

ATE Newsletter

Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic

Journal of English Language Teaching

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ATE Newsletter – Journal of English Language Teaching

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The ATECR Newsletter is the official publication of the Association of Teachers of English in the Czech Republic and is published semi-annually.

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Between the Newsletters:

Election of ATECR officers.



Ilona Havlíčková

Vážení členové,

níže naleznete volební kandidátku pro další dvouleté období. Vzhledem ke sloučení obou asociací - moravské i české, která proběhne do konference v září 2014, je kandidátka na předsedkyni z MSSUA.

Kandidát na předsedkyni AUA ČR:

Mgr. Libuše Kohoutová

Mgr. Libuše Kohoutová was born in Přerov in 1975. She started teaching English at the age of 20 and at the same time she was enrolled to study English at the Faculty of Education, Palacký University in Olomouc. She has always taught English at secondary schools with the exception of one rather short period in 2000 when she taught in elementary village school. She also spent six months working as an au pair in the Netherlands in 1999 and 2000. Her current job position is a head of foreign languages department and a teacher of English in Albrechtova střední škola, Český Těšín, prsp.org. Libuše also studied English at the Master of Arts programme at the Faculty of Education, Masaryk University in Brno where she also successfully studied the programme for secondary school teachers of English.

Libuše has been a member of the Moravian and Silesian Association of Teachers of English for many years but she became actively involved for the past six years, first as the Vice-President and since 2012 as the President of that association.

She organized two MSSUA/MSATE Conferences: Crossing Borders in Český Těšín in 2009 and Traditions and Innovations in Olomouc in 2013.

Kandidát na místopředsedkyni AUA ČR:

Mgr. Ilona Havlíčková - stávající předsedkyně AUA ČR za období 2013-2014.

Zbylé funkce zůstávají dle stávajícího stavu.

Vzhledem k mému blížícímu se porodu nebudu s nejvyšší pravděpodobností přítomna na konferenci v Liberci. Volby proběhnou za přítomnosti mého zástupce.

Přeji pěkné léto,

Ilona Havlíčková

Announcing the Unification of ATECR and MSATE by the President of MSSUA/MSATE:



Libuše Kohutová

To tell the truth, I have never understood why there are two associations of teachers of English in one country, particularly such a small one as the Czech Republic. When I was the Vice-President of MSSUA/MSATE and I represented our association at the IATEFL UK Conference in Glasgow in 2012, there were three representatives of the same country at the Associates' Day: one on behalf of ATECR, one for AMATE and me, which was quite confusing for others. I had to explain several times why there were three of us. That was probably the main impulse for me to think seriously about the mergence and discussion began among MSSUA/MSATE members as well as with the partnering Czech association.

Both associations in the Czech Republic, as well as our partners from abroad, have to face the same kind of problems. Mainly, there has been decrease in the number of members. In my opinion, the main reason is that associations do not have much to offer nowadays. The current situation is very different from the 1990s when the Czech associations were founded.

At that time, there was a lack of qualified teachers of English and associations along with the British Council could offer some training, workshops, advice. Nowadays, all teachers should have appropriate education (university degree) and workshops and conferences are organized by nearly every publishing house. These events are mostly free of charge or they

are cheaper than those organized by associations as their main purpose is to advertise their products. Another reason, from my point of view, is the loss of prestige. Why did I personally become a member of a professional association? I knew my colleague, whom I admired, was in MSSUA (yes, Bohdana, I mean you) and I was really pleased when she asked me to join. But what prestige does the teaching profession have nowadays?

Two, with AMATE three associations in one country is really confusing for our partners. They have to sign partnership agreements with both organizations. Their conferences are usually held annually whereas ours are held every other year, which is not fair for our partners.

All these reasons lead to just one logical solution and that is the fusion of our associations. It will make us stronger as all teachers of English will be united in one association, our voice will be louder and our views will be supported by more people. By making this step, we can only gain, never lose. We will be able to do more, to function better, to help more.

Mgr. Libuše Kohutová
MSSUA/MSATE President

ATECR: The Czech Organization for English Teachers



Forthcoming Events:

TEACHING FOR TOMORROW



**The Ninth International and Thirteenth National
Conference of the Association of Teachers of English of the Czech Republic**

Liberec – September 19th & 20th, 2014

Our association's conference will be hosted by the English Department of the Faculty of Science, Humanities and Education of the Technical University of Liberec. It will offer a varied programme of talks, workshops, research-oriented presentations and poster sessions intended for teachers in primary, secondary and tertiary education.

We invite experienced, less experienced and native speaker teachers and anyone involved in ELT from our country and abroad to give presentations, preferably on one of the following topics: ELT Methodology, Teacher Education, Literature and Cultural Studies, Language and Linguistics, Testing and Assessment, ESP and ICT in ELT. A major resources exhibition will be open throughout the Conference. A number of distinguished plenary speakers are expected to attend the Conference.

The Conference will be officially opened at 2 p.m. on Friday, 19 September 2014 and closed on Saturday, 20 September 2014 at 6 p.m.

The Conference has been accredited by the Ministry of Education (MSMT – 1927/2014 -1-19 from 15 April 2014). It will thus be possible to ask headmasters and school authorities to reimburse any expenses incurred by this event.

For more information and an electronic registration form click here:

<http://atecr.weebly.com/conference.html>

ATECR Proceedings: A Call for Papers

For a winter 2014 Issue of Proceedings:

Submission deadline = October 1, 2014.

The ATECR Conference Proceedings will not have a theme as such. Contributors are urged to submit original papers on any subject related to the teaching and learning of English language on any level, from the basic school level to university. Papers submitted are reviewed by members of an editorial board. We invite all conference presenters to submit a contribution.

Submission Guidelines:

Articles should be theoretically based yet pedagogically applicable. Articles, including references and appendices, should be kept under 8 pages, although longer articles may be published when justified by substance and likely reader interest.

Submissions of original work should be double-spaced with ample margins and should follow **current MLA format** for attribution and citation and the *NCTE Guidelines for Non-Sexist Use of Language*. Include a brief biographical sketch of the author(s) with submissions, e-mail and full “snail mail” work addresses.



Submissions should be sent electronically by or before **October 1, 2014** to the editor at:

koy@pf.jcu.cz



ENGLISH FOR A CHANGE

24th IATEFL-Hungary
conference

Veszprém 2014



The Annual Conference of the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language Conference, organized by the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, will take place:

3rd October to the 5th October 2014 in Veszprem, Hungary.



The conference will cover a variety of areas:

- Business English
- Teacher Education (Pre- and In-Service) and Career Paths
- Information and Communication Technology
- Special Needs Education
- Lifelong Learning
- Language Education Related Research
- The Methodology of TEFL
- Curriculum, Syllabus and Materials Design.

More details at: <http://www.iatefl.hu/?q=node/217>

**IATEFL Poland
&
The Foreign Languages Teaching Centre of
The University of Life Sciences in Lublin**

have a pleasure of inviting you to

**The 23rd IATEFL Poland Conference
Lublin, 12-14 September 2014**

Centrum Kongresowe Uniwersytetu Przyrodniczego, ul. Akademicka 15, Lublin



Click here for

[Registration Deadline: 10th August!](#)

Reports on Conferences and Courses:

TESOL International Convention, Portland, Oregon

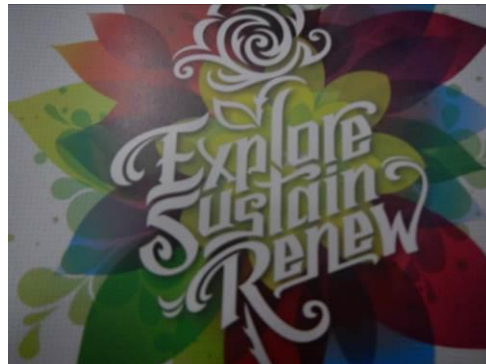
This year in March I had a great chance to go to Portland (state Oregon, USA) to represent our ATECR association at TESOL conference (convention). I would like to share with you some ideas and in the end of my writing I would rather use an advanced technology and some links to show you how it was like during my stay there – you can look at some photos on Facebook or listen to four main keynote speakers whose presentations are online and free of charge (you can find them on ATECR website). You can listen and enjoy the conference.

Free Recorded Keynote Sessions:

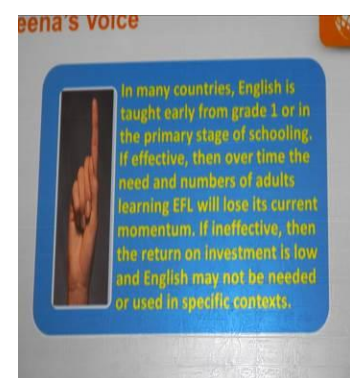
- **"English as A Powerful Instrument of Community Building in East Asia,"** Opening Keynote presented by Surin Pitsuwan.
- **"Five Megatrends Shaping the Future of TESOL,"** James E. Alatis Plenary, presented by David Graddol.
- **"Next Generation ELT: Voices of TESOLERS,"** Presidential Keynote, presented by Deena Boraie.
- **"Complexity Theory: Renewing Our Understanding of Language, Learning, and Teaching,"** Saturday Keynote, presented by Diane Larsen-Freeman



The TESOL Annual Convention & Exhibit in Portland, Oregon, USA, brought nearly 7,000 attendees from all over the world to "explore, sustain, and renew" their dedication to teaching the English language. . Under the banner "Explore, Sustain, Renew: ELT for the Next Generation," the 2014 convention featured more than 1,000 educational sessions and opportunities for participants to learn the latest developments in English language teaching, discover new research, improve their practice, and network with peers from across the globe. In addition, the English Language Expo featured one of the largest exhibitions of its kind in the world, with more than 130 exhibitors offering the leading products and services for English language educators and their classrooms.



The speakers, presenting on topics that will lead TESOL into its 50th anniversary year in 2016, included Dr. Surin Pitsuwan, noted scholar and political leader from Thailand, speaking on “English as a Powerful Instrument of Community Building in East Asia”; David Graddol, Director of The English Company (UK) Ltd, whose topic is “Five Megatrends Shaping the Future of TESOL”; Dr. Deena Boraie, President of TESOL and dean of the School of Continuing Education at the American University in Cairo, Egypt, addressing the convention on “Next Generation ELT: Voices of TESOLers”; and Dr. Diane Larsen-Freeman, Professor Emerita of Education, Professor Emerita of Linguistics, and Research Scientist Emerita at the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan, USA, speaking on “Complexity Theory: Renewing Our Understanding of Language, Learning, and Teaching.” All of these presentations are available for viewing on the [TESOL website](#).





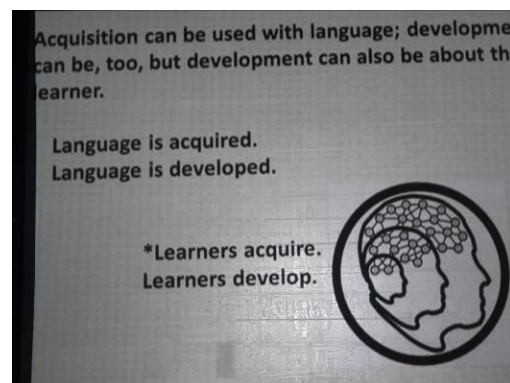
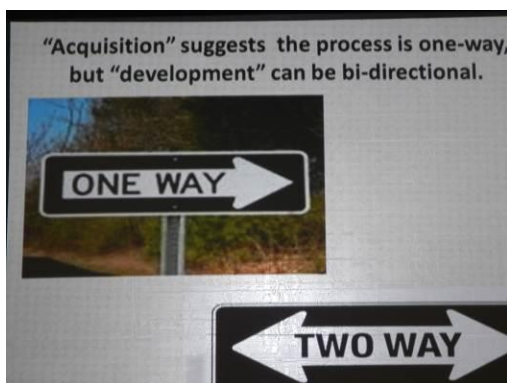
Complexity Theory has offered me a way to rethink some answers to questions that have been with me for a long time. It has also inspired some new questions.

Complexity Theory is the study of complex, dynamic, adaptive systems. Indeed, I can think of few things as complex, dynamic, and adaptive as language, its learning, and its teaching.

In addition to these keynote speakers, the 2014 TESOL International Convention featured nearly two dozen invited speakers addressing a variety of topics including communication, intercultural awareness, technology, learner motivation, and ELT contexts.

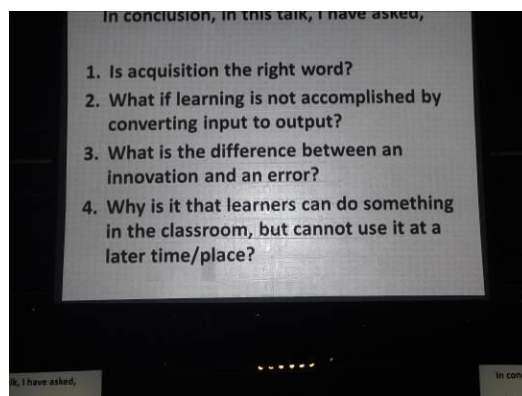
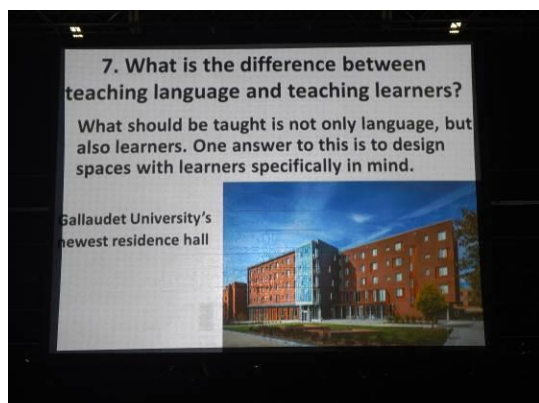


The 2014 TESOL International Convention saw the launch of several new features and programming. One of the most popular was the debut of the [TESOL Classroom of the Future](#), a dedicated space in the English Language Expo that focused on technology, design, and pedagogy of the ELT classroom in the next 5 to 20 years. The Classroom included technology demonstrations, sample classroom furniture, and presentations highlighting the future for English learners.



Technology continued to play an important role in other aspects of the convention experience. For the first time, members and others who were not able to attend the convention in person were able to not only watch but also ask questions during the opening keynote session live over the Internet. ([A recording](#) is available for those who may have missed it.) This new interactive feature was also available to those who were in the audience. Making further use of technology, attendees were also able to evaluate convention sessions via the TESOL 2014

mobile app or using a special web link, providing real-time, valuable feedback to help TESOL improve future conventions.



In addition to professional development and the chance to reconnect with peers, the annual TESOL International Convention provides an opportunity for leaders in the association to discuss important issues and plan for the future. With that in mind, leaders were engaged through various meetings on two important items on the association's agenda: the governance review and the next strategic plan. At various governance meetings, the Governance Review Task Force shared the results of their work, and provided leaders an opportunity to respond to key questions about next steps. In addition, leaders were given the opportunity to provide recommendations on the next strategic plan for the association.



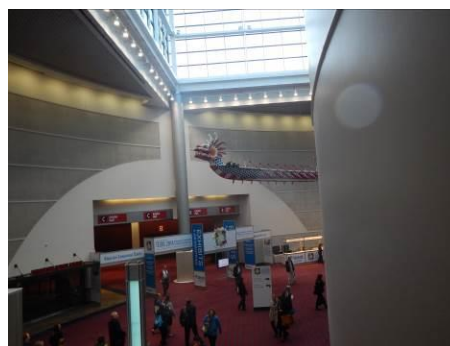
Details on the governance review and the work of the task force are available [online](#). The recommendations from the task force have been released. The first draft TESOL Research Agenda 2014 was also revealed at convention this year. The draft is available online, and the 2014 Research Agenda Task Force is seeking comments about both the content of the draft agenda and ways in which TESOL International Association can make use of the agenda to advance professional expertise in English language teaching and learning for speakers of other languages worldwide. Read the draft and provide feedback [here](#).



Directly or indirectly, [flipping the classroom](#) was part of many discussions. There were several sessions specifically about this topic and it was referenced by a number of presenters talking about technology. The premise of this arrangement is that students can prepare for activities before class and then do those activities during class time. Instead of lecturing in class, teachers are looking for ways to deliver the content of their lectures to students while they are at home and use the time spent in class on more engaging, interactive activities. Technology has really made this an enticing option to many educators and it is changing the way classes are taught. Presenter Thomas Healy suggested that using Facebook as an LMS and YouTube to deliver content might be the simplest flip setup, so that might be a good place to start.

Mobile technology was also heavily featured alongside the BYOD (**bring your own device**) model. Presenters discussed the benefits of apps that revolutionized not only how they could use their smartphones in the classroom, but also how students could use their devices for learning both in class and outside it.

Some of the most memorable apps mentioned include [Polls Everywhere](#) and [Reflector](#). Geocaching, scavenger hunts, and other activities using the GPS features of mobile devices encourage students to interact more with the world around them and take students away from traditional, stationary learning spaces. Many presenters talked about far more elaborate production by students including videos, multimedia presentations, games, and more. In these types of projects, students are producing not just language, but so much more—and, from the sound of things, instructors are leaving the learning of technology primarily to the students, and they are flourishing. Some students may be more adept at learning new technology than others, but in a supportive classroom environment, students can mentor each other in this area.



There were a lot of sessions about iPads: not tablets in general, but iPads. Teachers are really enjoying using their iPads in the classroom. With the right apps, an iPad can turn a computer, whiteboard, and projector into something like a SMARTboard for more interactive classroom activities. iPads can also be used as one or more stations for independent work in the classroom, providing time for teachers to focus on individuals or smaller groups. Additionally, teachers can use iPads to record student work, such as presentations, and reference the recordings when providing specific feedback. With the prevalence of iPad sessions and ubiquity of smart-technology users, I was definitely in the minority by not using a smartphone or tablet to photograph or record the sessions I attended.



In conclusion, the annual convention had a lot of information on technology and that is likely to be true for many years to come, but if you are not using technology for teaching now, do not worry. It can be overwhelming to think of all the things you could be doing in your classroom, but if you decide to make a change, large or small, make a plan with manageable steps. Flipping all your classes is not going to happen overnight, and if you previously banned cell phones, starting to integrate them into your classroom environment may take some time. Be patient and stick with it; the rewards will come.



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Teaching English in Kosovo

In mid-July 2013 I left the Czech Republic to visit a new country and teach a summer course in British and American literature. The job looked like a new adventure and an interesting challenge. I had never visited the Balkans before, even though Croatia is a popular holiday destination for many of my colleagues. I was ready for something new and I got what I was asking for in the Republic of Kosovo. Kosovo had declared itself independent of Serbia in 2008, a situation which caused unrest among Serbs some nine years after a major war in which tens of thousands of residents had been killed in acts of ethnic cleansing and many

Mitrovica
Summer
University
2013
July 19th - August 2nd, 2013

APPLY BEFORE
1st JUNE '13

150 local and international students;
official European certificate (ECTS);
chance to expand international contacts;
6 courses taught by local and international professors;
opportunity to expand your knowledge and join
the European academic network;
courses, books, accommodation and food provided free
of charge for local and Southeast European students;

spark
Mitrovica Summer University
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
www.my-program.org
facebook.com/msu2013
@2013msu

more people were either temporary or permanent war refugees. Of course there had been uprisings in Kosovo before, well before the collapse of communism, during the regime of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1981, and another uprising against Serbs in 1945 so the difficulties between these two ethnicities (Albanian and Serb) were not new. Further in the past, between WWI and WWII, Albanians in the Serbian Kingdom had been forced to add Serbian suffixes to their names and were required to conduct all official business in the Serbo-Croatian tongue. The Albanian language was no longer taught in schools.¹ Moreover, ethnic cleansing was also not a new concept for

Serbs in retaliation against the Albanian majority in Kosovo – for example Vaso Čubrilović, a highly influential member of the KPJ (Komunistička partija Jugoslavije), was one of many Serb nationalists who advocated for the mass expulsion of Albanians from Kosovo in the late 1930s.² For me, however, it was a new encounter with a post-war nation where tempers were heated and ethnic tolerance was minimal. Reconstruction was a lengthy process and still there was a heavy-duty United Nations peace-keeping military presence when I arrived.

¹ Julie Mertus, *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999), 285.

² Klejda Mulaj, "A Recurrent Tragedy: Ethnic Cleansing as a Tool of State Building in the Yugoslav Multinational Setting," *Nationalities Papers* 34, no. 1 (2006): 34.

Background and Setting

On Thursday, May 8th I received an e-mail inviting scholars to apply to teach at the **Mitrovica Summer University 2013** which took place in July and August.³ An NGO called SPARK headquartered in Holland (with offices in Belgrade, Bujumbura, Juba, Kigali, Monrovia, Mitrovica, Prishtina and Ramallah) develops a variety of educational programs. In the “Call for Professors” they wrote for visiting professors holding a doctoral degree who “can apply to teach and submit a course proposal for one of the following topics: 1) European Human Rights Advocacy; 2) Information Literacy Tools in Formal and Informal Education; 3) Entrepreneurship - from basics to innovation; 4) Cultural Heritage and Diversity; 5) Environmental protection and hazardous materials; 6) Cultural and national contacts in Modern British-American Literature. Deadline for application is the 15th of May, 2013.” This deadline left me with just one week to apply, and I did so precipitously.

After a short time I was informed that I had been selected to teach the sixth topic. The course syllabus I submitted focused on cultural and national contacts in Modern British and American literature. My course centered on two novels: *Where Angels Fear to Tread* by the Cambridge-educated novelist Edward Morgan Forster (1879-1970) which sets English among Italians while the second novel, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* by Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain (1835-1910), focuses on complex black-white relationships in southern United States. Both novels include pretentious people of wealth who regard the ethnic racial or religious Other as their inferiors. While reading the novels, students thought critically about the motives of the characters, some of whom experience through epiphany the notion of *nosce te ipsum* or “knowing thyself,” which becomes obvious at the end of the novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. Students examined the racial or national presumptions of characters through the lens of this Delphic maxim, *nosce te ipsum*, primarily through their contact with the “Other,” i.e., with someone outside their social, national or racial circle. In both novels, “highbrow” characters acquire an awareness of themselves through firsthand encounters and then realize how false their presuppositions were, or what the Greeks call *peripetia*. In literary studies, students encounter a chance to see a whole new perspective on issues one may ordinarily perceive as an unquestioned value, so that it may be one domain of literary fiction to open the way for a Kosovar to get it – to accustom the reader’s mind to the idea of acknowledging the racial and ethnic Other as a fellow citizen rather than as an ostracized enemy. Hence the didactic purpose through literary study in the course was, while amusing them to lead them on imperceptibly, unconsciously step-by-step to the desired state of feeling as well as to a patient rational perspicacity. The aim also

³ See <http://www.my-program.org/index.php/en/msu13/professors>

included an improvement of English language skills by engaging participants in English with the two novels, fellow students and with me as well as the local Serb co-professor in English and thereby developing speaking, reading, writing and listening comprehension skills.

Unprepared in many ways, the majority of the six visiting foreign professors were ignorant that the course would not integrate Albanians with Serbs. Instead, Serbs residing in the North Mitrovica enclave or Serbs from other parts of former Yugoslavia made up the



overwhelming majority of the student participants and no Albanians were present. Among the foreign professors were an Austrian, a Spaniard, a Belgian, and Dutch, and Romanian, and finally me. The official name of the university in Mitrovica is “University of Prishtina, Temporarily Settled in Kosovska Mitrovica” (!) but shortened to University of Prishtina.⁴ The administration does not recognize the Republic of Kosovo. It is funded by Serbia, and “has remained under the scope of the Serbian education system”⁵ and not that of the Republic of Kosovo.

Some things took a little time to get accustomed to, for example the toilets

(Another “University of Prishtina” is really located in the City of Prishtina and is run by Kosovar Albanians, funded of course by the Republic of Kosovo.⁶) While we were made aware of the ethnic tensions, we were wholly unprepared for the hostile feelings against people from NATO countries or against any visitors originating from the European Union member nations.

Unaware of the intensity of these hostilities, I was further a target of some hostility as a U.S. born foreign teacher. (The United States was famously the most heavily involved in the bombing of Serb military targets in 1999.) And even though Austria is not a member of NATO, that nation dominated over the area until the end of World War I so Austrians were

⁴ In the Serbian language it is Универзитет у Приштини.

⁵ Zdravko Vitosević, *Catalog of the University of Prishtia, Temporarily Settled in Kosovska Mitrovica 2011/2012*. University of Prishtina-Kosovska Mitrovica Press, 2011, 5.

⁶ Destan Halimi, *The University of Prishtina 1970-2005*. (Prishtinë: University of Prishtina Press, 2005), on-line at http://filozofiku.uni-pr.edu/Files/Dokumente/Relevante/Monografia_opt.aspx

not popular either. After a Serb assassinated Archduke Franz Ferdinand one hundred years ago, WWI erupted. It was made clear to all foreign professors that there were specific places in Mitrovica which were dangerous to visit. We were informed that inebriated Serbs regularly stationed themselves by the main bridge connecting the north and south parts of Mitrovica and beat up any Albanian or NATO/EU member national, male or female. The local director of the NGO sponsoring the summer school program informed us some ten days after we arrived that in February of 2013, a number of bombs had exploded in North Mitrovica targeting Serbs with moderate political positions and that compromise was not tolerated by certain factions of the imperious Nationalist Serb population of northern Mitrovica.



Visiting Foreign Teachers in the front row at the University of Mitrovica, Kosovo

In North Mitrovica, one often saw the phrase “Kosovo is always Serbian” written in Serbian, English, German and even in Albanian languages. This slogan appeared exclusively in the north part of the city in graffiti on walls as well as on t-shirts worn openly and proudly by our Mitrovica University students in class. Another juvenile quote on North Mitrovica walls was “EU + USA = fascist” as well as an ebullient hero-worshipping of General Ratko Mladić, currently on trial in The Hague for war crimes (genocide) which took place in 1995 in Srebrenica (Bosnia). Serb and Russian flags drape almost every street corner. When any of the six foreign professors walked the streets engaged in conversation in English, frequent hostile stares followed. Over time however, I came to learn that the majority of Serbs, especially

those living outside of Mitrovica, do not really agree with the vocal radicals and that a silent liminal majority oppose Serbian nationalism – though they would be foolish, and it could be dangerous, to articulate a moderate view in public. Whenever I needed to buy something in a store, as a precaution I spoke in Czech first. If they did not understand me, only then did I speak in English.

In South Mitrovica, in contrast, Kosovo, Albanian and American flags abound. In the Albanian-dominated part of Mitrovica, young people wore t-shirts with flags and the words “Thank you America!”, “Dankeschön, Deutschland!” and the lengthier “Merci beaucoup – Vive la France!” Albanians smiled when they heard us speak English. Owing to the fact that the Republic of Kosovo has good trade relations with its wealthier neighbor Turkey, it was accordingly routine that the quality of cuisine and restaurant service was superior in southern Mitrovica. Traveling over the bridge separating the two ethnic groups, I honestly could not tell them apart. By appearance and attire, Albanians and Serbs look exactly the same to me. While the majority of Albanians are Muslim rather than Catholics, their attire was entirely Western and one does not see anyone praying five times a day.

There were a few preparatory meetings needed before classes began, and all the meeting progressed smoothly. On the first day of class I had students introduce themselves. The first student stated that she originally came from Prishtina. I responded, “Oh, that’s nice.



A professor from Belgium presenting EU history

You’re from the capital of this country.” A furious look from her indicated to me that I had made an enormous *faux-pas*. “Well, that is what some of the international authorities officially claim,” she replied. I only then realized that Serbs regard Belgrade to be the capital of the country, since “this country” is not the Republic of Kosovo but the Republic of Serbia.

One colleague, a visiting foreign professor from Utrecht in the Netherlands, made a similar innocuous error: she stated how wonderful the reputation of this country's coffee was. (This information was revealed to her in her Kosovo guide book.) She was, however, immediately met with hostile eyes of her students. Unaware that Serbs have poor-tasting coffee, it is indeed the Albanians, using their Turkish connections, who concoct some of the best tasting blends of coffee in the world. We met after class, exchanged our vexatious experiences, and concluded that a crash course in "Serbian Political Correctness" should be mandatory and promulgated to foreign professors in our preparatory meetings since there would be no other way for us to know that what we had stated (or what we could still say) was offensive to Serb students.

Teaching Literature

Mark Twain's novel *Pudd'nhead Wilson* has a complex plot which turns and twists rapidly enough with a slave named Roxy who contemplates a mercy killing and suicide, a switch of her slave infant and the master's baby and heir, cross-dressing, stealing, gambling, near-drowning, knife attacks, passing, honor lost and regained through dueling, the mother-getting sold "down the river" by her son as a slave, a murder, a trial, and finger print evidence. Mark Twain's intent in his convoluted plot is the construction by society of racial identity, and for Serb students who engaged in the in-class discussions, it was easy: two blue-eyed babies, one a slave, the other the heir to the plantation; then they considered the two children's identity (which was not under their own control). When the similar-looking babies are switched, the white baby Tom becomes a slave, and the 1/32 black, 31/32 white baby, Chambers, becomes the new heir in the family, and is called "Tom." At first only their cribs and clothes mark their identities, but they quickly acquire distinct features. Though substantial pampering for "Tom" and harsh discipline for "Chambers," the children learn to play their slave and master roles at a very early age, and their identities become learned. "Chambers," who is described as all white, becomes the slave in attitude, language, and habit. Chambers plays the traditional role of a slave and the new Tom takes his imagined place and race, which comprise clothes, language, posture, and other innumerable aspects of conduct.

The switched boys grow up in a master-servant relationship to one another and their names are designated by Mark Twain to match their switched, new, and false roles. The white slave, "Chambers," is described as "strong beyond his years and a good fighter; strong

because he was coarsely fed and hard worked.”⁷ The heir apparent, “Tom,” orders Chambers to fight with white boys who tease him; Tom grows to be scared and cowardly. When Chambers saves Tom from drowning, his reward is three stabs from Tom’s pocket knife after Tom’s white friends joke that Chambers is Tom’s “nigger-pappy,—to signify that he had had a second birth into this life, and that Chambers was the author of his new being.”⁸ This white slave thus acquires those ostensible attributes of blacks embraced by white society of the time—Chambers is physically superior to his “Negro” master, Tom, he has a meek disposition toward whites, and he speaks “the basest dialect of the negro quarter. His gaits, his attitudes, his gestures, his bearing, his laugh—all were vulgar and uncouth [...]”⁹ The environment and slave conditions create the “African-American” differences which the nineteenth-century social order regarded as “racial traits,” traits which the “real white,” now named Chambers, possesses. Serb students recognized these facets and indirectly could consider the similar kinds of ramifications for the tensions and ethnic differences in their country.

With the novel *Where Angels Fear to Tread*, E.M. Forster treats a European cultural conflict: Protestant England is shown to possess a rigid sense of morality, virtue and self-righteousness. Born into a lower-class family, the lovely Lilia Herriton is a widow with a young daughter, Irma. Her late husband came from a much higher social class and hence she is surrounded by haughty in-laws who constantly oppress and criticize her. She escapes to Tuscany for a lengthy holiday after the in-laws inhibit a new relationship from developing in England. Arriving in Monteriano, the Anglican Lilia quickly falls in love and marries a poor Catholic but charming Italian named Gino. The new life transforms Lilia, but her in-laws regard the new marriage and her Catholic conversion as an insult to the family, and furthermore a harm to their social standing. After a failed attempt to break up the couple before the marriage ceremony, the Herritons abandon Lilia to her fate. After a year, Lilia misses her daughter Irma, whose correspondence is intercepted and forbidden, and she becomes miserable in her marriage as her husband has extramarital affairs. As Forster puts it:

No one realized that more than personalities were engaged, that the struggle was national; that generations of ancestors, good, bad, or indifferent, forbade the Latin man to be chivalrous to the northern woman, the northern woman to forgive the Latin man. All this might have been foreseen.¹⁰

⁷ Mark Twain, *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (London: Penguin, 1986), 78.

⁸ *ibid*, 80.

⁹ *ibid*, 225.

¹⁰ E. M. Forster, *Where Angels Fear to Tread*. (New York: Dover, 1993), 41.

To rectify the marriage and her sense of loneliness and attempt to save her marriage, Lilia decides to have another child. After Lilia dies in childbirth, the Herritons decide to “rescue” the baby boy and bring him back to a civilized country. Philip Herriton and a neighboring woman, Caroline Abbott, are engaged in the task of “buying” the baby from Gino (only after all the English neighbors learn of the baby’s existence, further lowering the esteem of the Herritons’ social position. In Monteriano, an accident takes place after the attempt to steal the baby away, and the baby dies. Although he could have been charged with kidnapping and possibly manslaughter, Philip gets off free because Gino lies in his Italian court testimony: Gino forgives them all. In the process, Philip Herriton undergoes a metamorphosis via his experience of epiphany from a rather haughty Englishman to a tolerant, enlightened man.

Students enjoyed the novel and engaged in discussions regarding the low standing of the handsome Italian as well as the freedom Lilia felt while living with him. Students felt great sympathy for Lilia and her need to escape the restraints of England. None of them conceptualized social class particularly distinctly, thinking that class was only a matter of money, and so I reluctantly but necessarily needed to “lecture” to the Serb participants the particularly deep-seated sense of social class distinctions in England. (Interestingly, the religious intolerance that the Protestants expressed against the Catholic faith of Gino which is rather strongly conveyed in the novel seemed irrelevant to the Serb Orthodox students during discussion.)

Students wrote insightful seminar papers and engaged in wonderful class discussions, and, through close reading and sharing of opinions about the motivations of characters in both tragic novels, came to their own interpretations and discoveries about the nature of national, ethnic and religious conflicts and the ensuing tragedies they can cause. In this indirect way, it is hoped that on their own, they may apply these discovered notions to their own nation’s conflicts with others.

This 18-day stay in northern Mitrovica was in essence a great learning experience for me. I taught students who on the one hand were pleased to have a foreign lecturer, and even a native English speaker, lead the class instruction. The students wrote a seminar paper, an analysis on a novel, and in turn received detailed feedback on their performance both on their writing as well as on their daily class participation. Outside of the classroom experience, excursions to scenic or historical sights, with a particular emphasis on old Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries were undertaken. Debates on issues of controversy were also

arranged outside of class. One debate arranged after the class regarding sustainability of economic growth went smoothly but another debate regarding the possibility of Kosovo joining the European Union had the misfortune of degenerating into angry nationalist rhetoric.



Beautiful scenery – a weekend excursion to Peć

From another visiting professor I learned that all over the world there are civil wars or international (or tribal) wars centered on religious, political, economic or ethnic conflicts, and this post-conflict situation in other countries in the world does not differ much from the nationalism which divides the City of Mitrovica. However, most post-war countries elsewhere in the world are in far worse situations because Kosovo at least enjoys generous European Union, United Nations and private NGO funding to improve the post-war infrastructure – something most post-conflict nations do not have much access to. While writing this report may give a negative tilt to the experience I had in July and August, it is relevant to know that

the difficulties were caused by war from a few years ago. It is sometimes necessary to be reminded of the awful repercussions of war which follows for many years, well after the conflict has ended. It is something only older Czechs have personally encountered.

In this first visit to the Balkans, I undoubtedly learned an enormous amount about the intense religious, ethnic and parochial feelings of people here. In spite of the fact that the USA and UK led the NATO bombing missions against Serbia in the Kosovo War in 1999, Serbs in the North-Mitrovica enclave were very eager to learn English. The administrators and students were excellent and (except one student who was caught plagiarizing) the in-class literary discussions and the seminar papers written by the students exhibited a fairly lofty quality in English literacy as well as analytical acumen. Moreover, the Serb professors were gracious and professional and spoke English quite well. I was satisfied with the majority of encounters I had with the scores of Serbs I met. The excursions and special meals at restaurants were scrupulously organized for the volunteer foreign professors. My work teaching the British and American literature class in Mitrovica was really enjoyable. I only wish that the classes in this summer school had managed to integrate the Albanian and Serb Kosovars, and then all my expectations would have been fulfilled. I enjoyed four visits to the



Discussing with a Serb student in Mitrovica, the Republic of Kosovo

south part of Mitrovica immensely, where a Bosnian teacher as well as a German national working for an NGO funded business school hosted me. Hopefully a diminution of ethnic tensions will prevail between the Serbs and Albanians in the near future in Kosovo,

particularly among the younger generation; then – ultimately – our courses and these brief interactions among the university students will have served their intended purposes.

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METHODOLOGY AND CULTURE

Music in ELT: Ending Class with a High Note

Do you know what sort of students of English is usually bored the most during their lesson? Probably those pupils or students who reached puberty or are several years older. Many are not so motivated for learning, but merely want to get a requirement out of the way and behind in the easiest way possible. Unfortunately, that is often the case with many of our pupils. How then can an English teacher deal with it? How can the teacher undertake the teaching of many lessons with students who genuinely do not want to learn anything? The teacher is compelled to find ways how to motivate his or her students with a pleasant lesson. One way I will suggest could be, for these who are up to date with music, is using rock songs and their lyrics for English lessons.

As a confirmation of suitability of music and its convenience for English lesson in general, we may cite Steven Krashen, the well-known authority in linguistic pedagogy:

“Music is also used as a means of lowering anxiety and diminishing tension, and inducing the state of relaxed alertness considered optimal for second language acquisition.”¹¹

The value of using rock songs in the class is not empirically-based, nevertheless, it is theoretically grounded. In a hypothesis called *the affective filter*, Steven Krashen developed a notion of the weak filter which means that students have the positive affection toward learning. The affective filter must be weak. Songs are one means for the method which may achieve a low affective filter. In addition, songs offer the possibility of developing authenticity in speaking. In other words, music with lyrics can help develop more natural speaking with foreign language without pauses.¹²

Generally, music can make pupils feel relaxed and more open to learn. That is very important for learning students and for their teacher as well, especially in preventing an atmosphere of boredom from setting in. Several factors play important roles when choosing music for the lesson. These include style of music, timing and the type of learning activities.

¹¹ Krashen, S. *Principles and Practise*, pp. 145.

¹² Paquette, K. R., Rieg, S. A. “Using Music to Support the Literacy Development of Young English Language Learners”, pp. 228.

Style

The style of the music is important with learners in the age of puberty and adolescence since they listen to music very often. This could be the difficult task for teacher who does not listen to up-to-date music. Of course the teacher can expose his or hers students to other styles of music, but probably students will not like it and in my opinion it is necessary to choose a style which is generally popular among young learners.

There are several factors which play an important role regarding a song's suitability – length, level of difficulty and also appropriateness of lyrics. Eminem is very popular interpret for instance, and lyrics of his songs could be interesting, but it is challenging to follow their lyrics due to the fast tempo. He uses expressions which can be distinct in a particular context. Certainly students can improve their vocabulary with this particular singer, though even for the teacher it could be challenging. The suitability of lyrics must be checked by the teacher well in advance. One can find very pleasant, melodic and popular songs, but the lyrics may have a tricky or slippery content. Nevertheless, it is always necessary to take into account the level of particular learners.

According to my experience, if one chooses the optimal style of music and brings songs regularly into the lessons, students get used to challenging music and the majority of them welcome this activity. Moreover, they will remind the teacher about it regularly, assuring the notion that using songs in ELT are appreciated by students.

Timing

If we consider music as the popular part of the lesson, the chronology of its inclusion should be definitely enlisted closer to the end of the lesson after the less exciting elements are completed like grammar, new vocabulary etc. It may help the students to come out of lethargy at the end of class, especially if one is teaching a ninety minute long class. How much time one wants to spend with a song usually depends on the length of the song and the learning activities chosen.

Learning Activities

The chosen song will support all ELT skills, i. e. receptive (listening, reading) and possibly the productive (speaking, writing) skills, depending on the preparation of activities. Using video clips makes activities more motivating and elevates student understanding.¹³

¹³ Tůma, F. "Music video clips in EFL classes", pp. 37

Some activities are connected with particular song:

- ❖ Pre-listening activities can include questions about students' knowledge about the interpreter and his or her song and whether students like the style of music. The teacher can add some thought-provoking information. If there are some difficult words in the lyrics, the teacher should discuss them with students, especially some examples of the slang language e.g. boo (boyfriend or girlfriend), ain't (am not, is not, are not, have not, and has not) or reductions e.g. somethin' (something), 'cause (because), gonna (going to), wanna (want to). In case of some difficult lyrics (Eminem and rap songs generally), it might be better to translate difficult parts together with students before the listening itself.
- ❖ While-pre-listening activities include usually giving the lyrics to students on the paper. Otherwise, the text can have gaps for the students to fill in with the missing words of the song. Another possibility could be arranging the paragraphs so that the student has them in the wrong order and needs to put them in proper chronology.
- ❖ A good post-listening activity could be discussing their opinion on the message of the song, or at a more basic level, simply restating what the song is generally about. If the teacher wants to train them in writing, students can express themselves on paper. The point is, in this particular age they would much rather write about the song than about such mundane topics as what they were doing during the weekend or about the town where they live.

Listening to Songs and Language Improvement

The rhythm, stress and intonation together with the slang language and reductions, are aspects of the oral speech as well, but of course it is more difficult to listen to a song than normal speech. Listening to songs with lyrics helps train one in a foreign language more intensively than listening to ordinary conversations.¹⁴

If one adds up the conceptions mentioned at the beginning this text and the last one, e.g. firstly: music is what young people love and spend lots of time enjoying plus the fact that music with lyrics helps improve their language skills, adding songs to in-class activities should be a regular part of the most English lessons.

Young People and Their Opinion of Music

Positive impacts of music on motivation may be confirmed for using music in the ELT with one particular survey among young people showing that majority of young people

¹⁴ Lems, K. Using Music in the Adult ESL Classroom

listened to music for improving their mood. It is shown in the Figure 1. Songs may actually be the way to improve the atmosphere of enthusiasm in the class. Of course, it also depends strongly on the style of music. The teacher should make sure that students generally like the song he or she chooses. Figure 2 shows the most popular music styles among young responders. The four most popular in this particular survey were pop, RnB, hip hop and rap.

Figure 1: *Do you ever listen to music to improve your mood?*¹⁵

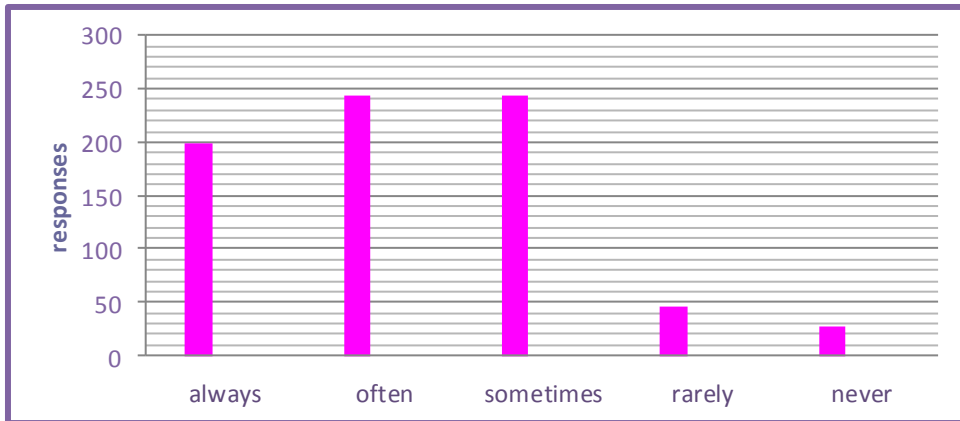
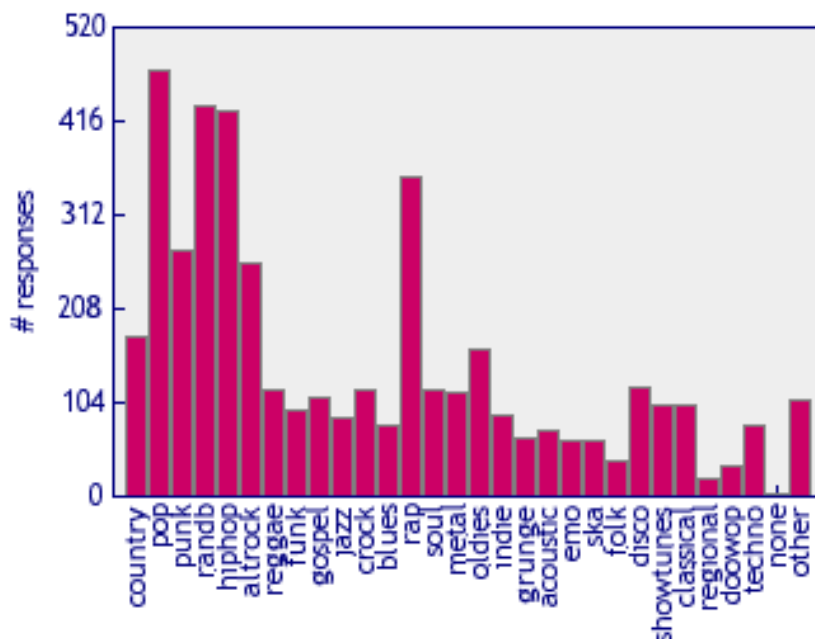


Figure 2: *What is your favorite music?*¹⁶



¹⁵ SmartGirl. Report on What Tunes Do You Listen To?

¹⁶ SmartGirl. Report on What Tunes Do You Listen To?

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The Scottish Referendum



Flag of the Scottish nation

Since 1707 Scotland has been united with England though before this union with England, Scotland was an independent kingdom. Soon a historical referendum will decide if there should be a change in Scotland's political future. Recent opinion polls show a lead to the opponents of Scottish independence. The question to be put to the 4.1 million residents of Scotland reads:

“Should Scotland be an independent country?”

Scottish Independence
Referendum: Thursday, the
18th September 2014

Millions of pounds are being spent in advertisements by political groups before the election. Obviously, most of the British government officials, including prominent Scottish politicians like former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, are against Scottish independence. Moreover, there are a number of unsettled questions regarding the independence of Scotland from the United Kingdom, namely:

- Currency: Will independent Scotland have the Pound, Euro or its own currency?
- NATO: Will Scotland remain in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization?
- Oil: Which country will own the oil in Scottish territorial waters? (The majority of the United Kingdom's oil is off shore from Scotland.)
- European Union: Will independent Scotland join the Euro Zone and will it be more or less Euro-skeptic than the United Kingdom currently is?
- Official Status: Will there be a Republic of Scotland or retention of the Monarchy?

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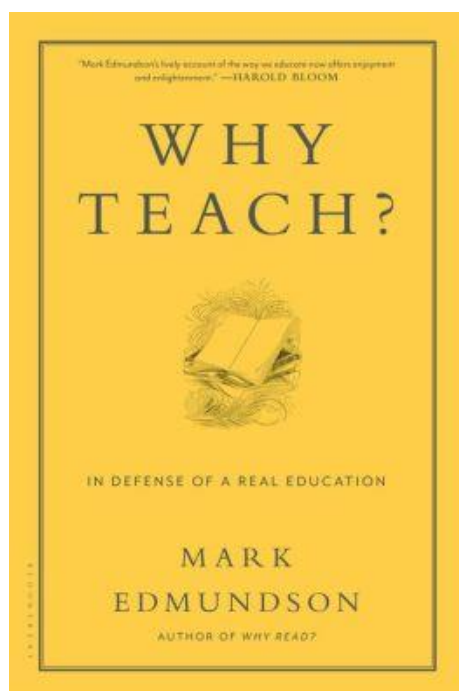
- interesting activity used with your learners
- research on language, literature, or teaching/learning topics of interest to your colleagues
- your own “English revelations“ - your understanding of a grammar point, vocabulary item, or other information in a new way
- views on a book you have read recently (textbook, methodology book, etc.)
- report on an interesting workshop, conference, or meeting you have attended recently
- other topics of interest to teachers of English in the Czech Republic

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BOOK REVIEW



MARK EDMUNDSON: *WHY TEACH? IN DEFENSE OF A REAL EDUCATION*, New York: Bloombury, 2013. 223 s. ISBN: 978-1-62040-107-1

The title of this collection of essays, spanning the late 1990s up to 2013, is misleading: teaching is hardly the sole focus of each essay; it concerns less than one third of the book. Edmundson, a professor of English at the University of Virginia, ponders in one piece the character-building value of playing American football, then considers “*global education*” (study-travel abroad programs) while a third evaluates the teenager’s preparation needed to get accepted into top-ranked universities. Another disadvantage I noted from the onset is a certain elitism in these writings. As a professor of English armed with a Ph.D. from Yale

University, Edmundson seems less concerned with confronting problems with the ordinary setting of teachers and learners than with those with extraordinary ambitions. He fittingly celebrates the humanities which he views as falling into neglect.

A renowned scholar of literature (particularly a specialist of Milton, Wordsworth and Emerson), Edmundson has collected 16 non-literary essays in this volume which take on a variety of issues current at schools and universities which pertain not only to the American academic scene but are current concerns in the Czech Republic as well. His analysis of the American contemporary culture, “*ever more devoted to consumption and entertainment, to the using and using up of goods and images*” (p. 6) is just as valid for many Czech students. He references the tendency of “*students bursting out of my class [and] grabbing for their cell phones...*” and the Facebook phenomenon:

At Harvard and Yale, I'd now expect to find [students] who've hit a white incandescence or maybe who've fused completely with the Internet, living within it, like characters out of a Neuromancer, finding in their merger with the machine a kind of high that can take the place of happiness (p. 40).

Besides this trend, there are also echoes of ambitious Czech students I have encountered pursuing two degrees at different universities at the same time, often at universities in different cities. Likewise, more numerous slackers attend university more for the enjoyment. Their only wish is to get by with a minimum of effort, just enough to fulfill their parents’ expectations of graduating. Edmundson also experiences students rushing to class, opening up their laptops or iPad tablets while he remains unsure if they are single-mindedly noting down highlights of his lectures or sending messages on Facebook. In a huge

lecture hall, faces of ambitious students and lackadaisical slackers behind a monitor look alike.

Professors likewise are supplied with laptops, encouraged to produce not only PowerPoint presentations in class but also employ interactive SmartBoards, Moodle and assign homework readings, interactive tests and assess language production using software through the Internet, though no evidence in the literature shows improvement in student achievement. As a result, American and Czech professors imitating students in using technology end up spending substantially more time with computers than with books and students.

To avoid this alienating state of affairs, Edmundson suggests stepping away from the laptops and all other technology in the classroom and instead dedicating an ever greater amount of time to real face-to-face discussion, in-class contemplation and brainstorming. With in-class perusal of Wikipedia regarding the discussion topic these days, students rarely engage in true brainstorming but become merely mimetic (rather than thinking) human beings. Edmundson recalls at this point Henry David Thoreau's admonishment of the non-thinking public's addiction to newspapers who fail to "live deliberately" in *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854). Students' rushed life serviced by technology and financial pressure of a "return on investment" (since university education is expensive in the USA) is ominously altering higher education. Both the USA and the Czech Republic suffer from a tendency of university administrations focusing so much on finance and research and less on teaching quality. Likewise, the way professors teach has declined, with an unfortunate, silent collaboration with students that generous grading and thin assignments lead to generous teaching evaluations.

Edmundson celebrates students who eschew for example business or law school for a career in teaching. They earn less money and have an accordingly lower standard of living. Yet, Edmundson avers, they have "*the kinds of problems that are worth having, and if you advance, as Thoreau asked us to do, in the general direction of your dreams, you may have them*" (p. 66), a romanticized consolation. Included in the volume is an infelicitous attempt to place sports, a visibly powerful element of secondary and university-level American educational institutions, into the perspective of educational-psychological development of the scholar. Entitled "*Do Sports Build Character?*" the essay constitutes the only non-elitist essay in the collection. He deftly weaves autobiography into the chapter to vacuously conclude that perseverance in sports led him to a strong work ethic as a scholar. Since intercollegiate sports are only cursorily played in Europe, this section is irrelevant in a Czech context.

One trend shared in both continents in higher education is the notion of "global education" – which translates either as a trip or semester study abroad. As Edmundson confesses, "*when I ask around among my colleagues – well-traveled, dedicated types – they don't seem to have much more idea what global education is than I do*" (p. 97). It becomes clear in the essay that a trip or semester abroad is a lot more entertainment than any kind of laborious learning or of educational benefit these days; Edmundson describes taking University of Virginia students to Asia. They disembark from a boat in Shanghai wearing T-shirts featuring Chairman Mao and straw harvest-the-rice dome-shaped hats, something akin

to the “*Czech Drinking Team*” or Franz Kafka T-shirts on sale in the Old Town district of Prague sold to young American tourists. Students also learn about tourist traps rather fast:

At our pre-port meeting before Shanghai, we learned about how young Chinese students would come on in a friendly way and then take foreign visitors off to a “traditional” tea ceremony. Two hours later, their friendly hosts would hit them with bills for seventy-five dollars for a couple of cups of tea and a few grains of rice (p. 99).

This is Edmundson’s hapless depiction of “*global education.*” After that he conveys the obtuse conclusion that students developed a nice rapport with people because of American “friendliness” which overcomes class, race and language barriers and that it suffices as “*global education*” (p. 98).

If one sees the title of the book by this renowned professor, one might have high hopes for intrepid analysis but these hopes are soon dashed. This book is popular, pusillanimous and hardly scholarly, telling of vexatious trends but offering no solutions, just some cheerleading for teachers and students in the humanities.

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ASOCIACE UČITELŮ ANGLIČTINY ČESKÉ REPUBLIKY
ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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