

**Attention!**  
**You are now leaving your  
comfort zone!**

**David Spencer**

**1<sup>st</sup> P.A.R.K Online Conference**  
**7<sup>th</sup> November 2020**









## Emotional Learning

The basic idea behind this session:

By reflecting on how we **feel** (as teachers or students), we can understand ourselves better, and hopefully feel more in control of our feelings and emotions, instead of being dominated by them.



## What is a Comfort Zone?

A comfort zone can be described as a psychological state in which things feel familiar to a person and they are at ease and (perceive they are) in control of their environment, experiencing low levels of anxiety and stress.





How comfortable are you in these professional scenarios?

- 1 Teaching primary students
- 2 Teaching teenagers
- 3 Teaching adults business English
- 4 Teaching students with special needs

*5 = Extremely comfortable*  
*4 = Very comfortable*  
*3 = Okay*  
*2 = Uncomfortable*  
*1 = Very uncomfortable*  
*(0 = Get me out of here...NOW!)*

How comfortable are you in these professional scenarios?

- 5 Teaching teachers/Teacher-training
- 6 Being observed teaching
- 7 Watching a video of yourself teaching
- 8 Doing a webinar for teachers

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How comfortable are you in these professional scenarios?

9 Teaching very large classes (over 35 students)

10 Teaching large classes (around 25 students)

11 Teaching one-to-one

12 Teaching small groups (between 5 and 18 for example)

*5 = Extremely comfortable*

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*3 = Okay*

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*1 = Very uncomfortable*

*(0 = Get me out of here...NOW!)*

How comfortable are you in these professional scenarios?

13 Teaching with no preparation/no materials

14 Teaching via live online video-conferencing (Zoom etc.)

15 Teaching in a classroom where everyone wears a mask, is separated and cannot move

16 Teaching 75% of your class in a classroom wearing a mask while the other 25% watch you live from their homes.

*5 = Extremely comfortable*

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**Quick question, quick response!**

**Are comfort zones good or bad?**

# What do you think happens when you Google 'comfort zone'?

'9 ways to go beyond your comfort zone'

'10 lessons you will only learn beyond your comfort zone'

'Motivational speech for success: Step out of your comfort zone'

'6 ways pushing beyond your comfort zone is critical to success'

'Escape your comfort zone'

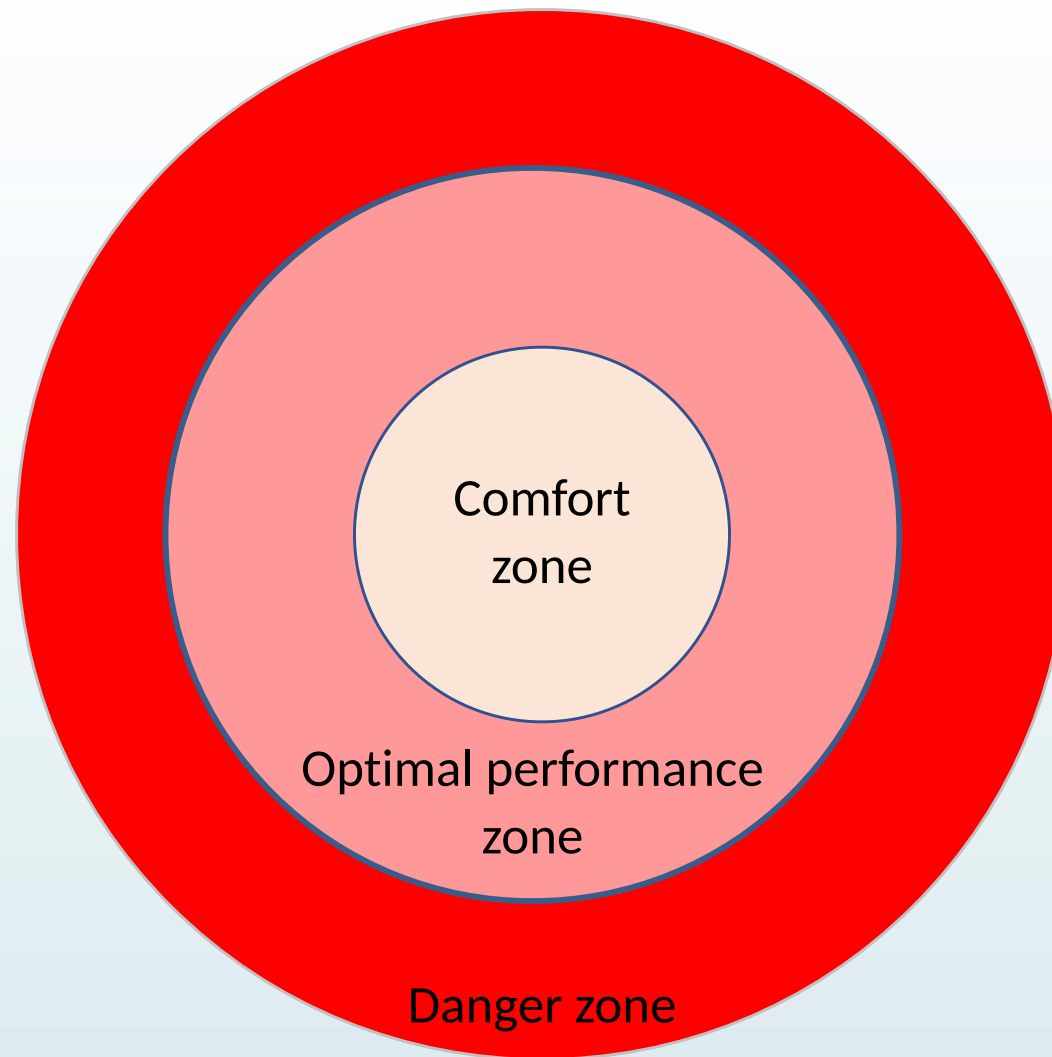


## **Robert Yerkes, 1907**

‘Optimal Anxiety’ - in order to maximize performance, humans must reach stress levels that are slightly higher than normal, just outside of our zone of comfort.

However, anxiety improves performance until a certain optimum level.

Beyond that point, performance deteriorates as higher levels of anxiety are attained.



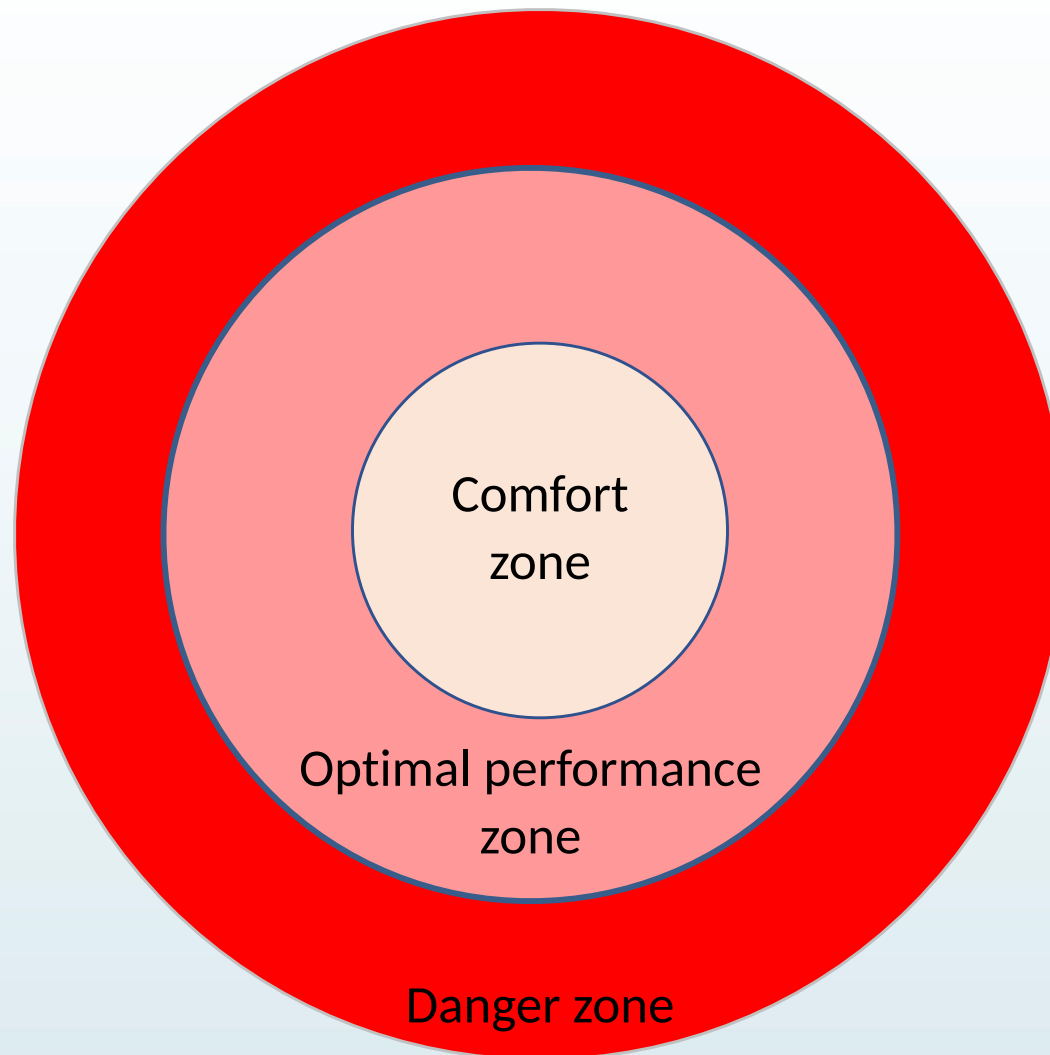
The question I get asked most frequently before a talk:



The question I get asked most frequently before a talk:

‘Do you still get nervous beforehand?’

- 1 Do you ever get nervous before any of your classes?
- 2 Do you teach better or worse when you're a bit nervous?
- 3 Do you teach better or worse when you're very nervous?



How could this relate to our students' performance and progress in English?



## What happens when you are 'kicked out' of your comfort zone?

### 1 NEGATION

'This can't be happening.'

'I'm not going to do it.'

'I can't do it.'

'It's probably not going to happen anyway.'

## What happens when you are 'kicked out' of your comfort zone?

### 2 REJECTION

'This is stupid.'

'It doesn't work.'

'(Online) teaching isn't real teaching.'

'This (platform) is rubbish!'

## What happens when you are 'kicked out' of your comfort zone?

3 RESIGNATION

'I suppose if I really HAVE TO...'

'If there's really no alternative...'

'This could last for months, so...'



## What happens when you are 'kicked out' of your comfort zone?

### 4 CONSTRUCTIVE ACCEPTANCE

'Let's get on with this!'

'Let's make the most of this situation!'

'Where can I find out more?'

## What happens when you are 'kicked out' of your comfort zone?

5 CRITICAL APPRECIATION/SATISFACTION

'Actually, there's something to be said for...'

'That actually works quite well!'

'I think I actually prefer doing it this way!'

'I don't like this aspect much but THAT is really good!'





## So where are you right now with online teaching???

- 1 NEGATION
- 2 REJECTION
- 3 RESIGNATION
- 4 CONSTRUCTIVE ACCEPTANCE
- 5 CRITICAL APPRECIATION/SATISFACTION

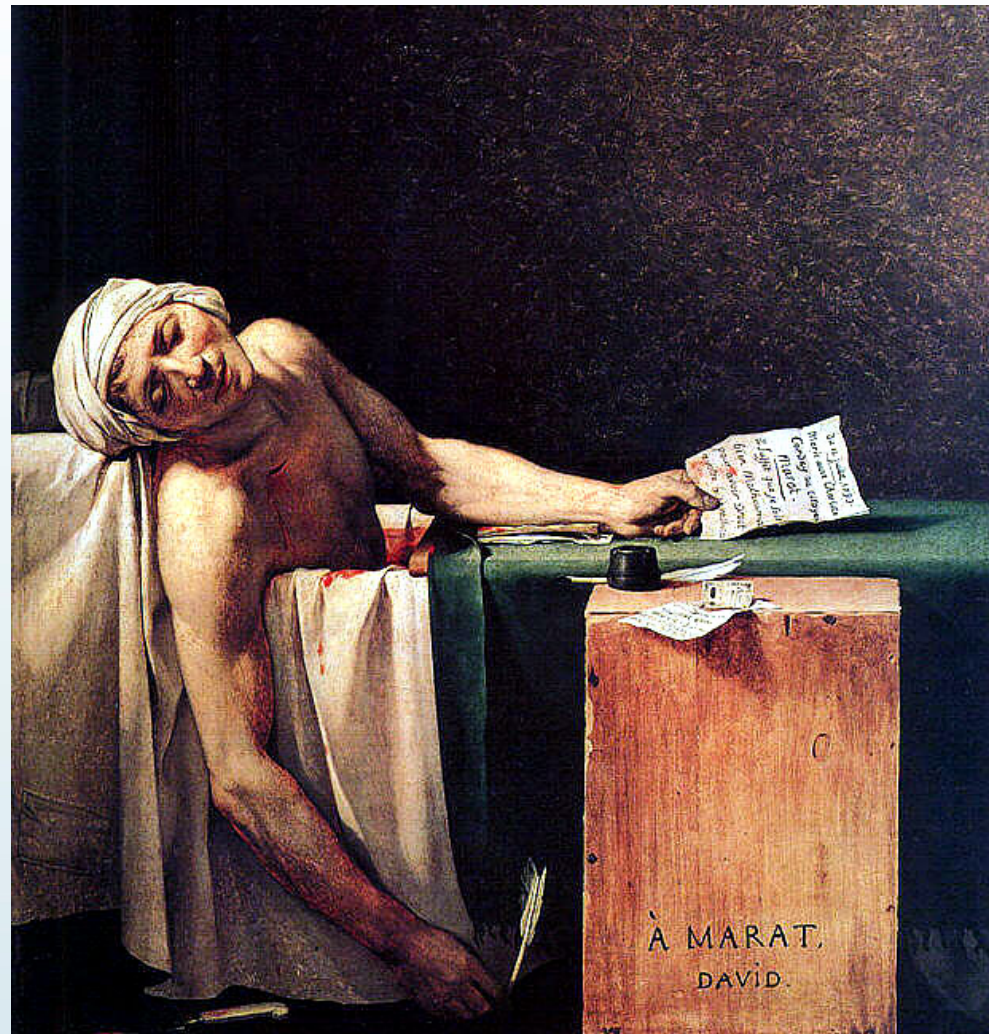
OR, BACK TO

1 NEGATION 'Never again!', 'Time to change job.'

.....

6 EXHAUSTION!

That feeling when you've just corrected that last essay!



## **Reasons to be cheerful!**

### **What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones**

1 NEW KNOWLEDGE...

YOU CAN TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS!

# **Reasons to be cheerful!**

## **What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones**

2 NEW SKILLS AND SUPERPOWERS



## Writing / Part 2

From: Liwan

To: Elena

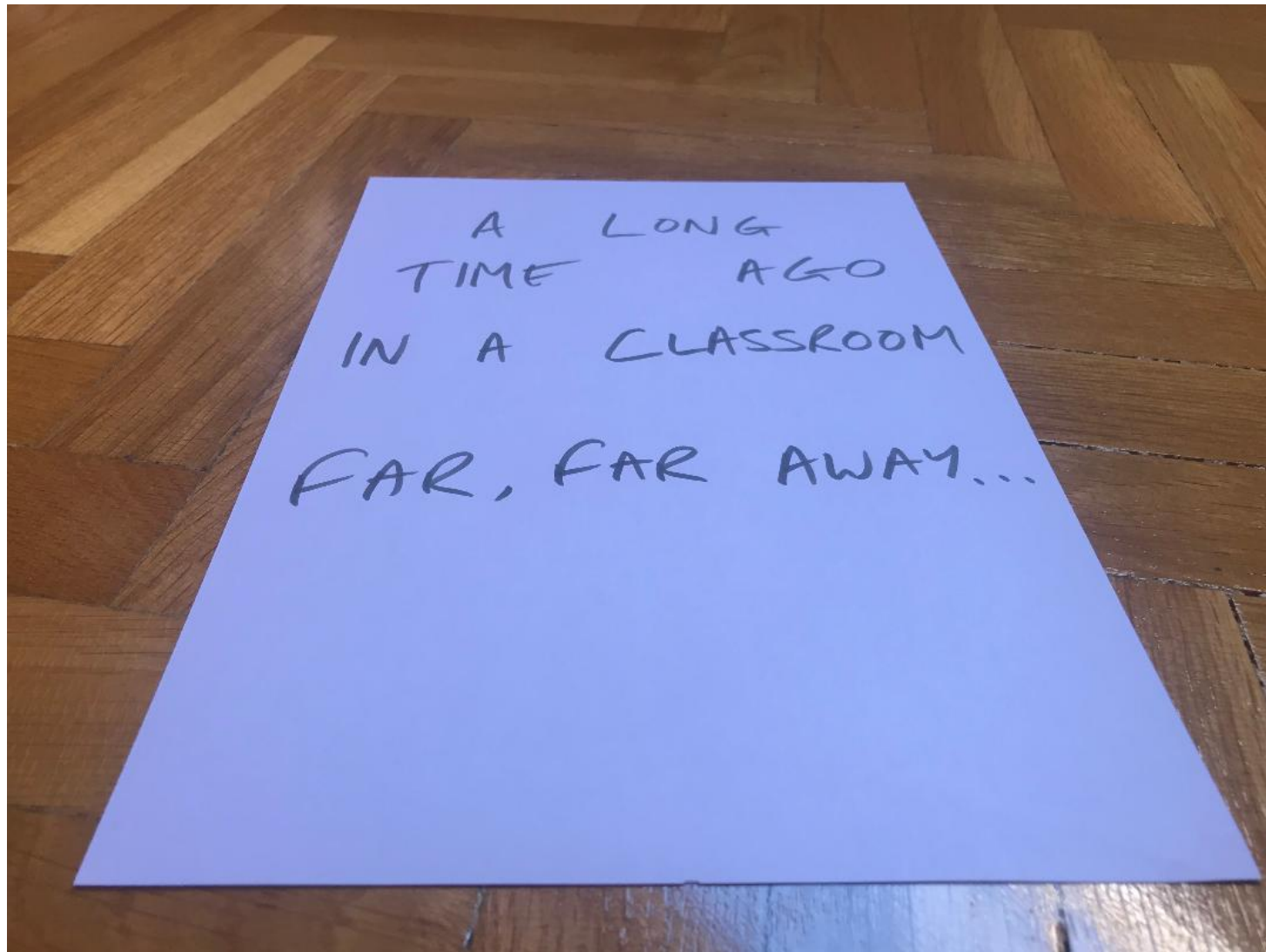
Hi Elena! I've owed to hear from you after all the time without writing to. I've been thinking about your problem and I'm going to try to help you.

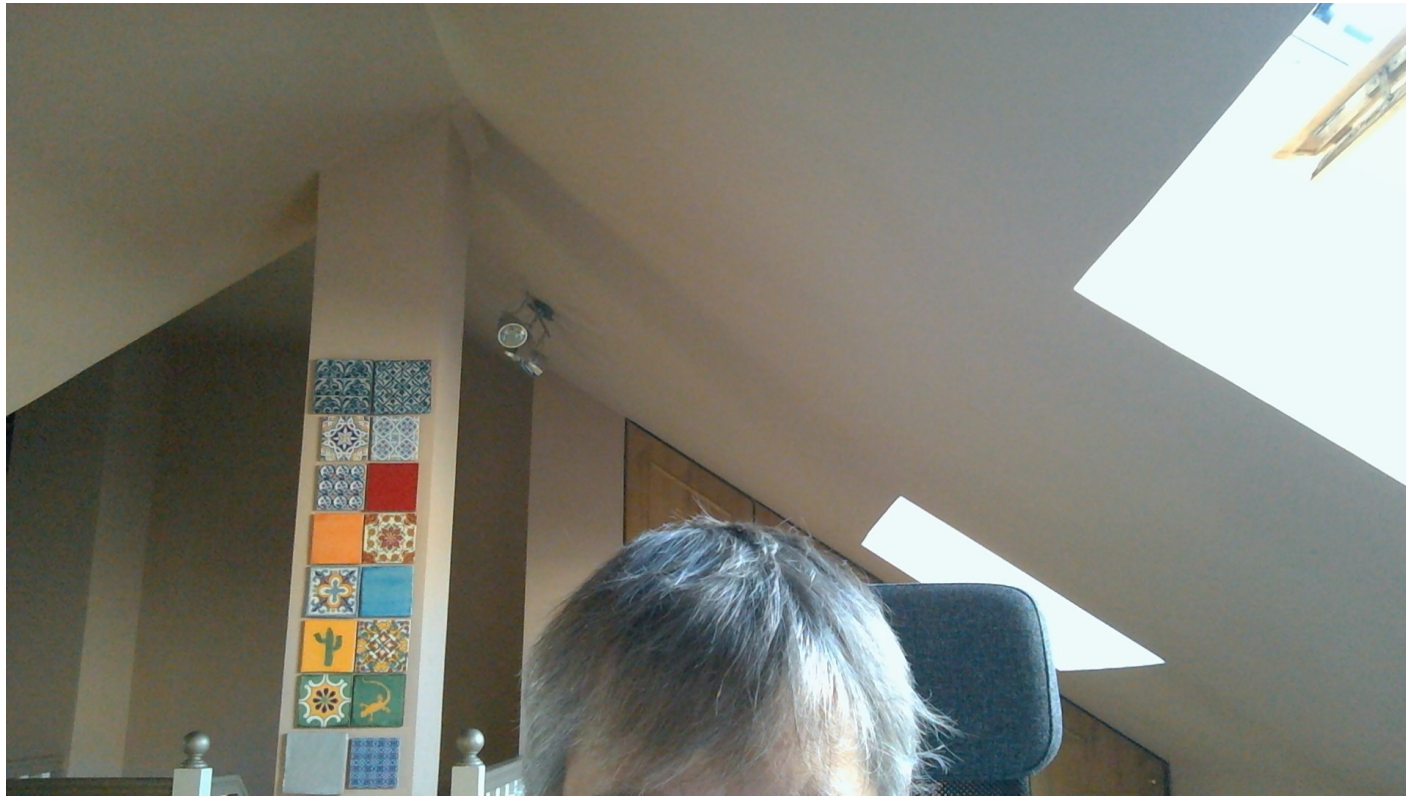
Last year I had to make a similar decision and I was seeing which of the two subjects brought me more, interested me more, and which would serve me the most for my future.

In my opinion you should think the good things and the bad things of each and see which one has more benefits.

As your advice I think it would be useful to think if you enjoyed studying more the poor events of history or the location of each country, rivers, cities...

I hope this tips will help you, I hope I hear from you soon! Kisses.





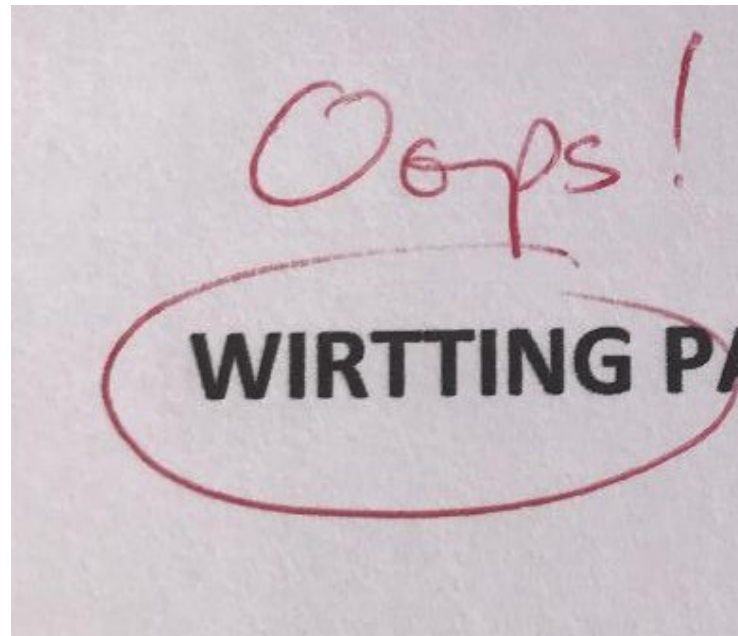
David Spencer

The fastest way to fail an Intermediate/Advanced  
English Writing exam

**This is my english writting exam.**



New super-power: Identifying spelling mistakes from typos!



## Reasons to be cheerful!

### What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones

3 WE ARE EXTENDING OUR COMFORT ZONES, NOT STEPPING COMPLETELY OUTSIDE THEM:  
OUR PREVIOUS SKILLS, EXPERIENCE, TECHNIQUES AND ACTIVITIES ARE STILL VALID.

## ACTIVITIES THAT WORK IN ANY SITUATION

**JUST SAY YES!**

## ACTIVITIES THAT WORK IN ANY SITUATION

THINGS THAT ARE...



## ACTIVITIES THAT WORK IN ANY SITUATION

THINGS THAT ARE... TYPICALLY RED

## **ACTIVITIES THAT WORK IN ANY SITUATION**

**THINGS THAT HAVE MORE THAN SIX LEGS**

## ACTIVITIES THAT WORK IN ANY SITUATION

### QUESTION CHAINS

Teacher: Juan, can you choose someone in the class to answer question 1?

Juan: Yes, I choose Marcos. Marcos, how important is music in your life?

Marcos: (Marcos answers)

Teacher: Marcos, can you choose someone to answer question 2?

Marcos: Yes, I choose Elena. Elena, what do you like to do at the weekend?

Elena:

## **Reasons to be cheerful!**

### **What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones**

4 THE TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP...

PHYSICALLY-DISTANCED MAYBE...

BUT NOT PERSONALLY-DISTANCED OR -ISOLATED

**Reasons to be cheerful!**  
**What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones**

5 WRITING – THE COMEBACK OF A NEGLECTED SKILL?



**Reasons to be cheerful!**  
**What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones**

6 TEACHERS WILL NEVER WALK ALONE!

## THERE IS SO MUCH HELP OUT THERE

Online conferences like this one.

Webinars. (See the [Macmillan Education Webinar Archive](#).)

Online advice and support. (See the [Macmillan Education Distance Teaching and Learning Hub](#) and [Back to School](#) campaign.)

Coursebooks offer digital distance-learning solutions and help and advice.

Social-media

# **Reasons to be cheerful!**

## **What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones**

7 LIFELONG LEARNING

'Did you know? Shift happens' – Fisch and McLeod  
YouTube

'Many of our students may end up doing jobs that don't exist yet, with technologies that haven't been invented, to solve problems we don't even know are problems yet.'

**Reasons to be cheerful!**  
**What have we gained by pushing beyond our comfort zones**

7 LIFELONG LEARNING –  
TEACHERS RIGHT NOW ARE SHINING EXAMPLES TO OUR STUDENTS!!!



## How comfortable are you in these different teaching scenarios?

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- 16 Teaching 75% of the class mask to mask, 25% watching live online

**How comfortable were you the first time you experienced these different teaching scenarios?**

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**‘THE ONLY CONSTANT THING IS CHANGE.’**

Heraclitus, around 500 BCE

## Any questions, comments, doubts...?

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