

**Conference of the Association of  
Teachers of English in Iceland (FEKÍ)  
June 7 – 9, 2012  
Menntaskólinn við Hamrahlíð -- Hamrahlíð College**

**Scheduled Presentations**

The conference presentations will discuss both research-based, academic findings as well as practical, proven classroom activities.

Following Icelandic convention, the presentations below are listed alphabetically by the first name of the first author. I have taken the liberty to edit English text to conform to U.K. spelling.  
Robert Berman

**Andy Curtis, (Opening Plenary Speaker)**

Anaheim University, CA, USA

**Theme: Reading and Writing**

**Title: Hungry for More: Critical Reading as the Key to Creative Writing**

As recently as September, 2011, Linda Harklau, in *the Journal of Second Language Writing*, referred to adolescent L2 writing research as “an emerging field” and highlighted what she referred to as the “sparse research literature in this area” (pp.227). Although Harklau is referring to the situation in America, this also appears to be the case for adolescent L2 writing research elsewhere. Given that the journal *JSLW* started publishing 20 years ago, in 1992, it is relatively rare for new fields within second language writing research to be identified at this stage, making this an area that could grow exponentially in the near future.

Also, it has been well-established by now that for second language writers to be competent at higher education levels, such as at the college and university level, the foundation and frameworks for writing at those levels must be laid and established *before* students reach those levels. Without this foundation, student writers are unlikely to be able to reach the desired levels of writing proficiency at these higher levels of education.

This opening plenary talk will, therefore, focus on helping adolescent learners in Iceland develop their English language writing skills through critical reading of creative literature written for this age group. These texts will include *The Hunger Games*, by Suzanne Collins, first published in 2008 and now printed in 26 languages in 36 countries, and with the recent release of the movie version, in March 2012, reaching record-breaking box office figures.

**Anja Bakken and Guri Figenschou Raaen,**

North Trøndelag University College, Levanger, Norway.

**Theme: Literature**

**Title: Developing writing skills and awareness of genre & context**

Developing writing skills and awareness of genre & context This contribution presents experiences from workshop seminars for teacher students and experienced teachers in Norwegian primary and lower secondary education. The seminars are aimed at encouraging writing and developing writing skills and genre awareness among pupils within that age group. This work includes the use

of several strategies and principles such as media transfer, writing frames or templates and the use of visualizations and physical objects to boost interest and enthusiasm for creative as well as functional and argumentative writing. The activities are practical classroom-based work. They cover a series of genres and text types, both fictional and non-fictional; however there is a certain emphasis on texts that young people immediately are able to relate to, such as popular culture and social media texts. Teenagers and young adults are exposed to a multitude of texts every day; visual, verbal and auditory, on the net and on the screen. Current Norwegian education legislation emphasises the role and importance of basic skills and focuses on the interrelatedness of language, context and culture in language learning. These workshop activities constitute one step towards developing necessary awareness about the communicative context and aims to make contributions towards the increased diversity of texts that students are supposed to be exposed to and consciously exploit in their English learning.

**Auður Torfadóttir, Brynhildur Anna Ragnarsdóttir and Lára Flosadóttir**  
Icelandic Ministry of Education

**Theme: Curriculum design**

**Title: Enska í nýrri námskrá (English in the new curriculum)**

Nú eru væntanlegar nýjar námskrár fyrir öll námssvið grunnskólans. Þær eru byggðar á nýrri menntastefnu sem birt er í Aðalnámskrá 2011 og tekur til sex grunnþátta sem mynda kjarna menntastefnunnar. Þeir varða starfshætti, inntak og umhverfi náms og eru sameiginlegir fyrir leik-, grunn- og framhaldsskóla. Þessir þættir eru: Læsi í víðum skilningi, menntun til sjálfbærni, heilbrigði og velferð, lýðræði og mannrétti, jafnrétti og sköpun og eiga þeir að enduspeglast í öllum námssviðum. Í erindinu verður fjallað um hæfniviðmið í ensku og hvernig nám og kennsla geta aðlagð sig grunnþáttunum. Leitast verður við að svara eftirfarandi spurningum: Hvaða hæfni í ensku þurfa nemendur að hafa tileinkað sér við lok grunnskóla? Hvaða starfshættir og vinnubrögð stuðla að því að nemendur öðlist þá hæfni? Hvernig er hægt að tryggja að allir nemendur fái nám við hæfi? Hvert ætti inntak og efnisval námsins að vera? Hvernig umhverfi og andrúmsloft laða fram sem bestan árangur? Hvernig á að haga námsmati þannig að það sé réttmætt, óhlutdrægt, sanngjarnt og heiðarlegt og sé nemendum til hjálpar og hvatningar.

**Ármann Halldórsson,**  
Verzlunarskóli Íslands, Reykjavík, Iceland.

**Theme and Title: Role playing games (workshop)**

In my workshop I will talk about my own learning in the field of Role Playing Games, and my experiments in using them in English teaching. I will give a brief overview of the hobby and discuss the very limited literature on their use in class. I will connect my ideas with the current trend of gamification, which has been mostly discussed in relation to marketing and in education mostly with an emphasis on Video Games. I believe that table-top RPGs, such as Dungeons and Dragons have enormous potential in the English classroom, as well providing various possibilities for importing ideas into other teaching methods. I will give a brief talk and then try to provide a little hands-on experience and play a little around with the participants, bringing my dice and other tools of the trade!

**Ásrún Jóhannsdóttir**

University of Iceland

**Theme: Young Learners**

**Title: English in Grade 4 in Iceland. Vocabulary Knowledge at the Onset of Instruction, Demographics and Implications**

The focus of this study is to explore 4th grade students' attitude towards English and the contributing factors that affect their motivation and vocabulary attainment at the beginning of formal instruction. 386 4th grade students (8-9 years old) from 12 schools around Iceland took part in the study in the spring of 2010. These students are beginning formal learning, and the study presents the complex learning environment these future users of English, and their instructors, are up against. Preliminary results show that starting age of students' instructed learning at school does not necessarily predict how well they score on tests in grade 4, nor does it affect their predominantly positive attitude towards the language.

**Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir**, University of Iceland

**Anna Jeeves**, University of Iceland and Fjölbrautaskólinn í Garðabæ

**Theme: Curriculum**

**Title: An Academic Writing Program for Secondary Schools**

In this presentation a new academic English writing program developed at the University of Iceland will be presented and the feasibility of its relevance to the secondary level discussed. Recent studies (Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir og Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir, 2010; Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir, 2011) suggest that there is a dissonance between foci in English instruction and the needs of Icelanders in education and the workforce (Anna Jeeves, 2012; Hulda K. Jónsdóttir, 2012). There seems to be an overemphasis on basic conversational (often receptive) skills at the expense of formal academic literacy skills. Recently, the Department of English at the University of Iceland has made efforts to enhance students' academic English skills with a specially developed writing program. In that context, it was suggested that the program be adapted and tested for use at the secondary level and pilot tested at Fjölbrautaskólinn in Garðabær. The program promotes writing through awareness, demonstration, practice and a great deal of writing production. The implications of the Garðabær pilot program will be presented and suggestions elicited for how the program might best serve students at the secondary level to better prepare them for further study and work.

**Björn Gunnlaugsson**,

Norðlingaskóli, Reykjavík, Iceland

**Theme: Technology**

**Title: 21st century toys**

As a former English teacher and current deputy head teacher, I will show some examples of how technology has made life easier for teachers of 8th-10th grade English. This includes web-based curriculum, Excel as a time saving tool in assessment, and the use of the iPad as a student tool.

**Charlotte Rosen Svensson and David Cato**

Pearson ELT, United Kingdom

**Theme: Technology**

**Title: 21st Century Skills for Language Teachers**

The 21st Century skills movement believe that to be successful in today's fast moving and increasingly connected world learning needs to be centered around three core skill areas of career and life skills, digital literacies and the 4 C's: Communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity. The session will focus in more depth on some features of these skill areas and look at their relevance for today's English Language classroom. While some technologies make teachers worry they are being replaced, this talk looks at how teachers need to re-place (re-position) themselves. This examination of digital literacies questions whether they really are the responsibility of the English teacher. We will discuss ways in which educational institutions and publishers address the area of technology in English language teaching and discover how some technologies can help to re-position English teachers in a positive way, benefitting both learner and teacher. Examples will be taken from MyEnglishLab.

**Deborah Larssen**

University of Stavanger, Norway

**Theme: Assessment**

**Title: Assessing the written language of young learners using the AYLLIT framework**

Within every language classroom there is the need for teachers to assess their young learners' writing. How can teachers make sure that the feedback they give is balanced? Highlighting the communicative writing abilities and progress a learner has made whilst also showing areas for improvement. Through research and development work done through the European Council of Modern Languages AYLLIT (Assessing young learners' literacy) project, a framework for assessing writing in the primary school aims to assist teachers in this task. The author has been actively involved in the AYLLIT project, both at the pilot stage and its presentation at the end of project conference in Graz. During the past year the framework has been demonstrated and used by student teachers and on in-service courses in the local area. This conference presentation/workshop will include a brief summary of the AYLLIT project. The direct links between the AYLLIT descriptors and the CEFR will be then be shown and the framework described. However the main focus of the presentation/workshop will be to give participants the opportunity to try out the framework with texts produced by pupils from the AYLLIT project, in the hope that they will be encouraged and feel able to use it in their own classrooms.

**Gary Anderson**

Cambridge University Press

**(1) Theme: Reading and Writing**

**Title: Tools for Teaching Kids Writing Inside—and Outside—the Box**

How can we involve students of all abilities and enable them to understand and learn language better? By affective/effective teaching for Multiple Intelligences and by supplementing the course book with materials to stimulate the intelligence and sustain the interest of all types of learners in different teaching situations. In this workshop, we'll try out writing activities from both coursebooks and supplementary materials for teaching young learners, tween-agers and teenagers. The aim will be to ensure all students efficient and enjoyable ways to write and learn in English and teachers easy-to-use materials and ideas to take away to teach their classes inside—and outside—the box.

**(2) Theme: CLIL and bilingual education**

**Title: Readin', Ritin' and... CLIL; or CLIL Won't Kill (I & II)—Au contraire!**

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), teaching content subjects through other languages or vice-versa, is an important emerging trend in current educational practices in many countries—and makes sense for a variety of reasons. This talk will include an overview of those reasons and the theoretical underpinnings of CLIL and then move into how the theory has been put into practice in especially writing activities for young learners, tween-agers and teenagers. We'll look at both 'real CLIL' or bilingual education (CLIL Won't Kill I) and 'CLIL lite' or working subject matter into language classes (CLIL Won't Kill II)

**Guri Figenschou Raaen,**

North Trøndelag University College, Levanger, Norway.

**Theme: Grammar**

**Title: A comparison of basic English skills in 7th and 10th grade**

This contribution presents results from two studies of Norwegian pupils' written skills in English and attempts to show a development of basic formal skills from 7th grade (13 year-olds) to 10th grade (16 year-olds). The aspects that were investigated were the spelling of a selection of high frequency function words and the ratio between correctly spelt and misspelt words. Additionally, concord between subject and verb and use of progressive forms were surveyed. The texts from 7th grade (2006) document that the majority of the pupils at the end of primary school do not master basic English written skills. The same pupils were tested at the end of 10th grade, in order to find out to what extent the pupils' skills had improved in the course of three years. The findings show improvement, but there is still a substantial minority that does not master basic skills like spelling and concord. In Norway, as in many other countries, there has been some resistance against form-focused instruction in foreign language teaching. There is also little tradition for testing in primary school, and subsequently little documentation of pupils' skills on leaving primary school. One exception was the introduction of national tests a few years ago, but the written tests in primary school were stopped after massive protests. With the introduction of a new national curriculum in 2006, however, basic skills were again emphasized, and there is now a renewed interest in the field.

**Hafþís Ingvarsdóttir**

University of Iceland University

**Theme: Language Teacher Development**

**Title: Autonomy and Alliance: Two core concepts in language teacher development**

As English in Iceland seems to be entering a new linguistic context it is important to meet those challenges with innovative teaching approaches. In this proposed presentation two constructs, *autonomy* and *alliance* will be discussed in relation to language teacher development. Both concepts emerged as core concepts in my research on teacher development among foreign language teachers in upper-secondary schools in Iceland. Those two concepts may seem contradictory; It will, however be argued that both play an important role in the development in language teaching as both may be a prerequisite for change in teacher's beliefs. It has been maintained that isolation in teaching can be an obstacle to teacher development. Accordingly, the importance of collaboration amongst teachers has been highlighted although the term is often unclear. It is also known that many teachers choose to become teachers and stay as teachers because they see teaching as offering a certain freedom and independence. Some teachers even shy away from cooperation because they experience it as restricting their independence. Through teachers' voices I will illustrate how both constructs, autonomy and alliance, serve as a vehicle that helps to move teachers' thinking forward and how they perceive they have grown in their work. This they have done through cultivating a trusting and supporting collaboration with a colleague or colleagues and at the same time they have strengthened their autonomy.

**Ion Drew**

University of Stavanger, Norway

**Does writing mirror reading? A longitudinal study of young learners' EFL writing development in the Early Years Literacy Programme**

This paper reports on a longitudinal study of the written development in English of a group of young language learners as they progressed from the 4th to 6th grades in a Norwegian primary school. The learners wrote a timed written text at the end of each year level. The corpora of texts were analysed and compared, focussing on fluency, and grammatical and lexical complexity. The objective measures used were text length, the number and length of T-units, the number of simple and complex noun phrases, noun, lexical verb and adjective types, and the degree of subordination. The Early Years Literacy Programme (EYLP) was used as the basis for the pupils' English instruction. Originating in Australia for mother-tongue literacy instruction, the programme emphasises graded reading and station teaching. One of the aims of the study was to find out to what extent the pupils' written language development was mirrored in the books they were reading at each level.

**Liying Cheng ,**

Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

**Theme: Assessment**

**Title: Factors influencing English Language Learners' performance on the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test**

This presentation will report a study investigating potential factors influencing English Language Learners' performance on their Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test (OSSLT) performance. Student-level factors (from the Student Questionnaire administered along with the OSSLT) and school-level factors related to socioeconomic status and parental education (from Education Quality Indicator Program) were analysed in relation to these students' test performance (n=4311). The variables included students' after-school literacy activities (both reading and writing), their home language patterns (the language(s) they spoke at home), as well as the average socio-economic status of the families in the school. The results showed the relationships between students' test performance and their personal learning characteristics as well as school-level factors. Specifically, literacy activities associated with higher test performance included Internet, literature and non-fiction reading and writing activities. Parent education index (not their income index) was a significant positive predictor of the average school reading and writing scores for these English Language Learners accounting for 20% and 9% of the total variance in the average school OSSLT reading and writing scores respectively. The findings help teachers to address the unique literacy development, i.e., nature, type, and frequency of literacy activities and first language use at home to best support second language students.

**Patience A. Karlsson**

University of Iceland

**Theme: Storytelling**

**Title: Storytelling as a teaching strategy**

The purpose of this presentation is to share the outcome of the study I undertook for my M.Ed. thesis. The thesis takes its sources from existing literature, personal experiences and a classroom-based study aimed at discovering how storytelling can be adapted in the ninth and tenth grade to enhance Communicative writing. My findings are based on action research design targeted at exploring the benefits of storytelling as a teaching strategy and to explain the effectiveness of the strategy. An oral storytelling approach to develop writing skills was used in a ninth and tenth-grade class in a compulsory school in Iceland. The study was carried out over six weeks, twice a week with eighty minutes used for each lesson. Activities involved in the study were: a) Oral story telling sessions by the teacher; b) Writing of story outlines through prompts by students; c) Engaging peers in discussing story outlines and deriving feedback; d) Writing draft stories for feedback; e) Submitting final stories for feedback and assessment; f) Writing stories in a group; and g) Presenting stories in groups. A further step-by-step guide to group storytelling in the classroom, and to writing stories, are given and might be useful to any teacher who wants to try this powerful tool. Underlying theories are analysed, and implications for practice are discussed.

**Rebecca Charboneau,**  
University of Stavanger, Norway

**Theme: Reading and Writing**

**Title: Using the Early Years Literacy Programme in an EFL context: A case study of a Norwegian primary school**

This paper presents a case study of English reading and writing instruction in a fourth and a fifth grade English class in a Norwegian primary school using the Early Years Literacy Programme (EYLP). The EYLP program was designed in Australia for early first language literacy instruction. However, in the present context the programme has been adapted for EFL instruction in Norwegian primary schools. The programme emphasizes additional assistance for learners, parent participation and professional development for teachers. Characteristics of the programme are different learning activities, including reading and writing, for learners organized in homogeneous groups. The groups rotate around stations in the classroom, including a teacher station for guided reading using level-differentiated texts. The English instruction in these classes was observed three times during a four-month period. The focus of the research was on literacy instruction, grouping and interactional practices, materials used in the classrooms, and methods of use. The observations were audio recorded. The teachers were also interviewed to gain additional understanding of their background, educational experience, and beliefs and practices regarding language and literacy instruction.

**Renata Emilsson Pesková**  
Hlíðaskóli, Reykjavík, Iceland

**Theme: Technology**

**Title: Exploring Technology in Elementary Classrooms**

For two years my 8th grades have had access to the computer room regularly. Gradually our use of the Internet in the English classes has moved from gap-filling and grammar-drill to various on-line tools and free software, with focus on independent use of internet resources, including on-line dictionaries. The on-line course for language teachers *Spuni 11* has been the main inspiration in my search for a technology-based curriculum. In my classes I have used some tools repeatedly, such as *Bookr* (booklets), *FreeMind* and *Spicynodes* (mind maps) or *Glogster* (posters). Teaching English in the computer room enhances active use of English by a majority of students. While using computers, the students' motivation increases, as well as independent and peer study. Next to language learning students acquire new practical knowledge of technology, they practise new learning strategies, and they activate their creative minds. At the same time they get space to work with and present their personal interests and hobbies. I realized that even though the present generation of students is very technology oriented, they do need extra encouragement to walk new ways. As a language teacher I would like to offer them language study with contents that will matter in their future. I would like my students to recognize and utilize the potential that is lurking out there in the cyberspace full of seemingly endless possibilities.



**Robert Berman, Samúel Lefever, Anna K. Wozniczka & Kriselle S. Cagatin,**  
University of Iceland University

**Theme: Multicultural education**

**Title: Secondary school immigrant students' attitudes towards schooling, academic language and social participation**

Snow-ball sampling and deep interviews were used to ascertain the views of Polish and Filipino adolescents towards their studies, home- and second-language use, participation in Icelandic society, and other social/psychological factors which may contribute to social and academic success.

Recent studies with Polish pupils in Icelandic primary schools indicate that strong L1 language support and students' own motivation to maintain their heritage as well as to integrate into Icelandic society are assisting them to succeed socially. However, Berman, Lefever and Woźniczka (2011) found cause for concern in the possible lagging of academic language proficiency and its effect on academic performance of young Polish adolescents. Cummins (2005) calls this Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP), a skill that is key for ongoing success in school and which may take up to 10 years to develop. For this reason, our study focuses on older learners, examines whether the reasons behind these students' lack of academic success are language related and/or due to other reasons such as motivational and financial factors, peer and family pressures, or even employment opportunities.

**Samúel Lefever**

University of Iceland

**Theme: Young Learners**

**Title: Picking up English at home – the case of Icelandic children**

This paper will discuss the incidental foreign language learning of children in Iceland. A study was carried out in five urban schools to investigate the listening and communication skills in English of children (age 8) who had not received formal English instruction prior to the study. Participants completed a set of listening comprehension tasks based on an international test of English for young learners. Next, a random sample of the participants took part in a test of oral production. In one-on-one interviews, the children were shown a set of pictures and asked to describe them and answer questions in English. They were also asked to talk about their hobbies, families or other topics of interest. Finally, parents of the most competent children were interviewed and asked to describe their children's English learning and use in the home. The results of the study show that children begin to learn English outside of school at an early age in Iceland. Most children in the study could understand basic spoken English and many could participate in simple conversations in English. This was learning that had occurred outside of school in a naturalistic setting. Parents primarily attributed their children's language learning to their exposure to English through media and computer games and their interest in learning English. The talk will end with a discussion of the significance of the findings in regard to the changing status of English in Iceland and the implications this has for teaching English to young learners.

**Samúel Lefever and Hafdís Ingvarsdóttir**

University of Iceland

**Theme: Curriculum**

**Title: Is English teaching in Iceland at a crossroads?**

In this talk we will draw attention to conflicting characteristics of the English teaching scene in Iceland and some of the challenges schools and teachers are facing as a result.

A very interesting development is the incidental language learning of children: more and more Icelandic children seem to be picking up English on their own outside the classroom. Studies also show that young people are highly motivated to learn English and enjoy learning the language at school. Yet in compulsory (K to grade 10) schools, two-thirds of the teachers responsible for English instruction have not received special training in English or language teaching! At the same time, fewer students are choosing English as their teaching subject at the School of Education, University of Iceland. Thus, the professional development of teachers, at both pre-service and in-service levels, is an area of concern.

At secondary school level, as Birna Arnbjörnsdóttir and Anna Jeeves point out in this document, “there is a dissonance between foci in English instruction and the needs of Icelanders in education and the workforce”, which is leading to serious moves to enhance the curriculum with more formal academic literacy skills.

Following the talk, an expert international panel will discuss the issues raised in light of the situation in other countries.

**Sylvie Dolakova**, MSATE MSSUA, Kpt. Jarose 495, Czech Republic

**Theme: CLIL and bilingual education**

**Title: Topic Books – tool to get, keep, store and retrieve knowledge**

Topic (project) books enormously increase children’s interest in working with (not only) foreign language and facts. It is a wonderful way of attracting your students for new forms of work with information, facts, knowledge and fine manual skills. Any topic can be covered in project-topic books, which suits many ideas of CLIL, science, history, storytelling etc. Some art techniques enable children to deal with vocabulary, structures, functions and grammar together with attributes such as co-operation, organization, multiple intelligences, presentation skills and many others. You will see a few examples of those project-topic books. Key words: Language, art, and presentation skills, co-operation, projects-to-be-proud-of Participants: Primary, lower secondary level Biodata: Sylvie Doláková, MA, university and freelance teacher trainer Czech Republic I taught English in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, now I teach at Masaryk University in Brno and work as a teacher trainer. I have designed many games for teaching English to children aged 4 – 10, published in books of English games and activities for children. I am going to represent the Moravian Association of Teachers of English (MSATE, MSSUA, Czech Republic).

**Torill Hestetraet**

University of Stavanger, Norway

**Theme: Young Learners**

**Title: Trends in vocabulary teaching among Norwegian 7th grade teachers of English**

This paper presents trends in teaching vocabulary among Norwegian 7th grade teachers of English. The data is from a national questionnaire survey on teachers' beliefs and practices about teaching and learning English vocabulary. The questionnaire items included both open and closed questions. In the open question the teachers were asked to describe a vocabulary activity that worked well. In the closed questions they were asked to report their practices and beliefs. Here the questionnaire involved items on the role of reading and writing in teaching vocabulary. The results have been broadly categorised into implicit and explicit ways of teaching vocabulary. Examples are provided from these different categories. The vocabulary activities include reading and writing as well as using stories, games, drama, translation and recycling of words in different contexts.

**Yayoi Mizoguchi**

Hamrahlíð College, Reykjavík, Iceland

**Theme: Grammar**

**Teaching Japanese grammar to Icelanders: some preliminary findings**

Japanese particles, or *teniwoha*, are suffixes or short words that follow the modified noun, verb, adjective or sentence. They indicate various meanings and functions, such as speaker affect and assertiveness. It is very common for L2 Japanese learners to make mistakes selecting the correct particle. The purpose of this research is to discover whether correct particle selection in the writing of Icelandic learners of Japanese may be taught effectively through written feedback. It is hypothesized that teacher feedback, followed by revision, will help Icelandic students to acquire correct Japanese particle selections, based on the work on written feedback by Ferris (2003). This action research study aims to develop practitioners' teaching of L2 Japanese. Participants in the study are 11 students at an upper secondary school in Iceland. The data will be collected through a pre-test, a post-test and a multiple drafting processes in L2 Japanese writing. Participants will write essays about the topic of their choice and revise their writing based on the feedback from the teacher/researcher, who will also interview participants to gain insights of their perspectives on the learning of Japanese grammar through feedback. Some preliminary findings will be provided.