

ELT



Ireland bulletin

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Email us to write for the next ELT Ireland Bulletin!

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Welcome to our 7th Bulletin!

By Laura O'Grady (President of ELT Ireland)

2020 saw ELT Ireland welcoming its new committee members, Gabriela Pozza (Events), Dimitra Gkotosopoulou and Austin Brailey-Jones (Social Media) and the stepping down of Former ELT Ireland President and founding member Mr. Peter Lahiff. It is with heartfelt thanks and admiration that we bade adieu to Peter, who luckily continued to work with us during what became an unusual transition period. He has continued to do this, and we are very lucky to have his expertise and experience.

2020 saw ELT Ireland adapting to the challenge that is our 'New Norm' with all our committee stepping up to the plate and ensuring that our scheduled ELT Ireland events proceeded. It is due to their commitment that ELT Ireland were able to host a variety of events throughout the year. Throughout this pandemic we, as a committee, were able to ensure that our members had access to our four ELTed events, our Good Practice Project, our Manager Meet-up and our annual conference.

Our Manager Meet-ups have changed format from being hosted on Wednesday evenings to a half-day Friday event. Our first ever Friday Meet-Up, in January 2020, was a huge success with great input from all involved, this particular event was based on 'Dealing with Uncertainty'. Additionally, ELT Ireland were asked to participate in a 'Good Practice Project' whereby members were interviewed and their responses recorded either on our YouTube Channel or in our Bulletin for all of our members to access. This allows for managers, administrators, directors of studies, and teachers to share their ideas and thoughts on best practice during this time. We are looking forward to a time where we will be able to host these types of events in person.



Our Online ELTed Events

Pic by ELT Ireland

Our 7th annual conference will be taking place online this year on 20th and 21st February 2021. The theme this year is "Teaching in the New Normal" and we are looking forward to welcoming our plenary speakers David Fisher, Dr Anna Nunan and Peter Lahiff. We will also be hosting a large number of speakers from home and abroad, in addition to this we will be hosting sponsored talks and talks with our exhibitors and exciting networking opportunities in our breakout rooms. We hope to see you all there!

Making it happen: The ELT Ireland committee at the 2020 conference

Pic by ELT Ireland

Membership of ELT Ireland continues to grow gaining members from both within the ELT community and from outside. We would like to extend our thanks to those committee members who stood down during the year, Christine Mullaney (Social Media), Jane Seely (Membership) Austin Bailey-Jones (Social Media) and Liam Tyrell (Membership).

As President of ELT Ireland, I would like to thank you all for continued support, commend the committee for working tirelessly throughout the year to bring you so many worthwhile events and, as always, am looking forward to growing our membership in the year ahead.

All the best, Laura.



ELT Ireland Events

By Gabriela Pozza

2020 was a year no one will soon forget: with the outbreak of the pandemic, the entire world went online. Teachers had no option but to face the challenge of transferring their skills to digital platforms and not only had to teach a language, but also ensure they were creating positive and engaging connections with their students. It was the moment to show the extraordinary adaptability teachers have always had.

Regardless of the level of restrictions, our well-known ELTeds were not left on mute: four webinars were held (in March, May, June, and December) which were surprisingly as engaging as face to face. We learnt about how to use different tools in online classes, the benefits of reflective practice, how to better handle culture, the challenges of PBL, how to use students' output in the classroom, amongst many other effective strategies and insightful discussions.

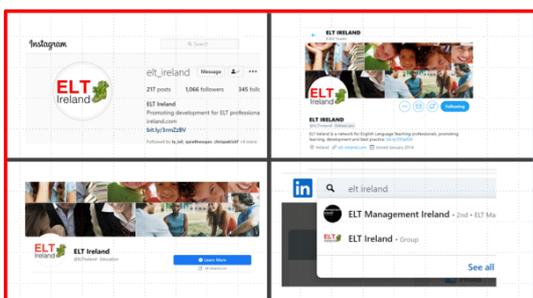
In the year of remote teaching, we were close as ever. Being online enabled us to connect with ELT practitioners from all over the world who are passionate about what they do. We would like to thank our members who have made it all possible during these challenging times. You are the ones who keep ELT Ireland alive!

ELT Ireland are looking forward to another year of great achievements!

Keep up-to-date with what's happening

By Dimitra Gkotosopoulou

Be part of our online community on FB, Instagram, Twitter & LinkedIn @ELTireland. You can take advantage of the opportunity to communicate with thousands of ELT professionals around the world, find professional development ideas, and get notified about ELT Ireland and other ELT events. DM us if you would like us to share an ELT related post of your interest in our social media.



ELT Ireland Social Media

Pics by ELT Ireland



ELT Ireland Events

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Acknowledgements

by Laura O'Grady (Bulletin Editor)

2020 was a very exciting year for everyone with the publication of our sixth issue of the ELT Ireland Bulletin. This issue saw us covering a range of topics from Ireland's International Policy to Teaching Foundations of ESL to Adults.

2021 hopes to recreate that excitement and innovativeness from our future contributors! Our seventh issue would not be here without the contributions from our writers, the advice and support from our reviewers and the ELT Ireland team. I would like to thank everyone involved in the creation of this issue.

To all the potential ELT writers I would like to say, being a writer allows you to reflect on your practices, allows you to sit still and think, it encourages you to develop your skills and to share your invaluable knowledge with others. So, if you are interested in contributing to our fourth issue contact us at info.eltireland@gmail.com. Many thanks to all.

Overall, the feedback from both students and teachers has been overwhelmingly positive. We expected that there would be some teething problems, which there inevitably were, but what we didn't expect was that the classes would be so popular. Since April we have had a cohort of students who have consistently rebooked month on month who are finding the courses beneficial in terms of both their language development and as a social outlet for those stuck in lockdowns around Europe.

What we've learnt

This period of time has been a real eye opener for us in a number of ways. First and foremost we have learned that there is huge merit in delivering online classes. We have seen our students make genuine progress and we were delighted to be able to give students access to courses while they were unable to travel. We also learned that a lot of our teachers had digital literacies that we were not aware of. While we worked to get to grips with the new technologies and their features, we were surprised to find that many of our teachers were far more skilled than us and how generous they were in sharing their time and skills to help bring others up to speed.

We also realised how over reliant we had previously been on photocopies and physical resources. Once we return to face to face lessons we will definitely continue our use of digital resources in the classroom. We have found Google Classroom to be an invaluable resource that will reduce the amount of paper we use in the school and will also be a huge asset should we need to transition back online during future lockdowns. We have also learned that Zoom provides a great platform for more than just classes, we have found it beneficial for doing speaking tests and inductions before students arrive.

What's next

Over the next few months we imagine that continuing to hold certain lessons types and courses online will prove much more practical for teachers and students. We envisage at least another year of limited travel with a low number of students arriving into the country and believe that

schools should continue to have a strong online offering and make sure that all teachers are trained in the use of online platforms so that they can switch between online and face to face lessons should the need arise.

For us personally, and we imagine for many other schools, this has been the biggest challenge that we have faced to date. The logistical challenges involved in transitioning an entire school to a whole new way of operating overnight have been plenty! But, as is so often the case in EFL schools, the true heroes of the day have been the teaching and office staff whose resourcefulness and adaptability have gone above and beyond expectations and the students who have also shown such adaptability, resilience and patience towards their schools as we have all worked so hard to stay positive and provide the best service possible. It has been a steep learning curve all round!

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Rob is the School Director in Everest Language School. His teaching career began with working in UCD during his master's in ethnomusicology and after gaining a English teaching qualification he has been teaching English and preparing students for exams over the course of the last 10 years. In the last year, he has managed the technical transition of moving Everest online. Rob has recently worked as an active participant in ILSG, the ELE Working Group and is now a board member with MEI.



Anne-Marie has been studying languages, culture, psychology and the effects of language learning on the human brain for the last 10 years. She has recently finished her PhD which focused on the cognitive benefits of bilingualism and adult language learning. She is the Director of Studies in Everest and over the course of 2020 she was responsible for adapting Everest's syllabus to encourage interactive and dynamic online learning. Anne-Marie became a qualified English teacher over 15 years ago and to this day her favourite place to be is in the classroom.