

Lion's Voice



Issue 7 September 2011

2nd Teacher Development Symposium Critical Approaches to Teaching and Testing

Speakers

Lindsay Clandfield
Sara Hannam
George Vassilakis

ATHENS Saturday, 8 October

Athens Imperial Hotel, New York Hall
@ 10:30 - 16:00

THESSALONIKI Sunday, 9 October

Makedonia Palace Hotel, Aristotelis I Hall
@ 10:30 - 16:00

> Editor's Note

Dear All

On behalf of PEOPLECERT Group I would like to wish you a very happy new school year and welcome you to the seventh issue of our Newsletter.

We are proud to announce that the **2nd Teacher Development Symposium** will be taking place next month! The theme of the symposium is **Critical Approaches to Language Teaching and Testing** and our three speakers, Lindsay Clandfield, Sara Hannam and George Vassilakis, will discuss aspects of critical thinking in materials design, teaching and testing. You can find details of the Symposium programme on pages 6 and 7.

In this issue you can also read our featured article by **Dr Dimitris Thanasoulas**, ELT teacher and author. Dr Thanasoulas discusses three approaches to teaching, the relationship between them and the implications for teachers. The benefits and problems of each teaching approach are analysed.

Maria Christakou, English & Greek Language teacher, discusses exam stress. She gives a definition of the term, looks at possible causes and suggests ways of dealing with it. As teachers and/or parents you will find useful practical tips on how to help your students and/or children overcome their stress.

Paul Shaw, Thessaloniki based English Language teacher and teacher trainer, discusses wheelchair etiquette in the Disabled Access Friendly Campaign column, giving all of us useful advice on how to behave around wheelchair users.

Finally, you can find our latest news on the City & Guilds exam dates for the academic year 2011-2012, an update on the Athens and Thessaloniki IP Exhibition events and information on the new City & Guilds exam preparation material.

George Lampropoulos
Editor

CONTENTS

Featured Article

> **Three Views of Teaching** 2
by Dimitris Thanasoulas

Disabled Access Friendly Campaign

> **Wheelchair Etiquette** 4
by Paul Shaw

Teacher's Corner

> **Dealing with Exam Stress** 5
by Maria Christakou

Cover Story

> **City & Guilds 2nd Teacher Development Symposium** 6

Latest News

> **December Examination** 8
> **New exam dates 2011-2012**
> **New Official Practice Papers**
> **Free of charge**
> **Athens & Thessaloniki IP Exhibition Autumn 2011**

Editorial Team:

*George Lampropoulos
Marios Molfetas
George Vassilakis*

Design:

Marketing & Communication Department

Disabled Access Friendly Campaign

by Paul Shaw



> Wheelchair Etiquette



Is there anybody at your school who uses a wheelchair? Have you ever met someone who does? The Disabled Access Friendly campaign offers the following tips.

You can be pretty sure that no one uses a wheelchair through choice. People use wheelchairs for many different reasons, and you should avoid making assumptions and having preconceived ideas of why they use a wheelchair and what

they can and can't do. If you're interacting with a wheelchair user for the first time, it can be difficult to know how to act. You don't want to cross any boundaries or accidentally offend someone, but at the same time you want to be helpful and understanding. Here's how to find a good balance.

1. Avoid presumptions about a person's physical abilities.

You don't know what this person's physical abilities are. Just because someone uses a wheelchair it does not mean that they are paralyzed or that they are incapable of taking a few steps. Some people only use a wheelchair because they cannot stand for long, or have a mobility problem. Do not test whether a person is genuinely paralyzed. If you see someone who uses a wheelchair moving their legs or standing up, do not question their ability or disability, and try not to act surprised.

2. Greet the wheelchair user the same as you would anyone.

Extend your hand, even if they have limited use of their hands or an artificial limb. Generally, it's appropriate to offer to shake hands regardless of their condition.

3. Speak directly to the person who uses the wheelchair.

If someone is accompanying that person (pushing the wheelchair, for example), don't talk to this companion about the person in the wheelchair - for example, "Will he/she be needing help with..?" to figure out how to help. This is insulting for someone who uses a wheelchair as it implies that he/she is not able to answer on his/her own. Always address him or her directly and respectfully. When you find that you are going to continue the conversation for a bit longer than you had thought, suggest you go somewhere where you can take a seat so that your faces are at a similar height. If you can't relocate to a seating area, then stand a few feet away, so that the person does not have to lift their head to look at you.

4. Don't feel shy about using expressions like "running along" or "let's go for a walk".

The phrases are figurative, not literal, and someone who uses a wheelchair understands that. It can be more uncomfortable if you blunder the conversation to avoid such phrases, because it shows that you are focusing on the person's disability.

5. Keep your observations to yourself.

Comments like "So what was it? An accident or...?" are intrusive

and upsetting; someone who uses a wheelchair will offer this information if they feel like it. Drawing attention to the person's disability is negative so don't focus the conversation around how difficult it must be to get around the town and the limitations imposed. Anyone who uses a wheelchair will have heard this conversation many times before and feels as if they are being defined by their disability, not by character. Stories about other people who use wheelchairs, other illnesses and mobility problems are also not really welcome, as again they focus the conversation on disability. So conduct a conversation in the same way as you would with any new acquaintance. You may be burning with many questions but it might not be appropriate to ask them, so think first.

6. Do not pat or touch the person who uses a wheelchair (or the wheelchair) unless you have their permission.

Because they are 'down low' at the height of children, people seem to instinctively pat, touch or tap and for anyone with spinal or back problems, this may be painful; in addition, it is a gesture that can feel patronizing. The same goes for leaning on or touching the wheelchair itself. Always ask permission before leaning on the wheelchair as it can be seen as an intrusion on the user's space and many people who use wheelchairs see the wheelchair as an extension of themselves.

7. Offer to help when appropriate.

Knowing when to offer a helping hand can be tricky. Remember that because a person uses a wheelchair, this does not necessarily mean that they are in need of assistance. Usually they will prefer to remain independent, and are proud of the fact that they have learned to adapt well enough to remain so. If you see a situation where they could use your help, ask. Don't insist on helping as this can be frustrating and awkward. Try to remember not to walk behind the chair as this means it is difficult to have a natural conversation and seems like you are waiting for that opportunity when they can't do something for themselves. Don't be afraid to ask a wheelchair user to slow down so you can keep up with them and walk side by side. Whatever you do, don't move the wheelchair without permission. Even if someone is not using their wheelchair, moving it out of their reach without consulting them first is not a good idea. Moving it with them in it without their permission is even worse!

8. Respect people who use wheelchairs at all times, even when you're not interacting with them.

Don't be one of those people who makes life difficult for people who use a wheelchair. You wouldn't want to come across someone who uses a wheelchair while your car is parked in one of the spots reserved for people with disabilities. The more you make it a habit in everyday life to be aware of people who have physical disabilities, the more comfortable you'll be when you're face to face with someone who happens to use a wheelchair.

Why not pass some of these ideas onto your students, because:

"The best schools have always done more than just prepare students for tests. They raise awareness of the world in which we live and try to make it a better place."

Website: www.disabled-accessfriendly.com, **Facebook Group:** Disabled Access Friendly, **E-mail:** disabledaccessfriendly@hotmail.com