Christmas
Myths and Legends
Engaging Students’ Brains
Lesson plans for all levels and ages
Sharing is a way of teaching

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Dear colleagues,

This month, The Teacher's Magazine brings along plenty of materials to work on two topics: Christmas and Myths and Legends. For young and very young learners, there is a story called A Special Christmas Tree as well as activities to learn vocabulary related to this celebration.

There are also legends from different places in the world, including an Urban Legend, for Teenagers and Adults at elementary and intermediate levels.

Last but not least, you will find an article on Engaging Students’ Brains to help them learn better, and in the section Tips for Teachers, there is an article on Validity and Reliability in Testing.

We hope you enjoy this issue and make the most of it.

The Teacher's Magazine team
Can a teacher engage students’ brains? Have you ever taught a class of students whose brains were not engaged in the lesson? Are there practical techniques teachers can use to help students make learning memorable?

**Connections**

Teachers can create connections with students that are so strong as to enhance mood, reduce discipline issues and strengthen motivation. For a brain to be ready to learn, we need the learner to be connected.

First, the learner should be connected with the teacher. Having a positive connection, showing you care, listening to your students are ways to establish the link. Be, as a teacher, ready to speak less and to listen more. Interest yourself in how learners are feeling the moment the class starts and as it goes along. Accept suggestions and ideas from the students. Ask them to think follow-up activities or ways to practise which they consider useful. By all means, teachers must avoid put-downs or comparisons in class. The class atmosphere should be a safe one so as to make students feel good, lower their stress and have their brains ready to learn.

Secondly, students should have a positive connection with their peers. That is really important during adolescence. So, fostering a friendly environment is essential. Teachers can help by talking problems over, finding solutions in groups, encouraging teamwork and helping them make that team spirit stronger. Teachers can also change leadership roles in class so each student is the leader at least once. Give students the possibility to shine. Allow them to share personal stuff, so that they feel you care.

Last but not least, the connection to the content is important. Though it is a difficult task sometimes, teachers do have tools to make students willing and hungry for that material. Create suspense, tell a story, use surprise, give a hint some classes before, so brains can connect to previous materials when you introduce a topic.

To conclude, connections with the teacher, other students and content are essential, and teachers should be confident about their power to create these connections.

**Learning to Remember**

Teachers can do a lot to help students remember. Neuronal connections need to be strengthened, so we are able to retrieve information. There are some practical activities teachers can include in the class to make this happen.

**Repetition**

Students need to repeat information so as to be able to remember it. It is a good idea to connect new material to previous knowledge by questions or brainstorming activities. During the class and the following classes, the material should be re-introduced. A useful activity is to ask students to do their own summary of the content seen or, at the beginning of the class, ask them to write what they remember from the previous class.
Oxygen and Glucose Levels
After a maximum of 20/25 minutes of classwork, our brains need a break. It is during this break that our oxygen and glucose levels will increase. How can teachers do that in class? A little bit of movement, dancing to a song, a stretching activity, changing seats or a simple walk to find a partner for the next activity are some of the examples. The benefits will be immediately seen and the atmosphere will refresh, too.

Yearning for Meaning
It is important for teachers to create an atmosphere where students are hungry for the material. They should be expecting anxiously the material to come. For this to happen, use suspense, stories, a puppet which comes into class at special moments, a fixed place in the classroom for certain activities.

Variety and Emotions
A strong positive emotion is a key factor in remembering. Students will not forget something that impressed them, something that aroused their curiosity or something that made them feel good. Giving the brain the chance to receive the content through different channels is an asset, too. Play music, retell stories, promote both individual and team work, encourage movement, listen to personal accounts, and you will have an enriched environment for the brain.

To conclude, we should consider repetition, variety, positive emotional classes, an atmosphere in which connections are taken into account, breaks to give oxygen and glucose to our bodies and reflection to have a helpful atmosphere. These are practical ideas that teachers can incorporate right now in class not only to be teaching effectively but to help our students’ brains to remember.
Ima Žero (2014) states that “music and rhythm are an essential part of the foreign language learning for preschool children. Songs and chants make it much easier to imitate and remember the language than words that are just spoken.” (p.6)

Mercedes Verdú Jordá (2002) agrees on the idea that the use of songs is an important resource when they are adapted to the kids’ level of learning, because they tend to contain simple and repetitive language which helps understanding and memorization. The use of songs is considered a key teaching strategy, because, once learnt, they become a source of patterns and routines that children can use, introducing and practising vocabulary and grammar without being aware of it. Moreover, songs are also very useful to make children practise phonetic components such as pronunciation, rhythm and intonation in a playful way.

According to Žero, “some songs are good for singing, others for doing actions to the music, but all of them are enjoyable for the students’ ears and development of listening skills. (...) a song is catchy and fun and EFL preschool students will be happy listening to it many times several months, which makes it reusable.” (p 6)

As Žero explains, “whenever possible(...) select a piece that is directly related to the content of the lesson. For example, if teaching animals, you could easily begin the class by doing the song Old MacDonald had a farm.” Besides this idea, it is important to have in mind that songs can and should be part of the different stages in the lesson, not only to introduce new vocabulary, but also to say Hello and Goodbye, or when it is time to tidy up or to sit in a circle.

The Internet is a great source where teachers would find a great variety of options; however, I consider that the best alternative is to create or adapt existing songs to fit both teachers’ and students’ needs.

If you are still not sure of the usefulness of chants yet, it is advisable to carry out a short experiment:

- First, teach 8 different new words related to a topic, for instance “food”. 
- Then, write them on the board next to a flashcard or a simple drawing. Read the words several times and make children repeat them, while pointing.
- Clean the board, and ask children to say the words written before. Did every student memorize all the words?
- Now, write the words again next to its corresponding drawing, but in two lines. (Write 4 words in the first line and 4 words in the second)
- And this time, while you point at the drawings, sing the lines with the tune of “Head and shoulders, knees and toes.”

For example:

Sandwich, pizza, fish and chips. Fish and chips!
Sandwich, pizza, fish and chips. Fish and chips!
Sandwich, pizza, fish and chips. Fish and chips!
And apple, and bread, and chicken and cake.
Sandwich, pizza, fish and chips. Fish and chips!

I am positive that your students will not only memorize each word, but also continue singing this short chant up to the end of the lesson.

You can adapt this or other simple catchy songs just by replacing some or all the words to practise or revise vocabulary, useful expressions and even grammar patterns.

Keep calm and sing!

Mariana Prats

Sources and References

This lesson plan is aimed at Young and Very Young Learners. It is about collaborative work and the topic of Christmas. Read or tell the story *A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE* to your students. While doing so, point at the corresponding pictures on the poster.

**PIXIE AND HUXLEY ARE PLAYING.**

IT IS A LOVELY CLOUDY MORNING.

PIXIE KICKS THE BALL HARD.

IT GETS STUCK AT THE TOP OF A TREE.

MOM TRIES TO GET IT DOWN.

DAD TRIES TO GET IT DOWN.

BUT HUXLEY HAS A GREAT IDEA.

AND EVERYONE IS WORKING NOW.

PIXIE PAINTS MANDALAS

DAD MAKES PAPER GARLANDS.

HUXLEY PAINTS MANDALAS.

MOM MAKES PAPER GARLANDS.

THEY PUT THEIR DECORATIONS ON THE TREE WITH THE BALL.

PIXIE, HUXLEY, MOM AND DAD ARE VERY HAPPY.

THERE YEAR THEIR CHRISTMAS TREE IS TRULY LOVELY.

TEACH THE FOLLOWING CHANT. YOU CAN ALSO RAP IT.

PIXIE AND HUXLEY PLAY WITH A BALL.

THE BALL IS HANG ON A TREE.

THEY MAKE DECORATIONS WITH MOM AND DAD.

THEY GET A LOVELY AND VERY SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE.

On pages 8 and 9 you will find photocopiable activities for Kindergarten students, while on pages 10 to 12 the activities are for Primary school students.

**A Christmas Tree for the Classroom**

Draw a Christmas tree on construction paper. Students can colour some mandalas, make some colourful garlands with crepe paper, and draw their hands on a sheet of paper, paint them and hang everything on the tree! You can use the mandalas on pages 14 and 15 to decorate the classroom’s Christmas Tree.
A) Put the events in order.
A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE

B) Pixie and Huxley are playing. Put the parts in order.

C) Make a Christmas tree using these shapes. Different results are possible.

D) Complete the missing “A” in these words and colour the drawings.
A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE

A) Match the lines with the corresponding pictures.

Pixie and Huxley are playing. It is a lovely cloudy morning. Pixie kicks the ball hard.

It gets stuck at the top of a tree.


Mom tries to get it down. Dad tries to get it down. But Huxley has a great idea. And everyone is working now.

They put their decorations on the tree with the ball.

Pixie, Huxley, Mom and Dad are very happy. This year their Christmas tree is truly lovely.

And everyone is working now.
A SPECIAL CHRISTMAS TREE

B) Follow the lines to match each illustration with the character or object.

Huxley, the boy
Pixie, the girl
Their dad
Their mom
The ball
The tree
A mandala
A garland
C) Where is the ball? Draw the ball in the corresponding place in each picture.
1) The ball is ON the tree.
2) The ball is BEHIND the tree.
3) The ball is NEXT TO the tree.
4) The ball is BETWEEN Pixie and the tree.

D) Match the character with the correct lines.

HELLO!
MY NAME IS HUXLEY.
I AM SIX YEARS OLD.

HI! I AM PIXIE AND HUXLEY'S DAD.
I AM FORTY YEARS OLD.

HELLO!
I AM HUXLEY AND PIXIE'S MOM. I AM FORTY-THREE YEARS OLD.

HI! MY NAME IS PIXIE.
I AM EIGHT YEARS OLD.
In December, Christmas is a good topic to work with children and discuss about different values such as generosity, solidarity, affection and collaboration. Apart from teaching children the meaning of this holiday, an interesting suggestion would be to make crafts to decorate the classroom.

**Christmas carols**

A very nice Christmas activity for children is to sing traditional carols. Children can learn the songs by watching YouTube videos, and memorise them while doing art activities. It would be a good idea to choose only one or two stanzas, preferably the chorus, since some Christmas carols include a lot of vocabulary and are too long. Some of the most popular and easy-to-learn carols all around the world are the following (adapted from [http://www.gourmegtgbaskets.com/Christmas-Songs.asp](http://www.gourmegtgbaskets.com/Christmas-Songs.asp)).

**Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer**

Rudolph, the red-nosed reindeer
had a very shiny nose.
And if you ever saw him,
you would even say it glows...

**Silent Night**

Silent night, holy night
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin, mother and child
Holy infant so tender and mild
Sleep in heavenly peace
Sleep in heavenly peace

**Jingle Bells**

Oh, jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh
Jingle bells, jingle bells
Jingle all the way
Oh, what fun it is to ride
In a one-horse open sleigh

**We Wish You a Merry Christmas**

We wish you a Merry Christmas
We wish you a Merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year!

For elder students, it is a great chance to create their own songs. They can adapt some traditional carols by changing only some words or, if their level of English (and creativity!) is high enough, they can invent their own. Browse the Internet to find the ones they like best. Among the favourites you will find “Joy to the World”, “Away in a Manger”, “The First Noel” and “O Little Town of Bethlehem.”

**Photocopiable activities**

There's a photocopiable page which includes some Christmas mandalas for children to paint and decorate the classroom or their own Christmas trees. Be sure to teach key words, and make good use of drawings by revising colours and shapes.

**Extra activities**

- Speak about Christmas with your students, about how it is usually celebrated these days.
- Speak about the story of the Nativity and ask: What happened on Christmas Day? Who were Joseph and Mary? What happened to them? Who were “The Three Kings” or the “Magi?”?
- Tell the story of the birth of Jesus and the adoration of the Magi, and let children give their opinions. You can also watch some short videos on the Internet about the topic.

Marina Prats
CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

Colour, cut and decorate your tree.
CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

Colour, cut and decorate your tree.
CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS

A) Unjumble the letters.

SENTPRE  DLECAN  TASNACLUSADEREINER  SCKGINTO

1) \_
2) \_
3) \_
4) \_
5) \_

B) Complete the words.

1) B\_\_L
2) CH\_\_ST\_\_TR\_\_
3) ST\_CK\_\_
4) AN\_\_
5) C\_\_Y

C) Whose presents are these?

1) Betty is a little baby.
2) Jill can fly it.
3) Tom's present has got four wheels.
4) Peter can play a popular game with it.
5) Meg's present has got long hair.
6) John's present is in the water.
7) Patty can play tennis with it.

Key: A) 1) present, 2) candle, 3) Santa Claus, 4) reindeer, 5) stocking; B) 1) ball, 2) Christmas tree, 3) stocking, 4) angel, 5) candy, 6) flower; C) 1) rattle, 2) kite, 3) car, 4) ball, 5) doll, 6) goldfish, 7) racket.
A LOVELY LEGEND

A) Read the text.
The Legend of the Red String originated in East Asia. It is said in Japan that lovers are connected by a magical red string. They wear it on their little fingers and it never breaks. So, lovers are together for ever, even if they are at different places.

B) Complete the chart with words from the text.

| Clues | SI | People who are in love. | ST | I | People who are in love. |
|-------|----|-------------------------|----|  | Colour.                  |
|       | RI | Part of the body.       |    |  | Continent.              |
|       | NI | Country.                |    |  | Opposite of separately. |

C) Answer the questions orally.
1) Do you believe in legends?
2) Do you like the Legend of the Red String?
3) Do you know people who are connected by an imaginary red string?
4) Do you feel connected to a person by a red string?

D) Complete.

My name: __________________________

Person I love: __________________________

1) Why do you love this person? Tick the boxes.

Because she/he is...

☐ kind. ☐ honest. ☐ intelligent. ☐ beautiful ☐ funny.

Key: B) 1) Lovers, 2) Little finger, 3) Red, 4) Asia, 5) Japan, 6) Together.
This lesson plan, based on the topic of legends, is aimed at pre-intermediate students. The activities presented last several classes, offering the opportunity to teach the topic in a meaningful way and to let students experience learning through different strategies (looking, observing, retelling, acting, performing, ordering, painting, designing, etc). Students will actively work with each legend for a week. By the end of the project, they will be able to speak about a legend and retell it.

Objectives
- To introduce the topic legend.
- To know three legends through poems.
- To develop reading comprehension skills.
- To work with intertextuality, comparing poems to videos, making a cartoon and a play out of them.
- To learn specific vocabulary.
- To be able to talk about these legends.
- To express themselves through a kinaesthetic activity: Acting out.

Pre-Task
Divide the class into groups. Each member of the group is given a word or phrase related to the definition of legend. Give them a few minutes to write a definition. Ask each group to read their sentence. See photocopiable activity A on page 19. You can show your students the following video about myths and legends: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCieG4zQjWy

Tasks: Legends as poems

Pre-reading activity
Give the names of the three legends: Lambton’s Worm, Daedalus and Icarus, and Romulus and Remus. Ask students Do you know any of the following legends? If so, tell your classmates what you know.

While-reading activity
Ask students to form groups and give each group one of the legends to read. You can go over the class listening and helping students to get the meaning of each story. Check pronunciation and intonation.

After-reading activities
Tell each group to write a short summary of the story to share it with their classmates. Remind them to use words from the story. Then, each group retells the story or reads the summary aloud.

Tell students they are going to watch several videos. In this activity, they have to identify the legend and spot if there is any difference with the poem they have read, in which case they have to explain it. They also need to take notes of extra information if there is extra information in the video. You may include other videos to enrich the discussion.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCieG4zQjWy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8r01m4d7QNA
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qegAAhN7Ao

Choose one of the poems and erase key words (no more than one per line). Write the erased words on the board, so students know which words to use. Once they complete the activity, read the poem aloud for students to check.

Writing activities
Tell students to create a cartoon out of their poem.

Another activity could be to ask students to invent a play script of the dialogue between Romulus and Remus when they want to get the crown back and decide to find a new place. This event ends up in a fight in which Remus meets his death. Below, there is an example:

Play script

Characters: Romulus and Remus

Romulus: We can place our flag here and this is going to be our new place and kingdom forever.
Remus: Yes, you are right. There is no sense in trying to recover a lost crown when we can find a new place. However, I rather set up my people over there, not here. (pointing to a new place far away from where they are).

Tell each group they should turn the poem into a narrative essay. If you think it is a difficult task for your students, another option would be to add a stanza to the poem given.

Follow-up
Ask each group to act out their story. Devote a class - or more than one - to make the set and props. Help students to make dialogues for their play.

Juliana Lujan Tomas
LEGENDS

A) How do you relate these words to LEGEND? Write a definition using them.

ancient times - traditional - story - people - events - unauthenticated

B) Legends as poems

**Lambton's worm**

One day in the North,
There was a big boy,
Lambton he was called
Who loved fishing on shores,
Going to wars and so on.

One day before dawn,
He went fishing alone,
To catch an awful worm.
And disappointed later on
He threw it inside a hole.

That awful worm grew as none.
It had bulging eyes, huge teeth and sharp nose.
Then, it went out of the lake,
Eating what it had next,
pigs, sheep, chicks among these.

The thing was that this event
Reached Lambton's place,
Where he had a job as a knight
Fighting and marching at nights,
Conquering, enjoying and having fun.

So he decided to come back,
To save his people and farms.
Then, he looked up and down,
Till he found that awful worm,
And chopped it in three parts.

Happily he then went back to war,
Knowing that he stopped it for all;
The huge and ugly worm,
That he had once caught,
While fishing on shore alone.

**Romulus and Remus**

Fearing to be deposed
The bad king sent off
With some of his soldiers to kill
The baby boy- twins.

Soldiers couldn't do so
And the twins survived above all,
Inside their own crib that sailed
Long rivers and lakes.

Till a big she-wolf nearby,
Heard them crying and went to check up.
"Should I eat them or not?",
She kept on wondering on and on.

She finally decided to keep them as family.
She gave them food and shelter,
And they became quite healthy.
Till one day an old shepherd passed by.

And saw the working hard among the wild.
This story reached the Great Grand King
Who asked for the kids,
To come and see him indeed.

He then realized that he was in front of his great sons,
and designed a plan to come back for the crown.
But Romulus and Remus had another mind.
They wanted to settle down as one, here or there or everywhere.

"This is my plan", Romulus said.
"And what about mine?", his brother replied.
Not reaching an agreement,
They started a fight.

The unlucky Remus died.
And it was Romulus who survived.
So people started to say
That it was Rome which had won.
After watching so many birds,
He finally designed the way
To safely escape.
With wax, feathers and strings,
He invented some wings,
To leave the island and cross the sea.

So he warned his own son
Not to fly too high;
For the sun could melt the wax
And the wings get lost.
Not to fly too low;
For the water could wet the wings
Making it impossible to lift.
A pity it was that Icarus forgot
All the dos and don'ts
So happy Icarus was,
Feeling free at his most
That he flew up and down
Enjoying the sun.

While flying around,
He finally got sight
Of a strong beam of sun.
This melted the wing
And it lost the string.

After him came Daedalus,
Realizing of the sight he'd had
Of two wings swimming the waves,
Of the big sea under him.

It was only then and not before,
That he realized he had lost his son.
And heartbroken as he was,
He kept on flying to the coast,
To become a new free man after all.
BEFORE WATCHING
A) Read the title of the short film. What language is it?
B) Look at the picture. What do you think the short film is about?

AFTER WATCHING
D) Choose the correct option and explain why.
   1) “Tuurngait” is a Sci-Fi short film. 2) Its genre is fantasy. 3) This animated short film is a horror one.
E) Read the short film’s review and answer the questions.

TUURNGAIT
Tuurngait is an animated short film about a boy who gets lost when following a bird, and a father who searches for his lost son. The story takes place in the Arctic.

Directors: Paul-Emile Boucher, Remy Dupont, Benjamin Flouw, Mickaël Riciotti, and Alexandre Toufaili
Release Year: 2011
Location: France
Idea: graduation project at the Supinfocom art school

Technical Specifications
Runtime: 6 minutes
Sound Mix: Stereo
Colour: 3D Stereoscopic

1) Who directed the short film?
2) Was it released last year?
3) Was “Tuurngait” directed in the Arctic?
4) Is it about a family?
5) Where is it set?

F) Figures in “Tuurngait”. Put the numbers from the box in the corresponding place.

It took 11________ year to finish “Tuurngait” and 21________ computers were used to finish the job. The process of machine calculation took 3________ month and it generated the 4________ frames that we see in the animated short film.

G) Match the synonyms that describe the boy, his father and the Tuurngac.
   1) What is the boy like?
      a) curious 1) inattentive
      b) adventurous 2) brave
      c) reckless 3) snoopy
   2) What is his father like?
      a) hard-working 1) reserved
      b) distant 2) caring
      c) loving 3) diligent

H) Match beginnings and endings.
   1) The boy’s father works…
      a) …traditional Eskimo clothing.
      b) …chases the animal.
      c) …in a workshop.
   2) He makes…
      d) …traditional figurines.
      e) …full of rocks, snow and ice floes.
   3) When he sees the strange bird, the boy…
      1) reserved
      2) caring
      3) diligent
   4) He is wearing…
      i) despicable
      j) enigmatic
      k) threatening
   5) They live in a place…

FINAL TASK
Draw a “Tuurngait” and describe what it can/can’t do, what it turns into and if it helps humans or not (and how). Vote for the best one and publish it on the school noticeboard.

Key: D) 2; E) 1; F) 1) Paul-Emile Boucher, Remy Dupont, Benjamin Flouw, Mickaël Riciotti, and Alexandre Toufaili; 2) No, it wasn’t (It was released in 2011), 3) No, it wasn’t (It was directed in France), 4) Yes, it is, 5) It is set in the Arctic; F) 1) one, 2) 20, 3) one, 4) 1700; G) 1) a) 3, b) 2, c) 1; 2) a) 3, b) 1, c) 2; 3) a) 2, b) 3, c) 1; H) 1) c, 2) d, 3) b, 4) a, 5) e.
A LEGEND FROM ARGENTINA
The Friendship Between the Rivers Limay and Neuquén

A) The following words are taken from the legend. How can they be related to it? Write a short paragraph including all the words.

friends - girl - beautiful - warriors - in love - jealousy - sea - shell - river - pain

B) Read the legend and check your predictions.

Neuquén and Limay were the sons of two native leaders, or caciques. One lived in the North and the other in the South, near the mountains, in Argentina. They were great friends and they usually hunted together. One day, when they were chasing a guanaco, they heard a very sweet song from the shores of the lake. They were attracted to the sound and went towards it; they discovered the most beautiful girl singing.

“What’s your name?,” Limay asked.

“Raihué,” she answered.

Both young warriors fell suddenly in love with her, and they soon were angry at each other, for they both wanted to marry her. They no longer went hunting together, and their jealousy was so evident that the caciques of both tribes became very worried. Their alliance was in danger, so they decided to ask a machi for help.

The machi explained the cause of their enmity and suggested they both took a test.

“What would you most like to have?,” they asked Raihué.

“A sea-shell,” she answered, “so that I can hear the sound of the waves when I take it to my ears."

The chiefs decided that the first to get to the sea and come back with a sea-shell would be Raihué’s husband. Following the gods’ advice, the machi turned both young warriors into rivers, so that they could flow to the sea from their homeland, one from the North, the other from the South. And they started to make their way towards the ocean very slowly across the uneven ground.

The wind felt disappointed. He had not been consulted. So, he began to whisper discouraging words in Raihué’s ears. “Neuquén and Limay will never come back,” he said. “There are sirens in the ocean, and they will seduce the young men and they will forget you.”

Little by little, Raihué’s heart shrank in anguish and pain. Time went by and she did not have any news from her two suitors. In the end, she gave up hope and decided to offer her life to Nguenechén to rescue the young men. The god turned her into a beautiful climbing plant, her roots going deep into the humid ground, her branches trying to reach the sky, her mouth opening in a red flower and her black eyes giving birth to a dark purple fruit sweet as honey. She was called michay or calafate.

For the wind, the evil he had done was not enough. He flew to tell Neuquén and Limay what had happened. He blew and moved their courses in order to bring them together and tell them the news. When the young men knew about Raihué’s death, they embraced and consoled each other, united again in grief. Their waters became one and turned black as a sign of mourning, forming the Negro River (Black River), whose mighty dark waters run across the territory and finally reach the sea.

Patricia Sainz


Glossary:
- Guanaco: a wild South American ruminant.
- Machi: among Mapuches, a shaman, a medicine man or woman.
- Nguenechén: main god among Mapuches.
- Calafate: a plant that grows wild in Patagonia.
C) Did you like this legend? Why/Why not?

D) Put the sentences in order:
1) Limay and Neuquén fell in love with Raihué. 
2) The machi turned Limay and Neuquén into two rivers. 
3) Raihué offered her life to the gods. 
4) Limay and Neuquén went hunting together. 
5) Nguenechen turned Raihué into a calafate plant. 
6) The machi put Limay and Neuquén to a test. 
7) Limay and Neuquén embraced each other and formed the Negro River. 
8) Raihué said she wanted a sea-shell.

E) Answer these questions about the story.
1) What’s the purpose of this legend?
2) Who was Raihué?
3) Why were Limay and Neuquén angry with each other?
4) What was the machi’s solution?
5) Why were Limay and Neuquén turned into rivers?
6) What did the wind do?

F) Grammar and Vocabulary
1) Find examples of the following items in the text. Add two more.

2) Complete with a suitable word from the text.
   a) fell ______ love
   b) angry ______ each other
   c) the alliance was ______ danger
   d) ask ______ help
   e) the cause ______ their enmity
   f) little ______ little
   g) time went ______
   h) she gave ______ hope
   i) ______ grief

3) Turn the following into reported speech.
   a) “What’s your name?” Limay asked.
   b) “The first to go to the sea and bring a sea-shell will marry Raihué,” the chiefs said.
   c) “They will never come back,” the wind whispered.
   d) “I offer you my life so Limay and Neuquén will come home safe,” Raihué told Nguenechen.
   e) “She is dead,” the wind said.

G) Write a dialogue between Limay, Neuquén and Raihué when they first met. In groups of three, act it out.

H) Invent your own legend. Choose a geographic feature in your area/country, and write down how it originated.

I) Follow-up
1) Find out where rivers Limay and Neuquén are. Do a Google search and find more information about these rivers.
2) Find about Mapuches. Where are they from? Where do they live now? What language/languages do they speak?
3) Find other legends from these people or from your area. Choose one and tell your teacher and classmates.
THE MYTH OF THE CHINESE DRAGON: ITS INFLUENCE IN THE PAST AND IN THE PRESENT

A) What do you know about the Chinese Dragon? Read the following sentences and decide if they are True or False.

1) The Chinese have recently chosen the dragon as their symbol. ........................................
2) According to Chinese beliefs, rain is caused by a dragon. ..............................................
3) The dragon is the most important sign of the Chinese zodiac. .........................................
4) The dragon's head resembles that of an ox. .................................................................
5) Nowadays, the Chinese flag has a dragon in its centre. ..................................................
6) In past times, nobody could use the symbol of a five-clawed dragon. ............................
7) Some Chinese vases can cost a lot of money. .................................................................
8) The dragon dance is a solo dance. .....................................................................................
9) During dragon boat races, there is a musical instrument on board. .................................

B) Read the following text and check if you were right in activity A.

In China, the figure of the dragon has had a great influence in people's lives. 3500 years ago, dynasties of the Chinese Empire chose it as a symbol of power, and even nowadays, it is considered part of the people's identity. According to the legend, the Chinese are descendants of a dragon.

Powers: the Chinese have always believed the dragon is the divine ruler of the ocean. It can control water, rainfall, hurricanes and floods. Weather depends directly on the powers of dragons.

In clothing: the emperor and his family wore robes made of silk and gold threads. Almost every robe had drawings of dragons and water.

In art: Dragons are depicted in the works of several Chinese artists. They inspired hundreds of paintings, drawings, sculptures, monuments and pottery. In the art business, vases with dragons of different Chinese dynasties are highly valued.

In celebrations: Chinese New Year is celebrated, not only in China, but all over the world. The dragon dance is one of the most beautiful group dances that can be seen in the streets. Sometimes more than twenty people are hidden under a big colourful dragon holding poles and moving them to make the dragon swing like a river. The longer the dragon is, the more difficult the dance.

In sports: dragon boat races are very famous in China and many other places. Usually, twenty paddlers move the boat forward while the sweeper (who is on the back) changes the direction. On the front, a drummer beats a drum and gives rhythm to the paddlers. The boat is very long, with a dragon head on the front.

In cities: Kowloon, a peninsula and a big neighbourhood in the region of Hong Kong, means "Nine dragons".

As a symbol: the dragon was in the centre of the Chinese flag from 1889 to 1912. The dragon was chasing a pearl, which meant that Chinese people followed spiritual energy, wisdom, prosperity, power and immortality.

For the emperor and the people: nobody but the emperor or his family could use a symbol of a dragon with five claws. The Chinese nobility could use the symbol of a dragon with four claws. Three-clawed dragons could be the symbol of the rest of the people.

The importance of number 9: the Chinese consider it a lucky number, being the highest of those having only one digit. As a result, the Chinese dragon has nine resemblances: its horns resemble those of a deer, its head that of a camel, its eyes those of a devil, its neck that of a snake, its abdomen that of a cockle, its scales those of a carp, its claws those of an eagle, it soles those of a tiger, its ears those of an ox.

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THE MYTH OF THE CHINESE DRAGON: ITS INFLUENCE IN THE PAST AND IN THE PRESENT

C) Complete the following crossword with words from the previous paragraphs.

1) Dragons could be drawn with three, four or five of these, according to people's place in the social Chinese hierarchy.
2) The region where Kowloon is situated.
3) The Chinese consider it their lucky number.
4) This group of people could use the symbol of a four-clawed dragon.
5) Pieces of art that are very expensive.
6) The robes of emperors were made of this fabric.
7) According to the nine resemblances, the eyes of the dragon resemble those of this creature.
8) The instrument played during a dragon boat race.
9) In the old Chinese flag, the dragon chased this object.
10) The liquid which dragons can control.
11) A precious metal used in emperors' robes.
12) The dragon is one of the twelve animals in this celestial coordinate system.
13) This natural surface is ruled by the dragon.

Sources and references


A) Before reading the text, answer these questions.
1) What is an urban legend?
2) Are there any urban legends in your town? Can you share them with your classmates?

B) Tell your classmates a story using the following words.


C) Read the following story, and compare it with yours.

1) Urban legends are fictional stories with macabre elements deeply rooted in local popular culture. These legends can be used for entertainment purposes, as well as for semi-serious explanations for random events such as disappearances and strange objects. There is an urban legend in Bahía Blanca, the town I live in Argentina, about a hotel. It is called “The Hotel Muñiz legend”.

2) The story begins in the early 20th century, when the town was growing fast and playing a major role in the country’s economy. The Cathedral was being restored and the architect decided to bring four gargoyle statues to make it look important. When the four statues arrived in town, in a horse-drawn carriage, the workers started to unload them with extreme care to avoid damaging the columns. They could unload three of them without trouble. However, when they tried to unload the last one down, they were not able to do it; it was too heavy. They did not make a big deal of that; they just thought they were too tired to do that job, so they went to sleep.

3) That night, the priest in charge of the Cathedral and the altar boy went to bed early, since they had to wake up for the two-hour shift to ring the bell. It was customary that the priest and the altar boy took turns to ring the bell every two hours to tell the time. The priest woke up at 4 am and rang the bell four times. Afterwards, he went to bed again to wait for his next shift, at 8 am. Nevertheless, half an hour later, the bell started to ring again. The priest woke up and saw the altar boy (the only person other than him living in the Cathedral) sleeping right next to him. He thought it had been the wind that moved the bell, so he went back to sleep.

4) The next day, the workers tried to move the last gargoyle, but they failed. It seemed as if it did not want to leave the carriage. That night, the bell started to ring at 3:45 and, this time, the priest was awake. He went up to see what was happening, but he could not see anything. He only heard the sound of a pair of wings beating in the air and, far away, he spotted a shadow moving out of town. He went down as quickly as he could and started chasing the shadow. However, he was never seen alive again; his dead body appeared far away from the Cathedral with his face in a grimace of terror. No one knows what happened to him.

5) After a month, it was decided that the gargoyles should not be in the Cathedral for architectural reasons. So, they were installed in a new hotel, called Muñiz, which was being built at that moment. This time, the workers had no problem unloading them from the carriage.

6) Today, the statues can be seen at the hotel. Except for the one that could not be unloaded in the first place. It is stored in a room that is closed to the general public. No one knows why.
D) Choose a title for the text.
1) Cathedrals around the world: the four gargoyles case
2) Why are there three gargoyles on the facade of the Hotel Muñiz?
3) The history of Hotel Muñiz
4) Urban legends in Bahia Blanca

E) 1) Match subtitles with the first 4 paragraphs.
   a) The strange ring of the bell        b) A shadow through the city
   c) When it all began                    d) Urban myths in Bahía Blanca

   2) Invent a subtitle for each of the last two paragraphs.

F) True, False or Don’t know?
1) The story occurred in a cathedral in Argentina. 
   2) The gargoyles were three, and the third one was too heavy to lift.
   3) All of the gargoyles were put in the Cathedral.
   4) The gargoyle killed the priest.
   5) Today, all the four gargoyles are in sight.

G) Match each word with its definition.
1) Gargoyle: a) Main church of a region that contains the bishop’s seat.
2) Cathedral: b) The person in charge of a church.
3) Priest: c) The person that helps the priest during mass.
4) Altar boy: d) A grotesque representation of a human or animal figure often with an open mouth.

H) Write the story from one of the gargoyles' point of view.

Key: D) 2, E) 1) d; 2) c; 3) a; 4) b; F) 1) T; 2) F; 3) F; 4) K; 5) F; G) 1) d; 2) a; 3) b; 4) c.)
In this section, we will be dealing with the importance of testing and how it should be included in our classes. Several ideas related to reliability and validity are provided to be taken into account.

Justification
When creating a test, we should consider its reliability and validity. When we create our own test or take it from another author, we should bear in mind several items before making an exam.

As for the validity of the test, it should test what it intends to measure. It has to be based on a sound analysis of the facts we are wishing to measure. It can test the four skills as well as vocabulary items and functions, or only one of them. There should be a high correlation between the class tasks and the test.

As Darr (2005) stated, ‘reliability refers to the consistency of the results we obtain from an assessment’, which means consistency beyond time, tasks and markers.

Tips for teachers
Validity and reliability are essential features of good assessment instruments. The former is related to the faithfulness of a test to its purpose and the latter refers to the consistency of test scores. Validity should be understood as an evaluation of the quality of the interpretations that are made on the basis of an assessment result. Traditional testing does not provide the necessary tools concerning these two elements. They use questions with a limited number of answer choices. They include multiple choice, true or false and some short answer responses; whereas other testing methods focus on the process by which a student arrives at an answer in addition to the final response. Traditional assessment forces educators to spend time teaching students how to manage tests, including strategies for selecting correct answers from a listed group. Alternative assessment allows educators to focus on critical reasoning skills, which students will be able to apply naturally to long-form test questions.

As for the reliability of the test, it should assess one ability at a time; the topics being discussed by the skills do not go beyond the knowledge of the culture being addressed; the rubrics should be easy to understand, short and to the point. The test must resemble the actual tasks the students deal with during the term. The scoring key should be detailed to be as fair as possible and timing should be specified. The acoustic conditions will be taken into account, too (Messick, 1989).

Teachers must consider that it is not the same to test on Monday than on Friday, in the morning or in the afternoon, during winter or during summer. Students will not get the same mark because the conditions of administration are not identical; forgetting can take place as well as personal problems or illnesses, among other issues. The higher the consistency, the more reliable the results. Consistent results will get generalized statements about our students’ level of achievement, and this will help us make decisions about teaching and learning.

Here are some tips teachers should not forget when creating a reliable and valid test:
- Test as many items as possible to make the test more reliable. Each item should be far from the other tasks; the more independent they are, the more reliable the test will be. Remember that the areas which are not tested are likely to become ignored in teaching and learning.
- The tasks must match the learning intentions we are interested in.
Do not include only easy topics to test; include what is important to test. All the skills, grammar and vocabulary items should be tested equally. A test must cover a wide range of content.

The tasks should require use of the desired skills and reasoning processes.

Ensure the instructions are clear and explicit either in oral or written tests; alternative interpretations should not appear. The effectiveness of a test cannot be fully realized if the students do not understand what the test demands from them. Questions should not be ambiguous.

Ensure the test is well laid out; the language used should be suitable and perfectly legible.

Try to familiarize candidates with the format and the testing techniques with samples.

Moreover, a test should be easy to administer, score and interpret as well as cheap to construct.

Provide good conditions of administration of tests such as uniform timing, good acoustic conditions for the listening test, and non-distracting sounds or movement settings. The time limit should be sufficient.

The test should not favour specific groups of students; for example, boys or girls.

Use items that permit scoring as objective as possible. Another factor which can affect reliability is the design of the marking schedule and moderation of marking procedures.

If you intend to test grammar or vocabulary, do not allow candidates to have too much freedom in their responses. The narrower the scope is, the more objective the test will be.

Provide a detailed scoring key in an attempt to anticipate all possible responses.

Assessors of the exam should be properly trained.

We should question the validity of our assessment results when using them to make decisions of the students’ progress towards our educational goals.

There are three interesting methods for determining reliability: test-retest, internal consistency and inter-rater reliability. The Test-retest reliability method consists of administering the same test or a similar one at different times to the same group of students and then comparing results. The internal consistency method consists of comparing the results on different tasks within the same test.

In conclusion, teachers should try to balance validity and reliability without losing any of them. There is also an important relationship between these two terms; any test which has no reliability has no validity either.

However, tests which achieve high degrees of reliability may not be valid, one thing that can improve validity is flexibility in assessment tasks and conditions, since it allows assessment to be appropriate to the learning context and to be made relevant to particular groups of students.

Sources and References
Organization is essential for any teacher, and one of the simplest but most useful resources to organize everyday activities is the school calendar, since it delivers valuable information, both for the teacher and the students.

On Poster 2 you will find the school year planner, to write down important dates:
- Students’ birthdays.
- Special dates for the country, the city, the school or the class.
- Assessment activities planned beforehand.
- Outings, open classes, etc.
- Homework deadlines, especially for older students.

If you stick paper labels instead of writing directly on the lines, you will be able to use the planner over and over again.

To help Very Young Learners to develop the concept of time, they can participate actively marking special dates by putting pictures related to these.

On page 31, you will find the 2016 calendar. You can make copies for your students, or put it on the wall. Use it to revise or teach the months and days of the week. To make learning more enjoyable, divide the class in two groups and ask questions such as Whose birthday is on (date)? What day of the week is 2nd April? When do the holidays start? etc. The group that answers more questions is the winner.

Have fun using both the school year planner and the calendar.
EVERY YEAR TEACHES US SOMETHING NEW

New and exciting challenges approach.
Accompany them with a huge smile.
Fight for your hopes and dreams.
Set goals for your life and work hard to achieve your objectives.
Enjoy what you have.
Love what you do every day.
Renew your energy.

We wish you an excellent year.
Thanks for sharing the learning path with us.