

## Joanna Malefaki Interviews Marjorie Rosenberg, Plenary Speaker of the TESOL Greece 38<sup>th</sup> Annual International Convention



Joanna Malefaki

*Hello Marjorie, first of all thank you for this interview. It's always a pleasure to chat with you. So, before we start talking about the 38<sup>th</sup> TESOL Greece Annual Convention, can you tell me a few things about yourself, so our readers can get to know you a bit better?*

I am currently the IATEFL President and will become the outgoing Vice President in April, standing down from the Board of Trustees in April 2017. I was the IATEFL BESIG (Business English Special Interest Group) Coordinator for five years and before that served on the committee. I was also the Chair of TEA (Teachers of English in Austria) some ten years ago. I have been teaching in Austria for 35 years. This includes a number of years at the University for Teacher Education and more recently at the University of Graz. I have also done a great deal of corporate training and still teach at the local bank. My publications include several books on business English for Cambridge University Press, Pearson, and Cengage as well as materials for Cambridge exams and two books on learning styles with Delta and Wayzgoose Press.

*We know that you are a teacher, a teacher trainer, you write books and present at conferences. How easy is it to juggle all those roles and responsibilities? Is 24 hours enough time?*

It is not always easy. At the moment I am juggling preparation for the next Trustees and Advisory Council meetings, involvement with the first-ever joint web conference between IATEFL and TESOL and working with the Conference Committee to plan the 2017 Glasgow conference. In addition, I have several lessons a week and a writing project, so there isn't much free time.

*You have been to a TESOL Greece conference before. Can you tell us what that experience was like? Also, why do you think educators should attend these conventions and even present at them?*

I thoroughly enjoyed the TESOL Greece conference and found it to be well run with excellent presentations and enthusiastic participants. I think teachers should take the chance to network, meet with colleagues, exchange ideas and learn from each other.

*You will be presenting at the convention. Can you give us some information about your talk?*

My plenary will be on the topic of 'Making Lessons Memorable'. When students keep in mind what we have done in the classroom it is easier for them to recall what they have learned. The talk will look at a number of ideas and practical examples to help teachers liven up lessons and make them fun, relevant and creative as well as appealing to the intellect and motivation of our learners.

*The theme of the 38<sup>th</sup> TESOL Greece Convention is "Keeping it Practical", how important is it for teachers to be practical when it comes to their teaching? I mean, their lesson planning, choice of materials and so on. There is a lot of 'choice' and it is very easy to get overwhelmed, don't you think?*

I hope that my plenary talk as well as one of the workshops I have offered will help teachers with practical ideas. I have always felt that giving teachers ideas which they can adapt and use in their situations is one way to keep them from becoming overwhelmed. It is important to think of ourselves as well and to do what works best for us.



Marjorie Rosenberg

Sometimes teachers can be a bit too ambitious. Do you think something like this may make their choices a bit impractical?

I would say it is always good to try things out and see how they go. I think it is better to attempt something new and ambitious, rather than not trying at all.

*One of the areas that will be covered at the 38<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention is learner and teacher motivation. How easy is it to keep learners motivated and how do you, as a teacher, stay motivated?*

I have stayed motivated over the years by enjoying my job and learning from my students. Students can be motivated when they realise that we recognise them as an important part of the learning process and not just 'empty vessels to be filled'. I have always tried to make lessons relevant, interesting, practical and fun, while providing them with what they need to learn in order to make progress and improve.

*Marjorie, you have published some books throughout the years. Can you tell us a bit about them?*

My first two books were photocopiable activities for business English, one with an Austrian publisher and the second with Cambridge University Press. I then wrote two of the workbooks for the CUP Business Advantage series. Several years later, I updated CDROMs for both FCE and CAE exams, also for CUP. The other books in the field of business were 'English for Banking and Finance 2' with Pearson and a revision of 'Pass BEC Vantage' for Cengage-National Geographic. While all this was going on, I was on an author team for school books in Austria, one set for lower secondary, and one for upper secondary for business and technical

high schools. The two methodology books I have written are 'Spotlight on Learning Styles' with Delta and the latest is 'Creating Activities for Different Learner Types' with Wayzgoose Press.

*You are very active on social media and connected with a lot of teachers all over the world. How important is this connection for you? What are the benefits of using social media as an educator?*

I find that crowd-sourcing can be very helpful when there is something I need to find out regarding methodology or even language. The language changes and grows constantly so we can always learn from each other. But the main thing I like about social media is the PLN (personal learning network). We often only see our students, so being in touch with other educators is incredibly supportive and helpful. I can't imagine being without my friends and colleagues around the world.

*As someone who has volunteered for a teacher association, can you tell us how joining TESOL Greece, IATFL or any other teacher associations, as a volunteer or as a member, can be of benefit?*

This is an interesting question. As volunteers we learn to organise our time, work with others, delve into policies and support teachers both locally and globally. My volunteer work with IATEFL has also taught me business skills such as setting agendas, running meetings and leading teams. It is an excellent way to work on your own personal and professional development. The other aspect I like very much is being able to give back to my profession. When I see how many teachers gather together to attend a conference, it is a wonderful feeling and reinforces my love for the profession.

*It was a pleasure talking to you today. We look forward to seeing you in Athens in March!*

