping an eye on each progress being made. To see this happen, it gives us immense joy that the work is progressing so well even if it has meant for us that we have had to move a mountain like hill at one school location. Of the targeted 7 of the 15 schools which were slated to complete reconstruction before the monsoon in June/July, we are nearing completion of task at two schools. Our team, including me, is constantly running/biking/jeeping up and down across our partner schools, so you can imagine a lot of busy activities happening. Amidst this reconstruction challenge, we have also managed to move ahead smoothly on our other usual activities that are important for the schools such as running our teachers support pro-

gramme to volunteers placement to school bags, etc. The detailed updates of what we have been up to are outlined below.

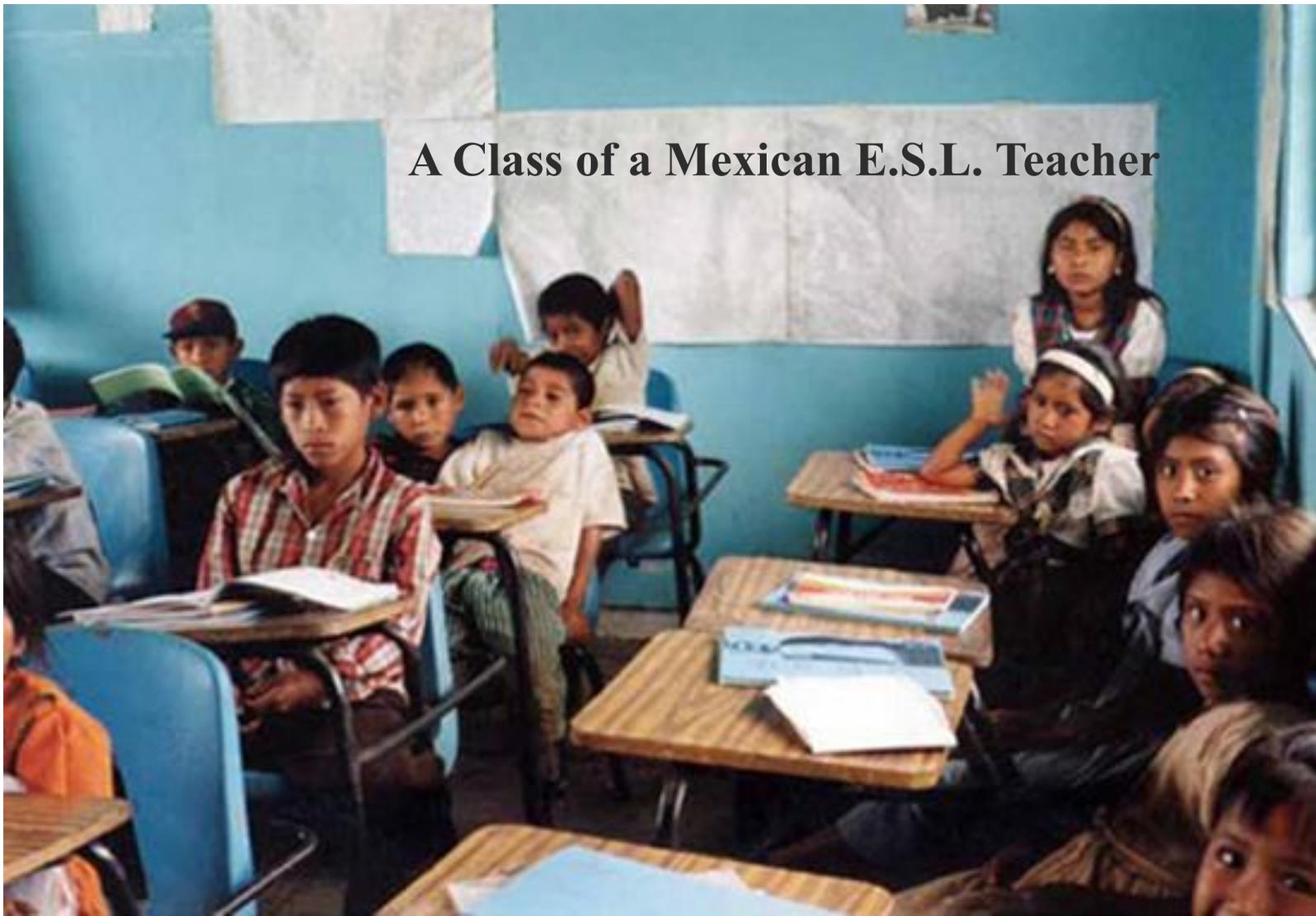
On a personal note, I have been filled with joy to welcome my daughter, Jasmine Dolma, who is now three months old. Let me take this opportunity to thank all those who have been sending wishes to me and my wife. Jasmine is growing well and healthy and she reminds me every morning that caring for children cannot be dealt with at shallow level. It is a serious task! My daughter inspires me to work harder at HELP as we feel responsible for thousands of children across so many schools in Sindupalchowk!

Last but not least, let me also take this opportunity to welcome and introduce to you two of our new colleagues, Ms. Richa Thapa, Head of Communications and Mr. Ashish Shrestha, Head of Finance, who bring so much expertise and compassion to the work we do here.

As always, we appreciate your feedback and suggestions. Jimmy and the HELP team.



A Class of a Mexican E.S.L. Teacher



By LIZ STEPHANIE MARTINEZ CORDERO,
MEXICO

I arrived at a high school in Mexico City in 2004, enchanted with the indigenous culture and eager to meet the students I was about to encounter. I had resided in Mexico a long time ago for over 13 years, so I had been acquainted with some of the traditions, customs, festivities and food dishes.

Mexicans speak Spanish with indigenous accent, slang and language structures and they usually do not understand the Spanish language from Europe very well, however, they display the Spanish language from the South of Latin America in their entertainment and theater.

Mexicans have an interest in learning English as Second Language since they

have a frontier with the United States, however, it is very difficult for them to learn it and speak it well. A foreign E.S.L. teacher reported the following opinions: “The first year I taught E.S.L. in Mexico and actually got into the classrooms, I was amazed that conditions could be so bad. Students often lacked pencils, erasers, and notebooks, and usually sat elbow-to-elbow in dark, crowded rooms with hot tin roofs. Floors and furniture were uneven, filling the rooms with constant rattling sounds that easily drowned out my voice, which was echoed and dampened as it bounced off the rock walls. The English schoolbooks were riddled with errors. My teaching failed miserably at first. Without speaking much of the native language, I couldn’t explain to students what I wanted from them. Refusing to use the textbooks, I drew some ire from other teachers. Refusing to hit students, I couldn’t force them to do anything at all. I

wanted to be a fun teacher, anyways, who earned the love of my students, but without much experience in the classroom I was at a loss to even do that. It only took my first day of teaching to realize that I seriously needed to change.”

E.S.L. classes in Mexico are given by teachers who have acquired full traditional Mexican upbringing and education. In general, teachers are mestizos or indigenous mixed with other races and expose the English language with indigenous accent and culture. The structure and style of E.S.L. teaching in Mexico is indigenous dominant. Mexicans usually speak very slowly and with soft and low tones. Unlike Western European languages, the indigenous communication is not so expressive orally and it is emphasized with visual cues and images.

Their language uses many symbols with no excess of vocabulary, rhetoric terms and pompous words. Indigenous do not express feelings and emotions so easily as Europeans do and do not communicate quickly and spontaneously. On the other hand, they are courteous and polite but do not like loud people and noise. Below is the video of an English class in an official Mexican high school:

AN ENGLISH CLASS IN AN OFFICIAL HIGH SCHOOL IN THE STATE OF MEXICO

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cwrzbXrAOzo>

The introduction of the ES.L. class starts with a listening activity and fill in the blanks exercises.

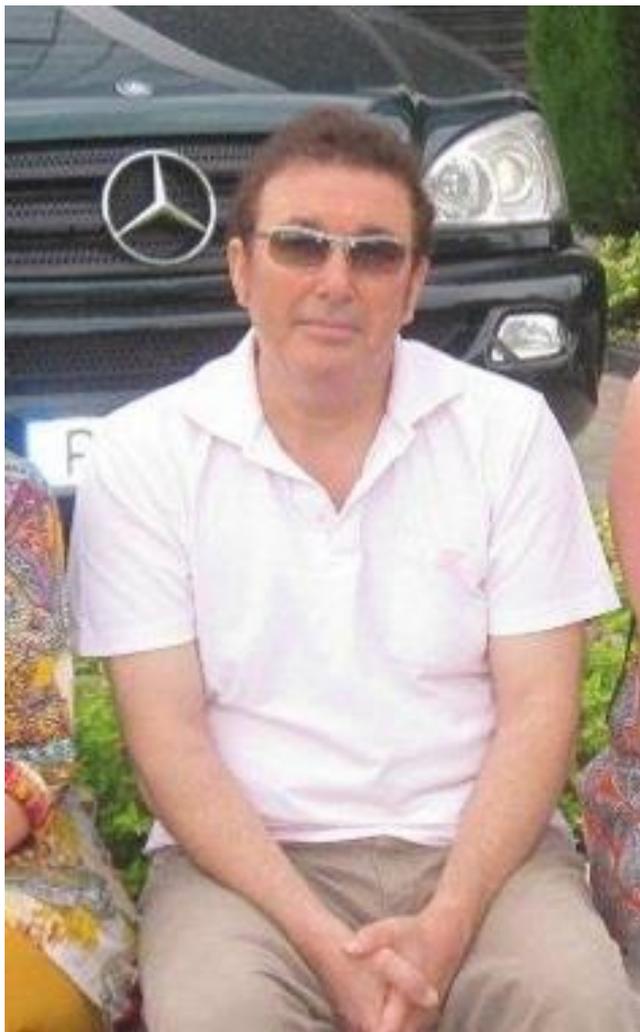
While the indigenous and mestiza female student is very feminine and flirtatious, the male is very stiff and attentive.

Mexican students sit down relaxed and in comfortable positions on chairs. The teacher does not correct all the time in front of the whole classroom or in groups of students gathered, but he may correct a student separately alone and even request for general feedback or group clapping. He does not like to move a lot in front of the classroom, he stands firmly, walks a bit slowly and smoothly and may also ask general questions to all students or to a group of students, but does not usually pinpoint or direct a question to only one person. Mexican teachers often do English readings out loud or perform in front of the students and students reply and respond in pairs or in groups. On occasions, Mexican teachers ask students to do an English reading or demonstration standing up as a sign of special respect and courtesy and at the end of the class they may give cheers or general good appraisals.

– Liz Stephanie Martinez Cordero, *E.S.L. teacher in Mexico City*



ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING FOR CHILDREN



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Abstract

Children learn languages differently than adults and often acquire new languages more quickly. Traditional teaching methods do not work as well with young learners as they do with adults. Children often respond best to teaching activities that encourage a sense of fun and games. In this way the young learner enjoys the process more than they would if it felt like a pure lesson and will remain more engaged. In several countries there is compulsory English education in

children's classrooms but there has been less success in fostering English learning that helps the students later in life. With the goal of increasing student engagement in learning English and helping the information be retained it is recommended to incorporate such things as games, songs, and rhymes. Younger students can benefit from these and other tools and should continue their English language learning throughout primary school.

English Language Teaching for Children

Based on the work of Curtain and Dahlberg (2004), the biggest impact in English language learning comes from long term usage of the language and continuing learning throughout life. They state, "When language learning begins earlier, it can go on longer and provide more practice and experience, leading ultimately to greater fluency and effectiveness". Children have a much greater facility for learning new languages due to their greater brain plasticity but the techniques and methods of teaching English have been developed primarily for teaching adult learners. Utilizing the traditional techniques that are useful for teaching more mature students may stultify younger students and fail to engage their attention. As important as finding the best ways to teach younger English learners is discovering what makes it difficult for them to learn.

The first thing that defeats most young English learners is simple boredom which leads to discomfort and can make them feel incapable of learning. Theoretical concepts of grammar and the institutional structures of language are concepts that do not facilitate the natural acquisition of language that is so powerful in children. Children are less able to focus on complex tasks or long form lessons than their adult counterparts and traditional English teaching

lessons can lead to boredom and inattention. When a student's attention wanders there is likely to be a teacher who demands they return their attention to the lesson and this can inspire resentment against the teacher, class, and ultimately the language. This extends to how assignments and exams are graded and the research shows that too strict grading guidelines can discourage young students. It appears that traditional English teaching methods are not the best practice for teaching younger learners.

It follows, then, that to teach a child English is it important to help them want to learn the language. It is incumbent on the instructor to create an atmosphere of learning that encourages rather than corrects, is fun for the student, and utilizes praise more than criticism. Children do learn additional languages more quickly than adult learners and this is especially true when there is a large amount of exposure to the language. This exposure should engage and entice as many of their senses as possible to saturate the learner with opportunities to incorporate the new language into their everyday lives. Children benefit more from unstructured learning time than adults do as well. Younger learners should therefore be given the opportunity to play with and explore the new language in a free time setting where the toys and activities expose them to English in a way that is self-motivating. Motivation and learning are both enhanced if the student feels comfortable in the learning environment. This could include such things as story times in English or allowing and encouraging students to display English language related artwork in the classroom to make it feel more their own. The recurring theme in teaching children English is that fun has much more of an impact than previously understood. The children have the power to learn English, they just need to want to.

Discussion and Analysis

One of the best ways to engage a student's sense of fun is through music. Music is so dramatically effective for teaching children because they have fun singing the silly songs and it strongly

reinforces the sense of flow and natural use of a language. If a child's attention begins to drift during class it is sure that the opening bars of one of their favorite English learning songs will bring them back into focus on the task at hand. The enjoyment of music makes the eventual acquisition of English language much easier and can help avoid the pitfalls of boredom. The research also shows that students show a greater retention of vocabulary and even grammar when the lessons incorporate music than if the instruction consists solely of spoken or written instruction.

Songs and other musical constructions are far and away the best tools for teaching children the sounds and rhythms of a language. As stated above music also does a good job of making vocabulary memorable and even fosters a natural sense of grammar without explicit instruction. The repetitive nature of most songs, especially children's songs, help expose the student to the same material again and again in an enjoyable and easy to remember packet of memory. A powerful example of the utility of music in teaching children English is the creation of Jazz Chants by Carolyn Graham in the 1980s. Carolyn Graham is an author and English instruction teacher at Harvard University and her experiences led her to create Jazz Chants as a tool to help English learners more naturally incorporate the rhythms and sounds of American English. There are many other pioneers in the field of English instruction that are developing, or already have developed, purpose built musical lesson tools for precisely this goal of teaching the sound of a language.

One of the instructional constructs that have been developed to take advantage of music's power to convey language is something called action rhymes. Action rhymes take advantage of young learners natural enthusiasm and energy to more enjoyably engage them in the process of learning English. Action rhymes have been demonstrated to be effective at helping even first time learners acquire at least some sense of word meaning and the general flow or pace of the language. The power of music

and rhyme to teach is such that they are being incorporated more and more into older student groups up to and including adult learners. This is thought to be primarily due to the repetitive nature of these tools, the rhythm and intonation of the language sounds, and the sense of casual fun they provide. It has been demonstrated over and over that the same child that cannot remember a whole sentence construction such as "Mary went to her Grandmother's house for Sunday dinner." but they can easily remember and reproduce all of "Mary had a Little Lamb". Another example that goes even further is the simple song/rhyme of "Head, shoulders, knees, and toes" because this song engages the physical sense of actually reaching for and touching the vocabulary item being taught. The repetition of these songs and rhymes are particularly effective in engages a child's natural predilection for mimicry and copying what their friends and teachers are doing. There has been no more powerful tool for teaching English to children than music.

Music is not, however, the only useful tool for engaging a young English learner's sense of fun and stress free learning. Games are often very useful for establishing the English classroom as a place of fun and enjoyment. The studies show that classroom games are uniquely effective for children unlike music which is nearly as effective for adults as children. Games will be met with eager glee by younger students and creates willing participation rather than truculent attendance. Children who are having fun pay more attention, retain more information, experience greater self esteem, and demonstrate a more holistic grasp of the language than students who experience a more traditional lesson style.

Another powerful aspect of game playing with regard to younger English learners is that the game inherently has a goal or win state. This activates a sense of competition in the students that can be harnessed to increase motivation and learning. Essentially a game that teaches language will require the student to speak in order to participate. The student, of course, does not want to be left out of the game and so they are motivated to communicate in

service of playing with their friends. The desire to know in order to win creates an ideal mind state for learning and information retention. Beyond just the desire to participate and try to win the game the student is also aware that failure on their part may include failure for their team or group and it is unwise to discount the power of peer pressure when it comes to classroom dynamics and ultimately English learning. Just like music and rhyme games are often very repetitive and the repetition is very effective at teaching vocabulary in particular. Also like music the games create a space in which the student wants to use their language skills and proactive use of a language is the best way to remember the vocabulary, grammar, and sound of the language. Motivation, repetition, and speaking the language are the focus and result of engaging in either music or games and are powerful instructional tools.

Like "Heads, shoulders, knees, and toes", games can incorporate physical motions, gestures, or activities that engage the students on several sensory levels. The physical activity also helps keep the student's energy levels up so that they are able to pay attention for longer. A student that is half asleep or daydreaming during a lecture is unlikely to retain much if any information and so it is apparent why a game would be a useful tool for and English language instructor teaching children. Student morale is important to the learning process especially for children who often have less sophisticated self management tools for handling stress and disappointment than their adult counterparts. It has been shown that a young student who feels confident and self assured will do better at learning English but also perform better in all of their classes. Engaged and enthusiastic students also encourage engaged and enthusiastic teachers which can create a virtuous cycle of high esteem and effectiveness. As stated above the competitive aspect of games can be a powerful tool for motivation but it should be said that students should not be forced to participate in a game against their will and alternative activities such as coloring should be allowed. An important element for the

successful use of games in the classroom is, of course, the game itself. The games used for teaching English, or indeed any language, should encourage healthy competition, discovery and exploration, and opportunities to benefit from correcting their own mistakes. Properly used games can create the atmosphere of enjoyable learning that is so important for teaching young learner and help the students



form a connection with their instructor that fosters trust and a desire to please. Again the factors of motivation, repetition, and fun are incredibly important for teaching children and games are effective for all three factors.

This information about the power of music, rhyme, and game playing as language instruction tools has been available for several decades yet the practices have not penetrated many of the regions where it would be most useful. In many classrooms around the world children are still being taught in traditional styles that incorporate little or no fun activities, music, or games. The students will often be given a lecture in their primary language, limiting their exposure to English as a spoken language, and instructed to refer to their texts for a lesson. The lesson is often a simple writing assignment with fill in the blank or short sentence constructions. These classrooms are often very quiet with the students required to sit at their desks and remain focused on the task at hand. There is more focus on the rules of grammar and spelling than the natural use of language and although repetition is used in these classrooms it often takes the form of literally repeating the same written assignment over and over until it is completely correctly. The low success rate for these students in retaining English outside the classroom is unsurprising given the information available in the studies done on how to teach children a new language.

Conclusion

Countries and regions who see the obvious advantages to their children from learning English have done a poor job of utilizing the best practices for teaching those children. Time has shown the traditional English teaching methods to be largely ineffective at teaching children and the conclusion can only be that the instruction practices need to be changed. After all it is unlikely there will be some fundamental change in the children. The need for motivation, repetition, and fun has been made abundantly clear and efforts should be made to incorporate those tools that accomplish those goals. The change will have to start with the teachers and it may be that there will be some resistance to this kind of change but the data are clear and the desire for more English speakers is clear. It is important, therefore, for there to be a collaborative effort to see that the changes are implemented and stay implemented in order to best serve the children trying to learn English.



The parable of the return of the prodigal son in the works of Jan Amos Comenius and Rembrandt van Rijn

Natalya Zolotukhina (white sweater) at a conference in 2015

By *Natalya Zolotukhina (St. Petersburg)*

Before turning to the topic of my article, I would like to give you some of my background. It is important, because my development as a researcher has been related to different spheres of Humanities, and thanks to their combination I'm setting out a hypothesis about the influence of the personality and views of Jan Amos Comenius on the creation of one of Rembrandt's greatest paintings "The Return of the Prodigal Son".

My scientific career began in the field of art history and culture. In 1974 I graduated from the Leningrad State University (now St. Petersburg State University) with the degree in history and art studies. and from 1969 to 1982 I was working in the State Hermitage Museum in the Restoration Department, and then as a researcher in the Department of storage and

records, where I was hosting international exhibitions. Of course, working in the Hermitage I would walk hundreds of times through Rembrandt's room whose gem is "The Return of the Prodigal Son", but could I ever imagine that in thirty years the Fate again would bring me close to the creation of the great artist?!

During these years I entered the Department of Philosophy and graduated from it with the degree in ethics and aesthetics; however, the circumstances of my life developed in such a way, that in the 80-s I switched to a different sphere of knowledge and that was pedagogics, where I combined teaching and research work and afterwards I defended a doctoral thesis, becoming a Ph.D. in Pedagogics (1990).

From 2001 to 2014 I was working as an associate Professor in the UNESCO department for Educational Sciences of the Russian State Pedagogical University named after A. I. Herzen, established in

1993 within UNESCO UNITWIN (sister universities) project. Naturally, switching over to a pedagogical field I could not avoid encountering one of the founders of pedagogical science, the author of the famous "Didactics" - Jan Amos Comenius (1592 - 1670). Even the very first acquaintance with the biography and works of Comenius struck me by their scale, some kind of planetary vision of the problems and of the future of human society development.

To justify the project for the improvement of human relations and social life Comenius wrote a 7-volume work under the title of "General Council on the Correction of Human Affairs". This project can be fully described as the concept of a new world order In the midst of political and religious strife Comenius proposed to organize an international center, which would unite the efforts of all progressively-minded people to safeguard peace, international cooperation in the field of politics, science and education. A century later this idea was embodied in the creation of such international organizations as the UN and UNESCO.

The legacy of John Amos Comenius consists of over 140 works, but, as is typical of great authors, all his life he was essentially creating one great work: an immense philosophical picture of the world in the form of a symbol – the Tree of knowledge and self-improvement which John Amos tended throughout his life. This 'tree' had its own 'seed' – *Labyrinth*²⁷



of the World and Paradise of the Heart.

My first publications on pedagogy were devoted to the ideas of Comenius, which have not lost their significance nowadays.[1] In 2012, when we were cooperating with our Polish partners within the international project "The Greatest Pedagogical Thinkers and their Impact on the Integration of Europe: Past, Present and the Coming Years" [2]. While preparing this publication[3] and reading the book by the Czech writer Miloš Václav Kratochvíla I came across the fact that the meeting between Jan Amos Comenius and Rembrandt took place in Amsterdam in the downhill of their life, that their mutual friend was Dr. Tulp, one of the main characters of Rembrandt's "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp"(1632) [4] which brought the first recognition to the artist.

In my opinion many thoughts, expressed by Comenius in his philosophical and pedagogical works, especially those, belonging to the latest Amsterdam period of his life, seemed to be in tune with the theme of the biblical parable of the prodigal son, which has been intuitively marked by me in this publication.

In 1668, two years before his death, Comenius wrote a short piece with a fictitious, autobiographical and confessional flavour, entitled "The One Thing Necessary, to Know What is Necessary for One in Life and Death and After Death Worn Out by the Unnecessary Things of the

World and Coming Back to the One Thing Necessary, as an Old Man, J. A. Comenius in his 77th Year Offers this to the World to Ponder (Unum necessarium..., Amsterdam, 1668). In this work, Comenius sums up his life experience in three images of man's journey on Earth: the *Labyrinth*, *Sisyphus* and *Tantalus*.

Comenius's words in the famous Chapter X of *The One Thing Necessary*, similar to the *Labyrinth of the World*, contain pride that, as he has passed through all the labyrinths, he can make out the light of salvation. Comenius thanks God that He has granted the strength to strive through all the twists and turns towards the 'ocean of kindness': 'All my efforts until now have been the cares of Martha out of love for God; foremost among such cares were my didactic works, to which I devoted myself in my endeavour to free the schools and the youth from their terrible labyrinths... And if my initiatives do not take hold, and the schools have not ceased to wander in their labyrinths, I still hope fervently, and expect from God that my idea will be of use when the winter of the church is over and the storm has finished and flowers bloom in our land' [5].

"*Labyrinth* is an allegorical symbol for the existing world order. The metaphoric images created in the first section, of the vanity of earthly human desires, the emptiness of the world from which love and heartfelt relations between people have been removed, and the nostalgia for an emotional establishment, all paint a powerful picture of man's pointless wander-

ings in the darkness of spiritual ignorance and a semi-bestial existence similar to the paintings of Bosch or Bruegel. But the second section, the *Paradise of the Heart*, is worthy of comparison with another majestic work that symbolizes the inevitable return of man to his spiritual Ancestral Home: *The Return of the Prodigal Son* from the brush of the great Rembrandt". [6]



Isn't it symbolic that the end of life of the two geniuses was so in line with the spirit of the biblical parable on the return of the prodigal son?! "The Return of the Prodigal Son" is the latest creation of Rembrandt, working on which he died in 1669, and in 1670 Jan Amos Comenius left this world. Two years afterwards I decided to return to this subject, preparing

my speech on "Social Interaction in Various Spheres of Life" [7] for the international scientific and practical conference in the Russian State Pedagogical University named after A. I. Herzen. I decided to go deeper into the circumstances of the Amsterdam meeting of Comenius and Rembrandt. And the first thing that I found on the Internet [8] was the portrait of Comenius, created by Rembrandt in 1660,- as it turned out, it had been made 6 years before he started working on the painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son" (1666 - 1669). Comparing Comenius's portraits of that period with the portrait, painted by Rembrandt and the painting, I allowed myself to hypothesize that the image of the Father reflects the portrait and psychological features, and what is more important – spiritual qualities of Jan Amos Comenius, which certainly

went through some transformation according to the artist.

Rembrandt created many paintings on biblical subjects, but "the Return of the Prodigal Son" occupies a special place among them. It is not only his latest creation, a kind of Testament to the descendants, but also a sacred message to all people and to each individual, which goes beyond the artistic genre.

The interpretation of personal and devotional context of this masterpiece is primarily connected with dramatic events of the artist's personal life.[9] Whom did Rembrandt portray in the image of the prodigal son? I believe, himself. After all, during the peak of his career, the artist creates a picture of Rembrandt's "Prodigal Son in the Tavern" (1635), where he portrays himself in luxury together with his beloved wife Saskia. Is it incidental that here Rembrandt calls himself a prodigal son? Of course, he experienced a turmoil of guilt when he recollected that the artist's mission had made him leave his family – his father and brothers, doomed to earn a hard living on their own mill, carrying bags of flour and still finding an opportunity to help their "runaway" son and brother at the first stage of his learning and creative activities.

Having acquired a high position in the society due to his talent, purchasing a luxury house in the center of Amsterdam, marrying for love, Rembrandt always remembered that his family in Leiden were still making their living through hard work. But years passed, Rembrandt's beautiful wife Saskia died prematurely,

his debts brought him into bankruptcy and sale of all of his property; Hendrikje, the second wife of the painter, soon dies from tuberculosis, as well as Titus, the beloved son of him and Saskia..

And yet nothing can stop the creative process in which he never cuts deals with his conscience to please the eminent customers. The main goal in his portraits of the poor and unknown elderly people is to

convey a spiritual light, to show a divine nature of man. In this tragic period of his life Rembrandt writes a series of self-portraits, as if looking with a merciless eye of the judge who is giving a heavy sentence to his "prodigal son". But reaching the limits of this self-revelation, he decides to turn to the Justice of Heaven. And the genius of the artist reveals him the

infinite mercy of the Heavenly Father, and when the "prodigal son" makes at least one step towards him, he opens his arms, the Gates of Paradise of his heart, being ready to bestow his love on the prodigal son.

It was during these years that Rembrandt meets Comenius and shares similarity in views and attitude towards people and life, he may even perceive this sage (as Comenius was 14 years older than Rembrandt) as his spiritual master, which subsequently found its reflection in the artist's work on the image of the Father in the painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son". To create the miracle of this hypothesis[10], we had to base ourselves not on art history, but on the understanding of spiritual kinship of these two geniuses, who found their only way through dramatic hardships, - the way back to God, bequeathed to all humanity.





Summertime in India.
MR Hubert has sent some photos
from the happy days

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25 participants from 8 different countries at the annual meeting 2016 in Plovdiv and Pomporova, Bulgaria