Interview teacher: Katrien Heremans

She’s a master’s teacher at Campus Max College in Tessenderlo.

1. In your experience, how do ESL students in 5 TSO in Belgium perform in writing compared to their speaking, listening, and reading abilities? They generally perform better in the receptive skills than the productive ones. The oral skills are also better than the written skills, if they are allowed to prepare.
2. What are the common challenges ESL students face while writing in English? Use of translation sites, too literal translations, spelling mistakes, commonly made mistakes and the tenses.
3. How do you assess the writing abilities of ESL students in 5 TSO? Evaluations with several criteria in grids, clearly stating their abilities. (Rubrics)
4. What strategies do you use to improve the writing skills of ESL students in your class? They have to correct mistakes (which we indicate using colours), they use the rubrics to see what needs work and they do extra assignments in their portfolio.
5. How do you differentiate your teaching approach for ESL students who struggle with writing from those who excel at it? All students are allowed to use extra tools (spelling checker, grammar rules, translation websites) when they need to. In the portfolio we mostly look at progress made.