

My memories from the 39th Annual International TESOL France  
Colloquium

### **A Report from Marta Bujakowska**

As with many other ELT events nowadays, TESOL France's annual Colloquium was moved on-line, and took the form of a virtual web conference, which was held on the 20th-22<sup>nd</sup> of November, 2020. The two platforms which made it possible, were ViMeet and Zoom.

Thanks to TESOL France's generosity, there were four IATEFL Poland members allowed to represent our association at TESOL France 2020:

**Lucyna Wilinikiewicz-Górniak, Małgorzata Bukowska-Ulatowska, Marcin Stanowski** and I. Not only were we invited to a conference, but to an on-line Cocktail Party on the Friday night, as well.

At first, I thought I wouldn't be able to attend on Friday night, but eventually, I found time to join the **Cocktail Party**. I would have really regretted it had I not participated in this low-key, light-hearted, true party. There was a lot of talks, games, and networking, with new and old colleagues, in break out rooms. We were even given recipes for drinks to have to hand!

Here is a little taster from the Cocktail Party:

*(click on the icon)*



TESOL France would like to cordially invite you to



THE PRE-COLLOQUIUM

# Online Cocktail Party

FRIDAY



NOV 20 2020



6:00 PM TO 8:00 PM

*This event will be on Zoom. The rest of the conference will be on ViMeet.*

• REGISTER •



Here's what's to come:

- 6:00 - 6:45 : Icebreakers & fun
- 6:45 - 7:15 - Mixing and mingling
- 7:15 - 8:00 : Trivia (in Teams)

*Go to the following link to get the recipes for our suggested cocktails:*

- Tea Break
- Saved by the bells
- A+
- Tippex (correction fluid)
- Teacher's Ruin
- Take the register
- The Bitter Administrator
- The Spicy Saucy substitute
- The Teacher's Pet
- The Agreeable Adjunct
- The Old-fashioned Professor
- The Honeyed Invigilator

On the Saturday morning, **Jeremy Levin**, TESOL France's current president, opened the conference with a tour of the platform, which was very useful, whilst I meandered between the sessions, later on. After a joyful opening plenary by **Chia Suang Chong**, '*How can we help our students communicate across the borders?*' I had to make my programme choices. I went to '*Anatomy of real Respect*' run by **Lenny Gold** from Sweden, where he talked about true respect for students, and gave some hints on how to cater to the emotional needs of their unconscious minds.

Afterwards, I jumped into the room where my dear Greek colleagues, Vicky Chionopoulou & Julia Aliverti, were talking about teaching through culture in their talk: '*Teachers in distress? Keep calm and trust culture.*' They have never disappointed me.

I moved on to listen to a teacher from Nepal, who was talking about large classes. We often complain about the size of our classes, but I know from my colleagues around the globe, how big the big classes may get. Teachers face real problems with groups as large as 40-50, or even more students. In his talk: '*Managing Unwanted Behaviours in Large ELT Classrooms*,' **Binod Duwadi** presented some useful strategies for handling such disruptive behaviours.

'*Smart phone = Smart activities*' was the title which drew my attention. A workshop run by a young colleague, **Olga Zhdan**, from Lviv, Ukraine, was packed with many ready-to-use activities, adaptable to teach face-to-face or online. Even some technical glitches didn't upset the speaker. Olga was talking about using the technology after all!

I needed a break in the afternoon, but I didn't miss anything because all participants have access to all the talks for some time. I haven't been at such a long-lasting conference before. Following the event, I can still enjoy the talks I wanted to replay, or some others which I couldn't attend in November.

Still on the Saturday, even though I co-operate with **Ola Zaparucha**, I didn't want to miss her talk on '*CLIL Wheel*' to learn more from her, as I was due to give a webinar on CLIL in the coming days.

On Sunday, I attended '*Build confidence: silence that inner critic*', by **Ann Collins**, an English teacher and a coach who shared her own experience with learning a foreign language – French, and taught us how to use the language to change beliefs.

Other sessions worth mentioning and recommended by **Małgorzata Bukowska-Ulatowska** were:

*'Building projects. A teaching toolkit'* by **Tyrrell Liam** – a highly practical workshop presenting the step-by-step approach to running English language projects.

*'Building engagement and motivation for learning'* by **Daniel Clark** – a lot of helpful ideas on shifting the classroom from a teacher-led one to more student-led one.

*'Magic in the Classroom'* by **Francesca Lambert** – a very energetic presentation, inspiring teachers to bring some magic into various activities they conduct, during English language classes for young learners.

*'Engaging teenagers: voice and purpose'* by **Helen Chapman** – a really convincing presentation, with four practical ideas to improve engagement with teenagers, by giving them a voice and a genuine purpose for using English.

*'Dynamic Assessment for Student Engagement'* by **Caterina Skiniotou** – an opportunity to reflect on assessment of and for learning, a chance to get familiar with Mediated Learning Experience and Dynamic Assessment concepts.

I am going to watch them after Gosia's recommendation. I hope I will still be able to. I have to admit that I have forgotten how long we have access to them.

I really looked forward to listening to **Chia Suang Chong** again, in her closing plenary, *'Looking after student and teacher well-being'*.

I need to say here that I would love it if IATEFL could find the funds to invite **Chia** to our next 2021 conference, whether face-to-face or on-line.

Thank you **TESOL France**, thank you **Jeremy Levin**, and all the committee members and conference organisers for this knowledgeable, yet atmospheric conference.

If I were to describe it in one word, I would say: **'CHEERFUL'** (in these strange times).

**Marta Bujakowska**

