



CHALLENGES OF TODAY IN ELT

1st Regional Conference



Sponsored by the Eaquals Members Event Fund

Venue:

**Royal Olympic Hotel,
Athens Greece**

Saturday

**27 April, 2024
9:00am - 17:00pm**

ORGANISED BY



Quality Language
Schools



Bulgarian Association for Quality Language Services



Romanian
Association
Quality
Language
Services



Challenges of today in ELT
REGIONAL EVENT PROGRAMME

Friday, April 26th

17:00 **walking tour of Athens**

Saturday, April 27th

09:00-09:15	Plenary	<i>Event opening</i>	<i>The president of the hosting association</i>
<i>QLS – Georgia Papas</i>			
09:20-09:50	Plenary	<i>Opening address + presentation - Equals - Opportunities & Benefits</i>	
<i>Lou McLaughlin</i>			
09:55-10:25	Plenary	<i>AI vs. EI in Language Education – Galya Mateva, Veselin Chantov – OPTIMA, Bulgaria</i>	
10:30-11:00	Plenary	<i>Place-based Education: the world as my canvas - Maria Davou – QLS – Greece</i>	
11:00-11:30	Coffee break		
11:30-12:00	Plenary	<i>Critical thinking in the classroom - Marija Pejatovic and Jelena Spasic – YALS, Serbia</i>	
12:00-12:45	<i>Sponsor's Plenary</i>	<i>KICKING AND SCREAMING? DIGITAL ACCELERATION IN EDUCATION 2019-24 AND ON – Grant Kempton – Pearson</i>	
12:50-13:20	Plenary	<i>Empowering the learner : fostering social and emotional skills to increase learning opportunities - Nergis Uyan – OZYEGIN University School of Languages – Turkiye</i>	
13:20-14:00	Lunch break		
14:00-14:30	Plenary	<i>“Augment” your classroom on your own! Apply emerging technologies into your instructional practice - Pitsikalis Stavros, Lasica Ilona-Elefteryja - University of the Aegean, Rhodes, Greece – QLS – part 1</i>	
14:30-15:00	Plenary	<i>“Augment” your classroom on your own! Apply emerging technologies into your instructional practice - Pitsikalis Stavros, Lasica Ilona-Elefteryja - University of the Aegean, Rhodes, Greece – QLS – part 2</i>	
15:00-15:30	Plenary	<i>Enhancing Emotional Intelligence for more effective learning. Diversifying communication practices in the digital era - Gyöngyvér Pillich-Wright Laura-Mihaela Muresan - QUEST – Romania</i>	
15:30-15:50	Coffee break		
15:50-16:30	Sponsor's Plenary	<i>THE ABCS OF VALUES: INSPIRING VALUES THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING – Jenny Dooley – Express Publishing</i>	
16:30-17:10	Round table –	Event closure	

20:00

Dinner for all who pre-book

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS:

Eaquals - Opportunities & Benefits – Lou McLaughlin

In this session I will outline the role of Eaquals in relation to quality assurance, accreditation and CPD and provide an insight into the tangible benefits of being part of the network.

AI vs.EI in Language Education – Vesselin Chantov and Galya Mateva

The talk will first focus on some advantages and disadvantages of using AI platforms and tools in contemporary language education. Next, it will try to offset some of the disadvantages against the more artistic and emotional approaches developed by humanistic methods and more specifically by suggestopedia. Its three main postulates (enlargement of didactic codes, artistic impregnation of teaching content and methods and stimulating psychological approaches) will help restore the left-right hemispheric balance of learners in the process of foreign language acquisition.

Place-based Education: the world as my canvas – Maria Davou

In this talk, we will explore the transformative power of place-based education. We will investigate how connecting learning to local environments enriches student engagement, fosters community connections, and cultivates ecological awareness. We will delve into innovative teaching method that bridge classroom theory with real-world experiences, nurturing well-rounded, conscientious learners prepared to shape a sustainable future.

Critical thinking in the classroom - Marija Pejatovic and Jelena Spasic

Not only is critical thinking one of the 4 Cs of 21st-century learning skills but it is also an important tool that helps us question, evaluate and make judgments about what we hear, read and say. Being served a large amount of information daily, it is important to teach our students to think critically from a very young age. In this workshop, we will explore some practical and easy activities, such as riddles, role-plays, and problem-solving activities, that you could use with learners of different age groups and levels of English.

KICKING AND SCREAMING? DIGITAL ACCELERATION IN EDUCATION 2019-24 AND ON – Grant Kempton, Sponsored Talk

There is a belief (or myth?) that before the pandemic teachers were aggressively against digital education and the pandemic dragged them kicking and screaming into the future. Is that fair? Is that even true? Maybe there are two sides... or even more to that story. What is certain is that we are walking a different path than we were in 2019 and the road ahead is still unclear. Let's try and shed some light, get connected onto the same wavelength... and destroy some myths 😊

Empowering the learner: fostering social and emotional skills to increase learning opportunities - Nergis Uyan

“LEARNERS”, the core agent of the learning experience, need to be placed in the centre of the entire teaching and learning continuum. It is high time that the language teachers question their role and reflect on what they could integrate into the learning process of the learners to promote learners' ownership. The language learners need to be provided with a rich learning environment to help them reach the intended learning outcomes. They should be equipped with the relevant strategies to carry and continually build their agency throughout their life to become life-long learners. These are some of the key highlights that the presentation would navigate through while providing teachers with some opportunities to reflect on their own practice.

“Augment” your classroom on your own! Apply emerging technologies into your instructional practice - Pitsikalis Stavros, Lasica Ilona-Elefteyja

The aim of the suggested workshop is to promote and enhance the implementation of innovation in education and training. The workshop will be of a total duration of one (1) hour, divided in three (3) sessions of twenty (20) minutes. During the first session attendees will be introduced to emerging technologies in education, focusing on Augmented Reality (AR) through an interactive demonstration. More specifically, they will find out how Augmented Reality works, realize the differentiation among other digital realities (e.g. virtual, mixed) and highlight the additional value of such emerging technologies in education and training. Specific examples of AR applications in education and training will be presented and discussed. During the second session, attendees will get familiar with existing applications of AR technology for educational or training purposes and will attend an exchange of ideas, discussing their experience and expressing thoughts concerning their future intentions on integrating AR into their classrooms or laboratories. Finally, during the third session, attendees will be guided to create their own learning objects supported with AR technology, using simple applications at their smartphones. Attendees of this workshop are not expected to have specific knowledge or skills prerequisites; however, they need to bring their own smart devices (tablets or smartphones) and have access to Wi-Fi internet connection (note: in case cardboards are available they could be used during this workshop). At the beginning of the workshop, attendees will be guided on how to install specific applications on their devices, to be able to attend the practical sessions. Throughout the total workshops’ duration, experiential learning and active audience participation will be encouraged, focused on the development of new skills and instructional practices.

Enhancing Emotional Intelligence for more effective learning. Diversifying communication practices in the digital era – Gyöngyvér Pillich-Wright, Laura-Mihaela Muresan – QUEST – Romania

This presentation aims to offer two perspectives on the refining of oral communication skills. Building on the European “EASE” project, it highlights the role of Emotional Intelligence for more effective communication in a foreign language (English in this case). “An Emotionally-intelligent Approach to teaching Speaking” will be illustrated through innovative teaching techniques and materials, specifically designed for improving the language learners’ oral communication skills. The latter will be then further elaborated on from the perspective of new contextual factors in the digital era, often linked to the challenge of unlearning certain communication practices, in order to adapt to the expectations of diverse audiences. These new learning needs, identified and addressed through the “DILAN” project (“Digital language and communication training for EU scientists”), open up new training opportunities for language centres/departments, as well as new professional development avenues for language experts. By way of a conclusion, we will invite the participants to reflect on the relevance of these perspectives for their own educational contexts.

The ABCs of Values: Inspiring Values through English Language Teaching - Jenny Dooley, Author, Express Publishing president

This seminar emphasises how English teachers can incorporate values into the EFL classroom. Beyond words and grammar, language shapes how we perceive the world and interact with others. By integrating values such as kindness, respect and empathy, students learn to appreciate diversity, build character and collaborate to make a positive impact on their world. Join us to discover practical strategies for nurturing these values in the classroom and empowering students to become compassionate global citizens.