

## **OPTIMA International Conference - “Reading & Communication Competences of the Digital Generation”**

**17<sup>th</sup> June 2023**

**Sofia Technical University**

**WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO:**



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**Registration link: <https://forms.gle/yq9y2h69HmM76Mko8>**

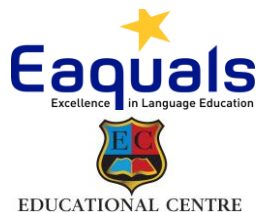


**Lyubov Kostova –**

after 9 years of international cultural management and relations at the National Academy of Theatre & Film Arts, and 22 years at the British Council first as the Bulgaria’s office Public Relations Manager, later Head of Projects & Partnerships and over the last 10 years as its Director, philologist Lyubov Kostova has now gone independent.

Raised trilingual and having lived for 5 years as a so called “third culture kid”, with a degree in Indian Studies and continuing to pursue foreign languages even at a mature age, an established theatre translator since 1993, founder of a number of science communication initiatives since 2003, a public and cultural relations expert, and proud mother of three who between them speak a total of 6 foreign languages, Lyubov truly places communication at the heart of her own story. Whether it is about reaching across cultures and professional practices or into the mysteries of distant worlds (even galaxies and species), she is convinced in the power of learning, reading and translating for the development of humanity.

Her favourite quote supporting her passion for crossing borders and boundaries through language is by the late polyglot and polymath George Steiner: “Without translation, we would be living in provinces bordering on silence.”



**Fannie Daou** –

Fannie Daou has worked within the EFL field for over 20 years. She is an experienced teacher with a strong interest in early and primary education. Since 2007, she has been working as an academic consultant and teacher trainer for Express Publishing, travelling extensively and delivering seminars and workshops at various ELT events and conferences around the world. She also works as a translator and editor.

### ***Getting the Message Across: Mediation in the EFL Classroom***

*Mediation is an essential element of everyday communication in today's ever-more pluricultural and plurilingual societies. In an effort to emphasise the crucial role of language in the social perspective, educators are integrating mediation in the language learning process. This presentation will focus on the purpose, the activities and strategies of mediation as well as its practical application in the EFL classroom, helping learners and teachers build connections and improve communication through the co-construction of meaning.*

### ***Teaching in the past or teaching in the present?***

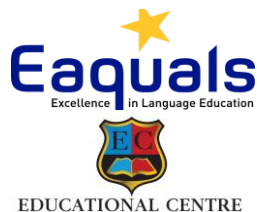
#### ***Creating a culture of effective communication in the language classroom.***

*What exactly does it mean to be a teacher in the 21st century? How do you know whether you have embraced the latest skills required to educate students in the modern world? Are your values reflected in all of your instructional materials, both within and outside the classroom? Are you armed with the appropriate information to facilitate communication? Are there easily accessible tools and meaningful activities to boost your learners' confidence? Effective communication skills are vital for success, as they foster student growth and future learning while creating a secure learning environment.*



**Charlotte Smith** –

Charlotte has a BA in English Literature and French and holds the Trinity College London CertTESOL and the Cambridge DELTA teaching qualifications. She taught English in the UK to students from all over the world for several years and was the Director of Studies at a language school before moving to Bulgaria in 2021 to work with the British Council. She loves reading, travelling, meeting new people and adding to her collection of vintage clothing.



### ***Reading and AI: Your Personal Graded Reader***

*Artificial intelligence is becoming increasingly relevant as a tool for language development, but how can we use it to develop learners' reading skills? This talk will outline some ideas for teachers to generate personalised, comprehensible input and help learners to gain access to a range of text types. We'll also look at ways of providing extensive reading opportunities using AI and empowering learners to create their own engaging content for consumption.*



#### **Galya Mateva –**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Galya Mateva worked for more than 16 years as a teacher and researcher at the Research Institute of Suggestology before she became an Assistant Professor of English at the Technical University of Sofia where she took an early retirement. Currently she is a Cambridge CELTA and DELTA tutor and director of the programmes at AVO Language and Examination Centre. She actively contributes to the activities of Eaquals in her capacity of an inspector, consultant and Optima's Founding Chair. Dr. Mateva is the author of numerous publications and presentations in the area of suggestopedia, communicative ELT and quality standards in language education.



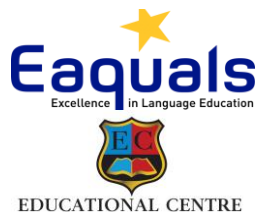
#### **Mila Mateva –**

Mila Mateva has a BA in English Pedagogy from New Bulgarian University and an MA in applied linguistics from the University of Odense in Denmark. She has been teaching English and training teachers of English for both young and adult learners for nearly 20 years. She is the author of several suggestopedic coursebooks for young learners. She has delivered workshops and presentations at Bulgarian and international conferences.

### ***Developing initial reading skills in English through suggestopedia (in intensive and extensive contexts)***

*The talk will reveal an underestimated aspect of suggestopedia related to the accelerated formation of young learners' initial reading skills in English. The proposed methodology framework rests on the psychological, artistic and didactic teaching methods of suggestopedia. It follows the whole (discourse) – parts (sentences, words, letters) – parts in the whole principle and operates under intensive and extensive conditions.*

*The classroom procedures start with a didactic play or communicative activities and continue through games based on three illustrated sets of sentences by gradually shifting the focus to individual words,*



letters and letter combinations. At the final stage, the kids can read not only the familiar words and sentences but also very short stories embedded in new contexts.

In conclusion, while developing initial reading competence, teachers need to activate kids` central and peripheral perceptions, the kinesthetic, emotional and rational aspects of the learning communication.



**Marija Pejatovic -**

YALS president, teacher and teacher trainer from Oxford School, Leskovac, Serbia. Marija has been teaching for more than 20 years and as a teacher trainer, she has both national and international experience.

***Hey, young learners, let's read!***

*It is always a good idea to start your class with a game, however, there are other times you can use games to support young learners on their journey through knowledge. In my workshop I will share some of the most useful and engaging games we use to support the reading skill. The games are particularly useful for children who do not use the English alphabet in their first language. The activities can be, also, adapted for different age groups.*



**Niki Koutalianou -**

Niki Koutalianou has worked as a teacher and director of studies at Bourtsoukli Language Center in Tripoli Greece for more than a decade. She has a bachelor degree in English Language and Literature from the National Kapodistrian University of Athens and a Master's degree in Digital Marketing from Deree the American College in Athens. She tries to imbue anything she does with creativity, imagination and innovation. Currently, she works as a Freelancer in Digital Marketing and is a sales consultant for Ariston educational psychometric tests.

***The Book Club***

*Is reading for pleasure a lost hobby among students? Can we inspire students to fall in love with reading using technology?*

*A detailed presentation of the QLS online book club, created by a team of QLS members for the QLS schools all over Greece. We will explore its functionality, uses in the classroom, its events and multiple benefits that have transformed our teaching!*

## LATEST & TRENDY

**THE FLIBETS: PRE A1**



**WORD GAMES AND PUZZLES: PRE A1-A2**



**iWONDER: PRE A1-A2+**



**#ENGLISH: A1-B1**



**4MINDS: A1-C1/C2**



**THE ART OF WRITING: B2-C2**



**GRAMMAR & VOCABULARY BOOSTER: B2-C2**



**NOCN: B1-C2**

