



[Katie Quartano at ISTEK 2013](#)

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In the lead up to the ISTEK Schools 3rd International ELT Conference, we'll be introducing some of the presenters on the blog. Next up is Katie Quartano...

Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

I have a background in business administration and tourism, worked for Swissair and Austrian Airlines for 15 years in Thessaloniki, and I am now employed by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Together with Paul Shaw and other volunteers I run the Disabled Access Friendly campaign, which uses ELT to raise awareness about issues facing people with mobility disability.

What is your teaching background?

I have a CELTA qualification and have worked since 1999 as an oral examiner.

Tell us a bit about your session.

I am going to show you how your students can learn English through the eyes of a person with a mobility disability. I'll be giving you practical information on how the Disabled Access Friendly's free teaching resources can help you teach more than just English. This material prompts students to step into the shoes of someone with a disability for a better understanding of their needs and feelings. The ELT classroom becomes a place where you can raise awareness about the world and help make it a better place.

Why are you interested in the area you'll be presenting on?

The more training seminars I do that raise awareness about mobility disability, the more I realize how deeply rooted stereotypes of disability are, and what a need there is to encourage critical thinking on the subject.

What should your audience expect to learn?

They will learn how to approach this topic of mobility disability in the classroom, which many may feel is too sensitive or upsetting to talk about with young children. They will learn that even at young learner level, by using the Disabled Access Friendly campaign's material, they can touch on abstract issues such as attitudes towards disabled people. They will be stimulated to examine their own preconceived ideas about disability, and learn about the traditional medical model of disability and the more enlightened social model of disability. They will see how other teachers have successfully used the campaign's material in class and hear students' feedback on the issue. They will be reminded that education is more than just acquiring skills and knowledge.

What are three words that sum up your session?

Inspiring! Meaningful! Worthwhile!

Which other presenter(s) are you looking forward to seeing?

I am particularly looking forward to seeing Sue Lyon Jones and Jeffrey Doonan.

Do you blog? Tell us about it?

Not really, but I know I should get more involved in this! 24 hours in a day is just not enough for me.

Can we find you on Twitter or Facebook?

Yes:

Facebook Page: <http://www.facebook.com/DisabledAccessFriendly>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/DAFCampaign>

Have you been to Turkey before or is this your first time?

Yes, I have been to Istanbul before, and I think it is one of my favourite cities in the world. Delicious food, a mixture of cultures, friendly people and lots to see and do.

What other aspects of the conference are you looking forward to?

I'm looking forward to everything! The talks and workshops, the people I will meet, the friends I will reconnect with, the city and the good food!