



International Federation of Language Teacher Associations
Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes

The Nordic-Baltic Region

Electronic Newsletter No.4

(December 2020)

PRESIDENT's Note



Sigurborg Jónsdóttir, Iceland

I hope you are all doing well and enjoying the holidays with your family. It has been a most unusual year. We have been faced with COVID-19, challenging us to think differently about life and our priorities, forcing us to rethink our approach and understanding of teaching in so many ways.

There is a lot of difference between online and on-site teaching. And we have been confronted with some basic questions, such as should the lessons be according to the traditional timetable or more project based? What tools and platforms should we use? How can we keep our students motivated and positive and how do we stay positive ourselves? But the core of teaching is still the same, communication with our students and showing them that we care about them.

The associations have been actively supporting their members with online seminars and different net-based activities. The teachers themselves have been advising and helping each other. Informal groups have been popping up all over the place. The Newsletter together with the Facebook site is our common platform for exchange and sharing good practice, ideas, links, also information on association work. So please enjoy reading.

Now that vaccine is available, we have high hopes that life will slowly return to how it was before. But it will take some time, so we must be prepared for a few more uncertain months.

Stay healthy, take good care, enjoy the season and all the very best for the coming year 2021.



IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT ABOUT FIPLV WORLD CONGRESS



Mirosław Pawlak, President of FIPLV (Fédération Internationale des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes, International Federation of Language Teacher Associations), <https://fiplv.com/>

FIPLV World Congress of Modern Languages

Warsaw, June 27-29, 2022

Language Education in the Times of Global change: The Need for Collaboration and New Perspectives

Our initial intention was to hold the FIPLV World Congress of Modern Languages in September 2021 in Warsaw in association with the Polish Association of Modern Languages, together with its annual conference. Despite the unprecedented situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, we had been hoping that the event could still take place as planned. It has now become quite evident, however, that even if the conference could indeed go ahead, there is far too much uncertainty to take such a risk. We are also fully aware that it is very difficult to apply for funding, book flights and make hotel reservations, not really knowing what the future holds. At the same time, we strongly feel that most of our members are eagerly looking forward to the opportunity to meet face-to-face rather than participate in another virtual event.

For all these reasons, the Executive Committees of both FIPLV and the Polish Association of Modern Languages have agreed that the best option will be to postpone

the event until 2022 when the pandemic has likely been brought under control. The Congress is scheduled to take place in Warsaw, Poland, on June 27th-29th, 2022, it will still be held in conjunction with the annual conference of the Polish association, and it will be hosted by Warsaw University.

We will be sending out the first Call for Papers in February, 2021 and the closing date for the submission of abstracts will be September 30th, 2021. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by the end of November, 2021. Presentations in all major world languages, as well as Polish, will be welcome.

We are sincerely hoping for a huge turn-out following the long period of lockdowns and travel restrictions. We look forward to seeing you in Poland.

CALL for RESEARCH PARTICIPATION- LANGUAGE TEACHERS ALL CONTEXTS

We are writing to invite you to take part in an online survey (LINK TO SURVEY: <https://forms.gle/Q6Mg7p4bmPXAzpTS8>) about your psychological and social experiences during this period of the coronavirus pandemic. The aim of this research is to better understand the ongoing effects of teaching during the pandemic on language teachers' health and wellbeing. As some of you may know, we conducted initial research in April, and this is a follow-up study to understand how teachers are experiencing the situation now. In addition, comparing the two datasets will enable us to understand the durability and changes in these experiences. It is hoped the study will teach us lessons we can draw on in the future to appreciate the kinds of support that teachers need when facing periods of upheaval and change.

The survey is completely anonymous and your participation is voluntary. You can refuse to answer any of the questions or quit at any time without saving your responses. You will be asked questions about teaching, stressors, coping behaviour, your recent mental and physical reactions, and your activities. The survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

Please note that some of these questions can be considered sensitive, so if you are having difficulty coping these days, feel fragile or are concerned that responding to these questions might have a negative impact on you in any way, please do NOT continue. If you have any concerns about the study or wish to discuss your reactions with the researchers, you can contact any of us by email at any time.

Many thanks for your contribution to this study. We hope you and your family stay safe and well.

Sarah Mercer, University of Graz, sarah.mercer@uni-graz.at

Tammy Gregersen, University of Sharjah, tgregersen@aus.edu

Peter MacIntyre, Cape Breton University, peter_macintyre@cbu.ca

More information is available on FIPLV website:

<https://fiplv.com/2020/11/18/call-for-research-participation-language-teachers-all-contexts/>

Call for Proposals for an edited book entitled Effective Online Language Teaching in a Disruptive Environment



Prof Terry Lamb PhD, Vice-President FIPLV

I hope you are all coping with the current Covid-19 situation. In relation to this, please see below information about a Call for Proposals for an edited book entitled Effective Online Language Teaching in a Disruptive Environment from our good friend and colleague, Pete Swanson PhD, former President of ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages).

The Covid-19 global pandemic radically and rapidly, and perhaps forever, changed the K-20 educational landscape. In March 2020, K-12 schools and institutions of higher education were forced to pivot quickly to online and remote teaching. This new paradigm resulted in many teachers, regardless of content area, being singularly unprepared. Unlike other content areas, the teaching and learning of languages requires interaction

(Long, 1981, 1983) in a communicative environment. This underscores the need for face-to-face, synchronous instruction, a requirement not necessarily present in other content areas. Language teaching is unique in that the content is taught in the target language. This entails a double-cognitive load for learners as they must process the content while concomitantly using it to the best of their linguistic abilities. The constraints placed upon this interaction by the online and/or remote learning environment compounds the difficulties learners experience while trying to master a second, third, and so forth language. Given this singular challenge for teaching languages online, the proposed volume will gather evidence from the field that offers guidance vis-à-vis best practices, innovations, remarkable and even unusual achievements that will help language teachers succeed in the future.

This is an international Call, intending to gather experience from around the world. Potential authors need to go to the website for the CFP, login, and submit your proposal there. Website url:

<https://www.igi-global.com/publish/call-for-papers/call-details/4957>

I hope you will wish to contribute to this important volume.

NEWS from The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) of the Council of Europe

LANGUAGES AT THE HEART OF LEARNING



LES LANGUES AU CŒUR DES APPRENTISSAGES

ECML programme outputs “Languages at the heart of learning” 2016-19

ECML is pleased to announce the completion and launch of three new resource websites. The three sites (in English and French) represent the most recent outputs from the ECML programme “Languages at the heart of learning” (2016-2019). (<https://www.ecml.at/ECML-Programme/Programme2016-2019/tabid/1796/language/en-GB/Default.aspx>)



This website has been designed for teachers and teacher educators of what are traditionally considered to be “non-linguistic” subjects such as maths, biology, physics or history. The practical resources help teachers to identify the linguistic needs of their learners and to reflect on language-sensitive approaches which can be applied when learning new subject content. Teachers can explore different ways to support their students with writing, speaking, and reading tasks by drawing on students’ first language in their teaching and creating appropriate teaching materials.

www.ecml.at/languageinsubjects



A Guide to Teacher Competences for Language

This comprehensive resource platform has been developed for teacher educators and those responsible for teacher education programmes. It provides an overview of frameworks and descriptions of language teacher competences in various contexts, as well as national and regional standards or guidelines for all teachers working in public education.

A key focus is also to raise users' awareness of the ways in which initial and in-service teacher education and the resources developed to support it, contribute to the fundamental aims and values of the Council of Europe - i.e. ensuring quality education for all for effective participation in democratic, social cohesive and inclusive societies. www.ecml.at/guidetoteachercompetences .



Language for Work adopts a coherent approach to work-related second language development with special attention to the integration of migrants, refugees and ethnic minorities. The website provides professionals working in this field with a dynamic platform for sharing expertise and developing practice as well as a comprehensive set of resources including research and policy material, descriptions of competences for those supporting work-related language learning and examples of practice.

<https://languageforwork.ecml.at> .



Finland: COVID-Situation Was Under Control



Outi Vilkuna, puheenjohtaja / Chair, Suomen kieltenopettajien liitto SUKOL ry, The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL (outi.vilkuna@sukol.fi)

As the autumn term is drawing near its' end it has been also time for the The Federation of Foreign Language Teachers in Finland SUKOL federal assembly which was held in hybrid form. There 15 participants (ICT-Support included) present at Helsinki head office with all safety issues well taken care of and almost all representants of district and language association were present remote on Zoom. Normally the association has had two annual federal assemblies, one in spring and one in autumn, but as the spring 2020 assembly had to be cancelled, there were numerous issues which needed to be addressed and decided upon. One of the urgent issues was the renewal of association 's rules in order to move to one annual federal assembly system from November 2021 onwards and enable the possibility of having remote participation also in normal conditions. The number of association board members was also reduced from ten to eight (and their respective reserve members the same); the newly elected board will have it's first meeting in January 2021. The federal assembly also discussed and accepted the plan of action for the next board to implement.

COVID-situation was under control for most part of the autumn term eventough in many educational facilities students were at school and remote teaching in rotation in order to facilitate the following of safety measures. This system has however been demanding on teachers as they have had to adjust their teaching accordingly. We do also see that the toll of remote teaching period in the spring 2020 is only now becoming clearly

detectable in the students (at all levels) in the level of acquired knowledge and learning and even more specifically in the psychological burden. This is of great concern to us all. We are most pleased that the autumn matriculation examination period was carried out as smoothly as it possibly could, although as a safety measure there were some additional exam days to enable following of eg. social distances at examination locations. The same will take place for the spring 2021 matriculation examination period. This of course adds supervision time for teachers.

The national curriculum work for upper secondaries should be completed in spring 2021 and implemented from autumn 2021. There are many ongoing and overlapping legislation projects also, eg. most importantly the ambitious extension of compulsory education as the aim of the Government Programme is that, having completed their comprehensive school education, all students gain an upper secondary qualification. The minimum school leaving age will be raised to 18 years. In addition, student guidance and student welfare services will be improved, along with the capacity of comprehensive schools to provide everyone with the skills to complete upper secondary education. In addition, student guidance and student welfare services will be improved, along with the capacity of comprehensive schools to provide everyone with the skills to complete upper secondary education. The extension in compulsory education is due to become effective in 2021. The related new Act is designed to apply for the first time to those subject to compulsory education whose compulsory education under the current Act terminates in 2021. Raising the age of compulsory education to 18 years and extending compulsory education to upper secondary education requires ensuring that all those who complete compulsory school education have the knowledge, skills and competence required for upper secondary education. The Government Programme outlines the expansion of compulsory education <https://minedu.fi/en/faq-about-the-extension-of-compulsory-education> . All parties concerned for providing upper secondary education are concerned about the funding and the impact on eg. group sizes, optional courses, eg.

The Ministry of Education and Culture will implement between 2020-2022 a new Right to Learn development programmes aiming to secure an equal start for learning by improving quality and equality in early childhood education and care (ECEC) and comprehensive school education <https://minedu.fi/julkaisu?pubid=URN:ISBN:978-952-263-693-5> .

Interesting research report from EduCluster Finland on the topic of The Bilingual Advantage - The Impact of Language Learning on Mind and Brain. It argues that knowledge of more than one language, even if partial, can provide people with advantages not accessible to monolinguals.

LITHUANIA: FIPLV NBR, LKPA, VU Conference (2018) Materials Published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing



Dr. Roma Kriaučiūnienė, former president of LKPA,
Institute of Foreign Languages, Faculty of Philology, Vilnius University

The publication of the research papers that were presented at our FIPLV, LKPA, VU conference in 2018 was eventually published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

The reviewing process took a long time. Initially there were over 20 articles presented, and finally only half of them succeeded to be included in the book after a very strict double blind peer reviewing process.

Cambridge Scholars Publishing asks to promote the book wherever we can. Below are the links to the publication.

<https://www.cambridgescholars.com/educational-linguistic-and-media-discourses>

Book Description

This book presents a collection of research papers from both experienced and emerging scholars, some of whom presented their work at the international conference 'Language Teaching and Learning in the 21st Century: Linguistic, Educational and Intercultural Aspects' held in June 2018 and organised by the Institute of Foreign Languages of the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University, the FIPLV Nordic-Baltic Region, and the

Language Teachers' Association of Lithuania. The book consists of three parts, the first being devoted to language teaching and teacher education. The second section explores literary and cultural issues, while the third part encompasses linguistic and media discourse studies.

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

<https://www.cambridgescholars.com/download/sample/66264>

<https://books.google.ro/books?id=S6sEEAAQBAJ&pg=PA3&lpg=PA3&dq=ovidiu%20ivancu%20educational%20linguistic%20and%20media%20discourse&source=bl&ots=NFqI9j8v6l&sig=ACfU3U2yfyh8OAVMUj0sOi5ApsHjIDfYXw&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiZ75XU1-PsAhVElosKHVIMCnYQ6AEwAHoECA4QAq&fbclid=IwAR3ZyFY1HprKtrA9TqJgvxGWZarHdRXAZXxsIDT-56YwJWIaU6uOZYsQ8pI#v=onepage&q=ovidiu%20ivancu%20educational%20linguistic%20and%20media%20discourse&f=false>

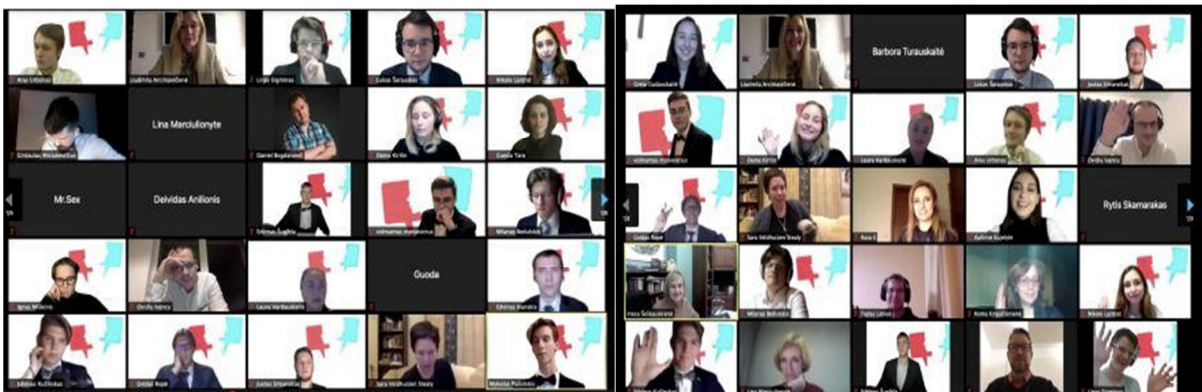


Vilnius University Debate Tournament

Intra-Faculty Applied Debate is an academic event that offers a platform for undergraduate students from different faculties of Vilnius University such as Philology, Communication, Physics, Mathematics & Informatics, Life Sciences, Chemistry & Geosciences, Politics & International Relations, Medicine, and Philosophy to share and exchange their passion for reasoning, expression and tolerance of a different view and opinion. This academic event is an outcome of the course "English for Academic purposes and Research (C1)" mostly taught by the lectures from the Institute of Foreign Languages (VU, Faculty of Philology) for First Year undergraduate students at different faculties of VU.



Academic debate is used as one of the mandatory course tasks, during which students practise how to develop a reasoning line and to research supporting evidence for well-balanced argumentation. In this debate event, more than ten debating teams are adjudicated by 5 experts representing different fields of expertise (politics, culture, linguistics, economics, diplomacy etc.). Debators deliver speeches on the prepared motions and compete for the debate trophy on an unprepared motion in the super-final. The debate tournament has been organized since 2018, and the first two debate trophies (2018 and 2019) were won by the students from the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Debate Tournament 2020 was held online, and the debate trophy was awarded to the students from the Institute of Political Science and International Relations.



LITHUANIAN NATIONAL TV:

Lithuania's Minorities Consistently Fail State Language Exam - What Can Be Done?

Since 2013, all students including those that attend minority schools sit the same Lithuanian language exam that is necessary to graduate high school. But students whose native language is not Lithuanian consistently underperform.

"The results do not change from one year to another. Many minority students do not pass exams. The Lithuanian language exam is the worst, as most of them score 30-40 percent," Vida Montvydaitė, head of the Lithuanian Department of National Minorities, told LRT RADIO.

In 2020, 19.7 percent of minority students failed the Lithuania language and literature exam, according to the National Agency for Education.

More detailed information can be found here: <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1273849/lithuania-s-minorities-consistently-fail-state-language-exam-what-can-be-done>

LATVIA: Latvian Association of Teachers of English Informs



Inga Linde, LATE president

On 29-30th September with the support of the European Centre for Modern Languages and the European Commission the Latvian Association of Teachers of English managed to hold the postponed "Supporting Multilingual Classrooms" workshop in Latvia. Twenty-eight project participants who are mostly teacher-trainers, multipliers or EFL methodologists from all over Latvia, had the chance to meet and work together for two days in Riga and the ECML experts, Kristin Brogan (Ireland) and Merce Bernaus (Spain), led the workshop through Zoom.



Currently Latvia is undergoing the changes in the system of education and the new competence-based curriculum is being introduced. Therefore, the participants found the ECML's workshop and resources immensely beneficial and through the numerous opportunities for group discussions in the workshop have developed a better understanding of the principles and values underlying pluralistic and intercultural approaches. The participants also became acquainted with the ECML's resources, lesson plans and project work examples and how to use these materials in their classrooms.



The Latvian Association of Teachers of English would like to thank the ECML, its team and experts Kristin Brogan and Merce Bernaus for all the support, understanding and cooperation in this fast-changing environment. The following picture shows Kristin and Merce leading the workshop through the Zoom platform and Déirdre Kirwan speaking about her experience and practical examples of multilingualism in an Irish primary school.



We are glad that the event was so successful and that we managed to hold the project in this way and that the teachers had this chance to come together as very soon after the event the quarantine was reintroduced in Latvia. The participants were very grateful for the opportunity to participate in the event and said that the workshop exceeded their expectations. Thank you ECML and the EC for this opportunity.



Reflections, next steps and evaluation.

The project activities also encouraged the teachers to develop a cooperation network and the teachers will participate in the follow-up workshop during the online LATE teacher professional development day "Developing Engagement in a

Period of Change” on 29th December 2020. The project participants will introduce all teachers of English in Latvia to the ECML’s materials, resources and the project participants’ experience.

The senior officer from the National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia Tatjana Kunda will give a presentation on “Mediation and pluricultural/plurilingual skills in the classroom” and will help the participants to find out how mediation tasks can be introduced into the foreign language classroom. This is a follow-up workshop after the ECML project entitled ‘Exploring ways to test mediation and pluricultural/plurilingual skills in the classroom’ which was held on 19th-21st February in Riga and was conducted by two ECML experts - José Noijons (the Netherlands) and Gábor Szábo (University of Pécs, Hungary).

ESTONIA: EATE Autumn Seminar



Ilmar Anvelt, EATE Committee member

Although the Estonian Association of Teachers of English (EATE) decided to cancel its Summer Seminar in August, we managed to make use of the low tide between the two waves of the corona virus and hold our Autumn Seminar “Teaching Makes a Difference” on 22-23 October 2020. This time, the seminar was arranged with approximately the same programme at two venues, on 22 October at Tallinn Secondary School of Science and on 23 October at Miina Härma Gymnasium in Tartu. Our aim was to attract more participants from Tallinn, the capital of Estonia.

Because of travelling restrictions and quarantine conditions, we could not invite any speakers from abroad, but we used either pre-recorded or live video

presentations by them. One of the speakers, Steve Lever from Express Publishing, even used a panorama of Tartu as a background picture, saying that this was as near as it was possible for him to get to us. Other speakers included representatives of local schools and universities and the US Embassy in Estonia.

We are happy that, despite several difficulties, we managed to hold our seminar, and arranging it at two places was a success. We hope that in the new year we can carry on with our work as usual.

Photos from the event: Book sales at Tallinn Secondary School of Science, Evi Saluveer from the University of Tartu, one of the most popular presenters at our seminars, EATE Committee members preparing seminar materials at Tallinn Secondary School of Science, Kelli Odhuu, Head of the English Language Office at the US Embassy, speaking about emotional intelligence, Seminar participants watching Mona Siksek's (National Geographic) video presentation.



Materials to Support Teaching and Learning during Covid-19



Eglė Šleinotienė, LKPA Honorary president, FIPLV Nordic and Baltic region Secretary

The sudden global outbreak of COVID-19 in late 2019 and its second wave in 2020 have changed educational systems in all countries of the world. Challenges faced forced us to reshape the main aspects of language teaching and learning. We must be proud of our success in offering good quality service to our students.

In this newsletter we decided to provide more materials and information concerning teaching and learning during this hectic time. We offer some additional teacher and student friendly materials, multiple possibilities and ideas to support teachers to improve remote teaching experiences and practices. It's worth getting acquainted with them. Enjoy working.

*How might the coronavirus crisis be affecting foreign language teachers?<https://oecdutoday.com/coronavirus-foreign-language-teachers/>

*Teacher Learning in Difficult Times: Examining Foreign Language Teachers' Cognitions About Online Teaching to Tide Over COVID-19:
<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.549653/full>

*Guidance on the COVID aware languages classroom: <https://www.all-languages.org.uk/guidance-on-the-covid-aware-languages-classroom/>

*English Language Teaching During the Times of COVID-19- Challenges and Opportunities: A Brief Study of GFP Students in Muscat College:
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3704603

*Covid-19: Support, Resources and Guidelines:

<https://www.pearson.com/english/professional-development/covid19.html>

*World Languages Resources to Support Learning During COVID-

19: <https://educateiowa.gov/pk-12/resources-support-learning-during-covid-19/world-languages-resources-support-learning-during>

*UNESCO: Distance learning solutions:

<https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/solutions>

*UNESCO: Education: From disruption to

recovery: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/>

*Stephen Krashen's Seven Tips for Teaching Language During Covid-

19: <https://www.language magazine.com/2020/05/08/stephen-krashens-seven-tips-for-teaching-language-during-covid-19/>

*Resources and Examples: Learning in the Time of COVID-19:

<https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/issue/covid-19-resources>

*COVID-19 READINESS (with videos): <https://cle.indiana.edu/news-and-events/covid.html>

FOOD for THOUGHTS:



The Electronic Newsletter is issued by:

NBR President Sigurborg Jónsdóttir, Iceland.

NBR Secretary Eglė Šleinotienė, Lithuania.