

The
Teacher Trainer

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO TRAIN, MENTOR AND EDUCATE TESOL TEACHERS

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TW: What do you deliberately leave behind?

HK: The only thing I leave behind on purpose is my current work at home and other home issues. I need a clear head. I can't go to a conference or training session not focusing 150% on it. If I am neither at home nor at the venue, mentally, it doesn't work. My family know that and spare me their details when I am travelling. Although, as a result, there have been a few rude awakenings when I've got back home. Examples have been; a family member in hospital, a crashed car and a leaking pipe.

TW: What do you like best about travelling training?

HK: I love meeting new people and trying out the ideas I want to communicate. If you plan a session or course in the comfort zone of your study, that's great. But you need to see if the ideas travel and how they are received when they arrive. I often know if the session will be right when I see my audience for the first time. And then the real challenge starts. I'm always re-jigging my original plan, and adapting.

Some people say I'm a workaholic and that that's why I take on so many talks on top of my full time job. But I have a different view, thanks to Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. I live in and believe in 'flow' which he has defined as, "a mental state of operation in which a person performing an activity is fully immersed in a feeling of energized focus, full involvement, and enjoyment in the process of the activity. In essence, flow is characterized by complete absorption in what one does." Or as Confucius says: "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." I have to say I have not worked much in my life. Also I love the feedback; favourable or less so. It is always part of the growing process.

TW: What do you like least about travelling training?

HK: Having said all the wonderful things about travelling training, I have to say there are things I don't like. However, it is a state I recognise and acknowledge. There is a pattern. Somebody contacts me and I am tickled pink by their invitation. I start the correspondence and there is more correspondence. What a drag! I start preparing my sessions and I feel totally incompetent and question my judgement. What was I thinking, when I agreed to go? How could I have thought I can take the session or topic on board. Can I really be a keynote or plenary speaker. Moi? Then I prepare and prepare and finally I say to myself: "You've done your best, now leave it.". Finally, getting up at the crack of dawn, spending hours waiting at the airport, getting swollen legs, a sagging face, doing some silly duty-free shopping for things I don't need and later will regret buying. But all the bad stuff is gone once I've touched down, have seen the place and met the people. Then of course you discover the technology doesn't work and you don't have your allotted 60 minutes. It's been cut to just 30. You juggle, with sweat trickling down your spine. You manage. All done! Negative feelings gone until the beginning of the next trip.

TW: And where are you off to next?

HK: This year is reasonably busy but I have cut down. So, TESOL France, IATEFL Liverpool, Pilgrims Canterbury, Exeter College at the University of Oxford, hopefully Izmir in Turkey and Greece again, and then IATEFL Poland. But there may be more surprises in store that I don't know about yet.

TW: Thanks Hania and good luck with it all. I hope you get into your garden at some stage!

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The Disabled Access Friendly Campaign

The voluntary Disabled Access Friendly campaign aims to increase awareness about mobility disability among students learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and to persuade them that through their own actions they have the ability to bring about change. It paves the way to progress being made both in attitude and infrastructure so that people with mobility disability are less isolated, have improved access to the world, and are empowered to live more independent lives.

The campaign is based in Thessaloniki, Greece, and is run entirely by volunteers. The campaign's free online material (www.disabled-accessfriendly.com) helps teachers to develop students' social conscience, to make English lessons meaningful, and to encourage critical thinking through a curriculum of social empathy. The free resources consist of lesson plans and graded reading texts at all levels, which can be used as supplementary material, for project work and examination practice. The material provides language students with the information necessary to allow them to put themselves in the shoes of someone with a mobility disability and stimulates them to explore how others feel and to understand others.

(Why not have a look at the web site and then introduce it to the teachers you train or work with? The Editor)

DISABLED ACCESS FRIENDLY CAMPAIGN

www.disabled-accessfriendly.com

Using ELT to raise awareness about issues affecting people with mobility disability.

The campaign's website provides free EFL teaching material and graded reading texts for skills building, projects or examination practice.

This material also stimulates students to put themselves in the shoes of someone with a mobility disability for a better understanding of their needs and feelings.

The best schools and teachers 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.

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