

Report from the Coordinator

Sandie Mourão

Welcome to another edition of CATS, as reliable as ever, peeking through your letterbox or dropping onto your doormat, as autumn pushes its way through to the end year end.

What a super year the YL SIG has had so far! Cardiff was the spring highlight. Our solo PCE "*Teachers and young learners: research in our classrooms*", was a resounding success, with over 40 participants from at least thirteen different countries. We listened to accounts of small-scale classroom research projects, participated in discussion and collectively decided that the YL SIG could take on the role of tracking research in the YL Classroom. By providing a **virtual research database**, focussing on small-scale classroom research projects, we hope to encourage teachers to be involved further in this area. Plans have been laid to have this database set up as you read this issue, so check our website for links!

I trust you haven't forgotten we are celebrating our 20th birthday this year! To commemorate this event, the YL SIG committee was present in its entirety at Cardiff for the PCE, as was a birthday cake! (see end of my report) You can see photos of us all on page 39. Huge thanks go to Sarah Etchells for ordering the cake, and to Andy Jackson for buying all the drinks for our little celebration, and for borrowing his family bread knife to cut the cake! We did have fun!

But that's not the end of the celebration! A selection of articles on small -scale classroom research in the YL classroom is being edited. It includes contributions from the five speakers at our PCE and five other contributors whose work is pertinent to the collection. This 20th anniversary publication will be free to all members and we plan to have it reach you all by the end of this year. We are sure you will enjoy reading the articles and that they will convince you to consider participating in the exciting world of classroom research!

The IATEFL Annual Conference at Cardiff was also a great event for the YL SIG, with interesting talks in a full programme. Members and non-members alike filled the rooms where the YL talks took place. Wendy Arnold, our discussion list moderator, was able to attend this year and in her usual exuberance has written up many of the talks she attended. These write ups can be found on our website, in the members' only section, along with links to further write- ups from the ELTECs roving reporters - a very valuable resource. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting old friends and making new ones and am looking forward to the next annual conference, which will be taking place in Harrogate. For further information see page 41.

YL SIG events continue to unfold around the world; our first Biannual Low Income (BLIC) Event will have taken place as you read this, in Riga, Latvia. Many thanks to the organisers from LATE who worked so hard to get this conference going. In March, 2006 we are in Austria, looking at Drama in the YL classroom; in April we are running another solo PCE at the Annual IATEFL Conference in Harrogate, **Young Learners and the CLIL Continuum**, see page 40 for further information; and we hope to be in Hong Kong in the autumn. We are already looking at events for 2007, with plans for a BLIC Event in Sri Lanka with Global Issues SIG, a possible visit to France with the Learner Independence

SIG and the USA with the Learning Technologies SIG. We hope to see you at one of these events!

Our discussion list continues to be fruitful, with fielded discussions starting again in October. See page 34 for more detailed information on these discussions. If you aren't already on this discussion list, shame on you! Do join us: it's a really wonderful resource, which brings our members together from all over the world.

As you can see, we are as busy as ever, working to provide our YL SIG members with as many opportunities as possible to reap the benefits of belonging to an association. I'd like to say a huge thank you to the YL SIG committee who give of their time and energy heartily: Wendy Arnold, Kay Bentley, Chris Etchells, Andy Jackson, Gordon Lewis, Rosemary Mitchell-Schuitevoerder, Carol Read, and Jason Renshaw, thank you for being a truly great team. I'd also like to thank Hans Mol, who recently began editing our website, keeping it up to date and tidy!

Sadly this team will be changing....

Andy Jackson has been a solid force on the committee since 1999 and will be stepping down this autumn. Andy has been a hard working committee member, wearing a number of different hats: membership officer, finance officer and coordinator. Through Andy we have been privileged to use The Bell Language School premises in London for our committee meetings, as well as their cupboard space to store back copies of the CATS publications. At meetings Andy made sure we had cups of tea, chocolate biscuits, and a constant supply of jelly babies, wine gums and extra strong mints! Of course we will miss these aspects of Andy's contribution to the YL SIG, but most of all we will miss Andy, his sense of duty and his great sense of humour. I worked closely with Andy as joint coordinator from Summer 2002 till Autumn 2003; it was an excellent way for me to slip into the coordinator's role with such a supporting hand. I speak for the YL SIG committee and its members when I say,

"A very, very big thank you for everything you've done for the SIG Andy. We'll miss you!"

(see picture of Andy celebrating with the committee on page 39)

With Andy leaving and my term as coordinator coming to an end, the YL SIG is looking for volunteers to join the committee, to learn the ropes and then eventually take on one of the committee roles. If you are interested in joining a hard working group of professionals, have internet access and lots of energy to plough into an association like IATEFL, please do get in touch with me. If you have enjoyed being a YL SIG member, think about giving back some of the good you've received. A SIG reflects its healthy, energetic committee, and a committee is made up of SIG members. Get in touch!

Sandie Mourão

July 2005

nettlehouse@mail.telepac.pt

