



Please note:

Enrolment will be made through ESSARP's web page. If you have enrolled for a course and will not be able to attend a single session or the whole course, please advise at the Centre as soon as possible. Please ensure a prompt start by planning to arrive in advance of the beginning of the session.

D965 - Webinar: Introducing Neurodiversity in the English Class: A Boy Called Bat by Elana K. Arnold

Dates: 04 & 11 June from 18:00 hs. to 19:30 hs. - 2024

Venue: Distance

Sessions: 2

Minimum attendance for certificates: 2

Vacancies per school: 5

For: Primary school EFL teachers

Please enrol before: **2024, May 30th**

Facilitator(s): *Ms. Patricia Pena Koessler*

Graduate Teacher of English at Primary and Secondary level from I.S.P "Dr. Joaquín V. Gonzalez." Postgraduate course in Children's and Young Adult Literature at I.E.S en Lenguas Vivas "J.R.Fernández." She has been teaching Literature in primary and secondary school for more than seventeen years. At present, she is also teaching Children's and Young Adult Literature at Lenguas Vivas. Additionally, she is a Master's student in Literary Studies at Universidad Nacional de Córdoba.

Ms. María José Boladeras MA

Graduate Teacher of English from I.S.P. N° 7 "BG E. López" with a postgraduate course in English Language from Universidad del Salvador. Postgraduate course in Orton Gillingham at IMSE "Institute of Multisensory Education" in Atlanta, USA. Postgraduate course in Children's Neuropsychology and Learning Difficulties from Universidad de Morón. Currently, she is a Master's student in Learning Difficulties at Universidad del Salvador. She has been teaching English to students with learning difficulties for nine years.

Objectives:

- To analyse authentic representations of neurodiversity in children's literature.
- To become aware and more understanding of the unique neurological identity of our students through examples brought up in the novel.
- To focus on our students' strengths rather than weaknesses and create an appropriate learning environment within which all students can flourish.
- To reinforce and extend students' reading comprehension skills and habits in the mixed- ability class.
- To learn how to avoid using insipid and ineffective in-class reading comprehension activities that only discourage students from reading.
- To propose multisensory techniques together with literary activities that will spark interest in even the most reluctant reader.

Contents:

Neurodivergent characters are still scarce in children's novels and, more often than not, only their hurdles are depicted. If we want to make our mixed- ability class more inclusive, we must make sure all voices are present in the texts we teach through authentic representations. The novel *A Boy Called Bat* will trigger discussions on neurodiversity and will allow both teachers and students to learn about tolerance and prejudice. These two sessions will have a dual purpose: to begin with, an expert in SEN (Special Educational Needs) will make recommendations on how to cater for all learning styles with the most suitable EFL teaching strategies. Additionally, a Children's Literature teacher will provide suggestions on how to exploit the aforementioned novel.

- Bibliography:**
- Arnold, Elana K. (2017) *A Boy Called Bat*. NY: Harper Collins Publishers.
 - Armstrong, Thomas (2012) *Neurodiversity in the Classroom*. USA: ASCD.
 - Benton, Michael (1992) *Secondary Worlds, Literature teaching and the Visual Arts*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
 - Dehaene, Stanislas (2014) *El Cerebro Lector: Últimas noticias de las neurociencias sobre la lectura, la enseñanza, el aprendizaje y la dislexia*. Buenos Aires: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.
 - Maley, Alan (1993) *Short and Sweet, Short texts and how to use them, Volume 1*. Great Britain: Penguin Books.
 - Ruttle, Kate (2009) *You Can series: Motivate reluctant readers*. Warwickshire: Scholastic.
 - Willis, Judy (2007) *Brain-Friendly Strategies for the Inclusion Classroom*. Virginia: ASCD.
 - Zwiers, Jeff (2010) *Building Reading Comprehension Habits in Grades 6-12*. USA: the International Reading Association.

Methodology: María José Boladeras, a SEN specialist and Patricia Pena Koessler, a Children's and YA Literature specialist will engage in a conversation on neurodiversity in the EFL class through a question-and-answer format. Firstly, they will examine the term neurodiversity, and how to make lessons more inclusive, by suggesting teaching strategies and techniques for all sorts of students to enjoy and benefit from the use of literary texts in the EFL class. Adapting our lessons to different learning styles and ensuring equality for all SEN students is required by national law 27306. However, all students in a mixed-ability class will profit from the teaching of Literature and a teaching methodology accommodated to SEN students. Secondly, they will be analysing extracts from *A Boy Called Bat* and ways of making the most of this endearing novel in the EFL class. It won't be necessary to have read it. Though this is a story featuring a functional autistic boy, the plot does not center around disability. On the contrary, this neurodivergent character will teach us about tolerance and prejudice by portraying that what makes him tick, in this case a cute baby skunk, is not different from any other middle grade child. This novel, the first of a series of three, will allow the teacher to hold discussions on all sorts of diversities and foster respect for others while engaging students with its heart-warming plot.