

# ELT



## Ireland bulletin

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Email us to write for the next ELT Ireland Bulletin!

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# Thank You for helping me with my "Big Idea"

By Marianne Jordan

The theme of the ELT Ireland 6th Annual Conference 2020 is "Big Ideas and their Impact on ELT".

I have had a very "Big Idea" for many years now, as some of you may know. My big idea has centred around how I can help and encourage teachers and learners to use the IPA (International Phonetic Alphabet) to teach and learn English pronunciation.

## Thank You Participants

First of all, I would like to thank all you participants who have attended my presentations and lessons and given feedback. Your enthusiastic participation in many of the tasks has been incredibly helpful to my research and lesson preparation. It is also a joy to watch you jump right in and try out some new pronunciation tasks and games. I have listened to all your feedback and taken all your points on board as you have been an enormous help in finalising my ideas on my new method of teaching the IPA. I can also tell you that my students and teachers I train are also benefitting from all the information and advice I have gathered from you over the years. Below are just some of the main feedback points and comments I have received, which may help you too.

## Pronunciation Feedback: Main Points, Tips and Comments

Here are the top tips and comments (in no particular order):

**Tip 1:** The most important part of pronunciation is intelligibility.

**Tip 2:** As English is not a phonetic language, the sooner learners start learning pronunciation, the better.

**Tip 3:** You do not have to have an RP accent to teach pronunciation.

**Tip 4:** Be proud of your accent because it is your identity and culture.

**Tip 5:** 'Standard British' and 'Standard American' are guides and what learners are going to see in dictionaries.

**Tip 6:** It is important to inform learners of the many other English accents across the globe.

**Tip 7:** It is essential to teach learners regional pronunciation if they are living locally.

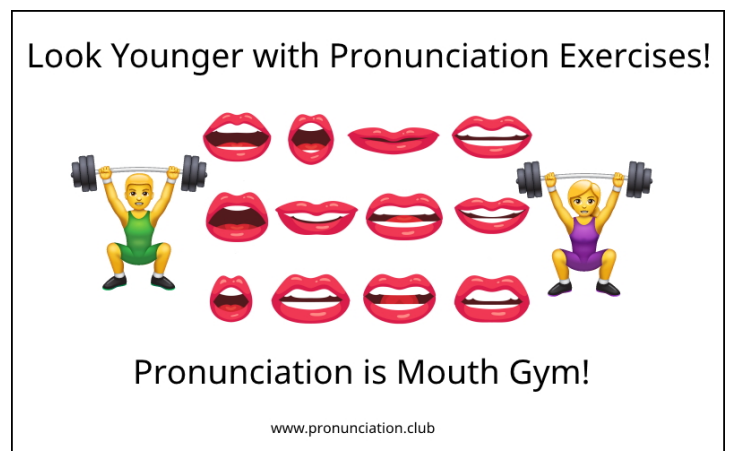
**Tip 8:** A learning disability, such as dyslexia, or a speech impediment, such as a lisp, will be carried over into English learning and will require extra help.

**Tip 9:** There are many ways to learn and teach pronunciation. Choose the best one for you.

**Tip 10:** There are many more resources now to help you learn and teach pronunciation.

**Do YOU have a "Big Idea"?**

If you have a "Big Idea" or even a small idea or a hunch about something, you may have already mentioned it to your family or friends or colleagues in your staffroom.



Pronunciation makes you look younger!

Pic By: Pronunciation Club

There are also many ELT Ireland events you should consider, to talk about your idea, for wider and professional feedback.

**Here are some ways you can share your "Big Idea":**

**ELTChinwag** - Join a bi-monthly Twitter chat from the comfort of your own home. You can type in a comment or question or observe what others are saying to get a feel for what is needed and get tips to help your teaching. Each ELTChinwag has a theme and discussion point, so watch out for something that relates to what your idea is and also join in others to see what the format is. There are always useful tips and tricks to use in your classes.

**Annual Bulletin** - Write an article for the ELT Ireland annual bulletin. ELT Ireland also has an annual evening workshop to brainstorm your ideas for the article. This workshop itself is also a good way to get live informal feedback. Writing an article is a great way to share your ideas or area of specialisation. You can write this in your own time in plenty of time before the deadline. ELT Ireland even helps with the editing of all the articles and offer suggestions of how you can make your heading and layout more appealing to readers. Every ELT Ireland member gets a copy of this annual bulletin at the annual conference. Each member can then read the bulletin at their leisure at home and note the tips and suggestions that will help their teaching. If you are looking for feedback or comments about your idea(s) you could include your contact details so teachers can get in touch with you.



That magical 'light bulb' moment!

Pic By: Clipart

**ELTed Talks** - Showcase your ideas at an ELTed talk. If you are presenting for the first time, I would recommend the ELTed talks as they are very short talks and quick to prepare. As the talks are just 15 minutes, there is no time to change rooms so all the participants are in the same room for the day and can listen to all the talks. Everyone in the same room means you will get full attendance to your short talk. Then after your talk, you can continue the day as a participant and not have to choose between two or more talks to attend so you can hear all the other presenters without missing anything.

Check out the calendar for next year's ELTed talks and go to a few of them to prepare yourself for your ELTed talk. ELT Ireland holds these talks in many cities around Ireland so have a look to see which ones are closest to you. Plus there are videos of past ELTed Talks you can watch, on the ELT Ireland website, to see how other teachers present.

**Presenting at Events** - Presenting at events can be a bit daunting in front of your peers and, even more so, other teachers from other schools and colleges. After all these years of presenting, I still get the nerves and dry mouth! However, after the first few minutes, you settle down and realise that the teachers in attendance have full support for you and admire your good intentions. At all the ELT Ireland presentations I have watched, I have never seen a presenter getting booed nor have I ever seen a presenter getting pelted with rotten tomatoes. I guarantee you they will have your back as we all know what it is like to get up in front of new faces with all eyes on us. I have also heard some presenters admit it is their first time to present and that they are incredibly nervous and immediately the atmosphere in the room changes to ALL the participants genuinely feeling for the presenter and giving their full attention, support and huge applause at the end. You could even start your presentation by asking for feedback on the way

you presented and leave time at the end for comments to help you for presenting again in the future.

Getting feedback from your audience, even just observing their body language, will help you greatly to confirm, either way, any new ideas you want to test out to improve your teaching. We can all go to CPD courses to help us to improve our teaching but if you have a new idea (and it doesn't have to be a big one) presenting at ELT Ireland events is a great way to get feedback from a wide audience. Presenting is an opportunity to try out your idea before teaching it to your students.



ELTed Limerick, MIC 2019

Another great feeling you can get from giving presentations is seeing the magical "light bulb" moment when your audience (peer teachers!) has learned something new from your talk!

Pic By: Author

The most important part of presenting is sharing your big or small idea or something you find that works in your classes to give some of the participants a new approach to teaching. Sharing ideas and experience is what ELT Ireland is all about.

## Thank You ELT Ireland

I also want to thank ELT Ireland for giving me presentation time slots in your many events to present my "big idea". Being able to present my ideas at various venues around Ireland as part of ELT Ireland has also been hugely important for my research, lesson preparation and getting feedback from teachers who are keen to learn more new ways to improve their teaching and to get new ideas. To have the opportunity to give some teachers the confidence to teach pronunciation has been a massive highlight in my teaching career.

Thank you also for your suggestions and edits for the articles I have submitted for this bulletin and for all other help you give to myself and all members of ELT Ireland all in your own time and voluntarily (...VOLUNTARILY!)

I am so grateful to ELT Ireland for all the support you have given me. It has been awesome, as a freelance teacher and writer, in particular, to be able to 'test out' all my 'Big Ideas' on fellow teachers to see what works and what doesn't.

**"I have listened to all your feedback and taken all your points on board as you have been an enormous help..."**

ELT Ireland has been an enormous help to me in making my "BIG IDEA" for pronunciation, get to where it is now. Thank you all for volunteering to help other teachers who are outside of your own very busy work:

Peter Lahiff - President. Peter is also the Academic Director of Future Learning, developing and implementing innovative technology enhanced summer language courses for young learners.

Laura O'Grady - Events & Publications. Laura is also Director of Studies of a Junior Centre in Ireland and Spain, a Cambridge examiner, and was a teacher in Centre of English Studies in Dublin and has been involved with ELT Ireland for four years.

Ben Dobbs - Newsletter Editor. Ben is also an independent communications and leadership trainer working internationally, mostly in the UAE, Russia and China.

Jane Seely - Membership. Jane has been working in ELT since 2010 as a teacher and manager, and is now working in the University of Limerick as a Teaching Assistant in Linguistics and TESOL. Jane completed a PhD in Applied Linguistics at Mary Immaculate College in June 2019, and also works as a freelance researcher and consultant in ELT.

Joanne Mitten - Treasurer. Joanne Mitten has been working in the UK State Education and ELT sectors since 2009. Having run busy year-round language schools, she is currently Summer Academic Director a large Dublin Language School. She has delivered teacher development sessions on topics such as Syllabus Development, Assessment for Learning, Planning for Differentiation and Using Media in Lessons.

Christine Mullaney - Communications. Christine is currently an EFL Teacher and Summer Teacher Training at DCU language schools. She has held a range of academic and management positions in Dublin's biggest language schools including EC, Delfin and Kaplan as well as at Dundalk Institute of Technology. She was one of the founding committee members of ELT Ireland

Grateful thanks to all, Marianne.

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- ELT Ireland Events Calendar

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