A large, dynamic graphic of a blue water splash dominates the left and center of the page. The water is captured in mid-air, creating a sense of movement and energy. The splash starts from the bottom left and moves upwards and to the right, filling the upper half of the page. The background is a light, neutral color, making the blue water stand out.

**APAC - ELT Convention 2012:**  
Solid Learning in Liquid Times

**APAC - ELT Convention 2011:**

Do Coyle, H. Dellar,  
C. Dilmé & S. Marcos,  
S. Dreger, C. Escobar, M.J. Lobo,  
E. Eixarch & N. Pelàez,  
U. Sol, A.M. Fuentes

**Contributions:**

M. Cortés, J.Fusté  
C. Mallol, Eva Hugas

**apac**

**ELT - Convention  
2012**

**solid learning  
for liquid times**

**February 23rd, 24th & 25th**

**apac**

Associació  
de Professors i  
Professores d'Anglès  
de Catalunya



**Universitat Pompeu Fabra  
Campus Ciutadella**

**Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27  
Barcelona**

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# Editorial

*Liquid times*.... *Liquid* is the term Zygmunt Bauman uses to describe the state that society finds itself in nowadays. *Liquid* can be interpreted as the opposite of *solid*, and thus, the structures we had considered to be definitive cease to be so. *Liquid times* mean constant change, which can generate a certain unease in us as we try to adapt to new situations.

As you have read, the theme of this year's APAC-ELT Convention is *Solid Learning for Liquid Times*. We need to equip our students with language competences which will allow them to adapt to new conditions quickly. The articles that we have put into this issue of the journal, most of which come from speakers from the previous convention, aim to help teachers re-orientate their classroom activities, with emphasis placed on prioritising a focus on communication over a focus on form.

This is the case of the articles by Do Coyle, Cristina Escobar and María José Lobo. The concrete examples given by Núria Pelaez and Elizabeth Eixarch, Anna Maria Fuentes and Eva Hugas illustrate these ideas well. Motivation is also an area we have to prioritise, and Hugh Dellar offers us a continuation of his work in motivating students through real communication in the classroom.

Pronunciation is often an area that is given short shrift in the classroom, and the article by Judith Fuster, *Pragmatics in Intonation*, brings out the idea that poor intonation can lead to breakdowns in communication, and that solid work can be done with students to remedy this. Another solid thing that students can latch onto is routines, and Carme Dilmé and Sónia Marcos show us the importance of teaching kindergarten students the same classroom routines in English as they are learning in their native language.

Of course, the new technologies are part and parcel of our current liquid times and must form part of our teaching methods. Montserrat Cortés, Susan Dreger, Cristina Mallol and Usua Sol provide us with many resources for incorporating new devices, programmes, and ways of doing things into our classes. And this brings us back to the article by Do Coyle, in which she advocates that, with all of the means we have at our disposal, we have to create dialogical classrooms, classes without borders or boundaries, classes which bring the outside world into them.

We at APAC would also like to bring the whole world into our journal. But, unfortunately, we are limited to a finite number of pages. So, you will see that in some cases we direct you to the APAC web page for the full version of a given article.

We hope that the material in this issue helps you find some new stability in these liquid times and that it helps your students acquire solid language knowledge and abilities.

And, to conclude, we note that *solid* is characterised by a *lack of liquidity*, which is such an acute, rampant problem nowadays. So, we offer you this New Year wish: may 2012 turn out to be a good *liquid* year for you, in the sense of liquids you enjoy, liquidity you can use, and a smooth flow from January to December!

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear colleagues,

Have you ever come across a thinking man? I know, “Man? Thinking?” Well, I happen to belong to the male race myself and I know how rare these occasions can be. And yet I feel we are soon to have a chance to meet such a rare beast. Men breathe, walk, drink, shout... you name it, but on top of all that, our guest speaker for the opening session of the APAC-ELT Convention on February 23<sup>rd</sup> is a man reputed for his thinking abilities. Indeed, Mr Jorge Wagensberg can be described as a man who has made thinking a way of life. His topic, “Intellectual Joy and How to Acquire New Knowledge”, sounds like the kind of propitious spark that should electrify the convention’s atmosphere in order to create a favourable climate for sharing thoughts on the learning process and, as our motto goes, on how to produce solid learning in liquid times.

I am glad to inform you that we are working closely with the Departament d’Ensenyament on the establishment of a new APAC prize for members committed to pedagogical innovation and willing to improve their professional abilities. Details of the new prize (along with the verdict for the 2012 John McDowell prize) will be given in the convention. As you know, our aim has always been to encourage permanent training and research while drawing attention to achievement. We want the new prize to suggest these goals because they have fuelled APAC’s spirit since its foundation more than twenty-five years ago.

I would also like to mention that we are reshaping our publication services in order to concentrate efforts and provide a clear focus to three main resources: the APAC monographs series, which will continue to provide volumes of outstanding current research on a particular topic; an issue of our magazine fully devoted to the proceedings of our annual convention; and a new collection that we’d like to call APAC’s TPR (Theory, Practice, Research), open to contributions by members and professionals willing to publish work related to any of the three fields mentioned. We take our modest but regular publishing capacities as an undertaking to secure easy access to materials that should prove relevant to our professional community.

I know some people believe that if wishes were horses, beggars would ride, but I think it reasonable to wish your active participation in our imminent February convention. APAC’s history has been based on the loyalty of its members. Don’t miss it this time.

See you soon,

**Miquel Berga**

President



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## Language Learning & Language Using: Towards Dialogic Classrooms

by Do Coyle, APAC 2011

It is always a pleasure come to Catalonia because I have learned more working with teachers from this region than from anywhere else. Thus I am very thankful to this part of the world I believe the more you try to explain things through the more you begin to understand them better and develop them like in the joint venture with many of the people here, some are no in this auditorium. Many of you might think that I am more associated with CLIL than with the teaching of English, but it is only an excuse because what has attracted me always is Pedagogy.

I was fascinated to listen to our previous speaker because we were asked to think of what teachers had inspired us. That is because I am a bit of an oddity because I hated school. What is more, I hated languages. They were my worst subject. I wasn't even good at languages.

But I decided I was going to do something that would revoluzionate the world about the experiences of young people learning languages. I was 19 at the time and very arrogant. My first foreign language was Russian. I remember going to Kiev, putting money on a phone to make a call and when the person at the other end understood me I yelled:

*It works!*

My drive was to try that no other student of languages would have the bad experiences I had. That is why I am so fascinated by Pedagogy in general.

So far we have been looking backwards and celebrating the 25 years. I want to look forward; I am particularly worried about the next few years because of the speed at which things are changing.

I was external examiner for Mauritius and once I got to school there. The headmaster called a meeting of all the staff, gave me piece of chalk in front of a blackboard and said:

*This lady is going to tell us how to do it.*

I do not know what I said. The whole concept of expertise is much more complicated than that. You cannot just tell teachers what to do. But more of that later.

From those who knew me before I shall inform you that I have moved to Scotland. If you believe that Great Britain is a nation you should go to Scotland because I have been there more culturally challenged that I have ever been in my life. As soon as I open my mouth I am labelled as English. I do not mean I am segregated but it has made me aware of my own culture. It is question of identity.

We have to address this notion of multiple identities. I have my academic identity and my language identity being English. I was determined I would not use the word "Wi" that means little in Scotland to maintain my identity but I have adopted others.

The world is changing very rapidly

First I am going to address some macro issues and then we are going to look at what happens when we close the door of the classroom. That's when the magic starts.

Do Coyle is Professor in Learning Innovation at the University of Aberdeen, Scotland. Formerly at Nottingham University, she led an initial teacher education programme for future CLIL teachers, a Master's programme for CLIL and supervised doctoral students in the field. Do is internationally renowned for her work in CLIL pedagogies and acts as advisor and consultant to ministries and organisations on a global scale. She is involved in a wide range of European initiatives and has published extensively in the field, including the national guidelines for CLIL. Her main research interests lie in furthering classroom pedagogies and professional learning rooted in teacher-learner class-based inquiry. Do's current research involves teacher-learner networks for analysing effective CLIL practice using digital tools and virtual spaces. She is also carrying out collaborative research in Austria and Italy to investigate pluriliteracies in CLIL settings and has launched an on-line Masters in Plurilingual Education. Her latest publication is the 2010 CUP book on CLIL (Coyle, Hood and Marsh).

# ELT Convention

## From the macro to the micro....

- Changing Learning Paradigms
- The Language Phenomenon
- Dialogic Classrooms
- Implications for Teachers of English

## For motivating teachers and motivating learners



Sir Ken Robinson

## Changing Paradigms

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U&feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zDZFcDGpL4U&feature=player_embedded)

Very inspirational. He speaks from the British perspective and analyses the state of Education. Really worth listening to

An old paradigm where you worked hard at school, went to University and got a job is no longer working. My daughter has finished her degree and is getting more and more depressed because she cannot get a job Kids with Attention Deficit Disorder are given pills to help them but when you think about all the stimuli the kids have around them locking them in a classroom with a blackboard can be potentially boring.

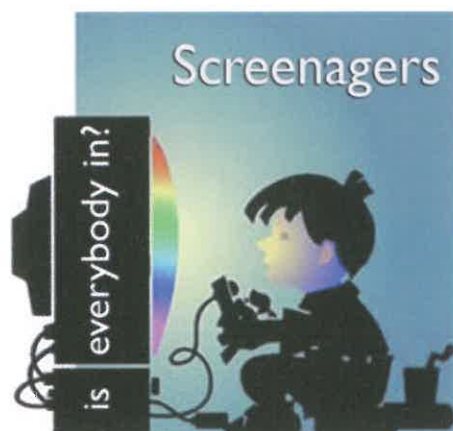
That puts a lot of pressure on us as teachers. I do not think children should be entertained but they should be taught well by teachers who are good pedagogos.

Communication  
is everywhere





# ELT Convention



This technology uniting young people in particular cannot be ignored in the classroom either. Phones going on in the middle of meetings are becoming part of the normal practice and they are no longer frowned upon

The type of communication is often very basic: what time people are coming; where they are meeting; etc. But our function as teacher is to make communication into something much deeper.

The offer is really huge:



I had a sky link with a teacher from Lleida who does all sorts of technological things in his classroom. He made a Twitter for us so could communicate. We had a brilliant discussion. It cost us nothing. Neither moved from where we were. The Catalan teachers were with me in Edinburgh and the other teacher in Lleida. My question is:

*Why aren't we doing more of that with our learners?*

To me that is priority now: **to bring the outside world**

**into the classroom.** If we want Dialogical classrooms we need to have borderless classrooms with links to the outside. And I do not mean just pen pals where communication is exhausted after a few exchanges once they have told one another how many brothers and sisters they have and who their favourite singer is.

What I am talking about is having links with Estonia, Poland, or Thailand. The communication would have to be in English as lingua franca. How do we square this?

*The glory of human learning is*

*that it is essentially a complex, messy, non-linear process*  
(Kumaravadivelu, 2001)

That is bad news for us teachers! I am going to concentrate in the non linear aspect.

Traditionally, teachers of English have adopted a linear, grammatically organised description of language. Present tense must come before the past tense.

I ask myself why? Have you tried having a conversation with somebody and not using the past tense? For decades we have had

# ELT Convention

these criteria of what is difficult and what is easy. What should take priority.

That is the challenge we have got in the next 10 years. I am not telling you to get rid of the things that work but we have to do other things.

In the past the main aim in teaching languages was that students had access to literature. The aims have changed. **People try to learn languages so they can have conversation with other people around the world.** But most classrooms are still incredibly monologic.

*The dominant form of classroom practice emphasises whole class mono-logic interaction which constructs pupils as respondents and limits their discourse. (Lyle, 2008)*

How can we make it succeed? With these European Key Competences?

- Communication (first language and others) Learning to Learn
- Cultural Awareness and Experiences
- Digital Competence

But not all students will need languages with the same level of proficiency and for the same objectives. We need Pluri-literate learners and to have access to a range of languages at a range of levels.

And this?



The language phenomenon is changing. The native speaker used to be the "God". Nowadays I tell my Catalan teachers of English that they are the experts as they understand the problems the kids have. And who want to be a native speaker, anyway? You are already one. I do not want to be Scottish despite living there and loving it. I might try to learn "Doric", the local language, and also Gaelic but without losing my identity.

Some pedagogs in England described learning language being as difficult as "Gardening in a gale", "An uphill struggle". I cannot accept that learning languages is so hard. When I went to Russia I had been learning Russian for many years but I had not had a chance to say what I wanted to say.

When my daughter went to secondary school I asked her what was the subject she was most looking forward to learning: "Languages" she said. My heart sunk. I knew that what she would be learning would be:

- Days of the week
- Months of the year
- The content of her pencil case

*And what would you like to say in the foreign language?* I asked

She looked at me astonished and said:

*Whatever I say in English, of course*

My heart bled because I knew that despite being a very good school, with excellent exam results, she would not be able to say in the foreign language what she wanted to say unless she persevered for at

least eight or nine years.

If we assume that young people want to say about the same in whatever language it is, we cannot rely on this grammatical chronology; we cannot rely on putting together the pieces of this jigsaw.

Languages in the school is a multi-layered situation.

Language teachers have a lot to contribute to these inclusive literacies because young people would in the future have access to different languages but not necessarily in the traditional way.

Lo Bianco in Australia has been doing research about language talking to a lot of young people who thought that having a lingua franca was not a controversial issue, but rather a natural factor in today's world. Multilingualism is essential and non-controversial; it is needed to access new opportunities and for living in a diverse and globalised world.

Multiple identities is the norm for young people and that does not worry them too much. One's culture is not in danger because one is using a different language.

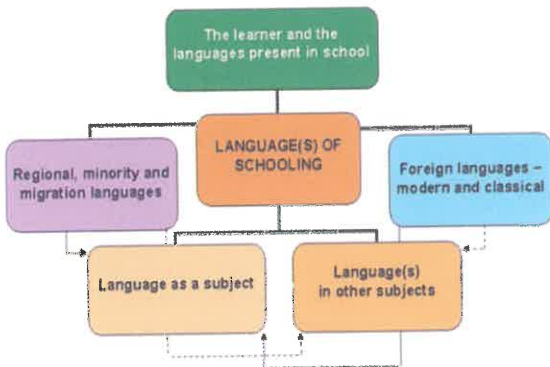
There is a Transition from ICT to LKT (Language and Knowledge Technology)

Some of the young people questioned showed to be pragmatic and more ready for the challenge we are worried about:

*In ten years our languages will become far more flexible as a result of the impact of the unlimited power of the internet, mass media and new technologies, this will lead to a kind of 'cohesion' between languages (Lo Bianco & Slaughter 2009)*

According to the Council of Europe, Plurilingualism connects a range of linguistic and cultural capacities which include mother tongue/s, learned languages, used languages and

## Linking Languages for Inclusive Literacies



parts of acquired languages. The current model of learning one or two languages in the formal setting needs to be revisited; especially since many learners do not find the process itself motivating.

**There is huge difference between language using and language learning.** We do need to organise the language somehow, at least in our minds as teachers. But beyond the grammatical organisation that will allow us to generate new, correct utterances **we also need to make our learners able to say what they want to say.** There is also a huge difference between speaking and talking. **Speaking is saying the things that I have to say. Talking is saying the things I want to say.**

A Teacher of English is a teacher of language and teacher of learning. For a time teachers of foreign languages lived in what I call a grammatical bubble and considered that general learning theories or the whole curriculum did not apply to them.

Now we have to face the realities of the multilingual classroom and plurilingual pedagogies, if nothing else because we might have in any of our groups multiple nationalities. That is a reality and we have to live with.

Currently, I am an external examiner at the University of Limerick in Ireland. I was there visiting stu-

dent teachers who were doing a super job. One of them was an EAL (English as an Additional Language) in which there are lots of opportunities for language using. The teacher was doing some work on the use of metaphor. She had 10 children from four different nationalities. Their language was not too bad. I would say it was B2, I would say. It was St. Valentine and they were looking at metaphors about love. But not once did she say:

*And in your language, do you have metaphors about love? If so what are they? Let's look at them.*

When I talked to her about that afterwards she said she had never considered that because she had to get their English up at a speed. She had never thought of doing translation. That is another issue: the use of mother tongue.

The Current Language Education Discourse deals with

- Communicative competence
- Learner autonomy
- CLIL
- The earlier the better

But the question remains how we make our learners use the language for learning or for identity purposes.

**Gibbons (2002) bridging discourses through learner-teacher interaction**

A holistic and inclusive view of language with a diagram like this full of tangents.

This coincides with the responses from the young people questioned by Lo

Bianco who found the process of learning the language really difficult.

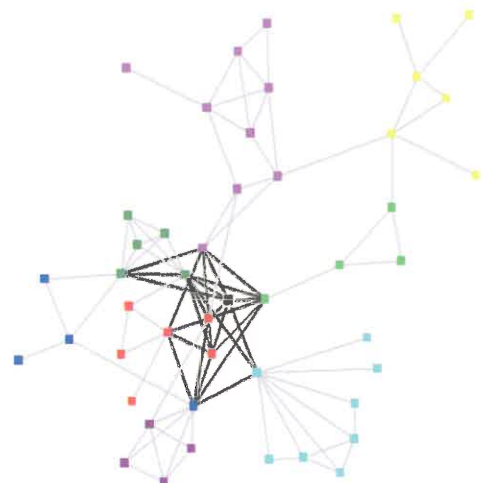
In Teacher – Student Interactions we need **Maximum Cognitive Engagement.** When do we teachers ask ourselves how we are involving our student cognitively in the content of what we are doing, and the content could be the grammar? But what worries me is that learners of 11 or 12 when learning a foreign language have content that is appropriate for kindergarten.

**We need to focus on meaning, language and use.**

Let's focus on the micro ~ classroom pedagogies...

*If you want to improve the quality of learning, the most effective place to do so is in the context of a classroom lesson...The challenge now becomes that of identifying the kinds of changes that will improve learning for all students...of sharing this knowledge with other teacher.*  
Stigler, J & Hibbert, J (1999)  
*The Teaching Gap*

Here is another of my heroes. I hope I have spelled it right. Apparently he is just called KUMA.



# ELT Convention

He is Indian but I think he is in the States now. I love this notion of Post Method Pedagogy:

*Post method pedagogy rejects the narrow view of language education that confines itself to the linguistic functional elements that obtain inside the classroom. Instead, it seeks to branch out to tap the socio-political consciousness that learners bring with them to the classrooms, so that it can function as a catalyst for identity formation and social transformation (Kumaravadivelu, 2002)*

Language is our greatest Learning Tool. The more languages you learn the better. A lot of research has been done with elderly people with Alzheimer or dementia and it seems you lose one language at a time. So the more languages you speak the longer you would remain a speaking person. That is big motivation for me.

If language is our greatest learning tool, the strategies which scaffold learning in general and language learning in particular empower learners to talk for learning as well as about learning in the target language. We need to develop learner-teacher expectations and confirm that **language using is as fundamental as language learning**, thereby demanding a focus on meaning as well as on form. That would transform both the quality of teaching as of learning and create new more rewarding classroom experiences.

**“When we learn stuff we didn't know before we feel we are getting better at using the language.”**

That was said by a learner in some research carried out in Dialogic Pedagogies.

In the UK you have to do several years of the foreign language before learning content through it. But I believe that **from the very first lesson there should be some content learning.**

If anybody fancies spending a few hours taxing your brain cells look at Bakhtin: dialogic spaces. It is incredibly difficult to understand and I am not very sure I understand it all. He is the guru behind dialogic spaces. What he means by dialog is not two people having a conversation. It is much more than that.

*Dialogic meaning-making: where learners play an active role in developing a personally constructed understanding of the curriculum through dialogic interchange*

Each person in this room would construct differently what I am saying now. But we make exams demanding from every learning the same construction of learning. That is not real.

In ordinary everyday behaviour we cannot consider talking unless we bring a hearing along with it into account. How often do we introduce a hearing into our dialogic classrooms? In some approaches to listening practice learners were forbidden from taking notes at the first hearing. That did not take into account the scaffolding mechanism of the learners and the different learning styles.

## Dialogic Approaches

*• Classrooms are full of talk but little of that talk is used to promote pupil interaction or collaborative talk (Mercer 2002)*

We get all excited about group work. But the research tells us that group work is incredibly difficult to organise as an activity. Often in groups children do not build on what the other is saying unless it is something much formalised like jigsaws.

*• If an answer does not give rise to a new question from itself, it falls out of the dialogue (Bakhtin, 1986)*

That is really difficult because we were never trained for that as a teacher. I do not think that we

have even scratched the surface in questioning in our classrooms.

We must go beyond the “what, where, when” questions. Learners need to be taught the big question: **WHY?**

There is a problem here because you cannot give an easy answer.

*• We need to teach learners how to engage in dialogues through which knowledge is constantly being constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed (Wegerif 2006)*

This is where communication is going. At surface level we have the mobiles, gadgets but we need to get under the surface of communication. Getting a Blog helps sometimes as learners are engaged in dialogues, taking some of what the others are saying, building on it, making decisions on whether they agree on some aspects of their learning or disagree; and so why.

*• Dialogic classrooms encourage extended chains of questioning as coherent shared enquiry and where learners treat their utterances and those of others as thinking devices (Alexander, 2006)*

What do we need to do to create dialogic language classrooms? Will it ‘jargonized’ before it is understood never mind applied?

All the rules of grammar can remain, But what are we going to do about use when the question why comes up and children want to say things they do not know how to say? **Language using and language learning must go hand in hand.**

Language using will consist of three types of language:

**• Language of learning:** all the language needed for whatever topic the teacher is dealing with. Teachers are very good at that. No problem at all. Key words, vocabulary...

**• Language for learning:** all the language I would need to use my language as a learning tool. It goes beyond the gram-

mar and notions, functions. It is the answer to the question why.

• **Language through learning**, the new language that might happen unexpected during the lesson. The teacher has to decide how to react to it. Whether to ignore it or to recycle it into the lesson. That is a difficult decision because it might put the lesson planning upside down. It is going to take time but I think it is going to happen.

We need an integrated learning approach to curriculum building.

A 4Cs Framework for CLIL:

- Cognition,
- content,
- communication and
- culture.

## Translanguaging

Translanguaging is the communicative norm of multilingual communities. It cannot be compared to a prescribed monolingual use. There was a very strict code about the exclusive use of the target language, but now I think that we should reduce the boundaries of our classrooms and include

- Multiple discursive practices, including **code-switching**. This assumption will not be accepted in all the forums but the more multilingual classes I observe the more convinced am I about the importance of speakers to become effective code-switchers. However, that will depend entirely in your context. One cannot give definite rules here.
- Not only from the perspective of the language but from that of speakers.
- Different types of languages for different modalities: speaking, writing, reading, information technology.

## Implications for teachers of English

- Awareness of the complexity

at very different levels and we have to talk, talk, talk about it not just with our English Teachers colleagues. We have to encourage these dialogs at a senior level.

• Examine what it means to create a dialogic classroom: vision it, scope it, select a focus, do it bit by bit and enjoy the messiness because we have to own it. Young people are owning the technology, we do not but with dialogic you need a clear vision. In that way, when you are doing any planning you have to ask yourself how that would fit with a dialogic classroom.

- Involve the learners
- Start experimenting with dialogic approaches using technology to assist e.g. find a 'dialogue partner'. Get people anywhere in the world and start talking to them. Start your learners talking to them

## Communication Revisited – towards dialogic classrooms

A good place to start:

- Scaffolding Learning
- Questioning. It is my favourite point now. In my training as a teacher I was never trained to ask questions. It was always this intuitive thing that happens. But one has to organise your lessons in a way that learners eventually ask the questions to one another. That will solve the problem of how you get the kids to speak.
- Interaction
- Collaborative Meaning Making
- Communication across languages/TL
- Contingency

So what does all this mean?

We have to...

- cognitively challenge learners, revisit learning: the difficult process
- demonstrate that revisioning languages is crucial for learning
- re-conceptualise the position

of grammar: focus on meaning as well as form is only the tip of the iceberg

- find additional/alternative ways of skilling learners to use as well as learn language
- work in a borderless classroom - conceptually
- hold onto what works, to what is possible. We will not try to revolutionise classrooms as it has been tried so many times before. But I think time is running out. We need to raise our expectations about what is possible
- leave the comfort zone and think outside the box

## Big Decisions

- Finding dialogue' Partners
- Developing dialogic skills (collaborative learning, group work)
- Examine the content of dialogue
- We need to take control of pedagogies and not leave it to so called 'experts'

## Working towards dialogic classrooms

Towards merging some of the spaces: from monologic to metalogic and eventually to dialogic. Metalogic is what we have been doing today and if we focus on the meta I think we are half way there:

*Where the problem is not the question and the answer is not the solution. Lampert 1990*

If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you've always got. If you do not like what you have got then change it.

My talk has not been dialogic but I hope you have been having internal dialogues into your heads. I hope you will be inspired by the networking you do at the conference. I hope you will inspire others.

...



## Motivating your Students: A 10-Step Guide

By Hugh Dellar

Keeping students interested in the learning process is one of the biggest challenges we face. Here, I explore nine ways of ensuring motivation levels stay high.

### 1 Listen to your students

Teachers spend a lot of time listening to students, but often simply to decide whether they are producing "three" and "tree" correctly, or to listen for grammatical errors. This isn't the kind of listening I mean. Rather, I'm talking about listening when students try to say something REAL – something personal, funny, interesting, powerful. Students frequently attempt these kinds of communications: when they turn up late and explain why; when they're struggling with an exercise and we ask how it's going; during normal speaking activities. The feeling of being listened to is a powerful - and motivating - one!

One reason why teachers don't do much of this kind of listening is that it's not seen as teaching! One way round this

is to reformulate student output and turn it into input. When a student arrives late and says, "I lose my bus", say "No problem. Come in ... but not *lose*. I ..... my bus? Yeah, OK. *Missed*" and then write on the board:

*Sorry I'm late. I missed my bus.*

Students can then brainstorm other reasons for being late – and you can reformulate these too. If the excuse is in L1, say "OK. No problem. Let's quickly look at how to say that in English!"

### 2 Talk to your students

In the same way as we don't often listen to our students, so all too rarely do we actually talk to them. The majority of Teacher Talking Time is procedural - telling students what we want them to do. Obviously, this is important, but if it's all we're doing, we're missing the chance to use TTT to encourage group bonds.

Much of this can be done when dealing with vocabulary. Real-world events are great for hanging new vocabulary on, and the more you listen to your students, the more likely you are to remember things that come from them and that can be used as a hook.

The way you involve the students is through remembered stories. For example, I recently explained the question *What're the hours like?* to my Intermediate class. I asked for possible answers and got things like *Very boring!* I said "No. Stop there! OK, so you remember Feng runs his own company in China and it's very stressful, right? Well, for Feng *What're the hours like?* / *Well, it depends, but sometimes I have to work really long hours. I start at* what time, Feng? OK *7 and finish at?* 12. 12 at night? Wow! So you sometimes *work a 17-hour day!*"

This helps students see how the language you're teaching connects to them; it weaves everyone into a unit of learning and shared experience; it fosters a culture of banter and makes language more memorable.

### 3 Tell your students about yourself

We can bring in our own experiences when contextualizing vocabulary in the same way as we use students' experiences, but we can also model speaking tasks. With tasks that require personal investment from students, it seems fair to start from us as teachers. For instance, in a recent class, students were doing *Film* vocabulary and had to discuss whether they preferred foreign films to be dubbed or sub-titled, what the best special effects they'd ever seen were and if they had a favourite soundtrack. I set the task, but first just told them I much preferred sub-titles, as most dubbing looks stupid, and it seems ridiculous to watch a Japanese or Turkish film in English!

Simple stuff, but vital for several reasons. Firstly, it gives students an idea of what kind of turn you expect them to take. Secondly, it exposes them to useful language they might use themselves. Also, this kind of TTT positions you as a human being in the classroom - in a focused, learning-centered kind of way!

The motivation for students lies in realizing that you're similar to them, that it's OK to bring their lives to the classroom and that longer turns revealing this kind of information are welcomed.

### 4 Teach them USEFUL things

Students quickly recognize useful language when presented with it - particularly if it's things they've been trying to say or recognize as things they say in L1 and thus may want to say in L2. At the same time, when presented with useless language they won't need or use, students struggle to learn. Motivation levels go up as soon as we start teaching things students can imagine themselves saying.

There's nothing worse than forcing yourself to learn some-

thing you can't see the utility of. At Intermediate and below, if you can't imagine yourself saying the sentences you're teaching, then maybe they're not worth looking at.

### 5 Teach the class first - and the coursebook second

Different classes react differently to material and the time needed to teach a page of a coursebook depends on the students studying it. If we steamroller over issues students raise, we send a covert message that the students are unimportant and that they have to pull themselves up to where we are, because we aren't going to go down to where they are.

This particularly becomes a problem when explaining new vocabulary. Say you're doing a unit on Studying and the word *essay* comes up. Learners may well enquire "Like *dissertation?*" Ideally, teachers should stop and explore how the words differ in meaning and usage. The board can be used to give examples:

*I have to do a 1500-word essay for my Economics module. The deadline's next Friday.*

*I did a 12,000-word dissertation for my MA, which counted as 60 credits.*

Students can then talk about any essays or dissertations they've had to do. Obviously, this takes a few more minutes, but it's time well spent. We need to make sure we give students the space to take the class where THEY want it to go, and to use this desire as an opportunity to make clear how what WE want them to learn from the class differs from what THEY have brought with them.

### 6 Be careful how you correct your students

If we correct students every time they make a mistake, they'll end up never wanting to speak English again! I'm not saying there isn't a place for formal correction. If you're doing pronunciation or a controlled grammar practice, then it's fine. However, it works less well when students are talking to each other as it interferes. That said, we still need to think about ways of helping students say what they're trying to say better.

While students are talking, mingle and get things up on the board - in whole sentences, as they're trying to say it, but with gaps in it. Thus, if students are doing a quick warmer on Friday morning about what they're doing over the weekend, my board might look like this:

I haven't ..... decided yet.

I .....work tomorrow.  
go to the launderette tomorrow  
and ..... my washing.

clean the house tomorrow.  
We have a cleaning rota and it's my .....!

I'm not really sure. I ..... go swimming if  
the weather's nice. ~~It's depend~~

Stop the students and elicit missing words / corrections from the class. This kind of elicitation is motivating as it involves everyone, is quick, and recycles language already studied; the fact that it comes from what students are saying is also motivating. It also shows you accept students make mistakes with structures studied previously, and offers the chance to revisit ground already covered.

## 7 Test your students

Students frequently feel stuck, and testing can be a great way of providing positive feedback. Obviously, this could just mean giving students a formal test. However, lots of things I do in class serve as quasi-tests of how well students remember things from previous classes. For instance, after a reading last lesson, begin the next class by putting students in pairs and seeing how much they remember - not just of the content, but of the actual language too. Round up by eliciting what they remember and re-lexicalising it with the whole class. Once students understand these kinds of warmers, they start paying more attention to the language.

Re-doing tasks is another great test. On a simple level, this means every Friday asking students to discuss what they're doing that weekend - and them getting better at this conversation over time. It could also mean doing a speaking task from the book again, and this time monitoring to ensure the class uses some of the new language fed in after the last attempt.

## 8 Worry less about topics

Many of us think in terms of vocabulary lessons, grammar lessons, listening lessons, etc. If you devote a whole lesson to, say, speaking, the choice of topic becomes central. You want something your students are motivated to talk about, but finding such topics is problematic.

There are several reasons for this: firstly, classes are full of different personalities with different interests and finding a topic-based lesson that grabs everyone is nigh-on impossible. It's also optimistic to expect students to discuss things for a long time - they often lack subject knowledge and language, and they're often asked to discuss things in L2 that they wouldn't in L1!

Generally in L1, we tell anecdotes about things that've happened, we make brief comments, we report what we did or are going to do, and so on. We chat with a purpose, rather than debate or discuss.

If we want to tap into students' lives and experiences in a way that maximizes the chances of classroom interaction

occurring, we should worry less about hot topics, and instead take a different approach.

## 9 Worry more about language and anecdotes

One thing students in a language classroom have a common interest in is language. In addition, the one skill students can only really practise in class and nowhere else is speaking. Students can do readings, look up new words and do grammar exercises at home. Once you accept this, the step towards involving students' own lives in the language is a simple one and revolves around the questions we ask about vocabulary.

We need to do more than simply offer definitions, synonyms or translations of new language students encounter. We need to explain, of course, but also exemplify and expand upon language in a way that involves the whole group. For example, the other day I was doing a reading and some students underlined the words *demonstration* and *loan*. Once the students finished the gist task, I explained that a *demonstration* was when people get together in public to protest and a *loan* was money you borrow from a bank. I wrote two examples on the board:

*I went on a demonstration to protest against ...*

*I took out a loan from the bank to ...*

and elicited things demos can protest against and what loans might be for. I then reformulated their ideas. Students discussed any demos they'd heard about, and if they'd ever taken out a loan. Out of this came stories of sports cars that ended up as write-offs, demos against the Iraq war and against the fur trade. Now obviously, not all classes will talk this much about every word you ask about, but the first part of this process - asking questions about the language you're exemplifying in order to generate connected language - works with even quiet classes - and ensures there's little bits of speaking more often. It's this little-but-often approach that provides extra motivation for students.

## 10 Look deep into your coursebook

I hope you'll agree that many of the ideas for creating a more interactive, language-rich, cheerful, focused and motivated classroom that I've suggested are things that can be done by all of you, whatever your classroom situation. Having said that, though, I'd be lying if I didn't finish by saying that there are issues around coursebooks that emerge from these ideas. If you truly want your students to be motivated, it helps if there's plenty of little bits of speaking scattered through your coursebook; a strong focus on useful, spoken language; conversations in L2 that resemble the kinds of conversations students will have in L1; and inbuilt ideas on different ways of revising, recycling and testing language. With this in mind, I politely point you in the direction of the series of coursebooks I have co-authored, OUTCOMES and INNOVATIONS, both published by Heinle ELT.





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# Contributions

ganization (*tags* or *feeds*), distribution, publication, reproduction and search of audio files (*podcasts*). Apart from offering the storage and downloading of music, these applications can be integrated with blogs, Readers, etc.

Examples:

[www.talkr.com](http://www.talkr.com)  
[www.bandnews.org](http://www.bandnews.org)  
[www.finetune.com](http://www.finetune.com)  
[www.jamendo.com](http://www.jamendo.com)  
[www.podomatic.com](http://www.podomatic.com)

Why are they useful?

You can find any type of songs, any artist and listen to the music, download it and share it with people you want to. Learners can deal with songs from an educational point of view taking the most of this enormous resource. Students can share songs dealing with a similar topic. Students can create podcasts themselves, or they can share a group of audio or video files according to their needs. Students can create and upload audio files with only some basic knowledge of software such as Audacity. Audacity is a program where one can edit his/her audio files.

## How to create a podcast? (Podomatic)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmyMAUCHzrY>

Although I have tried to compile the information and present it separately, we have to become conscious that:

1. most of the Websites presented can be connected, and used for several things,
2. the example section for each axis is only a small representative total of the huge amount of possible WebPages to be used,
3. even though I have tried to give several applications of these webs, there are endlessly tasks to be performed,
4. the classification of these Websites is ephemeral as it is constantly changing.

Finally, we cannot finish without mentioning the virtual worlds. In the near future it will be a really powerful and useful tool to engage students in learning. Even though the first thing that comes into one's mind while talking about virtual worlds is "game", but students learn better if they are trained through games and recreation. There are many virtual worlds, I would mention here some examples: Second life, Spore, Whyville, Habbo Hotel, Dizzywood, world of Warcraft or Active worlds. In the near future they would be really motivating to encourage collaboration and promote learner autonomy. Moreover, they would be appealing as students and teachers will be able to create an environment in which language learning and cultural exchange take place in an open, cooperative, and supportive setting.

In conclusion, although the existing web will inevitably change quickly, teachers have to engage themselves as soon as possible in the world of new technologies for several rea-

sons: the most powerful cause is the direct implication that the 1X1 teaching system will entail. Publishing houses' learning platforms offer a great deal of material to be used in the classroom setting, but it should be complemented with refreshed devices to offer students real life experiences involved in the foreign language teaching process. The high motivation among students is also a potent source that the work with new technologies can benefit from. Learners from whatever age are keen on learning about the internet and far from being digital natives, they still have a lot to learn.

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c) **Social Bookmarks and Tag clouds.** They are tools to store, label, organize and share collectively the most relevant links (web sites, blogs, documents, music, books, images, podcasts, videos...) It allows to gather the opinion of all the users who participate.

Tags are short descriptions that denote the content of specific resources and makes possible the classification and information searching based on keywords. Tags can be considered labels chosen by the creator of the content. Tags can be presented in charts called tag clouds.

As it has been said before, social tagging is called folksonomy. Another use of tags is that users can look for other users with similar interest.

Social bookmarking is linking a website and saving it for later. Instead of saving it to your web browser, you are saving it to the web.

Examples:

<http://del.icio.us>  
<http://digg.com>  
[www.blinklist.com](http://www.blinklist.com)  
[www.bookmarkz.net](http://www.bookmarkz.net)  
[www.diigo.com](http://www.diigo.com)

Why is social bookmarking useful?

It can be the base of collaborative information discovery. Groups of students with a common interest (either personal or educational) can use bookmarking to share interesting content. Teachers and learners can recommend, rate and comment on certain resources through a common blog, for example.

How to use social bookmarking? (Delicious)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcgloI3Zw4Y&feature=related>

**4. Applications and services (mashups).** The applications that contribute to the web 2.0 mapping are enormous, diverse and constantly changing. A special feature that a great number of applications Web 2.0 share is that they favour the interoperability of services, they want to integrate several Technologies in one (Application Programming Interface or API): Participation, openness, collaborative social Networks, etc.

Examples:

[www.meebo.com](http://www.meebo.com)  
<http://gmail.google.com>  
[www.squidoo.com](http://www.squidoo.com)  
<http://dailymashup.com>  
<http://springdoo.com>

a) **Project organizer.** They are the most complex applications as they integrate a lot of organization and management instruments. These resources offer attractive tools to work with and they facilitate the team organization. The most famous activities to be done are: collaborative writing, file exchanges, agendas, e-mail services, etc.

Examples:

[www.buzznet.com](http://www.buzznet.com)  
<http://planner.zoho.com>  
[www.e-messenger.net](http://www.e-messenger.net)  
[www.ning.com](http://www.ning.com)  
<http://voo2do.com>

Why are project organizers useful?

They are very useful as teachers, as well as students, can create online projects for specific topics. It fosters collaborative work and information and opinion exchange.

How to use project organizers? (Ning)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qqeqgD\\_TzPM&feature=related](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qqeqgD_TzPM&feature=related)

b) **Webtop.** In this section we can find WebPages that can be used as a virtual desktop (*webtop*). They offer feeds Readers, e-mails, chats, calendars, tools to write in blogs, etc.

Examples:

<http://desktoptwo.com>  
<http://g.ho.st>  
[www.spiraluniverse.com](http://www.spiraluniverse.com)  
[www.inbox.com](http://www.inbox.com)  
[www.glidesociety.com](http://www.glidesociety.com)

Why using webtops?

It is a personalized desktop that one can access from anywhere. Ensures that users are running the same version and there is no problem of compatibility. It is also less prone to viruses attacks, etc.

How to use webtops? (Spiral Webtop)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaQaft9YAcc>

c) **Storage in the web.** In this section we can find services that offer remote storage. They also allow sharing documents with other users.

Examples:

[www.omnidrive.com.au](http://www.omnidrive.com.au)  
[www.xdrive.com](http://www.xdrive.com)  
<http://omnidrive.com.au>  
[www.4share.com](http://www.4share.com)  
[www.box.net](http://www.box.net)

Why storing in the web?

Although most of the students have got pen drives, it is frequent for them to forget these devices at home. If learners have a free virtual space in the web where they can upload and download all of their documents, they won't have the problem of not having their documents ready to use.

How to store in the web? (Go2upload)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pYgpzRXROA>

d) **Music players, uploaders and downloaders.** Tools and web sites developed to facilitate the creation, edition and or-

# Contributions

**i) Calendar.** Tool to organize the agenda. They simplify individual or group planning.

Examples:

[www.30boxes.com](http://www.30boxes.com)  
<http://upcoming.org>  
<http://calendar.yahoo.com>  
[www.evnt.org](http://www.evnt.org)  
[www.localendar.com](http://www.localendar.com)

Why using a calendar?

If one is used to use a paper agenda, digital agendas can be of greater use. Any event can be written on the agenda as a group or an individual event. Future school planning will definitely be digital and as with web 3.0 all electrical intelligent appliances will be connected, it will make the life of users easier. Mobile phones warn us of important events noted down on your internet calendar. So calendars would end up being very functional and efficient.

How to use an on-line calendar? (Google)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CW9CcPah3f0>

**j) Slides presentations.** They help to elaborate, publish and distribute presentations. They are easy to use and mostly free.

Examples:

[www.slide.com](http://www.slide.com)  
<http://slideshare.net>  
[www.flashspring.com](http://www.flashspring.com)  
[www.teamslide.com](http://www.teamslide.com)  
[www.smilebox.com](http://www.smilebox.com)

Why using slides presentations?

They are motivating as they offer the possibility to present content made by oneself or by others in an easy and catchy way. Slides presentations can also be used to develop students' reading skills and creativity, and to make students see different ways of presenting information. It is also useful to engage students in opinion sharing and debates. Students can also develop slides presentations and they would use their communicative competence to try to make themselves understood.

How to use slides presentations? (Slideshare)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9ShKOeMKb0>

## 3. Social and intelligent information organization.

There is a need to use tools to help users organize and optimize the search of useful material on the net. To prevent the *infoxicación* (Cornella 2002) or infoxication (intoxication of information or information overload) there are many resources useful on the net. Pagerank as in Google, readers' opinions as in Amazon or Folksonomy or social classification applications (through tags) are enriched by the intellect of many people. Through social networking searches could be more productive. According to Baeza (2006) the web does

not only have to offer the user the possibility to access information but to reach their objectives. This is what Web 3.0 wants to offer, and that's why it is called the intelligent or semantic web. It would help to structure information in the same way human minds do, through cognitive maps. On the other side, the incorporation of unionized standards such as RSS, Atom, RDF, OPML allow the distribution of categorized contents that give new and constantly changing information to programs called Readers. They help to connect users to individual interesting sources.

**a) Searchers.** They can be generic or specialized, and there are a lot of tips to help users find the information they want.

Examples:

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)  
[www.yahoo.com](http://www.yahoo.com)  
<http://search.aol.com>  
[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)  
[www.intellect.com](http://www.intellect.com)

Why using searchers?

Although everyone has used searchers to find information on the web, one should know how to use them appropriately to find the desirable information. As internet is an infinite source of knowledge and resources, teachers should help students to distinguish reliable from non-reliable information.

How to use searchers? (Google tips)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DahGSReGx3M&feature=related>

**b) RSS readers - Feeds incorporation.** RSS reader or Really Simple Syndication is a format of syndicating news, they are applications to link the contents of different web sites in the form of feeds (RSS, Atom and other formats derived from XML/RDF). They allow the user to collect the feeds of blogs or other web sites and display dynamically the content updating it regularly.

Examples:

<http://feedburner.com>  
[www.feedreader.com](http://www.feedreader.com)  
[www.google.com/reader](http://www.google.com/reader)  
[www.RSSreader.com](http://www.RSSreader.com)  
[www.simplefeed.com](http://www.simplefeed.com)

Why using RRS?

RRS are useful tools to keep students and teachers updated in whatever subject, topic or issue they are interested in. They are also useful to help individuals be connected to national or international news. So we could have, in our web-sites, a link to BBC news, for instance, in this way we could always read through our webpages the latest news online.

How to use RRS?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0klgLSxGsU>

**d) Wikis.** Similar to an on line Word processor, it allows users to write, upload photos, videos, documents or links, easily. They are open tools that allow users to enrich content published by other people.

Examples:

<http://wikispaces.com>  
[www.mediawiki.org](http://www.mediawiki.org)  
[www.tiddlywiki.com](http://www.tiddlywiki.com)  
<http://bluwiki.com>  
<http://wikihost.org>

Why using wikis?

Wikis enhance collaborative work; students can create collaborative stories, reports, magazines and projects. They foster communication among learners and they are easy to use.

How to create your own Wiki? (Using Wikispaces)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YxCtALhG-q4>

**e) Online Word processor.** They are Word processor tools, with an online platform. One has access to them from any computer connected to the Internet. They allow us to access, edit, and share documents. An advantage is the creation of content collectively and simultaneously. One can work on DOC, PDF, ODT, SXW, RTF, HTML or TXT among other formats.

Examples:

<http://thinkfree.com>  
<http://docs.google.com>  
[www.ajaxwrite.com](http://www.ajaxwrite.com)

Why using online Word processors?

There is a main advantage, people do not have to copy from one computer to the next to work in different computers, one can always have access to his/her documents only with an Internet connection. If one wants to share documents, inviting a friend is a possibility. Teachers can create cooperative documents with students or with other teachers and students can also create group documents.

How to use your own online Word processor? (Think free)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yKKPSVU35y0>

**f) Online spreadsheet.** This tool offers an online spreadsheet database, templates, graphics, etc. to work with.

Examples:

<http://spreadsheets.google.com>  
[www.editgrid.com](http://www.editgrid.com)  
[www.writeboard.com](http://www.writeboard.com)  
[www.zohowriter.com](http://www.zohowriter.com)  
[www.goffice.com](http://www.goffice.com)

Why using online spreadsheets?

It could be very useful for teachers to share information

on students, for instance, if teachers work through competences, they can create a spreadsheet to share with other teachers and see the evolution of one competence in an individual learner. Different teachers can also share a spreadsheet to evaluate a competence from different areas. Students could use spreadsheets to gather information from a survey, for example.

How to create your own online spreadsheet? (Editgrid)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9y6NMVEAdA&feature=related> (part 1)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8iMtWqF12II&feature=related> (part 2)

**g) Photosharing.** Platforms to publish, share and edit digital photos. Through tags, etc. users can classify photos. Throughout these tools there are different means to present the images (slideshow).

Examples:

[www.flickr.com](http://www.flickr.com)  
<http://picasa.google.com/>  
<http://labs.live.com/photosynth>  
<http://photozou.com>  
[www.picture2life.com](http://www.picture2life.com)

Why using photosharing?

Students can share photos with friends or e-pals and discover new cultures and ways of doing. Students can use photo sharing to help them with oral presentations, to talk about hobbies and interests, to reflect upon a specific item, to plan a visit to a foreign country, etc. Images are very motivating and can help visual learners to retain vocabulary words, for example.

How to use a photosharing platform? (Flickr)  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8RqvKXgOc9w&feature=related>

**h) Videosharing/TV.** Tools to simplify access to edition, organization and search of multimedia material (audio & video).

Examples:

[www.blinkx.com](http://www.blinkx.com)  
[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)  
<http://video.google.com>  
[www.veotag.com](http://www.veotag.com)  
[www.youare.tv](http://www.youare.tv)

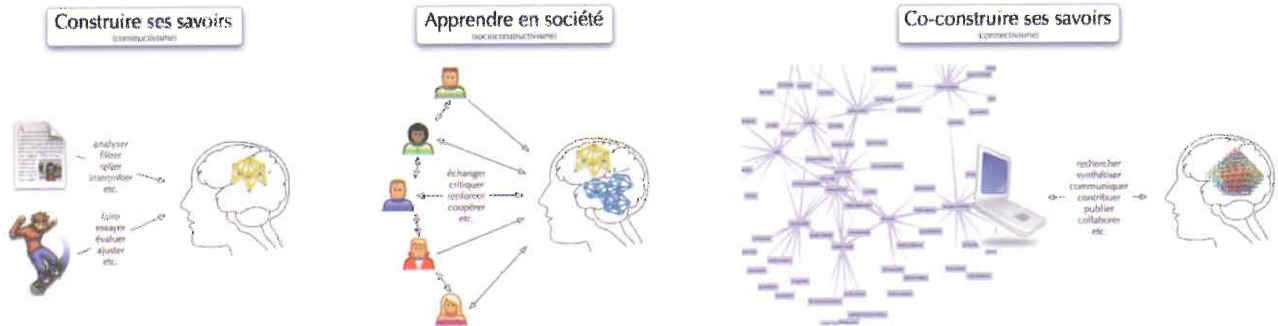
Why using videosharing?

Since videosharing platforms were created, it has been possible to find an unlimited amount of videos on line. YouTube is the most popular. Teachers can use videosharing platforms to introduce, extend or summarize a topic; it can also stimulate students to give their opinion on specific subjects; besides, students can create their own videos (recording & editing) and hang them on the net. Students would enjoy it.

How to upload a video? (YouTube)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_O7iUifbKU&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_O7iUifbKU&feature=channel)

# Contributions



From: Guité 2007

Summing up, as we can interact and construct knowledge among ourselves, learning communities facilitate the exchange of objective and subjective information, that's how shared cognition is possible.

How to use a social network in education? (Facebook, Ning, Edmodo)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CaNi0dk0zh4>

**2. Contents** are nowadays user-generated. At the present time Internet users do not only consume highly experts generated contents but contents generated by everyday users with only a basic knowledge on handling the network, so now citizens have a more active role in front of mass media.

Examples:

[www.dodgeball.com](http://www.dodgeball.com)  
[www.econozco.com](http://www.econozco.com)  
[www.friendster.com](http://www.friendster.com)  
[www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)  
[www.yoono.com](http://www.yoono.com)

Quoting Velasco (2006) "*soy el medio, soy el mensaje*" we can infer that some things which are published may not be trustworthy. But internet is a powerful tool and a lot of brains connected, exchanging information can mean a fertile cyberspace to create knowledge.

**a) Weblogs Software (blogware).** Content Management Systems designed to create and run blogs.

Examples:

<http://wordpress.org>  
[www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com)  
<http://360.yahoo.com>  
<http://blog.com>  
[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

Why using blogs?

Blogs are types of websites usually maintained by an individual with regular entries of commentaries, descriptions of events, or other material such as images or videos. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse-chronological order.

Blogs can be very useful as they can be a space where tea-

chers and students share opinion and information. Class blogs can be used to inform students about events, activities, or useful material to improve their learning process. Students can also exchange information among themselves and enrich their knowledge cooperatively.

How to create a Blog? (Using Blogger)

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bnpl0FsS\\_tY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bnpl0FsS_tY)

**b) Blogging.** It is used to improve the blogs exploitation. Readers, organizers, resources to transform HTML in PDF, or PDF in virtual books, label, search, spread, enrich the blogs use.

Examples:

[www.blogalia.com](http://www.blogalia.com)  
[www.blogdigger.com](http://www.blogdigger.com)  
[www.blogexplosion.com](http://www.blogexplosion.com)  
[www.fotolog.com](http://www.fotolog.com)  
[www.mybloglog.com](http://www.mybloglog.com)

**c) Content Management Systems (CMS) or Web Content Management** allow to modify the information quickly simplifying the creation and maintenance tasks of any web space. The user sees the result while writing (*what you see is what you get*). Most of the CMS integrate other Tools (e-mail services, music, video, etc.)

Examples:

[www.joomla.org](http://www.joomla.org)  
[www.backpackit.com](http://www.backpackit.com)  
[www.livestoryboard.comopensourcecms.com](http://www.livestoryboard.comopensourcecms.com)  
[www.cmprofessionals.org](http://www.cmprofessionals.org)  
[www.blogr.com](http://www.blogr.com)

Moodle is a Course Management System, Learning Management System, or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). In Moodle teachers can create activities, link resources, start forums, etc. Moodle keeps track of all the activities students have done, the time they have employed to do them and their mark (if they are self-evaluative).

How to use Moodle

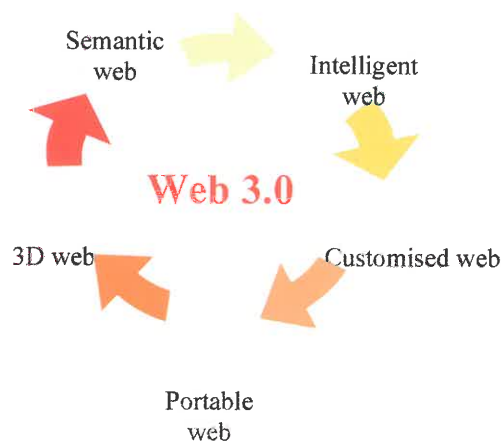
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zWOp1oq-TvI&feature=related>

# Contributions

Through this chart one can see the main differences between the 3 Webs:

Web 1.0	Web 2.0	Web 3.0
Read only web Focused on companies Home pages Owing content Taxonomy	Read-write web Focused on communities Blogs Sharing content Folksonomy	Portable personal web Focused on individuals Lifestream Consolidating dynamic content Me-onomy

Adapted from: Strickland 2007



In our current situation as English teachers in a high-school, we should focus on our present everyday reality. Nowadays that in many schools the 1X1 (one computer for every student) is a fact, we are directly and inevitably immersed in what can be called “blended-learning” (Sharma & Barrett 2007), we have to combine a face-to-face classroom component with an appropriate use of new technologies.

New technologies are really helpful as they assist us to attend different learning styles, different intelligences, different paces, different proficiency levels, etc. But in the near future our students will be guided through the net towards the completion of their personal goals, and their individual interests and needs will be fully attended.

Meanwhile, we will focus on what we have now available, which is the transition between the web 2.0. and the web 3.0. Following Cobo Romani & Pardo Kuklinski (2007) the web nowadays is organized in 4 fundamental axis:

**Social Networking:** tools designed to facilitate social exchange

**Contents:** gears to facilitate online reading and writing and possible exchanges.

**Social & intelligent information organisation:** resources to label web information.

**Applications and services:** tools, software, online platforms to offer extra services.

I will explain these 4 axis with a common structure: a) a definition of the concept and subdivisions, if any, b) Web

site examples, c) practical applications, d) a video on how to get started and e) an image example of the possible interface to be used.

1. **Social Networkings** are virtual meeting points where individuals find new and powerful interaction channels that allow groups to act as small communities. These communities can exchange contents and opinions and they are a current influential tool to communicate and share information.

Examples:

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)  
<http://myspace.com>  
<http://twitter.com>  
<http://www.ning.com>  
<http://www.edmodo.com>

Apart from the horizontal social Networks (not created because of a common aim, excluding obviously the socialization), the vertical Networks (created around an interest) are nowadays more and more frequent. Inside these vertical Networks one can find the Learning communities, among others.

Example:

<http://dimglobal.ning.com>

This learning community focuses on the application of ICT in the classroom

<http://www.classroom20.com>

This learning community focuses on the use of web 2.0 in the classroom setting

<http://flatclassroomproject.ning.com>

This learning community focuses on the relevance of cooperative classroom projects

Why are learning communities useful?

Piaget’s constructivism (Piaget 1970) argues that humans generate knowledge and meaning from their experiences.

Through socio constructivism Vigotsky (1978) already talked about how important was to construct knowledge in society. Individual’s learning takes place because of their interaction in a group, he said.

Now, with connectivism, a new theory for the digital age, Siemens (2009) states that knowledge is reached by a strong interdependence between individuals, groups and communities, since knowledge rests in diversity of opinions.



## From web 2.0 to web 3.0: the transition

**Digital resources any foreign language teacher should know about.**

By Cristina Mallol

*Nowadays there are more and more digital devices that teachers can use in their foreign language classrooms. These devices are very engaging and motivating but there are so many and they are so varied that it is nearly impossible for a teacher to master them all. In this article I present a taxonomy of the present web, which is a transition from web 2.0 to web 3.0, and from this classification and synthesis teachers could choose the most interesting tools for them to use in their classrooms according to their aims and the needs and interests of their students.*

There are plenty of resources for teachers and students in the internet, from file sharing to different type of software or virtual worlds. There is so much material and everything is so ephemeral that I think a present day classification could be beneficial for most of us.

First of all, we have to have in mind that a few years ago websites were static and changed rarely. Web material was created by experts and only a few feedback was received from readers. Thus, interaction was very limited. This type of web was labelled as Web 1.0.

With Web 2.0, material is created by everyday users, and a lot of feedback, that's to say reactions from other people, is received. How is this feasible? Social networking websites, blogs, wikis, etc. make this possible. Hence, Web 2.0 can be defined as the evolution of traditional applications that, as

it is user-centred, it fosters collaboration and cooperation among internet enthusiasts (Brown & Adler 2008).

Now Web 3.0 is coined and it is said to be a virtual space where the computer, rather than humans, will generate new information, and browsers will act as personal assistants. How will this be possible? Computers will not work syntactically (labelling through the HTML code and classifying content according to words) but semantically (organising the information establishing meaning connections among words). This semantic web (Metz 2007) will also be the first generation of the conversion of the physical to the virtual world. Furthermore, Web 3.0 will connect all our intelligent electrical devices in order for users to have access to all their information from anywhere they want.

Cristina Mallol has been teaching foreign languages (English and French) in primary and secondary schools for more than 12 years. She is a member of the research group "Competència interlingüística i intercultural en l'ensenyament i l'aprenentatge de les llengües" at the Ramon Llull University in Barcelona. She has also been working on the research project "Innovació educativa mitjançant les noves tecnologies: llengües estrangeres i traducció" in the University of Vic. She is interested in using new and eclectic approaches to engage every individual student in the classroom.

# APAC - John McDowell Award 2012

Concurs per a professors i alumnes de llengua anglesa de tots els nivells educatius

## BASES

**Oberts a professorat i alumnat de llengua anglesa de tots els nivells educatius**

Com cada any, l'APAC (Associació de Professors i Professores d'Anglès de Catalunya) us convida a participar en el **Premis APAC - John McDowell**, que tenen la finalitat de reconèixer l'esforç realitzat tant per professors com per alumnes en els seus treballs en llengua anglesa. Els premis volen promoure la recerca i la innovació pedagògica del professorat i donar un reconeixement a les activitats d'aula de l'alumnat. És per això que l'APAC us anima a presentar tant els vostres treballs com els dels vostres alumnes.



### • MODALITAT A: TREBALLS PRESENTATS PER PROFESSORS (o futurs professors)

(Crèdits variables d'anglès, treballs d'investigació, projectes, memòries, treballs acadèmics, etc.). Els treballs presentats en aquesta modalitat han de ser inèdits i han d'incloure: objectius, continguts i conclusió. En el cas de les crèdits variables també s'hi ha d'incloure el material per utilitzar a classe i les activitats d'avaluació. Pel que fa als treballs d'investigació han d'estar relacionats directament amb aspectes de la llengua anglesa.

1 premi que consistirà en un curs de dues setmanes al Regne Unit, esponsoritzat per l'Institut Britànic (l'anada i la tornada al lloc de destinació serà a càrrec del professor/a premiat/ada)  
1 accèssit que consistirà en un val de 100€ i un diccionari electrònic CASIO

### • MODALITAT B: TREBALLS PRESENTATS PER ALUMNES (Treballs de recerca)

Tots els treballs presentats en aquesta modalitat han d'incloure objectius, contingut i conclusió i han d'estar directament relacionats amb aspectes de la llengua anglesa.

1 premi que consistirà en un diccionari electrònic CASIO Ex-Word  
1 accèssit que consistirà en un val de 100€

### • MODALITAT C: TREBALLS PRESENTATS PER GRUPS CLASSE (Vídeos, DVDs, projectes, revistes, pàgines web, etc.)

Els treballs presentats en aquesta modalitat han d'incloure una introducció del professorat de la matèria indicant els objectius de l'activitat.

1 premi que consistirà en un val de 300€ i tres diccionaris electrònics CASIO  
1 accèssit que consistirà en un val de 100€

## Bases generals

- És condició indispensable que tots els treballs siguin en anglès.
- Tots els treballs s'han de presentar en un sobre o paquet tancat. La informació imprescindible que hi ha de constar és:
  - o Modalitat en la qual participa (Modalitat A, Modalitat B o Modalitat C)
  - o Nom, adreça, correu electrònic i telèfon de contacte del concursant
  - o Nivell educatiu o curs (en cas dels alumnes i grup classe)
  - o Escola i nom del professor/a
- **El termini de presentació dels premis finalitza el dia 31 de desembre de 2012.**
- El jurat estarà format per cinc membres d'APAC.
- Els premis es lliuraran en el marc de l'APAC- ELT Convention 2012
- APAC es reserva el dret de publicar totalment o parcialment els treballs presentats a la revista i / o a la web d'APAC.
- Tots els participants al Premi APAC han de ser socis d'APAC amb l'excepció de les modalitats B i C.
- Tots els treballs s'enviaran per correu ordinari o per correu electrònic a:  
APAC (PREMI APAC) Gran Via de Les Corts Catalanes, 606 4rt 2a F  
08007 Barcelona - info@apac.es
- APAC no es responsabilitza dels treballs no recollits abans del dia 30 d'abril del 2012.

Aquestes bases anul·len les bases publicades anteriorment.

# Contributions

**documentation, and submitting it.** In “Who’s the murderer?” the different cooperative groups must present their findings to their classmates.

While they investigate the murder, the students are also asked to do another parallel activity: they must write their own detective story in a group. Every chapter contains some guidelines for doing this. After solving “MURDER AT HOME” they must present their own story. They can use <http://goanimate.com>, [moviemaker](http://moviemaker.com) or perform the story, as they wish, and their classmates must solve the case.

While working on this project, the students are going to learn and practice grammar, vocabulary, listening, writing and speaking in a comprehensive and meaningful way. In each chapter, after discovering things by themselves and discussing, there is a section where students can find grammar explanations. If they wish, they can review them all together.

There is another section called **Test your Knowledge** with some whole-class review games and individual activities, where they work at their own pace. There are also some interactive online games to investigate crimes.

To review listening skills and vocabulary there is a listening and a vocabulary activity related to the topic in each chapter, made with <http://educaplay.com>, where you can create a lot of activities and insert them in your blog, sites, or even your moodle and grade your students.



## 4. Assessment

To understand assessment better, it is necessary to explain that in 2<sup>nd</sup> ESO in our “Institut escola” we work on English for 4 hours a week, and when the class is divided we participate in our school’s “Pla Lector”, which involves the three languages and lasts the whole year (<https://sites.google.com/site/plalectorverges/>).

So, each term, students do the following on a weekly basis:

- 2 hours working with the project “Who’s the murderer?”
- 1 hour of CLIL, studying History in English <https://sites.google.com/site/2esosocialstudies/>
- 1 hour (with half the students) working in our English self-access centre in the library.

Assessment is based mostly on gathering information about the students’ own progress and reflection through the observation of their detective notebook. It acts as a type of portfolio, where the teacher can assess competences number 1, 2, 5 and 6. Their detective notebook includes:

- their individual “DO-LIST”, pointing out the activities
- they decide to do as homework at home;
- their group notes about the progress in their investigation;
- their drafts of the detective story they are writing;
- their own vocabulary list; and a
- reflection on the use of English.

Their products are also important, as all the competences mentioned at the onset of the article are involved in them. They are assessed by both teachers and students using rubrics and grids:

- video stories created with [goanimate.com](http://goanimate.com);
- individual blogs in the “Pla Lector”, where they talk about books in English, Catalan and Spanish, using audacity; and
- oral presentations done in Social Studies.

Class observation is another key point for making sure that everybody plays his or her part in cooperative group work, focusing on competences number 5, 6 and 8.

Lastly, following the meaningful learning philosophy, tests are designed not to make students memorize contents but to make them think and use everything they have learnt: writing a short crime text using the appropriate grammar forms and vocabulary; listening to some people describing a crime and answering questions; and reading a detective story and trying to solve the case, among other tasks.

All the information and materials, together with the evaluation, the grids and rubrics used for assessment, are available at <https://sites.google.com/site/english2eso2/>

## REFERENCES

**Barrett, Terry; Moore, Sarah** (2010) *New Approaches to Problem-based Learning: Revitalizing Your Practice in Higher Education*, Routledge.

## WEB ADDRESSES

- <http://userwww.sfsu.edu/~rpuerter/revised/pages/problem.htm>
- [http://campus.usal.es/~ofees/NUEVAS\\_METODOLOGIAS/ABP/13.pdf](http://campus.usal.es/~ofees/NUEVAS_METODOLOGIAS/ABP/13.pdf)
- <http://chemeng.mcmaster.ca/pbl/PBL.HTM>
- <http://www.bie.org/>
- <http://www.studygs.net/pbl.htm>

## 2. Contribution to the key competences

KEY COMPETENCES	
Communicative Competences	Activities
1. Linguistic and audiovisual competence	Practicing all the skills in an integrated way.
2. Cultural and artistic competence	Learning or reading about other detective stories. Creating their own detective story.
Methodological Competences	
3. Information treatment and digital competence	Creating their own detective story using ICT.
5. Learning how to learn	Solving problems, working in cooperative groups, 'it's your turn' section.
Personal Competences	
6. Autonomous competence and personal initiative	Working in group assuming different roles to achieve a joint aim.
Specific competences related to knowing how to behave and live in our world	
8. Social competence and citizenship	Working in a group or team, discussing how to solve a problem, showing respect and helping others

## 3. Project structure

Instead of units the course is structured in chapters, and in each of them the students are going to watch a short movie created with goanimate.com. As we mentioned before, you can find all the materials at <https://sites.google.com/site/whosthemurderer/>



To work with PBL, students must follow some steps which are more or less the following ones:

1. Making a list regarding “**What do we know?**”
2. **Developing, and writing out, the problem statement in their own words** (it should come from each group's analysis of what they know and what they need to know in order to



The big question to solve is: who's the murderer? By watching the different movies related to the story and later reading the chapters carefully, the students must discover who the murderer is. To do so they must work like an excellent detective. So, the first challenge to discuss in their cooperative group work is how to investigate a crime.

In every chapter they are going to also find a small challenge like “*What are the main differences between the characters?*” or “*How do they give advice?*” mostly to focus on grammar points.

solve the crime (in this case). The problem statement is often revisited and edited as new information is discovered or “old” information is discarded).

3. **Listing possible solutions** (ordering them from strongest to weakest).
4. **Planning a list of actions to be carried out with a timeline.**
5. **Making a list of “What do we need to know?”** If their research supports their solution and there is general agreement they continue on to 6, if not they must go back to 3.
6. **Writing up their solution with its supporting**



## Who's the Murderer?

A whole-year project based on Problem-Based Learning and Project-Based Learning at IE Francisc Cambó i Batlle in Verges

By Susan Dreger

This year I have decided to take on a new challenge, say goodbye for good to students' books and feel free to plan the syllabus. As I know my students quite well, I thought that the topic to work with could be being detectives. They love working with projects and solving crimes! To make them more participative and find the answers to important questions, grammar rules, vocabulary and other issues by themselves, the project is based on Problem-Based Learning (PBL).

I have always thought that working without books facilitates the teaching-learning process, mainly because it is more meaningful, student-centered and engaging. In fact, during 1<sup>st</sup> ESO the same students only bought their workbooks, as we couldn't participate in 1x1, and we worked with the materials you can find at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/1englishverges/>

PBL learning is student-centered, promoting significant learning. The process is developed on the basis of small work groups, who go through a cooperative learning process in order to search for a clue to solving a challenging problem, proposed by the teacher, with the objective of propitiating the students' self-learning. The teacher becomes a facilitator of the learning process.

Visit "Who's the murderer?" project at:

<https://sites.google.com/site/whosthemurderer/>

### 1. Teaching Objectives

- Help students become more autonomous.
- Promote self-learning.
- Facilitate cooperation, discussion and understanding working in cooperative groups.
- Work on the skills in a more comprehensive and significant way.

through elicited conversations, discussion (think aloud protocols) and role plays; by correcting each of the individual noticing and producing written tasks (including the final task with awareness and production questions).

**Activity 3.4.5.1:** The learners' role plays are recorded with a video-camera. Learners look at the recording and make a constructive report of it as a self-evaluation as well as co-evaluation mediated by the teacher (learners will spot the correct and less proper aspects of their performance as well as that of their mates in the role play). After that, other learners and the

teacher will also provide positive feedback on the aspects that must be reinforced if necessary.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, an overview of some of the research conducted in the area of interlanguage pragmatics gives evidence of the importance of teaching pragmatics explicitly in the EFL classroom with as much naturalistic input as possible, so that learners get target-like input to process and become able to produce it. In order to enhance functional communication when teaching English as a foreign language, aspects such as pragma-

linguistics, sociopragmatics and the suprasegmental features of the target language, such as intonation, should be given an important role, especially to enhance the learners' awareness of the similarities and differences between their language(s) and their interlanguage(s). Therefore, a series of activities covering the steps of identifying, noticing, producing and pragmatic features should be planned in order to provide the learners with opportunities to practice in spite of the many inconveniences that impede the teaching of these areas.

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# Contributions

though I don't really want to." The low rise often makes the speaker sound dissatisfied about a situation or reluctant to comply with a request.

**Activity 3.4.3.2:** Students hear the sentence "Joe drove Jill to town last month" read in seven different ways. They should notice that the information focus changes to show which idea in the sentence the speaker wants to emphasise. They spot it and say which of the following meanings the speaker wants to give each sentence, using A-G to show their answer.

- A. They did not take the bus.
- B. Joe did not take Jill back from town.
- C. Joe did not drive Sue.
- D. Joe drove Jill to town, not to the supermarket
- E. It was not last week.
- F. It was Joe, not Jack, who drove Jill.
- G. It was not two months ago.

**Activity 3.4.3.3:** Students watch bits from the series "Angel", listening for and interpreting the implicit meaning of each of the characters' utterances. The teacher provides them with the intonation marks in the transcribed version, and the class discusses the real meaning of the speeches, feelings and attitudes of the speakers.

## 3.4.4. Producing

Learners' need for output as a tool for learning has been scientifically proven by research and must be covered. In this proposal teachers should especially foster work in pairs and/or groups in oral activities in order to put into practice exchanges that are functional for real-life situations outside the classroom. Taking into account the output and interaction hypotheses, learners that are engaged in interaction may learn to modify and restructure the immediate discourse, improving their pragmatic production. And doing

so in context with a partner or a group of students is not only a need and a motivation but also a way to ensure learning. At this stage the role of the teacher is mainly that of a mediator, evaluator (by giving positive and constructive feedback on the learners' productions) and observer.

**Activity 3.4.4.1:** Students are shown an exchange between Cordelia and Angel in the series, *Angel*, and asked whether the characters would express their attitudes in the same way if they were speaking to other people according to sociopragmatics. They should each provide a new dialogue for this new situation and explain their choices. They then compare their dialogue with that of a partner, discuss their choices and then practice them together. A given situation is provided with a possible solution that learners can agree with or not, depending on whether they think it is target-like or not and they can be asked to give a better solution, taking the interlocutors and context into account. This task aims at learners being able to understand why interlocutors use particular linguistic devices triggered by contextual factors.

**Activity 3.4.4.2:** Students look at an excerpt and listen for and interpret the implicit meaning of each of the utterances. They mark the intonation and try to provide the attitude of the interlocutors according to the intonation patterns and helped by what they know from the context. Once the individual activity is corrected, the scene can be acted out in groups of three (this is based on an excerpt from "Buffy the Vampire Slayer", where Buffy, Willow and Sanders are discussing Angel's return).

**Activity 3.4.4.3:** Students consider possible responses to a statement such as "Mary is going to have a baby". If given this piece of news, a possible response might be "Is she?", and different intonations would express a variety of attitudes

like the following: lack of interest, polite interest, extreme surprise or fascination. Students explain what attitude each transcription represents and provide contextual information on what reason would make the interlocutor react with such an attitude. Students can then perform each context.

**Activity 3.4.4.4:** The class is divided into groups of four. Learners prepare a role play imagining they are the main characters of each of the three series they have been exposed to during the teaching-learning process. The teacher makes three groups for each series role play and provides each of the groups with a given situation from which they have to plan a conversation in which the meanings conveyed by intonation play a great role. The groups discuss and write the script, marking the intonation patterns accordingly to convey each speaker's attitude. They can look at their class notes if necessary. Another session is devoted to performing the role plays.

## 3.4.5. Metapragmatics

According to Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, interaction is a tool for thinking and learning and facilitates cognitive development, a fact that highlights the importance of using discussion and group work during all activities focusing on pragmatics. Every time a task is corrected and discussed in class, constructive criticism makes the learners aware of their progress. Pragmatic learning takes place through interaction, and collaboration is geared toward interaction, so it is crucial to keep good records of learners' progress in their interacting ability in order for them to be aware of their capacity to deal with the topic. It will also help the teacher to consider if the learners have achieved the receptive, productive, interactive and metapragmatic objectives of the teaching proposal: to follow the learning process by collecting observational data on their spoken interaction

to facilitate feedback and self-evaluation following an input-output-interaction-feedback learning process. Influenced by Bloom's (1986) taxonomy of cognitive learning, the activities are distinguished between the stages of identifying, noticing, producing and metapragmatics. Nevertheless, the teaching-learning process is a continuum, and abilities are not completely separated (i.e. there must be feedback after each step; although learners already produce, they still should work on noticing, analysing, and distinguishing); input frequency plays an important role in pragmatics according to ILP research.

### 3.4.1. Brainstorming

This type of activity is a very stimulating way to introduce the topic, engage the learners and get feedback on their previous knowledge. It is an activity of suggestion and guessing to be started in the whole group by asking questions on what they know on intonation or asking them to guess what a speech act means with different intonations. Learners will write on a sheet of paper everything that comes to their mind, whether or not they share it with the rest of the class, so the teacher will have some written data on the group's prior knowledge. After this first stage, the explicit explanation of the pragmatic features of intonation will take place followed by the designed tasks.

### 3.4.2. Identifying

The guiding role of the teacher is very important; the learners are facing new information and s/he must ensure that all of them understand the theoretical framework. Input opportunities are essential at this stage and learners should at least be able to identify the surface suprasegmental forms of intonation through explicit instruction and awareness-raising tasks. Following the noticing hypothesis, attention is indispensable for awareness.

According to Kasper and Roever (2005) attention must be allocated to the action taking place and its immediate interactional and situational context that are indexed by pragmatic choices.

Activity 3.4.2.1: Students imagine possible responses to the statement "I got married last summer". The hearer may use the short answer, "Did you?" But the attitude would be apparent through the tone s/he used. A low fall would display lack of interest and probably put an end to conversation. A low rise would express polite interest and the first speaker would probably feel encouraged to continue. A high rise would convey extreme surprise, and a high fall would transmit a note of fascination. Note that all these feelings are added to the words uttered simply by the use of a different intonation pattern (Mott, 2005: 210-211).

Activity 3.4.2.2: Students listen to the situation already explained with the response in the different tones and the transcribed version with intonation marks and the corresponding attitude of the speaker in bold. The script will be repeated twice or three times, so the learners can notice the differences and discriminate the intonation pattern. Learners are invited to try and imitate.

Activity 3.4.2.3: Students listen to the following sentences from a boss to an employer in an auto repair shop. Notice how the intonation pattern changes according to the speaker's intention to focus on one or another item of information. A lack of attention on the part of the listener would cause a misinterpretation and possibly cost him his job.

Drive the yellow truck `to the dump (= not from the dump).  
Drive the yellow `truck to the dump (= not the yellow car).  
Drive the `yellow truck to the dump (= not the blue one).  
`Drive the yellow truck to the

dump (= do not have it towed there).

Drive the yellow truck to the `dump (= not to the Vehicle Inspection Centre).

Activity 3.4.2.4: Students look at a series of excerpts of the series "Bones". From the ones in which Temperance appears, the phenomenon of lack of pragmalinguistic or sociopragmatics knowledge on her part is discussed, then more excerpts are seen. A script version is available for each learner with the intonation pattern and function for each of the messages. The teacher then leads a whole-group discussion on the importance of pragmatics in daily communication, contrasting Temperance's actual reaction and the ideal one. Then students compare this miscommunication with the fluidity and common understanding among the rest of the characters in the other excerpts.

### 3.4.3. Noticing

At this stage, explicit teaching techniques will also be carried out in order to create opportunities for noticing the pragmatic issues of intonation. Following Schmidt's concepts of awareness at the level of noticing and understanding (1992), learners do not only have to recognise a feature but also understand it (to recognise a general principle, rule or pattern to which the teacher has directed their attention through explicit instruction and awareness-raising tasks). The role of the teacher is to create and monitor the activities that promote noticing, distinguishing, discriminating and understanding.

Activity 3.4.3.1: Students listen to and interpret the implicit meaning of each of the following utterances. In each case they are given a context in brackets to help them.

EXAMPLE: (May we go to the cinema, darling?) I sup,pose so. Correct meaning given by the learner: "If you insist, al-



# Contributions

competence of noticing and producing and metapragmatic skills as regards pragmalinguistics and sociopragmatics.

**b.** To make learners aware of the importance of intonation in English as regards speaker's meaning conveyance beyond words, the necessity of distinguishing the different tune meanings in order to respond adequately and avoid misunderstanding or miscommunication.

**c.** To develop the students' awareness of the existence of differences in intonation patterns and functions between English and Spanish and/or Catalan.

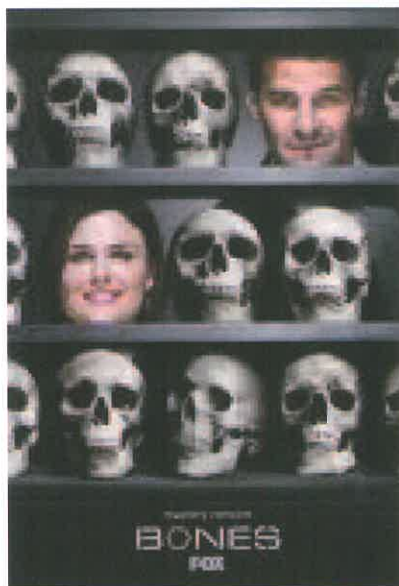
**d.** To achieve that learners feel comfortable with and are critical of their own and others' productions.

## 3.2. Methodology and material

The present teaching proposal is based on the positive effects of explicit pragmatic instructional interventions shown by ILP research. All the information regarding intonation that the learners need to know in order to deal with the topic efficiently and to avoid frustration will be taught explicitly from the very beginning and all through the teaching-learning process of the topic. The approach and aims of the teaching proposal are based on the cognitive frameworks related to FL pragmatic development: noticing, output and interaction hypotheses (Schmidt (1990), Swain et al. (1985)) and the Vygotsky's sociocultural theory developed by Merton (1968).

Bearing in mind that intonation is a suprasegmental feature of the language which can only be understood in an oral conversation in a real-life situation between a speaker and a listener, most of the tasks provided will be authentic audio-visual. Actually, intonation is a prosodic element that can be conveyed through written marks, an excellent visual support

to focus learners' attention on specific features. Therefore, sometimes after the audio-visual part, learners will see with the corresponding written version to ease the learning process, without aiming to retain or acquire the written code of intonation, as it would not be functional for a real-life situation.



As regards materials, the teacher would need to have access to a DVD player, a television or computer monitor and the selected excerpts of the episodes of the series "Buffy the Vampire Slayer", "Angel" and "Bones", which are the ones I have selected for this teaching proposal and will be seen in English with the English subtitles as a visual support. The organisation of the space is also an important issue, as it will vary a lot depending on the type of activity: pair work, individual tasks, a U-shape organisation for role plays, or in rows for the television screening. Of course, a video camera to record the learners' role plays and photocopies of the written activities would also be necessary. The reasons why I have chosen these series are: First, they are series that most of the learners may be familiar with, as they have been very popular all through the last decade and are still on TV nowadays. Secondly, they are very motivating and addictive series for youngsters, as the characters are or deal with vampires, dead people,

love and murders. Thirdly, the relationships between the characters change abruptly, with many (positive or negative) tensions because there are professional relationships and attractions, leading to many cases of double meanings, irony, changes of attitude and sentiments and a great deal of laughter on the part of the spectator. Finally, the protagonist in the three series is played by the same actor (David Boreanaz), which gives the sessions and activities a sense of continuum trying to see different intonation patterns and functions according to the different contexts provided.

## 3.3. Group of learners

ILP research shows that pragmatic ability increases with formal FL proficiency and that learners' divergence from pragmatic norms may be due to limited ability in the FL. Thus, the group to whom this specific teaching proposal is addressed should have a high level of competence in English, although, as it has been argued, intonation training may and should be started in earlier stages. Therefore, this proposal is aimed at Baccalaureate students, who have an average level of Cambridge's Low Intermediate.

This proposal can be implemented in any high school in Catalonia where the students in that grade have a similar level of competence in the TL. Similarly, it can also be carried out in language schools in levels from intermediate on. Regarding the number of students, a small group would be ideal (no more than twenty), but a large number of learners would not make it impossible to put the proposal into practice.

## 3.4 Activities

The activities provide naturalistic speech samples through audiovisual input, to guide learners' observation and raise their pragmatic awareness, to foster interactional and language-focused practice and

## 2. TEACHING INTONATION

Intonation is normally taught to learners of a foreign language, if at all, as a kind of refinement to their way of speaking, and it is commonly considered to be only worth talking about after mastery of the target language, partly due to the fact that we take it for granted. But teachers should bear in mind that

The same way erroneous stress can produce problems in comprehension, faulty intonation also makes speech very difficult to interpret.

the same way erroneous stress can produce problems in comprehension, faulty intonation also makes speech very difficult to interpret. In fact, languages do not necessarily use rises and falls in identical ways, and gross misinterpretation can arise because of this (i.e. Spanish and Catalan use rising contours in questions more than English, so Spaniards often have to ask English speakers of Spanish whether they are asking a question or making a statement). Therefore, intonation has an unquestionable importance in communication, which makes it more urgent that we should study it; it often conveys levels of meaning which go beyond the actual words themselves, sometimes playing a decisive role in conveying the information. Moreover, as intonation is so internalised, it is quite normal for bilingual speakers, or learners of an L2 / FL to transfer the patterns of their dominant language to their second language, which may lead to misinterpretations and miscommunication.

Speakers of English may use one or another intonation pattern according to what they want to stress, how they feel or what their attitude is towards a given message, interlocutor or situation. They may even be affected by an external factor of the communicative situation that affects their

Intonation often conveys levels of meaning which go beyond the actual words themselves

intonation pattern. So, intonation very much depends on pragmatic variables. Paying attention to the pattern gives clues of what the real meaning of the utterance is and avoids misunderstandings.

There is some important information about the topic that should be presented to the learners. To start with, English, Spanish and Catalan are intonation

languages. By varying the direction of the speech in these languages, we introduce attitudinal or grammatical changes, not lexical ones. There are four principal functions in English: the attitudinal, the grammatical, the accentual and the discourse function, not all of which are pragmatically relevant (see Mott, 2005, for further details).

The **attitudinal function** of intonation reflects the attitude or emotional state of the speaker, telling us, for example, whether s/he is being friendly, ironic or hostile, or whether s/he feels happy, angry or sad. Therefore, each tune carries information about the speaker's intention beyond the meaning of the bare words. Meanings may vary drastically, and it is essential to get the real

intention of the speaker to avoid an uncomfortable situation of incomprehension. The four main different possible intonation patterns as regards attitude conveyance are:

-low fall (↘Are you?) conveying lack of interest, coldness, discouraging further information.

-low rise (↗Are you?) conveying polite interest, inviting further details.

-high rise

(↗Are you?) conveying extreme surprise, excitement.

-high fall (↘Are you?) conveying fascination.

Furthermore, one of the **grammatical functions** of intonation is to distinguish between questions, exclamations and statements, to which the listener must be very aware to react and/or respond accordingly to the speaker's purpose or demand. Thus, in conversational interaction, the intonation patterns of an utterance indicate whether it is our turn to speak and what sort of response is expected. For example, a fall indicates completion, which may be seen by the listener as an opportunity to initiate a turn; whereas a fall rise may discourage him or her from this.

As regards the **discourse function** of intonation, it is interesting for learners to be aware of the differences between Spanish or Catalan and English: while the two first have a tendency to keep the accent on the last item in the intonation unit, which leads to a change in word order to focus on a specific part of the utterance, English highlights the words which are important to the meaning of an utterance though the primary sentence or phrase stress (´), different from the secondary sentence or phrase stress (˘). For example, in a broad focus sentence, no particular word is emphasised and the

stressed syllable in the last important word will be accented ("Put the yellow book on the

desk."). But any of the content words may be accented and given emphasis, leading to a narrow focus interpretation (i.e. "Put the yellow ´book on the desk" (= not the yellow pencil)).

## 3. TEACHING PROPOSAL

### 3.1. Aims:

- a. To foster the acquisition of certain skills regarding the

## Teaching the pragmatic features of intonation in the EFL classroom

By SJudith Fusté Fargas

### 1.- TEACHING INTERLANGUAGE PRAGMATICS (ILP) ON THE BASIS OF RESEARCH

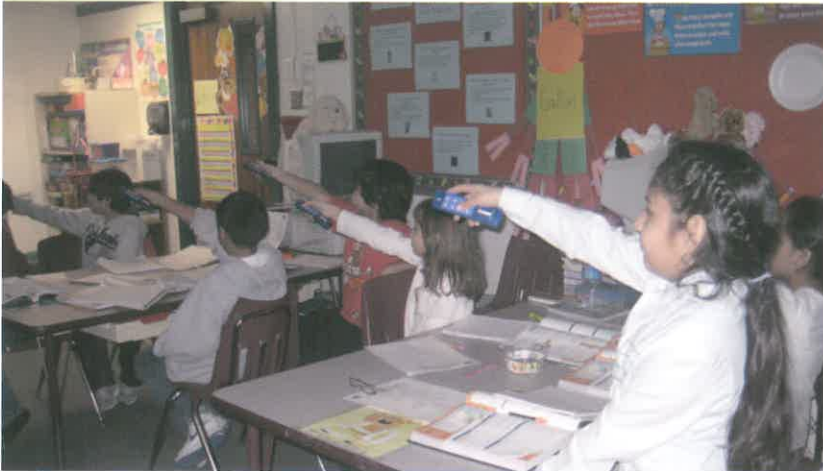
Research provides insight into interlanguage pragmatic pedagogy and gives evidence on the efficacy of instruction to foster learners' knowledge and ability to use a certain linguistic strategy and make the appropriate pragmalinguistic choices for a given speech act, taking into account the socio-pragmatic characteristics of the context. Thus, instruction is both necessary and effective for the learners to know the potential meaning of speech acts, which is the main point in ILP communication. Besides, an explicit teaching approach shows advantage over implicit teaching, as pointed out by Sharwood-Smith (1981) and Bialystok (1981). Further research by Ellis (1990) and Schmidt (1990) also agree on an explicit approach being the most effective because it includes explanations of the rules to apply as well as metapragmatic feedback for the

learners, so the input-intake process becomes easier. Although some pragmatic features are universal and can be positively transferred, most are language specific and must be taught in order to avoid pragmatic failure. Following James' idea from 1992 "the learner should be trained to develop contrastive awareness of the similarities and differences existent in the pragmatics of the languages in their linguistic repertoires" (Baiget & Irún, 2003:14).

Research conducted in the EFL context reports that, in contrast to SLA environments, the typical interaction patterns restrict pragmatic input and opportunities for practising discourse strategies due to large classes, limited contact hours and lack of adequate material providing either appropriate examples or sufficient contextual information on socio-pragmatic issues (Alcón, 2005; Baiget et al., 2000). Another

impediment reported by Alcón (2007) and Cots (1996) is the lack of theoretical conditions and research on ILP development in teacher training programmes, leading to teachers' low awareness of the topic (Alcón, 2007).

Furthermore, a lack of naturally occurring input and feedback on pragmatic issues makes the task of pragmatic language learning especially difficult. Foreign language teachers should take advantage of authentic audiovisual input, which provides ample opportunities to address all aspects of language use in a variety of contexts. Data obtained from authentic audiovisual input is more reliable, and by drawing the learners' attention to the linguistic forms and the sociopragmatic variables of selected speech events, awareness and comprehension of different pragmatic meanings are easy to be achieved.



teacher may print a detailed report. The system saves every class session; therefore, student records can always be accessed.

The use of CPSs promotes a highly competitive atmosphere in the classroom. It has the power of transforming an assignment into a contest, where every learner's goal is to come up with the correct answer.

## FLIP CAMERAS



*4th grade learner using the flip camera during a dramatization.*

Flip video cameras are an alternative to conventional video cameras. They are inexpensive, easy to handle and use and being introduced in the district schools very quickly. All classrooms at Beaver are equipped with a flip camera and learners use them to create videos of themselves completing tasks, acting out or during presentations.

## EDUCATIONAL DANCE MATS

Educational Dance Mats is an interactive multi grade program. The Dance Mat is connected to the computer and the images are projected on a screen. Then, the teacher or the learners select the game to be played and learners respond to the prompt on the screen by stepping on the correct pad on the mat. This type of activities is great for kinesthetic learners and they are required to be extremely focused and think fast before they run out of time. The image shows a 4th grade Beaver learner practicing phonics. He needs to match the word that corresponds to a given sound. Activities will get more

challenging as he gets the answers correct.

In order to conclude, just mention that apart from a universe of free downloadable software, some of which was discussed in this article, the school also uses multiple software programs purchased by the school or the district. These programs are used to tailor an individual learning plan for each learner and are used as presentation, reteach, enrichment or revision instruments. At Beaver, technology is used as a means to enable learners to continue learning outside the four walls of the classroom and engage them in higher level thinking skills and in activities that make learning fun.



This article has been possible thanks to the collaboration of:

**Mida Milligan**, School Principal at Beaver MST

**Shauna Pierce**, Second Grade Teacher at Beaver MST

**Christina Carrion**, Kindergarten Teacher at Beaver MST

## REFERENCES

- <sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_native](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_native)
- <sup>2</sup> <http://ww.voki.com>
- <sup>3</sup> <http://www.wordle.net/>
- <sup>4</sup> [www.bbn.com/utility/glossary/P](http://www.bbn.com/utility/glossary/P)
- <sup>5</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Skype>

## RESOURCES

- photo story: <http://www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?FamilyID=92755126-a008-49b3-b3f4-6f33852af9c1&DisplayLang=en>  
Audacity: <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>  
LAME MP3 Encoder: [http://www.free-codes.com/Lame\\_encoder\\_download.htm](http://www.free-codes.com/Lame_encoder_download.htm)  
Winzip (evaluation): <http://www.tucows.com/preview/194294>  
Some great resources for podcasting are: <http://www.shambles.net/pages/learning/mfolit/edupodcast/>  
Classroom examples: <http://www.learninginhand.com/podcasting/>  
Elementary Radio Station: <http://www.mpsomaha.org/willow/radio>

# Contributions

poses, learners may ask the teacher questions as they are working on their project.

Nintendo DSi has a voice recorder; therefore these kindergarten learners record their voice and often add it to their photo story. Another interesting and highly engaging sound feature is that learners may play with their voice and change the sound to a trumpet or a bird, among other sounds. In addition, Nintendo DSi also has the ability to animate stories using characters, so students may write their own story and animate it. If you are interested in reading more about Nintendo DSi used in the classroom you may read the article available at:

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/26199898/>

## PODCASTING

According to the New Oxford American Dictionary a podcast is "a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player".

At Beaver, podcasts are being used in multiple ways and many learner projects have been successful in the past. A prime example is the one titled "Did You Know? In this project learners first choose a country. Then, they find out interesting facts and information on language, landmarks, history, culture, music, art, literature and more. Next, they script it all together into a podcast entitled... Did You Know? This material is used in the classroom in various fashions.

Learners also create "How-To" Podcasts on the topic of their choice. They may be fun and informative at the same time. Classmates who listen to a "How-To" podcast need to be able to follow the steps explained and meet success when learning "how to" or whatever it is that the students are teaching. "I like the fact that I may record my speeches and presentations until I am happy with the outcome!" exclaims one of the students while working on his presentation.

In order to create a podcast, you need the following programs: Audacity, LAME MP3 Encoder, and Winzip

(evaluation). The links to download them are provided in the resources section.

## SKYPE

Skype is a software application that allows you to make voice calls over the Internet. If you call to another user of the service, it is free-of-charge; however if you call to landlines or mobile phones, there is a fee. It is common to see Beaver learners engaged interacting with students across the globe via Skype to practice the foreign language they are learning or to complete content area assignments. That way, learners have access to first hand information in order to complete a Social Studies or Science research project by instant messaging or video conferencing with their peers in other countries.

To download skype and create an account simply go to:

<http://www.skype.com>.

## CONVA SYSTEM: LCD PROJECTORS AND DOCUMENT CAMERAS

All classrooms at Beaver are equipped with a Conva system that allows teachers to manage audio visual presentation equipment by using their computer and enables them to deliver digital curriculum material. Simply by clicking on icons, the system runs all types of audio visual devices such as document cameras, data projectors or whiteboards.

The picture shows a learner sharing her written assignment. The image of the assignment is captured by the document camera and projected to a big screen so that the whole class may see what the learner is reading, writing, or drawing. It is an alternative to the traditional blackboard and offers the advantage to see the real document in detail. Teachers use document cameras to display books and articles, among others. These cameras may zoom in and enlarge images and these images may be frozen so the document may be removed from the camera and still be projected to the screen. The camera may also be twisted in different directions, so it may also be directed to the learners as they are presenting or acting out and that image may be projected on the screen.

## CPS Classroom Performance System

Classroom Performance Systems, also known as Classroom Response Systems, are individual hand held remotes or "clickers" that facilitate interactive classrooms where learners participate in formative or summative assessments.

The image shows fourth grade Beaver learners engaged using CPS clickers. Learners may respond to yes/no questions or multiple choice questions asked on paper, verbally, or on a screen.

After casting their answer choice, the signal is picked and sent to the computer. Teachers obtain immediate feedback from each learner and vice versa, learners get immediate feedback when the results are displayed in a bar graph on the screen. The bar graph shows the

different answer choices picked by the learners and which one was the correct one. All responses are stored in the computer and at the end of the session the



Voki is used extensively as a Message Board by teachers at Beaver. "This is a great way to get kids to pay attention to instructions" states Mrs. Pierce, second grade teacher at Beaver MST. "Many times I will have an avatar say the morning to do's. I also create an avatar to give special messages or introduce new topics", adds Mrs. Pierce.

A bonus feature is that Voki can be set to repeat the message after a few minutes if needed. That allows the teacher to take care of other issues that may arise in the classroom while the avatar repeats the instructions for those learners who need some clarification. Avatars are a great resource when used as a means for assessment. In this case, learners create an avatar presentation to show the understanding of what they have just learned. It is amazing to see how deeply engaged, focused, and enthusiastic they are when creating their own avatars; they have fun customizing their characters, assigning them a voice, and selecting different backgrounds. The best part, though, is how proud they feel when it is time to share their outcomes with other peers and teachers. Also, learners may include avatars in their blogs and e-mail messages.

There are many free options to create an avatar of your own, but in order to use voki, just go to:  
<http://www.voki.com> and follow the instructions.

## WORDLE

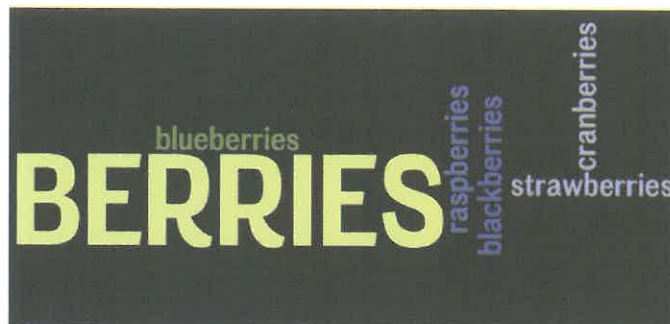
Wordle home page defines it as a toy for generating "word clouds" from text the user provides. These clouds give greater prominence to words that appear more frequently in the source text. Students can tweak their clouds with different fonts, layouts, and color schemes.

"Wordle is a great tool for brainstorming and I use this site to describe new topics", explains Mrs. Pierce. Educators may use wordle as an initial, formative, or summative assessment tool for vocabulary, synonyms, antonyms, words families, adjectives, or more abstract concepts among others. For instance, when learning about food, learners may

brainstorm what food vocabulary they already know by creating a wordle for every food category as shown in the image below; conversely, learners may create a wordle at the end of the unit to show what they learned. It is encouraged to have learners create both, so they will be able to track their progress and thus be hold accountable for their own learning process.

Beaver strongly believes that it is vital to acknowledge students effort and hard work. For that reason, apart from being posted on the school web, or saved to the wordle gallery, most student created wordles are printed and displayed in the classrooms or hallways. Some are even framed and proudly displayed as if it were an artwork.

In order to make a wordle go to <http://www.wordle.net> and select create. Type in the text you want wordled and click GO. Once your wordle appears on the screen, it may be customized. Although it can't be saved as a jpg, you can take a screen shot of the image and work with that. In order to create a shot, click the "Print Screen" on your keyboard, and paste it into another document. It's that simple! Use the cropping tool to finalize the image to your preferences.



*This is an example of a wordle*  
<http://www.wordle.net>

## PHOTO STORY 3

Microsoft Photo Story 3 is a free application that allows learners to create presentations in a quick and easy way using their digital photos. The software allows them to crop and rotate their photos, add captions, insert background music and a variety of special effects and transition styles that enable them to create a Windows Media

Video movie file with pan and zoom effects.

At Beaver, learners are deeply absorbed by projects that call for a photo story presentation. They start by taking pictures with the classroom digital camera and then they organize them using photo story. The next step is to narrate the pictures. Learners may record what is being narrated and that sound clip is applied to the picture selected. Last but not least, learners may further personalize their presentation by adding music from their favorite music clips or create music by customizing prerecorded pieces of varying styles. Once their photo story has all the special effects and is finished, it can be played on Windows Media Player or burned to a DVD or CD.

In order to see some sample stories already created you may go to the Photo story 3 home page. The fastest way to get there is to do a web search of photo story 3.

## NINTENDO DSi

"Nintendo DSi is a hand held portable game that is a great tool for younger learners to be engaged in the classroom" says Mrs. Carrion, kindergarten teacher at Beaver MST who

is a pioneer in this field.

Mrs. Carrion's young learners use the camera incorporated in the Nintendo to capture their own pictures in order to illustrate their assignments. These pictures can be put in a photo story, which may be posted in the school blog and that is available to family and friends.

Nintendo DSi is also used to conduct web quests in the classroom. Learners may use it as a search engine and as a means of communication with the teacher. For communication pur-

## Beaver Technology Center: Technology Integrated in The Classroom

by Montserrat Cortés

The purpose of this article is to provide a description on how technology is integrated in the classroom at Beaver MST (Math and Science Technology Center) which is a public elementary school located in Garland, Texas, a suburb east of Dallas. In addition, the article also gives a brief definition of every tool and program mentioned, explains how it is implemented by Beaver teachers and includes information on how to access it.

The mission at Beaver is to provide a positive and interactive environment that supports 21st century learners using an innovative, creative, and collaborative approach. Technology is integrated for all the digital natives in order to address the different learning needs and styles of all learners. Furthermore, it is incorporated in almost every activity to engage learners at high levels of critical thinking and for learners to create quality products that are relevant and demonstrate real world types of problem solving skills.

Technology is the core of the instructional program at Beaver and is supported by two computers labs, one computer lab technician, one district technology liaison, 6 student computers and one teacher computer in each classroom from second to fifth grade, and a LCD projector and a document camera in all classrooms. Moreover, the entire faculty is trained every year in the new programs and tools being incorporated in the school.

### AVATAR

An Avatar is a computer representation that can depict the appearance, mood, and preferences of a person. Cartoon avatars are becoming very popular especially after the movie that carries its own name. Beaver uses voki which is a free service that allows the user to create personalized speaking avatars.



image from [www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com)

### Biodata

Montserrat Cortés holds a degree in Anglo-Germanic philology from UAB and a Master's degree in Bilingual Education from SMU, Dallas, Texas. She taught English at a secondary school for 8 years and now holds a position at an EOI. In year 2000 she moved to the USA, where she currently lives, and where she has presented workshops at state and national conferences, published materials and articles in foreign languages teaching, and trained teachers.

CAMBRIDGE

English Language Teaching



# NEXT GENERATION

Batxillerat

*A breath of fresh air*

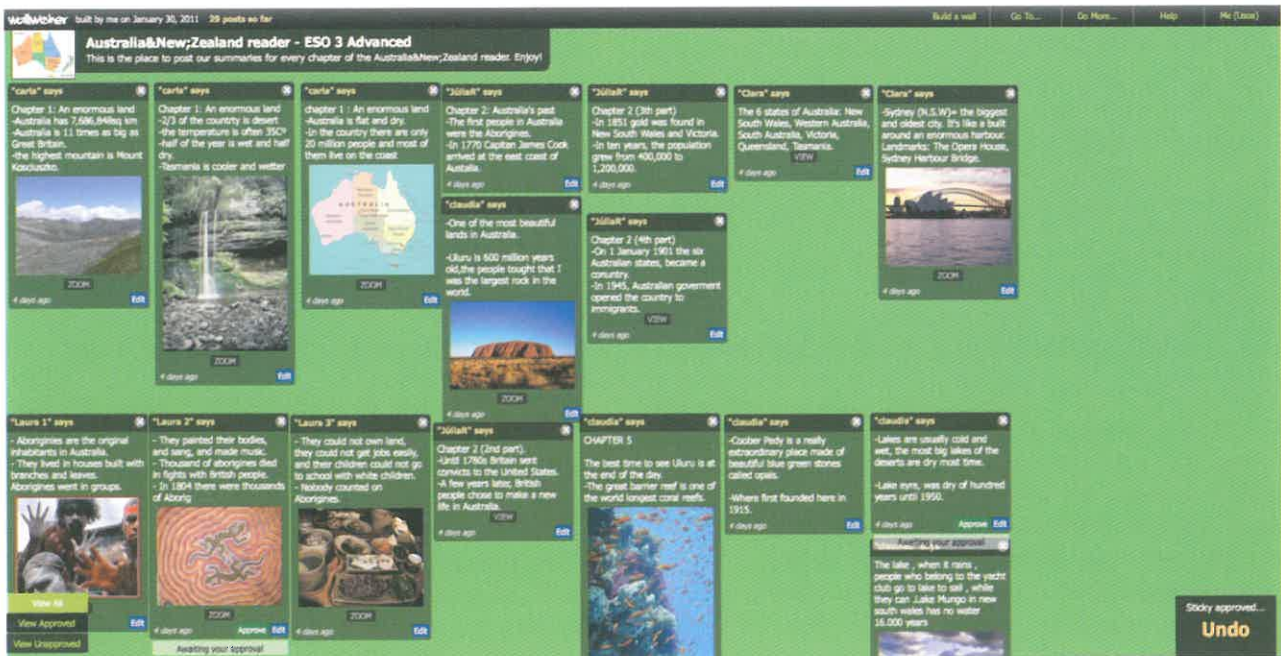




ing format and from the students' point of view it doesn't feel like writing, as texts are typed and can be enhanced with images and links. Finally, there's the element of collaboration, because every student contributes to the final product (i.e. the wall).

asking them to make decisions about their own learning.

But, of course, having said that, it's also important to bear in mind that ICT should be used as a tool to



*This is a screenshot of a Wallwisher wall that I created with my ESO 3 students to summarise the content of the reader Australia and New Zealand. After having read it in class, each student wrote a list with the main ideas for the chapter they had been assigned and wrote a short text as a post-it note on the wall. (Notice again the collaborative element of this activity). In the end, all the chapters had been summarised and enhanced with images and video.*

As the administrator of the wall, you have the option of approving posts before they are actually posted. By doing so, you can monitor what the students write and make any corrections you find necessary. This also puts you in control, which results in students taking the activity more seriously and really thinking about what they write.

So, as a conclusion, how can wikis and web tools help our students with English?

- Encouraging them to read/listen to each other and to give each other feedback.
- Motivating them to contribute and giving them a sense of ownership ("this is *our* English wiki").
- Showcasing their work (both to classmates and to parents).
- Providing them with a real audience.
- Giving them a reason to write/speak in English.
- Bringing their world into the classroom (everyday use of technology), providing variety and making tasks appealing.
- Developing language skills and competence; making them more autonomous as learners by

supplement and enhance teaching, but not the ultimate goal in itself. What's more, since technical problems might arise unexpectedly, having a plan B at hand (and loads of patience!) is paramount.

As a conclusion, I would definitely encourage all of you to just go for it and give wikis a try! You basically learn through experimenting and discovering how it works because they're actually technically very simple and intuitive to use. It's also really useful to have a look at other people's wikis, because that's where you can get a great deal of inspiration for your own. All in all, having your own wiki is all about not feeling overwhelmed and being willing to spend some time working on it! (It gets really addictive, actually!) Your students will definitely love you for it and all your work and efforts will undoubtedly pay off!

For any queries, comments or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me at [usoasol@gmail.com](mailto:usoasol@gmail.com). All the activities and tutorials on how to use the web tools mentioned are posted on [www.youareakeener.pbworks.com](http://www.youareakeener.pbworks.com) under *Teacher Training seminars*.



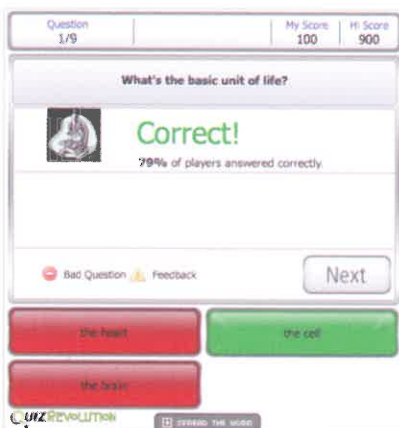
*These are the actual comments that some of the students wrote about their classmates' surveys.*

The advantage of this activity is that it's student-generated and personalised, so it's bound to be relevant for your students and therefore successful. Also, it's technically simple to use and manageable, which means students can focus on writing correct English rather than on which button to click on. The final step of the activity (feedback-giving) provides a solid reason to create a really interesting survey (as their classmates are going to take it and give their opinion on it!).

phy, sports and science). The students first drafted them and after having corrected them, they typed them out in the computer lab using Mystudiyo.

The next step was for their classmates to take the Trivial Pursuit-style quizzes and also leave a comment discussing the results they had got and how difficult and interesting they thought each of the quizzes was. This gave rise to some good group discussion on the wiki.

One of the main positive aspects of this last activity is that it can incorporate an element of CLIL (since it can cover different areas and therefore other subjects are dealt with through English). In addition, it has an element of game and competition that really appeals to teenage learners ("see how many answers I get correct"). This also gives students a reason to take the quizzes as it provides a challenge and an opportunity to be better than their classmates. This competitiveness also contributes to improving students' work, because since they know their classmates are going to be taking the quizzes, they come up with tricky questions which are both challenging and interesting.



*This is an example of a Science quiz some ESO 3 students wrote. I was very pleasantly surprised to see that they had thought of questions related to materials they were studying in other subjects, in this case, biology. (The biology teacher definitely appreciated it!)*

Another activity I did with my students using Mystudiyo was designing a general knowledge quiz. After having done one in class, students got into groups and wrote a set of 9 questions about any subject they liked (topics included history, geogra-

## 5. WALLWISHER

The last activity was carried out using Wallwisher ([www.wallwisher.com](http://www.wallwisher.com)), which is basically a website that enables you to create an online post-it wall where students can write their post-it notes just by double-clicking on the wall. In order to use it, you need to register with a username and password. You can then embed the wall on a wiki and students can easily edit it without having to register.

Wallwisher is easy to use and monitor and it's especially useful for summaries, to get students to give their opinion and to brainstorm ideas. It's got an appeal-

# ELT Convention

After this introductory stage, I asked students to adapt the text I had given them initially and change the chunks in bold to make them true about themselves (but also giving three options).

This is the text that Maria Garcia (one of my students in ESO 2) wrote following the model:

Now I'm going to tell you a bit about me:  
I'm **13 / 16 / 18** years old and I'm a **Gemini / Aquarius / Libra**.  
My birthday is in **June / July / October**.  
I **haven't got any / have got one / have got two** brothers and **one / two / three** sisters.  
I love **listening to music / watching TV / reading books** and **dancing / running / painting**.  
**Black-eyed Peas / Estopa / El canto del loco** is one of the bands I like most, but one of my favorite songs is **Bad Romance / Loca Loca / Waka Waka** because it's very **energetic / relaxing / energising**.  
I also like travelling and **Greece / Italy / Australia** is a country where I'd like to go to in the future because it's really **interesting / exotic / exciting**.  
I hate people **who are unpleasant / who are too serious / who are untidy** and **having to get up early / having to go to school / having to do my homework** is the thing that annoys me the most.  
I think I'm **cheerful and friendly / untidy and impatient / tidy and shy** and I enjoy **meeting new people / meeting my friends / going to the cinema**.  
I love eating **pizza / cheese / vegetables**.  
My friends say I'm **very quiet / talkative / untidy** and I spend hours **reading / watching films / sending text messages**. I'm also interested in **music / art / sport** and I find **sportsmen like Turé and Bojan / singers like Shakira / painters like Picasso and Dalí** fascinating.

Next, we went to the computer lab and students designed a Glogster poster to illustrate the text they had written.



This is a thumbnail of the Glogster poster the same student designed.

You can see the full-size version online at <http://englisheso.edu.glogster.com/mariasglog/>.

After a week, students had to present their posters in front of the class and their classmates were given the corresponding text with three options so that their reason for listening was finding the correct answer. The poster was used as a visual aid and it livened up the presentation. As a follow-up task, I asked students to write two questions for each of their classmates on the wiki (which the person that was being asked would then have to reply to on the wiki). As well as that, the students were asked to leave a comment discussing which poster they liked best and why. This gave them another reason to look at their classmates' work and analyse it.

Overall, the activity was very successful and the students immediately asked to do it again! It's really eye-catching and appealing to students, as it enables them to be as creative as they can, but without daunting them (because it's technically very intuitive to use). In addition, it's especially suitable for visual and kinesthetic learners and it caters for all levels, as it doesn't require much English. In this case, since I knew I wanted my students to present their poster orally I only allowed them to write keywords on it, not whole chunks of text. (However, you can also use it for students to write whole paragraphs). These posters proved to be a really good starting point for oral work and it gave the audience something to look at (and to gossip about!).

## 4. MYSTUDIYO SURVEYS AND QUIZZES

The fourth activity was quite simple, yet also very successful. It was done using Mystudiyo (at [www.mystudiyo.com](http://www.mystudiyo.com)), which I had previously signed up for with a username and a password. It's worth mentioning that I created a private account for me to experiment with and a public account for students to use. What I mean is that the username and the password for the latter were not my own personal ones, but public ones for all the students to have in order to be able to edit the survey both in class and from home.

After having done a survey on love and friendship in class, I asked students to write their own survey in groups. Once again, there were no restrictions on the topic, as long as the surveys were interesting and meaningful (not only for them!). After having corrected the draft, I took students to the computer room and they typed out the final version of their surveys using Mystudiyo. They also wrote a short text explaining the meaning of the points obtained.

The next step was for all the students to take their classmates' surveys and leave a comment on the wiki giving their opinion on which one they found the most interesting (and why), as well as discussing the results obtained and saying to what extent they agreed with them.

a robot-like voice for your avatar). The whole point of keeping the celebrity's name secret is for students to have a reason to write their text and to listen to their classmates. The fact that the avatars are posted on the wiki encourages students to do their best and create something which will be approved of not only by their teacher but also, most importantly, by their classmates.

## 2. DVOLVER FILMS

For this second activity, I used a software tool called Dvolver (available on [www.dvolver.com](http://www.dvolver.com)). This is a movie-making website which allows you to create your own short film in no time. Dvolver is easy to use and free, but it doesn't offer the possibility of recording dialogues for the film. The only sound that you can add to your film is background music. Having said that, Dvolver is perfect for making dialogues come alive in a fun way. I did this activity with my ESO 1 students to consolidate the use of *be going to* and *will*, as well as of the First Conditional. After having worked on a sample film I had made myself (which is called *Alien Invasion!* and which you can watch at [www.dvolver.com/live/movies-252329](http://www.dvolver.com/live/movies-252329)), students were asked to create their own film in pairs. The topic of the film was open, but the only condition was they had to use one example of *be going to*, one of *will*, and one First Conditional structure.

After brainstorming ideas (so as to avoid "cold writing"), students went to the computer room and started creating their online film in groups. First, they chose the characters they wanted, the type of story (the four options were a rendez-vous, a pick-up, a chase or a soliloquy) and they wrote a draft of the dialogue in their film (which I corrected on the spot). The result was really rewarding (both for the teacher and for the students!) and it was definitely an enjoyable activity with lots of language practice, but also with lots of laughs!

One advantage of this activity is that it's technically very simple, so students can work autonomously. What's more, it caters for different levels and allows for creativity, as you have the option of making a film with one, two or three scenes and to have two, four or six lines of dialogue in each scene, writing as little as one word and as many as 100 words per line of dialogue. Students were very motivated to create their films, as the activity was very manageable (the text they had to write was very short) and also appealing (it didn't feel like a writing task). As a follow-up, I asked my students to watch their classmates' films and leave a comment on the wiki justifying their opinions.

I also asked them to award a mark to each of the films (except their own!). The film awarded the highest mark was given a diploma and was shown in class. This last step of the activity gave students the chance to be the teacher for once, which the students really enjoyed (and showed themselves to be the toughest judges of their peers' work!).

## 3. GLOGSTER POSTERS

The third activity was probably the most successful of all five! For this one, I used Glogster (an online poster-making website available at [www.glogster.com](http://www.glogster.com)). I did the exercise with my ESO 2 group (a low pre-intermediate level), although you can also use it with older students (a fellow teacher got some ESO 4 students to make a Glogster poster too). The function I wanted to work on was talking about oneself (character, likes and dislikes, hobbies, etc.) and the language area covered in the oral presentation was verbs of like and dislike and also, personality adjectives.

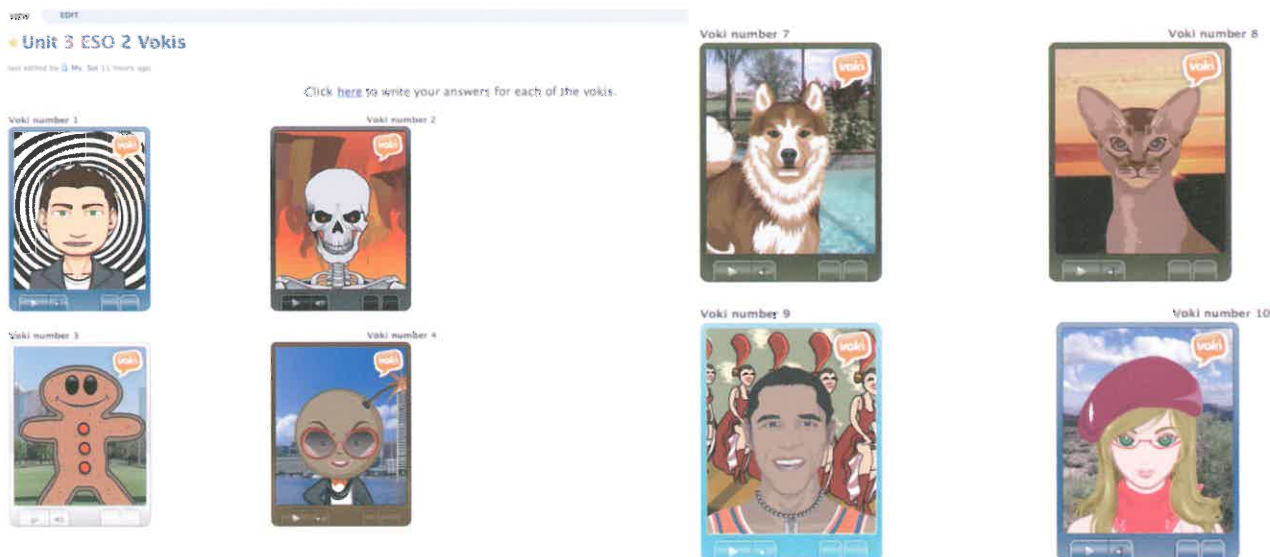
To arouse student's interest, I started the activity by giving them a text about me with three options. They had to guess the correct option, at this stage, without asking any questions. Then I showed them my Glogster poster to give them some extra hints. Finally, I presented my poster orally and students had to listen and check how many of their answers were correct.



These are some screenshots from the film *The Perfect Couple* created by two of my ESO 1 students.

## 1. VOKI AVATARS

The first activity is perfect for describing people. It's done using Voki ([www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com)) and I did it with my ESO 2 students as a way of "spicing up" the typical famous people description. After having done a few introductory tasks and having worked on the language required to describe people's appearance, students were asked to write a description of a famous person of their choice. The only condition was they had to keep the person's identity a secret, as they would otherwise spoil the whole purpose of the exercise. Once the descriptions had been corrected (first by me using a correction code and then rewritten by the students), I asked them to memorise their text (which was about 8 sentences long). Then, using a hand-held voice recorder, students left the class to record their texts one by one. (They'd done this before, so I could trust them!). Finally, we had two sessions in the computer room. In the first session, the students had to create a Voki avatar to accompany their description. They could choose to have any avatar they wished and accessorise it whichever way they liked. As you can see on the wiki page below, my students chose to "be" dogs, cats, Obama, skeletons or Gingerbread men. I didn't have anything to say about that provided the avatar was not offensive.



*These are the screenshots of some of the Voki avatars my ESO 2 students created for this activity.*

By the second session, I had already embedded the voice recording in each of the students' avatars. (With this particular group, I chose to embed the recordings myself, but in ESO 3, for example, I taught students how to embed the voice recordings and they did it themselves!). The students' main task was to listen to each of the avatars and find out (a) who was speaking and (b) which famous person was being described. In order to make the task easier, I created a chart which the students had to complete. I also asked them to leave a

comment on the wiki giving their opinion on the three Vokis they liked best and why. (This is another example of how the wiki can be used collaboratively).

After the second computer session, those students who hadn't finished completing their chart did it for homework for the following class. (Amazingly enough, they *all* had done their homework that day!). The next class, we went over the chart and finally announced who had recorded each of the Vokis to see if the students had guessed correctly.

Important tips for this activity:

1. Create an account for each class, so all the "ESO 2" students, for example, have the same username and password. This way, you'll be able to monitor who does what and to make any changes you feel are necessary.

2. Give students limited time to create their avatar. Otherwise, they'll spend longer looking for the best accessories than actually listening to their classmates' texts!

3. Provide some feedback once the activity has been completed. This works as a wrap-up slot for students to see what's been accomplished and how successful the whole activity has been. In this case, for

example, providing points for the correct guesses is an easy way of giving another reason to complete the task correctly.

The fact that the Vokis are online makes them appealing for students. Furthermore, they're technically very easy to create, so students can work quite autonomously except when embedding the recordings, which is a bit trickier the first time you do it. (However, the recording is optional, as Voki has an option to use

## Motivating 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learners: Web Tools and Wiki Activities for the EFL Class

By Usoa Sol

APAC ELT Convention, 27 th February 2011

**A wiki is a collaborative website which can easily be created, edited and used without any previous knowledge of technical computing language. It's a great tool for several users to share and jointly edit information without using email. In EFL class, a wiki holds great potential, as it can prove extremely useful for displaying students' work (for other students and for their parents to see). In addition, it provides an opportunity for students to look at their classmates' work and give feedback on it (in English, of course!). The wiki can also be used as a repository of extra resources for students to practise their listening and reading skills. Finally, it is also a place where students can contribute their ideas in English and use their English in a purposeful way and for a real audience. This also gives them a sense of ownership and a reason for using English, which makes language learning more meaningful and therefore motivating.**

I've been using a wiki with my ESO and Batxillerat students for three years now, and it's been a roaring success to date. Students are very proud of their English wiki and are really eager to contribute to it. I also find that it's made them more autonomous as learners, as well as more aware of the fact that together they can achieve a great deal more than when just working on their own. What's more, it's made them really examine their classmates' work and critique it (as well as their own!). Finally, having real people out there who could potentially look at their wiki has boosted their performance and made them really work hard! If you want to check it out, here's the address: [www.santgregorienglish.pbworks.com](http://www.santgregorienglish.pbworks.com)

In order to set up the wiki we use in the English Department, I chose PBworks, but you can also choose to create your own with Wikispaces ([www.wikispaces.com](http://www.wikispaces.com)) or Wetpaint ([www.webpaint.com](http://www.webpaint.com)).

A wiki offers endless possibilities, as you can create tables, insert links, embed documents and media

and make comments. All of this is just a mouse-click away! The other good thing about a wiki is that the teacher is always "in control". As the administrator, you choose what is posted on the wiki and what isn't. You can decide which users (i.e. students) you would like to invite and you can keep track of who's done what, and at exactly what time, as an email is sent to you every-time the wiki is modified. This works to your advantage as students know that they're being monitored at all times (thereby preventing misuse of the wiki). When it comes to editing a wiki, it is extremely simple as it's just like working on a Word document. You basically need to use the Edit button to add material or make changes and the Save button to save the changes you have made.

Here are five activities I've done with my teenage students in ESO which have worked really well. These activities can obviously also be done without using a wiki, but the wiki element adds a further step where the students have to read each other's work and comment on it. That way, students realise they're writing for a real audience (namely, their classmates), which increases the pressure on them to perform better.

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She has also held management positions in a number of Primary and Secondary schools and is currently the headmistress at the Secondary School "Les Aymerigues" in Terrassa.

For four years she has carried out the implementation of a CLIL Project (CLIL-SI) at the Secondary school "Sabadell".

Together with Núria Peláez, she has been cooperating with the research Team GREIP (*Grup de Recerca en Ensenyament i Interacció Plurilingüe*), the Action-Research Collaborative Team CLIL-SI, and they are both members of the research team at the UAB in the R & D Project "Academic discourse in a foreign language: Learning and assessment of science content in the CLIL classroom multilingual (DALE-APEC)." (2010-13). EDU2010-15783.

Since 2005/6 she collaborates with the UAB as a tutor of master students training as secondary school teachers.

She has presented several papers at conferences and meetings of *Semiimmersió* in Catalonia.

Some of her publications can be found at <https://sites.google.com/a/ies-sabadell.cat/eeixarch/> and <http://grupsderecerca.uab.cat/clilsi/>.

**Núria Peláez** has been teaching English as a foreign language in Secondary Education for more than 20 years. She holds a degree in Anglo-Germanic Philology (1986) and Spanish Philology (1995) and a Master in Research in Teaching Language and Literature.

Together with Elisabeth Eixarch, she has been cooperating with the research Team GREIP (*Grup de Recerca en Ensenyament i Interacció Plurilingüe*), the Action-Research Collaborative Team CLIL-SI, and they are both members of the research team at the UAB in the R & D Project "Academic discourse in a foreign language: Learning and assessment of science content in the CLIL classroom multilingual (DALE-APEC)." (2010-13). EDU2010-15783.

She is presently working at Institut Lluís de Requesens (Molins de Rei), and she collaborates with the *Departament de Didàctica de la UAB* in the formation of master students training as secondary school teachers.



## Overall appraisal of the experience

At the very beginning, the overall reaction from the students was a somewhat negative one, because they thought they would not be able to understand such a difficult natural science content in English. Furthermore, some science teachers did not consider CLIL lessons as a way to improve science content because of students' low English level. They thought it would be difficult to get deep into the content and get it all finished.

After some school years of implementing CLIL units, teachers (both science and English) think that CLIL can be of interest because it offers language learning and communication in context; it promotes linguistic competence as well as content learning, confidence, motivation and integral education.

On the other hand, students are proud of the opportunity they have to learn languages and Science based on a cooperative and interactive way.

To help students understand the content, the main issues are often given in the first language and the learning activities carried out in English; and CLIL units are revised every year to introduce improvements to adapt to learners.

## Conclusions

Although both experiences are based on common principles, as cooperative tasks, oral interaction, scaffolding in class, making students feel confident and able to improve both subjects, natural science/social studies and English; these common principles have been adapted to each context in their own way.

At *Institut Lluís de Requesens*, English teachers asked for the cooperation of subject matter teachers to create and implement two content-rich teaching units, but later on those teachers did not feel prepared to implement the units in their lessons themselves, so English teachers carried on the experience connecting some specific English activities while developing a Content-Rich Learning English teaching unit.

At *Institut Sabadell*, English, natural science and supporting teachers work together in a collaborative way, planning and implementing CLIL teaching units in the classrooms with the student-teachers.

Although teachers share experience and suggestions they are also aware of the difficulties in:

- √ combining expert teacher's schedules in order to teach to the same groups of students,
- √ integrating assessment of content and language, and
- √ increasing the general acceptance (at secondary schools) of the foreign language as a medium to teach content subject.

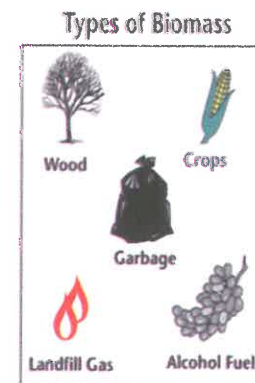
We would like to finish this article with some ideas that we have learnt during our own CLIL and Content-Rich experiences, sharing complaints and work with our colleagues:

- *Content-rich teaching units are a way of introducing an innovation where content teachers still do not feel prepared to implement their subject in a foreign language.*
- *CLIL gives a new dimension of learning English. It is not only just linguistic and far from student's context but it becomes the instrument and objective for learning.*
- *CLIL gives a new and innovative way of teaching. It is much more competent. Students learn by reflection, interaction and cooperation with other classmates and teachers.*

(Elisabeth Eixarch), a natural science teacher (Miquel Mas) and a supporting teacher (Josep Bazoco). Focused on interaction in the classroom, this unit aims at improving oral communication skills as a communicative goal.

Students at the end of the unit are expected to:

- Know about the definition and difference between renewable and non renewable energy resources, and know that the Sun is the ultimate source of our energy, and that all these resources are mostly used in order to supply electricity.
- Give examples of each type and know where they come from
- Know about advantages and disadvantages of using them
- Know about ways to save energy
- Know how to use some ICTs



## Structure of the Unit

The unit is divided into eleven sessions with the following objectives:

<p><b>1</b> <b>Introduction. Renewable and Non-renewable energy resources.</b></p> <p>Understand the general overview of the unit: Topic, materials, goals, assessment, final task. Introduction to both energy resources (renewable/non-renewable).</p>	<p><b>2</b> <b>Energy resources types</b></p> <p>Get to understand the main difference between both energy resources (semantic visual map provided).</p> <p>Learn about non-renewable energy resources (definition and types).</p>	<p><b>3</b> <b>Renewable energy resources</b></p> <p>Learn about renewable energy resources (definition and types).</p>
<p><b>4</b> <b>Renewable vs non-renewable energy resources</b></p> <p>Brainstorming previous ideas in order to organize them and prepare a mind map.</p>	<p><b>5</b> <b>Concepts and definitions</b></p> <p>Relate certain previous concepts with their definitions.</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b>Advantages &amp; disadvantages</b></p> <p>Understand the concepts of advantage and disadvantage related to energy resources.</p>
<p><b>7</b> <b>Saving energy</b></p> <p>Learn about the general process from which electricity/power is generated from an energy resource.</p> <p>Learn about how important saving energy is and how to save energy and be environmentally friendly (video).</p>	<p><b>8</b> <b>Electricity</b></p> <p>Be aware of how much energy certain household appliances consume.</p> <p>Know how to be more environmentally responsible consumers.</p>	<p><b>9</b> <b>Energy resources</b></p> <p>Be able to understand an specific text.</p> <p>Self assessment quiz.</p>
<p><b>10</b> <b>Our planet</b></p> <p>Become environmentally conscious about human effects on the planet.</p>	<p><b>11</b> <b>Final task</b></p> <p>Work collaboratively in groups of 4 students and prepare a PowerPoint presentation on a type of energy resource.</p>	<p><b>12</b> <b>Assessment</b></p> <p>Teacher assessment. Rubric/Peer assessment.</p>

*CHECK WEBSITE PUBLICATION FOR SAMPLE OF TASKS <http://www.apac.es/publications>*

# ELT Convention

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) experiences started in the 2006-2007 school year, when two teachers, an English and a science one, realized that they were teaching the same content to the same students and at the same time. Thus they decided to work together and they planned the first CLIL teaching unit on animals for students of 1<sup>st</sup> of ESO.

These teachers thought that sharing the objectives from both subjects (CLIL), pupils would learn school subjects in the curriculum while improving their language skills; and it gives English teachers the possibility of teaching a foreign language in context.

The foreign language used in CLIL classrooms, the third one in Catalonia, "is neither the designated subject nor the content of the interaction, but the medium through which other content is transported" (Dalton-Puffer 2007:3).

Three departments, Foreign Languages, Science and support, and some student-teachers of the *Màster oficial de formació del professorat d'educació secundària obligatòria i batxillerat, formació professional i ensenyaments d'idiomes* from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), collaborate in the design of the teaching units.

Every school year, a CLIL teaching unit is designed by some student-teachers with the supervision of the school teachers involved in the project.

The CLIL teaching units<sup>1</sup> which have been designed are the following ones:

CLIL Science teaching units	Target group
Vertebrates	1 <sup>st</sup> ESO
Be water my friend	
Pressure	2 <sup>nd</sup> ESO
Energy Resources	
Archimedes' Principle	3 <sup>rd</sup> ESO
Environment	

One of the innovative features of the CLIL units at *Institut Sabadell* is the fact that students attend six lessons a week of science in English. This means six hours a week learning science through English as a communicative language. This is possible thanks to the teacher-students at school during a practicum period of 6 weeks. In the classroom there are at least two teachers, one of each subject being taught.

Another feature is that every student attends CLIL lessons. For those students who have some special needs, teachers plan adapted activities and assessment.

It must be pointed out that those teachers from each department work together in a cooperative way when planning CLIL teaching units in which most of the planned activities are focused on cooperative learning.

## A sample: CLIL unit on Energy Resources

This teaching unit was taught in the school year 2009-2010 to 1<sup>st</sup> ESO students. It was designed by three student-teachers of the *Màster oficial formació de professorat d'educació secundària obligatòria i batxillerat, formació professional i ensenyaments d'idiomes* from the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona*, Teresa Badia, Mariona López and Nacho Pérez with the collaboration of an English teacher

<sup>1</sup> Most of these teaching units are available at <http://www.clil-si.org> and <https://sites.google.com/a/ies-sabadell.cat/eeixarch/teaching-units/>

## Main tasks of both teaching units (samples 1 and 2)

In general terms, both teaching units contain:

- Teacher-centred tasks in which the teacher presents some materials.
- Some tasks to be accomplished by each student individually (research, answering questions, writing activities, etc.).
- Peer or group work tasks (discussions, expert reading, classifying, etc.).
- Assessment tasks (tests, oral presentations, rubrics for peer and self-assessment, written projects (i.e. “Our own business plan”, etc.).

CHECK WEBSITE PUBLICATION FOR SAMPLES OF TASKS  
<http://www.apac.es/publications>

## Overall appraisal of the experience

The overall reaction from the students was overwhelmingly positive: they enjoyed the subjects, improved their skills in general and felt more confident. The continuing cooperative learning activities acted as a sort of bridge between stronger and weaker students.

### • Experience 2. Elisabeth Eixarch Domènech.

#### Context



Inst. Sabadell (Sabadell).

*Institut Sabadell* is a secondary school located in Can Rull, in the north-west of Sabadell, an area the population of which grew during the immigration wave of the 1960s. The students and their families belong to the lower-middle or working classes and so their social-cultural and economic level is medium to low.

From the year 2000 until today, there is a constant arrival of foreign students that makes our classrooms an interesting melting pot of different cultures and backgrounds. Therefore, teachers must

reorganize the curriculum in order to offer a wide range of opportunities to every student.

The predominant language of the students is Spanish. They only speak Catalan at school and even there it is such a hard task to make them speak Catalan because, although Catalan is used in the academic environment, (vehicular language in the school) many students use Spanish when talking to their classmates and teachers.

*Institut Sabadell* is a secondary state school, which depends on the *Generalitat de Catalunya* and identifies itself as a Catalan, state, democratic, secular and integrating centre. One of its features is to understand the education as a global process where students can develop and improve their personal capacities.

# ELT Convention

## Structure of the Unit

The unit is divided into two main parts:

Part 1: Introduction to the concept of “Business Plan”

Part 2: Creation of a very basic “Business Plan”

### Part 1

<p><b>1</b> <b>Introduction.</b> <b>Getting together to start a business.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- General overview of the unit: Topic, materials, goals, assessment and tasks.</li> <li>- General understanding of the importance of a business plan to start any business.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b> <b>Discussion. What sort of business are we going to start?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The class divides in groups of four entrepreneurs who want to start a business.</li> <li>- The students observe any existing commercial street in their town.</li> <li>-They discuss about the business they are going to start and its possible location.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b> <b>Making questions.</b></p> <p>Discussion in groups of entrepreneurs about what is important to start any business : the “What, who, why, where, when and how” of any business. (Business market study).</p>
<p><b>4</b> <b>Structure of a business plan</b></p> <p>Presentation of the four main parts of a business plan:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Description of the business</li> <li>2 Management Plan</li> <li>3 Marketing Plan</li> <li>4 Financial Plan</li> </ol>	<p><b>5</b> <b>Getting organized</b></p> <p>The <u>group of entrepreneurs</u> have to decide on who is to be the expert for each section.</p> <p>Re-organisation of the students in <u>groups of experts</u>.</p>	<p><b>5</b> <b>Observing more questions.</b></p> <p>The new groups of experts are given a list of questions and are asked to select the ones that are relevant to their area of expertise.</p>

### Part 2

<p><b>1</b> <b>Starting your own business</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-The students re-group again in groups of entrepreneurs.</li> <li>-Each expert knows the questions he/she needs to answer.</li> <li>-The students are given a road map to create their own business plan.</li> </ul>	<p><b>2</b> <b>Writing your own business plan .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Each expert works individually to present a proposal to his/her group.</li> <li>- Proposals are discussed in meetings called in regular intervals.</li> </ul>	<p><b>3</b> <b>Presentation of their business plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Each group presents its business plan as “documents” (in written form).</li> <li>-Each group makes an oral presentation (power point, prezi...) of their business plan to the class.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4</b> <b>Assessment</b></p> <p>The rubrics for assessment take into account:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The viability of their business</li> <li>2. The quality of their presentation</li> </ol>		

## Sample 1: Content- rich unit on Ancient Greece

This teaching unit is the most recent one, taught in the previous school year (2010-2011) in the 1<sup>st</sup> year E.S.O. history class and adapted to the 4<sup>th</sup> year E.S.O. English class.

On this occasion the unit was designed by three student-teachers of the *Màster oficial formació de professorat d'educació secundària obligatòria i batxillerat, formació professional i ensenyaments d'idiomes* from the *Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona* (Ana García, Mariona Gurri and Helga Martínez) with the collaboration of two English teachers (Núria Peláez and Montserrat Roquet), and one social studies teacher (Laura Beltrán).

Focused on cooperative learning, this unit aimed at promoting learners' communication skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) covering different aspects of Ancient Greek civilization.

### Structure of the Unit

The unit is divided into the following nine sections:

<p><b>1</b> <b><i>The traveling capsule</i></b></p> <p>Introduction: reflection on the extension and periods embraced by Ancient Greek civilization.</p>	<p><b>2</b> <b><i>Ancient Greek society</i></b></p> <p>-Reading activity. -Cooperative learning, learning about an unequal society.</p>	<p><b>3</b> <b><i>The city and the house</i></b></p> <p>-Reading and writing activities. - Description of the Greek house.</p>
<p><b>4</b> <b><i>Art and temples</i></b></p> <p>-Reading and listening activities. -Greek architecture.</p>	<p><b>5</b> <b><i>Myths</i></b></p> <p>-Reading and ITC activities (<i>glogster</i>). -Cooperative learning, learning about Greek myths.</p>	<p><b>6</b> <b><i>Religion I</i></b></p> <p>-Listening and speaking activities. -The Olympic gods.</p>
<p><b>7</b> <b><i>Religion II</i></b></p> <p>-Listening and speaking activities. -Watching a video. Group discussion. -A reflection on modern society in relation to an ancient one.</p>	<p><b>8</b> <b><i>Presentation of a Myth</i></b></p> <p>- Oral and writing activities. - Students present their final result in groups. - Rubric for oral presentations.</p>	<p><b>9</b> <b><i>Test yourself</i></b></p> <p>-Self-reflection on the unit. -Rubric for self/peer assessment.</p>

## Sample 2: Content -rich unit on Economics: “Starting your own business”

In 2005, our school enrolled in a *Pla Experimental de Llengües Estrangeres (PELE)* for economics being taught in English in 1<sup>st</sup> *Batxillerat*.

For this purpose it was considered appropriate to design a content- rich introductory teaching unit, specifically created to be taught in the English classroom for 4<sup>th</sup> E.S.O. students in preparation for the corresponding CLIL economics class.

Also focused on cooperative learning and aimed at improving the learners' communication skills in English, its content goal was to acquire the knowledge needed to create a very basic business plan.

## CLIL vs. Content-Rich Language Learning. What exactly am I doing here?

By Elisabeth Eixarch and Núria Peláez

One of the main demands of our present society, and one which is closely related to education, is to have a greater number of its members competent in one or more foreign languages. Being aware of this situation, investigators, teachers and institutions have been working in different programmes that aim at plurilingual education (Escobar 2007). In this context, we are going to present two teaching initiatives that were developed and put into practice in two separate state schools in the Barcelona area: one describing a **content-rich classroom** and the other one a **CLIL** experience in natural science.

### • Experience 1. Núria Peláez.

#### Context



Inst. Lluís de Requesens (Molins de Rei).

*Institut Lluís de Requesens* is a secondary state school located in Molins de Rei, a small city in the industrial belt of Barcelona, which, nevertheless, still manages to maintain the atmosphere of a traditional country town. Our students mainly belong to the middle or lower-middle classes, with an average to good socio-cultural standard. It may also be said, that the moderate number of new community members is well assimilated by and integrated in our school, where Catalan is also the predominant vehicular language of the students.

CLIL experiences started in the 2000-2001 school year, mainly promoted by enthusiastic English teachers enrolled in an *Orator* project, who asked for the cooperation of subject matter teachers to create and implement two content-rich teaching units: “Native peoples of the world” and “History of the twentieth century”, for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> ESO students.

Other teaching units, designed for the English classroom, followed the first ones, with the collaboration though varying enthusiasm of the school’s content teachers, who at that point simply did not feel prepared to implement them in their lessons themselves. Those content-rich units covered a range of topics always related to the official curriculum of 1<sup>st</sup> ESO and were then adapted to be implemented in 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> ESO as well: “Upper Palaeolithic”, “Egypt” and “Ancient Greece” are some of the examples.

## CONTENT-RICH Language Learning

## TEST YOURSELF



1. When challenged by a difficult message, the human brain pays attention to the content first. Later, if there is time and capacity, it may also pay attention to the formal features of the message. TRUE FALSE
2. Content-Rich lessons are usually taught by content teachers. TRUE FALSE
3. The starting point in planning a Content-Rich lesson is to identify a language focus. Then, find a suitable topic to exemplify and practice the language item in a realistic way. TRUE FALSE
4. Language practice in Content-Rich classrooms is closely associated to discourse genres (explanation, definition, report, debate, instructions, etc.), and to text types. TRUE FALSE
5. In CRLL, progress is seen as the capacity to evolve from producing, for example, a short, simple, explanation, full of mistakes and L1 expressions, to a longer, more elaborate one, with different types of mistakes. TRUE FALSE
6. Practicing formal language traits (comparatives, past continuous, connectors, etc.) is strictly forbidden in CRLL. TRUE FALSE
7. Collaboration among language and content teachers is desirable and tandem-teaching is unavoidable. TRUE FALSE
8. The most appropriate approach to Content-Rich teaching is task-based learning. TRUE FALSE
9. Can you name two tasks or task-types for a Content-Rich classroom which may suit your teaching context?
10. Can you write a question or a “but” about the Content-Rich approach to language learning?

Your score:

Your Team score:

**KEY:**

True: 1, 4, 5, 8  
False: 2, 3, 6, 7



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items as if that were communicative language teaching. It is easy to spot the fake: when the main criterion for success is the correctness of one particular grammar or lexical item, this

is an unmistakable indicator of content-fake planning. On the other hand, if the paramount criteria is communicative success

## Foreign language teaching in Spain has been accused of excessive formalism

taking skills, rhetorical effect and other communicative sub-skills, we may be certain that we are on the right track.

(Skehan, 1998), measured by the achievement of progressive competence levels of interactional competence, that is in accuracy, comprehensibility, coherence, appropriateness, consistency, turn-

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- g. We're a good team (establishing a common identity as a team; encouraging or acknowledging cooperation);
- h. I don't understand this (asking for help);
- i. That was good! (face-saving strategies);
- j. In English, please (reminding the rules).

Interesting teaching materials to activate this language and the associated social skills can be accessed at the *Thinking Together Project*, coordinated by N. Mercer.

### 3.- Lexis and morphosyntax

a.- *Prêt à porter language forms, simple and complex sentences or embedded clauses* which are often characteristic of one particular academic domain. Let's take for example the experiment of the peeled and the unpeeled oranges submerged in water. As in any other scientific experiment, students will be asked to **hypothesise** about the outcomes of the experiment. The linguistic form required to do that would be something like:

*If we put the peeled orange into the bowl, will it sink or will it float?*

Learning to understand and produce this sentence does not require mastering the whole paradigm of conditionals in English. Other examples of complex expressions that in a first stage can be offered to learners for immediate contextualised use are: *Tombs were carved into bedrock* (no need to focus on the passive voice as such; see language awareness section); Or *The Vikings reached Constantinople (Turkey), where they met people from Africa, Arabia and Asia* (no need at this point to present and practice all possible variations of relative clauses, but it is important that students understand that "where" refers to "Constantinople").

b.- Terminology, collocations, several word expressions or *chunks* which are characteristic of academic discourse: *libretto; conquer; skeletal system; kingdom; endangered fauna; dramatic intensity; stamina; it's got a round shape and bright colours.*

c.- Connectors: However; *was due to; In relation to; is caused by; "resulted in"*, etc.

d.- Formulaic language: We are going to talk about; *We can conclude that; Thank you for your attention.*

An updated version of the CLIL-SI planning template that considers and organises these categories is available at Escobar Urmeneta, C. (Coor.). (2012).

### 5.- Language Awareness Tasks for the Content-Rich classroom

As the planning of the Content-Rich Teaching Unit progresses, *language awareness tasks* which focus on lexical, pragmatic, discourse, morphological, syntactical or stylistic features may be built-in in order to help learners discover how some particular aspects of communication, closely related to task and content, function. Focus on these formal aspects will help learners to improve their performance.

Some sample activities of this sort are:

a.- Classifying sentences with the word "pressure" into sentences where the term is used in a scientific way and sentences where it is used in a non-scientific way (Eixarch & Peláez, forthcoming).

b.- Breaking the code: what do yellow words have in common? And red words? And green words? (key: verbs, adjectives and nouns.) (CLIL-SI, 2006).

c.- Editing the content and grammar mistakes of a set of sentences on biodiversity.

d.- Deciding whether a set of utterances were produced in a formal or an informal context.

e.- Deciding whether an utterance was rude or not in that particular context.

f.- Finding alternative ways of giving bad news.

g.- Circling all the personal pronouns on a text and drawing arrows to their respective antecedents.

h.- Splitting up a long compound sentence into shorter sentences, making the necessary changes.

i.- Circling all the connectors on a text and substituting them by other with similar meaning.

j.- Finding cognates on a text.

k.- Finding all the words conveying positive connotations.

l.- Rewriting sentences substituting some academic terms by colloquial ones (or vice-versa).

m.- Finding all the passive forms in a text (i.e. *Tombs were carved into bedrock*) and re-writing the former sentences in the active voice.

n.- Playing an adapted version of *Taboo* (guessing the word being defined by one's peer) with specific terminology related to the topic.

How many more language awareness tasks can you add?

### 6.- To conclude

Some time ago, in an interview the folk singer Raimon gloomily recalled his early experiences at school:

*"The teacher cared more for letters than words. He cared more for words than sentences. More for sentences than paragraphs and, eventually, he didn't give a damn what the essay was about".*

Foreign language teaching in Spain has been accused of excessive formalism. Raimon's anecdote and the opening quote by Mohan suggest that the problem exceeds the domestic scale and foreign language teaching.

In any case, it is certain that the time has come to balance the weight that content and the means to convey that content have in the teaching of English as a foreign language. This balance is only possible when the starting point for the lesson plan is the content, that is, the meaning that will be talked about. Catering for the language that will allow the learner to convey that meaning is essential but comes at a later stage in planning.

Although every teacher on earth might subscribe this very general statement, it is convenient to be on guard against proposals that disguise the practice of isolated morpho-syntactic

The way language is understood in CRLI simply goes far beyond tenses, phrasal verbs or superlatives.

The concepts *Content-obligatory* and *Content-compatible* language were coined by Snow, Met & Gene-see (1989) and have more recently been developed by Gajo (2007, 2011). They help the language teacher to set communicative goals

and identify the language which serves the development of any given topic.

**Content-obligatory** refers to language bits or language skills which are **indispensable** to develop and discuss any given content.

Once the academic content is established, a process of **needs analysis** begins. That implies that the teacher needs to identify the *language items* which are essential or, at least, useful for the development of the content-topic and the fulfilment of the learning tasks. For example, argumentative texts are consubstantial to History and it would be almost impossible to teach any historical content without making use of this genre.

On the other hand, one cannot talk and learn about Ancient Rome without using the terms 'empire', 'aqueduct', 'bath', 'villa', 'slave' and some other lexical items. Some time expressions will be also indispensable, for example, 'in the first century', 'BC', 'AD', 'five years later', etc. Sentence connectors and phrases expressing cause-effect relationship among historical events are also essential in the teaching of any History topic: 'They lost the battle *due to* casualties, disease and desertion.'

Last but not least, students won't be able to carry out the task—or at least carry it out in English—if they don't have the language they need at hand to negotiate among them their roles in the group, manage tasks and time, and sort out problems that may emerge as a result of the collaborative process.

**Content-compatible** refers to language and language skills which are not absolutely indispensable but fit well in the topic to be taught. For example, Roman mythology makes an excellent opportunity to learn to read or tell stories. Therefore the language of narrative fiction can very well be taught when teaching Rome, even if it is not 'indispensable' *in stricto sensu*.

#### 4.- How does language planning work in Content-Rich environments?

As has been suggested above, there are, at least, three heterogeneous *blocks* of language foci to be considered when deciding what the content-obligatory or content-compatible language is for any given Content-Rich Teaching Unit.

1.- The **discourse genres** and **text typologies** that will be handled by students in the learning tasks. We include here monologic (speech) and dialogic (conversation) texts, in the oral or written modes. In some cases, the learning goal will be that the students understand a given text, speech, documentary

**The way language is understood in CRLI simply goes far beyond tenses, phrasal verbs or superlatives**

(comprehension). In others, the students will be asked to participate in a conversation (interaction), also give a mini-talk or write a text (production). Some examples that illustrate genres and text types common in academic life are:

- a. The sequential explanation of the cycle of water (explanatory).
- b. The description of a certain type of flower / a Roman bath / a volcano (descriptive).
- c. The definition of "opera" or "rainforest" (definitions).
- d. A lab report (report).
- e. A formal presentation on the consequences of not recycling properly (formal argumentation).
- f. An informal conversation where you try to persuade a friend not to pour oil down the sink drain (informal argumentation).
- g. The story of Cleopatra (biographical narrative).
- h. Instructions to solve a geometry puzzle (instructional).
- i. A commercial on a magical slimming diet (persuasive).
- j. Expressing feelings about a shocking piece of news (personal response)
- k. ...

Sensible content teachers are sensitive to teaching genre and text types. It is difficult for students to acquire these sophisticated academic skills on their own without the guide of the teacher. Language teachers are excellently equipped to play that role. Jorba et al. (1998) present an interesting reflection on this respect.

2.- Items related to the **regulation** of the task, **negotiation** of roles, and the use of **pragmatically appropriate** language. This language is closely related to the development of the personal and social skills necessary to get the task done when working in pairs or in teams. The video-recorded conversations we have collected while students carry out tasks in pairs or small groups show two important findings: a) Making explicit that this language forms an important part of the course, contributes to increasing the percentage of target language that students use when solving tasks autonomously. And more important b) students in teams who display appropriate language skills to negotiate, regulate, self- and other and protect each other's face. Unfortunately, very few courses take explicit care of these language skills. Examples taken from peer-to-peer interactions recorded by members of the CLIL-SI team are:

- a. What do we do now? (getting organised; interpreting instructions);
- b. I'll be the organiser, OK? (getting organised; negotiation of roles);
- c. Why don't we do this? (making suggestions);
- d. it's my turn (turn-taking);
- e. You're right (agreeing);
- f. Are you sure? (disagreeing);

### 3.- Content-Related Tasks for the Content-Rich Classroom

The most intrinsically interesting topic can become a bore if approached in a de-contextualised or exceedingly scholastic way.

Thus, activities such as 'summarize the text in your own words' or 'write the verb in the appropriate tense' will probably lead to a lack of interest on the part of the learners

even if the text being dealt with is a breathtaking narrative about the Vikings. We all know that in the vast majority of cases, these exercises have a lot in common with the good old 'My tailor is Rich' type of practice.

On the other hand, a well designed task can turn unenthusiastic students into eager learners wanting to know more about whatever. Jimenez & Bazoco (2009) demonstrated this in their adaptation of a unit on *Pressure* for a group of fifteen-year-old students with special needs. The reaction of the students in the first lesson clearly showed that *Pressure* was far from being a favourite topic for them. A couple of *experiments* later, the most reluctant students were fighting for their turns to try and explain in their broken English what they had observed. Those *experiments* consisted of a) watching how some objects submerged in water floated while others didn't (peeled and unpeeled oranges among others); and b) observing that the water level rose when an object was immersed in it. It's important to remark that this was possibly the first time the students with special needs were offered the opportunity to put meaning into English words and they took up the gauntlet. It also needs to be acknowledged that the experiential approach combined with the scaffolding provided by the teacher helped the students utter meaningful sentences in English, and this produced a feeling of real success that completely changed their attitude towards English.

In short, a well chosen topic calls for a well designed task. One that fulfils the four criteria identified by Skehan (1998):

*Meaning is primary*

*There is a goal which needs to be worked towards.*

*The activity is outcome-evaluated.*

*There is a real-world relationship* (p. 268).

There are countless types of tasks that fulfil the previous criteria and combine different degrees of active involvement on the part of the learners plus a real need to talk and/or read and/or write about whatever the topic under discussion. Here are just a few examples:

Video-recording of an oral presentation on bullying (Escobar & Sánchez, 2006) to be shown to younger learners.

Solving a 'complex problem', for example, to create a week-long menu of meals for a diabetic person which does not exceed 100€, plus develop an exercise program to help them maintain a normal weight. Each team is assigned a different consumer profile (Adapted

from Matt, Noel). <http://www.uwsp.edu/education/lwilson/lessons/problem%20solving/pb7mn.htm>

Watching a *youtube* documentary on Macbeth and discussing in teams a set of four controversial statements about Lady Macbeth. Reading (jigsaw reading, perhaps?) the biography of Galileo and react to it.

Matching hazard pictograms to their meanings (Fuentes & Hernández, 2010).

In groups of three, retelling the story of Little Red Riding Hood using the first person. Student A retells it from the point of view of the girl. Student B retells the story from the point of view of the wolf. Student C listens and reports to class.

Drawing a picture of the African savannah against the clock using only four coloured felt-tips: one per student in the group. After that, writing against the clock a brief description of this type of biome and reporting to the class (Escobar Urmeneta, 2002).

Starting your own business (Peláez, 2011 in Eixarch and Peláez, forthcoming).

E-mailing peer students in an Inuit community and exchanging information with them (Vidal, 1998).

Critically reading a number of advertisements on slimming diets and spotting the tricks advertisers use to sell products (Sanmartí & Oliveras, 2011). Miracle English learning courses would also make an interesting topic of analysis.

Listening to a teacher explanation on colonialism and doing an associated task.

Finding information about Mozart and completing a quiz.

Writing a quiz about Mozart to test another group.

Drawing the sketch of a pyramid and preparing an explanation to present the class.

Designing and/or playing trivia contests on Impressionism.

Writing a letter to the Council of Europe to convince them to fine the Town Council for the pollution in your town.

Running dictation on the characteristics of the Casa Milà (the monument to be studied next week in Social Studies).

Writing a *do's and don'ts* list on saving energy at home.

Reading aloud one particularly interesting text on Frida Kahlo and discussing some aspects of her life and how it influenced her paintings.

How many more can you think of in five minutes?

The reader will surely have noticed that all tasks listed above are defined by a topic. Content and task need to combine well.

### 4.- Content-obligatory and content-compatible language

In the foreign language classroom, catering for language is important because of its primary focus on language learning.

*Homo Sapiens Sapiens* in certain ways made it possible for learners to easily relate our ancestors' accomplishments and struggle for better living conditions to the students' own way of life and to their personal concerns.

If the school has a strong CLIL project, the English teacher (ET) usually works in collaboration with the content teacher (CT), and if so, the ET will probably work following to a large extent the subject-matter programme. For example, designing a number of activities that will help provide linguistic and conceptual support to the students when they face the challenges set in the content classroom. Teaching materials following this approach have been successfully designed and implemented by a variety of teachers. Eixarch (2011) for example, designed a *webquest* on vertebrates, where students could practice and improve the reading skills necessary for the CLIL science classroom. Another example of collaboration between the language and the content teacher is presented in Pallarés & Petit (2009).

However, Content-Rich lessons are taught by many English teachers in non-CLIL environments as part of the ordinary work carried out in their classrooms. In this case, the ET has more freedom and will probably choose a topic taking into account not only the curriculum in a broad and imaginative

**Content-Rich Language Learning is against the profusion of trivial subjects that pack coursebooks.**

**Content-Rich lessons are taught by many English teachers in non-CLIL environments as part of the ordinary work carried out in their classrooms**


sense, but also the interests of her students and her own interests as well. It is clear that if a teacher does not feel anything special when listening to Reggae it is quite unlikely that she can make her students interested in it. Some teachers opt for introducing topics that will be useful for

their students in the near future. Peláez for example organises simulations on how to create a new company, a content to be covered in a more academic way in Business Studies the following term (Eixarch & Peláez, forthcoming).

Topics that have proved to be successful among primary and secondary students are:

*Water* (Medina & Serra, 2012); *Rainforests* (CLIL-SI, 2006); *The Road 44* (Parellada, forthcoming); *Painting landscapes* (Meneses, 2011); *Chemicals in Everyday Life* (Fuentes & Hernández, 2010); *Environmental Art* (Jorge, 2008); *Ancient Rome* (Barrull, 2007); *Musical Theatre* (De Dios, 2008); *Extinct Animals* (Batlle, 2008); *Roman Hispania* (Barrull, 2008); *The African Savannah* (Escobar Urmeneta, 2001); or *A trip back to Ancient Greece* (García Antón et al., forthcoming; Eixarch & Peláez, forthcoming).

Fifty more topics worth trying may include:

- 
1. A Medieval Castle
  2. Africa
  3. Amazing insects
  4. Animal weapons
  5. Apes
  6. Apples
  7. Banking
  8. Bats
  9. Bees
  10. Birds
  11. Butterflies and moths
  12. China
  13. Colour
  14. Dolphins
  15. Earthworms
  16. Electricity
  17. Fabrics
  18. Fire
  19. Trees in the neighbourhood
  20. Fossils
  21. Frogs
  22. Glass
  23. Heroes of our time
  24. Measuring
  25. Metals
  26. Middle Ages
  27. Money
  28. Mozart
  29. Oceans
  30. Oranges and Lemons
  31. Paper
  32. Plastics
  33. Poisonous animals
  34. Ponds and rivers
  35. Pyramids and mummies
  36. Reggae
  37. Reptiles
  38. Rocks and stones
  39. Sharks
  40. Snakes
  41. Spiders
  42. The Aztecs
  43. The Incas
  44. The life of a Masai boy
  45. The life of a Quechua girl
  46. The moon
  47. The poles
  48. The Sahara desert
  49. The sun
  50. Whales

Coursebook sentence	Content conveyed
1. <i>London is the city where the Prime Minister lives.</i>	Is this a distinctive trait of London? Or is it, perhaps, some exceptionally relevant piece of information for adolescents?
2. <i>Curry toothpaste is more original than mint toothpaste.</i>	It certainly is, but ... which adolescent has ever decided on this criterion when shopping for a tube of toothpaste?
3. <i>We're flying to Barbados on the 5th of August.</i>	How many secondary students will ever need to say a sentence like this? On top of this, as a teacher, you need to be brave to teach this sentence in schools based in certain socioeconomic contexts.
4. <i>Alejandro Sanz is a vocalist and a guitarist.</i>	Breaking news! Now what?
5. <i>I'm shy. I don't like meeting new people.</i>	How plausible in the lips of an adolescent? In an English lesson or in a therapy session?

Table 1. Source: coursebooks from different publishers currently available.

As in the Assimil method, it is clear that these sentences appear in the coursebook not because of the content they convey (they are meaningless), but because they illustrate a certain grammar point, which becomes the main or even the only goal of language teaching and learning. If the reader goes back a few paragraphs and revises Mohan's definition of language, she will probably come to the conclusion that to teach the former sentences and to teach a language are two very different things.

The point I'm trying to make is that when course or lesson planning begins by identifying grammar points (structures), which are subsequently fit into sentences and texts, what you obtain are sentences like the preceding ones or texts on horoscopes, celebrities or inexistent rock groups which are good at displaying instances of the grammar under focus, but useless to teach how to put one's meanings into words: the true objective of a foreign language classroom. But is there an alternative?

The terms *Content-Rich Language Learning* (CRL) and *Content-Rich Teaching Units* (CRTU) (Escobar Urmeneta, 2010) have been coined to label different samples of good practice observed in foreign language lessons taught by English teachers, some of which will be given credit later. Many of these teachers report that they became interested in the *Content-Rich* approach to planning and teaching after having observed the interest that some academic topics in CLIL courses arouse in their learners when approached in meaningful ways. Others, just because they tried to find a way out of the boredom caused by the well-known *double spread* on present perfect which the coursebook presents to learners year after year (and that they never seem to master). The *Content-Rich* approach shares its main principles with the *Content-based* approach initi-

ated in the eighties in the USA. The main difference between one and the other is that the latter was developed to cater for the linguistic needs of immigrant students with low English proficiency (LEP) schooled in the American system, while the former offers a model for planning and implementing EFL teaching units.

The main difference between CLIL and CRL is that CLIL is used to refer to lessons taught by content teachers in slots labelled other than language, whereas CRL is taught by English teachers in slots labelled "English". The truth is that the younger the students are, the more blurred become the borders between one and the other, as wisely noticed by Felip Falcó (2011).

But does academic content really attract young learners and adolescents? There are different factors that may contribute to success or failure in the implementation of the approach. Two of them are extremely important: the topic itself and the task set to the learners.

## 2.- What sort of Content-Rich topics for foreign language classrooms?

*Content-Rich Language Learning* is against the profusion of trivial subjects that pack coursebooks. CRL is also against trivialising significant topics. This implies avoiding tackling relevant issues without the necessary rigour (dolphins being described as 'fish', for example). Or, needless to say, as a mere excuse to display and practise any given morphological feature. So what sort of content topic will work in the English classroom?

Almost any topic, if presented appropriately, can gain the favour of the students without being trivialised. Evnitskaya (Accepted) shows that presenting information about the

## Content-Rich Language Learning in Context-Rich Classrooms<sup>1</sup>

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**Understanding, expressing and negotiating meanings (that is, content) is the driving force of language learning. However, this well proven psycholinguistic principle is often neglected in foreign language classrooms. In this article the main principles of Content-Rich Language Learning are presented, together with examples and tips that may help teachers to implement those principles in their classroom practice.**

### 1.- Why do we need Content-Rich language learning?

**Content-Rich Teaching Units** are teaching sequences designed to promote the learning and teaching of a foreign language taking bits of intrinsically attractive academic content as the starting point. This implies that it is the *content* to be explored (for example, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, *Renewable energies*, *Pasta* or *Anorexia*) which determines the selection of the language items that will be presented and practiced.

According to Mohan (1986),

*A language is a system that relates what is being talked about (content) and the means used to talk about it (expression). Linguistic content is inseparable from linguistic expression. But in research and in classroom practice, this relationship is frequently ignored. In subject matter learning we overlook the role of language as a medium of learning. In language learning we overlook the fact that content is being communicated (p.1).*

The human brain –and believe it or not, pre-adolescents and

adolescents are human beings and do have a brain— is designed to decode linguistic input for meaning in the first place in order to achieve successful communication. Only when the content has been successfully deciphered --or composed into an utterance-- does the brain release resources to work on those formal traits of the language that build the message up, and which make it comprehensible, accurate, coherent, appropriate, consistent or appealing. However many pedagogical proposals to foreign language teaching and learning tend to disregard this core principle. Let's take the example of the well known sentence "*My tailor is rich*", which has been frequently parodied for its utter implausibility. Language teaching approaches have made great progress since the seventies of the last century, when the boom of the Assimil method was at its peak. Or have they? Table 1 presents a collection of sentences extracted from language practice exercises in best selling course-books commonly used in secondary education in the past decade. A critical humoristic look into the content conveyed by these sentences may shed light on this respect.

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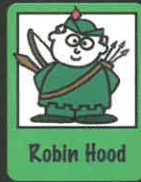
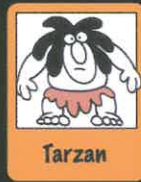
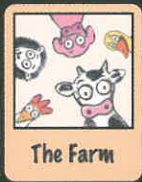
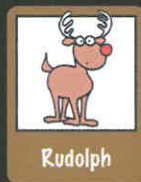
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- See my students growing personally.
- See that some publishers trust non native teachers of English to become part of their writing teams to develop teaching materials. Unfortunately this does not happen all the time and so publishers miss great opportunities to add the very relevant knowledge that teachers here have.
- Meeting teachers and sharing ideas.

I would recommend everybody to 'move' within teaching. By saying that I do not mean necessarily changing school, but taking all opportunities to add something new to your teaching, like participating in projects such as Comenius, e-Twinning, etc or setting up a new project in your own schools, attending new courses, participating in seminars, etc.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- Importance of using English at all stages in our classes.
- Teaching the language of the classroom to student teachers (great source of input in real class situations). The language that the teacher needs for classroom management purposes. Nobody seems to pay too much attention to this!
- Giving enough opportunities and time to our learners to use oral English. Just think: How much time did you speak in the last class that you taught yesterday? How much time did the learners spoke or had the opportunity to speak? Draw your own conclusions. But remember that if learners do not get enough opportunities to use the language, most probably they will never

speak it.

- Taking English beyond the classroom walls (ICT provide wonderful opportunities!)

- Progression.
- Evaluation (oral in particular).

It is desirable to have an oral exam together with the written parts at all levels. Including an oral test in les *Proves d'accés a la universitat*, would mean a very important change and would encourage many teachers to use more English in their classes.

- Linking levels: infantil, primary, secondary. The pupil is the same from infantil until maybe university. The teachers are different.

- Sharing ideas, projects, good practice and materials.
- Reflecting on results achieved and changing ways of doing if necessary.

- Media in English.

- Keeping our English updated.

- Would it be a good idea to check teachers use of English? If so, how?

Through learners' performance?

- ICT: *sin prisa pero sin pausa*.

The learner is just one person from beginning to end of the process. **It is the teachers' responsibility to ensure continuity and progression in the learning process.**

So, in order to complete the building, in order to have students who can understand and speak English within a reasonable period of time, in order to enable them to also read and write, the building needs not just good planning; it also requires hard work, collaboration and some changes.

*Perdoneu, però algú ho havia de dir!*

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understand, speak, read and write in English on a rich variety of topics. Besides, different proposals offered by the teacher can help the mixed ability class to progress.

But still today and far too often, in secondary classes the contents are based on grammar.

#### • Contact with primary levels

Learners come from primary where they have devoted long hours to learning English, some of them very successfully, others not so much. It seems to me really important that teachers in secondary get to know what the children did in primary and how they did it, so that nothing is lost on the transfer primary-secondary. Ideally teachers in primary and in secondary working in the same area should be in close contact and plan actions together to pave the way primary-secondary.

#### • VOCATIONAL / ARTISTIC STUDIES

I do not have any experience on these levels but I would say that oral communication, ICT and useful language presented in CLIL projects should be considered key words.

#### • EOI

What about offering CLIL courses: math, art, history, literature . . . in English? Not necessarily long courses! Perhaps the students attending those courses would find the language really relevant to meet their needs and make their learning even more exciting.

Now, because I am here to share things with you I would like to summarize things that are or have been important for me at some point in my life, some of them very motivating, some others not so much.

#### WHAT IS DEMOTIVATING FOR ME?

- To see that after a few years of tuition in English, children cannot understand or cannot say anything in that language. Imagine a child that started learning English at age 5 and after a few years in primary education, let's say in year 5, when the child is 10 years old, that child can say nothing or really very little in English. Or a secondary pupil we cannot use the language at all when he/she is in Year 4. We must ask ourselves 'what happened?' What's going wrong? I am completely convinced that there is at least one aspect in which we all can collaborate to build that building nicely: using English in our classes from beginning to end, using English naturally: to greet the children, to present activities, to organize activities, to make groups, to refer to the materials, to set up tasks, to tidy up . . . for every single thing! If we don't speak in English to the learners, who is going to do it? What are we there for? Besides, how many hours do babies need to understand and speak L1? Now think of a child who starts learning English at

age 5, let's say one hour per week. How much time does that child need to gather all the necessary input before being able to use the language? Now, if on top of that his/her teachers do not speak in English to him/her, how long will the process be? Or better, will that child ever be able to speak English just attending school?

- To notice that the wonderful world of ICT develops so fast that I cannot catch up with everything. That ICT offer a wealth of possibilities to be used in classes that sometimes I cannot handle.

- To see my student teachers taking grammar as a starting point to develop their teaching units. There are many other ways of approaching a TU that are more interesting and motivating. Most pupils will find the materials based on grammar boring and with little challenge involved in them.

- Being unable to find the English word or expression that I need in a particular situation, which makes me aware of the difficulty in the process of learning a foreign language and on how easily the language can be forgotten. It also makes me aware of the constant need for methodology and language courses and also for situations where I can use the language. The thing is that I do not feel guilty about it all, because I have always done my best as regards learning English and keeping it updated and fresh. But it is not always easy.

#### WHAT IS/HAS BEEN MOTIVATING FOR ME?

If I am motivated, pupils and teachers around me are very likely to be motivated too. I know that if I do something that I like doing, as a person or as a teacher, people around me are likely to be happy too. I know this can vary a lot among people, but in my case being able to do different things within teaching has made a real difference:

- Spending a year in UK as a language assistant when I was young.
- Participating in groups de treball and seminaris
- Participating in *Pla de llengües estrangeres* with amazing professionals.
- Doing my *licenciatura*: even my family situation was not easy.
- Working in primary and in secondary schools. We should always have opportunities to visit other levels. We should be allowed and pushed to do it because you get wonderful insights on how pupils develop. Working at the Centre de Recursos de Llengües Estrangeres (CRLE)
- Working at the Departament d'Ensenyament and at University
- Setting up ANIP and ANIN training courses. The courses are offered by the Departament d'Ensenyament and are addressed to teachers of English in infantile (ANIN) and primary (Department of Education).
- Writing course books and materials.
- Collaborating with APAC
- Hear comments like: 'The teacher in my class uses English all the time' (heard from practicum student teachers)

## PRIMARY

In primary basically the same principles as in "infantile" apply:

- **Time of exposure to English**

By offering not only the number of compulsory hours devoted to English according to the curriculum, but also CLIL options, schools can increase the weekly number of hours of exposure to the target language.

- **Amount of comprehensible input.**

The issue of making input comprehensible to the children remains exactly the same as in infantile. However, if the children used English at all stages in class in infantile, no doubt that there is a lot done already. The primary teacher will have to find ways to communicate with the children, not only as regards routines and activities used in class, but also for the contents to be presented. Again, deep training for student teachers is needed on this.

- **Content.**

Progression is needed! Using colours, numbers and animals again will give learners a sense of no progressing at all, which will demotivate them immediately. New contents and new language should be presented in an accessible way but always taking a step ahead. However, it is important that, while presenting new content and new language we take all opportunities to re-use language that is already familiar to the children. By doing this we will help the children to gain confidence in their learning.

- **Model offered**

Same as in infantile, learners are able to pick up the new language easily, so the linguistic model offered must be really good.

- **Using ICT.**

Some children will show really gifted at using ICT in primary. Besides, using ICT can make things really easy for the teacher in many aspects. For example, something like recording the children's voices, which was a real problem some years ago, is now something quite easy to do. Besides, we should remember that ICT can be a lovely resource to expand learning, not only in the classroom but out of it.

## KEY WORDS FOR PRIMARY

The ones mentioned for infantile: effort, creativity, oral understanding, oral production, reflection plus the following:

- **Reading:** an incredible source of input that is often neglected, in particular when talking about extensive reading.

- **Writing:** young children who are trained to express themselves through writing in the foreign language are really taking a huge step forward in their learning.

- **Simple reflections on the language:** Some children will appreciate very simple reflections at different stages. This does not mean taking grammar as the basis of your teaching, but as something embedded in the tasks that you propose in class. For example, some very

young children will notice that in English we say 'a green ball', not 'a ball green'. In that situation, why not offering a simple explanation to the class? Some learners will pick it up. Others will not. Fair enough.

- **Progression!** I personally consider progression a very important issue (please refer to 'Content' above). Children who started learning in infantile should be able to understand and use the language nicely at the end of primary.

- **CLIL:** yes indeed. CLIL for example in the form of a short Science or Art project, or a whole subject done in English, but don't forget to include stories, songs, chants, poems . . . in your classes, i.e. all those materials that mean an incredible source of input and enjoyment for the children, because they are an inherent part of childhood. As regards games I have to say that for many years I told everyone to use games as an essential part of our teaching. Games can work really well in infantile and primary classes. But I have noticed that some teachers, student teachers in particular took games too literally and paid attention to the game itself but not to the language involved in it. Our focus is the language not the game; if using the language is not an essential part of the game, we'd better forget about it.

- **Evaluation.**

Evaluation tasks should always be an encouraging means for the learners to continue learning and for the teacher a way to rethink and improve his/her teaching.

- **Reflection.**

Again, observing, sharing and reading will be paramount to make our teaching even better.

## SECONDARY

Same as for teachers infantile and for teachers in primary, I'm very pleased to acknowledge those secondary teachers who are working really well and developing really interesting projects in their classes. Their students can understand and speak lovely English. Well done!

However, far too often one or several of the following points are neglected in secondary education:

- **Using English in class.**

In secondary education English is expected to be the only language of communication, both by teachers and by learners. After quite a few years of tuition in infantile and primary, pupils should be acquainted with English and the teacher should make English the only language to be used in class. Not easy at times, but a real need.

- **Grammar.**

Traditionally grammar was the engine of teaching/learning English in secondary. But experience shows that perhaps grammar is not the best engine for a high number of secondary students and that a different focus is needed. In class interesting contents will generate the need for the appropriate language -and for the grammar too, so that students can

ICT practice in our classes. We must aim at naturally incorporating ICT in our teaching at all levels. In infantil too.

## KEY WORDS

### *Effort.*

Effort when talking about those little kids? Yes indeed. Those of you who have experience in infantil classes know that children will learn very quickly all the rules. If you teach them, help them, guide them, support them and push them to work, they will do most of the things that you propose in class. If you just offer them activities that do not imply any effort or challenge, things will not work nicely and the leaning process will not develop as desired. This does not mean that your classes should be boring at all.

### *Creativity.*

It is a bit surprising that the word 'creativity' does not appear in the curriculum for infantil as often as I would have expected. I believe that the magic of creativity should be present in all actions that we take in infantil, EFL included, and guide our teaching, offering lots of opportunities to develop the children's capacities to be creative and innovative in their lives.

### *Oral understanding and oral production*

We have already talked about the need of making input comprehensible to the children in order to ensure understanding. No doubt that good oral comprehension will lead to oral production. And, after all, oral understanding and oral production are the final aims of our EFL teaching.

Oral production is not easy. It would be too long to stop and reflect about theory, but the fact is that speaking a new language is always a big challenge for anyone. For little children it is a challenge too. Again, the teacher will have to be 'the artist' to create the highest possible number of appealing situations in class in which the kids want to say or have to say something in English. If the teacher uses English at all stages in his/her class and if the children understand what is said, they will immediately interpret that this is the language of communication and will try to use it. Sometimes the children will not achieve success, but the teacher's support in each situation will be crucial to encourage them to use the language more and more.

### *Evaluation*

I must admit that over the years I have changed my mind when I talk about evaluation. While years ago I just trusted the idea that little children would learn somehow and that perhaps it was time to simply enjoy the teaching/learning and to wait until the children grew up, now evaluation for me is something that should be present in each of our teaching actions. In infantil, I look at evaluation mainly as a steady process that should become a great source of information for the teacher in order to ad-

just his/her teaching to the group. Of course evaluation actions in infantil basically refers to systematic observation and annotations and not to giving marks to the children.

### *Reflection*

Teaching little kids offer immense learning opportunities to the teacher. Observing how the children react to your proposals, how they develop in terms of understanding and how start producing orally, can give incredible hints on how to continue teaching them successfully. Sharing findings with colleagues, trying to find an explanation to children's reactions and improvements and reading about new research and its results, can be really great moments for the teacher and can also lead to great improvements in class.

## TEACHER'S PROFILE

Now the question would be: In order to achieve success, what is the teacher's profile that we need to teach English in infantil?

For the reasons already mentioned, the teacher of English in infantil must be:

- A teacher with the best level of English, not a B1 or similar, but ideally a C1.
- A teacher able to communicate easily with the children by making himself/herself understood in the target language at all stages in class.
- A teacher who is good at using strategies and materials to engage the children in the tasks proposed.
- A teacher who is deeply familiarized with the dynamics of *infantil* classes.

The aspects above are not numbered because a good combination of the four is necessary since they are equally important.

## QUESTIONS

- Do universities provide with appropriate pre-service training addressed to EFL *infantil* teachers?
- To what extent do *nous graus* take real needs into consideration in terms of methodology and in terms of language?
- Should student teachers who want to teach English in the future do a part of their practicum abroad? I mean, should they stay in a school in an English speaking country? I do not mean an Erasmus student, but a real practicum stay in order to get familiarized with as many teaching issues as possible as well as improving their English. Should this stay be compulsory for all future teachers of English? I believe that a solution should be found for this.

The other side of the coin is: Do student teachers take enough opportunities to improve their English and to expand their training by staying in countries where the language is spoken? Should this be compulsory? (teachers should be acquainted with language and culture too. By living abroad they can cover both objectives)

*thought that it would be important to discuss the building plans to ensure continuity in the building.*

*The new team of workers started using bricks for the walls instead of the glass panels that had been used to build the first floors. When a few more floors had been built, the building looked a bit chaotic.*

*Besides, some workers noticed that some of the glass panels on the bottom floors had not been fixed properly by the first team of workers and complained that they had to do extra work: first trying to fix the glass panels that had not been properly fixed on the first floors and then putting the bricks on the top floors. They said that it was a really hard job and they felt that they would be unable to finish the building.*

*By now people in the city were very angry. They wanted the building finished.*

*But, you know, part of the new team of workers, the ones who were working in the interiors of the building were quite pleased with their work. They thought that the interiors on the bottom floors were really nice and they tried to link their work with what was already done. It was not easy at times, but they made the effort to understand the techniques that had been used, they got the right materials and they achieved continuity in the building. The result was really nice, but they couldn't finish the building because they had to wait for the walls to be completed. So when people in the streets ask them about the building, their response is always the same: Not finished yet! And nobody knows when the building will be finished! The end.*

Perhaps we could try and recognise ourselves as one or several of the characters in the story. The fact is that architecture and teaching have a lot in common: good planning, collaborating, working hand in hand with other levels, continuity, or using the right materials in the most adequate way are common features to both. Establishing a parallelism between both can be a good starting point for reflection. Very often we wonder why our building is not finished, why the final aim is not achieved and our pupils are unable to understand and use English after quite a few years of tuition. If we look at our teaching situation, what do we find? Let's go through some of the different teaching stages.

## INFANTIL\*

*The word 'infantil' is used here to refer to children 3-6.*

When we focus on **Educació infantil**, the foundations, the question is to start or not to start teaching English 'that early'. Some voices argue that we should wait until the children are older and have developed cognitively. But in my own experience and after seeing the great results achieved in many of the schools that start teaching English in pre-primary, I would definitely go for a positive answer. Very young children can learn English quickly, particularly in terms of understanding the foreign language, copying the new sounds and naturally reproducing the language that is part of daily routines and activities. Offering very young children the possibility of learning English in *infantil* is a wonderful idea and a great opportunity to lay solid founda-

tions for future stages. However, in order to achieve satisfactory results, schools and teachers should go through some considerations before undertaking a project that can affect the whole building, i.e. the whole learning process of the children.

Those considerations could be summarized as follows:

- **Time of exposure to English.**

Daily contact with the language is desirable and necessary, even if the periods of tuition do not exceed 30 minutes. Schools that can offer only, let's say thirty minutes a week should seriously consider waiting until their offer can be expanded.

- **Amount of comprehensible input.**

Children are equipped to understand lots of input, not just names of colours, animals and a few numbers. As long as that input is made comprehensible to them, children will amaze the teacher with their understanding. None of us can imagine talking to our own little son or daughter only in terms of colours, animals and numbers, can we? Why should do that with our pupils? Our little pupils deserve the best. Otherwise the foundations will not be strong enough. The teacher is responsible for making input comprehensible to the children. The process of learning how to make input comprehensible to children requires thorough training until the teacher becomes the 'artist' who is able to lead the whole class in the target language; a class in which the children understand and enjoy every minute of what is going on. Obviously this implies that great emphasis should be put on training student teachers on this issue.

- **Linguistic model offered.**

Remember that we need solid foundations. Otherwise the building will be very unstable and we will miss a lovely opportunity to build a really nice and solid building. If the teacher cannot offer a good model, he/she is not a good option to teach those children. Very often schools choose the teacher with the lowest level of English to teach in infantil. What a great mistake! The children need variety, wealth and accuracy, simply because they will absorb everything that is offered to them. So, offer them the best!

- **Content.**

It has already been mentioned that limited lexical sets, like names of colours or animals is not enough. As a matter of fact, offering only that type of content to children in infantil is really poor. If there is a stage or teaching/learning cycle in which the children are ready to learn about a great variety of topics, this is infantil. As long as the topics are engaging for the children and they are presented to them in the right way, children will be immediately enthusiastic and join in any activity proposed. Stories, songs, TPR and game-like activities among others can be part of very successful little projects, some of them CLIL type, in which the language will be simply an inherent part of them, ready to be picked up by learners.

- **ICT.**

Children are immersed in a society where ICT plays a key role. Even if ICT is not one of our strengths, we, teachers, must prepare ourselves to offer the kids good

## When i Grow Up i Want to be a Teacher

By María José Lobo

Mestra d'anglès a primària, Catedràtica d'ensenyament secundari (anglès),  
Professora Associada a la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

I have always felt part of APAC. Ever since the Association was born I have always been linked to it in a way or another. I know the hard work involved in managing everything, the effort invested on improving the teaching of English in our schools and the commitment of the managing committee. That is why I felt so honoured to be asked to be the keynote speaker on APAC's 25th Anniversary.

On my presentation I tried to share my thoughts and experience on TEFL with a very welcoming audience. They made me feel at home. This is how I started my presentation: telling a little story that deals with architecture much more directly than with TEFL. Here it is:

**STORY:** *Not finished yet!*

*Once upon a time, in a far away country, there was a nice city where people lived very happily. Life was really pleasant there and people got on very well with each other. One day they decided to build a very high building. They wanted to build a really important building; one of those buildings that are well known around the world. They asked an important architect to design the building plans and to cost the project. When the plans were ready, everybody looked at them and felt really proud: they would have a really impressive building. It would be an eco-building, a domotic building. It would have green roofs, solar panels, . . . everything! Yes! They would have lots of visitors in the city. Their city would become a really important city.*

*Soon the works began: bulldozers and other machines cleared the land. Then they dug deep trenches for the foundations. At that moment a little problem appeared: some people thought that the foundations as they were at the moment would be too big and they would have to use tons of concrete to build them and they would spend too much money. And perhaps there was no need to spend so much money. After all, once the building was finished, nobody would see the foundations. So there were meetings*



*at the Town Hall to discuss this point. The architect told everyone that solid foundations were needed for the type of building they were about to build. But he did not convince everyone and finally the mayor and her committee decided that they would cut down the amount of concrete to be used. And so they did.*

*The workers continued building the skeleton of the building. They also started building the walls. But after building a few floors they had to stop because, due to personal circumstances, the architect had to leave and the team working with him had to leave too. So a new team took over. There were new workers and a new architect too. The new and the old architect did not know each other. They lived in different parts of the city, far away from each other. None of them*

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At present she coordinates two Teacher Development Programmes: ANN and ANIP organized by the Catalan Department of Education and addressed to kindergarten and primary school teachers of English. She also lectures at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Faculty of Education, where she is involved in training student teachers of primary and in the Pre-service Teacher Education Master Course for Secondary Teachers of English.

She is co-author of ESU award winning *Big Red Bus* and *Super Bus* (Macmillan) and *Sunshine* (Pearson Longman) course books for the teaching of English in primary education.

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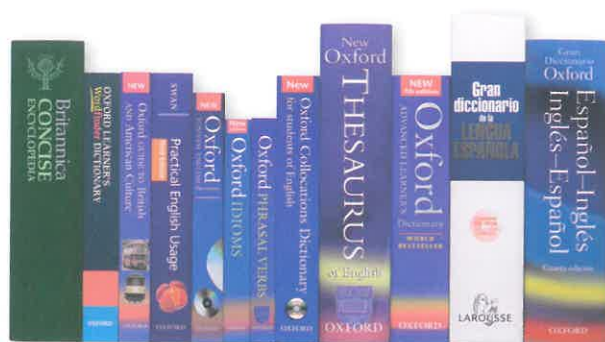
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either at home or at school. We use structures such as: *where's ...?/I don't know/maybe he's ill/ she's at home/she's on holidays/ he's at the doctor/ he's at the dentist/ etc.*



We then sing the weather song and keep track of the month's weather on a chart, which can later be used to work with graphs. We practice structures such as *how many cloudy days?* We look at the calendar to see the day of the week and we complete today's date and weather corner. We then play a clapping hands game singing the days of the week. We include different games to revise the numbers and check today's number in the calendar.

We use boxes to revise vocabulary, structures and songs. They are always a mystery so it keeps pupils motivated and aware. We use the pass the parcel game and when the music stops, that pupil is in charge of opening the box and revealing its content. Sometimes we find a set of song cards to sing, a set of flashcards to revise or objects to use in the classroom. Songs are a good way to learn and practice functional language.

We use the knock, knock game with boxes. We introduce some objects in the box and one pupil holds it while pupils sing: *knock, knock, what's in the box, 1, 2, 3, open the box! What's this?* The rest give the answer.

In P5 we have started to introduce today's menu. The pupil who is in charge reads the menu in Catalan and

then tries to find the proper flashcards to stick as starter, main course or dessert.

## What to take into account

- Create a positive atmosphere: The teacher should provide with a relaxed non-threatening atmosphere so pupils feel at ease, enjoy lessons and are motivated to take part in the activities.

- Pay attention to all pupils: Pupils at this age are very demanding and need one-to-one attention. Although some classes are very large we should make sure that pupils are not left out. They need emotional reassurance and tend to be very insistent asking for approval and trying to catch the teacher's attentions. Whenever possible, try to convince the school board of the importance and the positive results to split groups.

- Give positive feedback: Well done! Fantastic! Great! Use praise to motivate them and plan success oriented activities that all of them are able to do at a certain extent.

- Do not waste time: Take advantage of every single minute and activity. Do not abuse of colourings and drawings and always provide language when doing individual tasks. Every situation in class is perfect to introduce and use language.

- Promote communicative activities so that pupils can interact using meaningful context. Pupils have fun when they can speak English.



- Do not forget to revise! Young pupils learn incredibly fast but they can also forget even faster. Make sure you give them different activities to revise what they have learnt. Although teachers can find it a bit boring, pupils surprisingly love to repeat the same things over and over.

- Do not underestimate children! Keep this always in mind so pupils are more capable than we think. Do not hesitate to set difficult tasks. Sometimes pupils might need extra help but you will be surprised with the outcome.

to it and time and energy are not wasted in procedures.

It helps to develop memory and listening skills as young learners are making an effort when they need to memorize vocabulary, songs, chants and stories at a time when they have an optimum level of brain plasticity.

Pupils are great imitators. They copy everything the teacher says and does. This is why the model needs to be very good and teachers should provide a good language level. At that age pupils are still learning and coping with new sounds and therefore their ability to assimilate English sounds is highly developed. The belief that teachers with a low level of English can conduct English lessons at lower levels is no longer true, as the chances to damage children output are very high and errors learned at initial stages are difficult to mend.

At these ages children are less inhibited. They have fewer psychological barriers than older pupils. Although we always can find shier children than others, in general, they are not worried about getting things right or wrong. They take chances and experiment with language. They learn by playing without even realizing that they are learning and they have fun doing it.

Pupils learn very fast. They absorb new learning at a thrilling speed. They also forget very fast and this is why revision is of outmost importance.

Families are also very supportive of the idea of learning English as soon as possible. Sometimes even obsessed with the idea and can put a lot of pressure on children. Nevertheless, as they show interest and children realize it, they become more motivated to learn and to show later on what they have learnt in the English class that day.

As we said before, we are getting very good results and we only started two years ago. Therefore, we strongly believe that English should be an important part in the curriculum of *Educació Infantil* and should be planned seriously and in a consistent way. A session a week is never enough, so the school board should be sensitive to languages and provide for a good planning since P3. If this is not the case it is the specialist's duty to struggle and negotiate until an agreement is reached. We are aware that this is not an easy task as there are a lot of teachers who still see English at school as a threat to Catalan language.

Learning languages helps to develop linguistic strategies and mechanisms that can be transferred to the learning of other languages. Therefore, the more languages the better. Different studies in this field state that bilingual children learn a third language more easily than those who only master one.

## What can Routines offer?

- Allow participation: Learners need to know what

is expected of them in the classroom. So it's very important to give very simple strategies to make students involved in the classroom. For this reason, establishing some simple routines early on is extremely important.

- Foster autonomy: We think that simple routines help learners to understand what is expected of them, why and when, so they make them feel more secure. At the same time helping to create a safe learning environment, learners become more autonomous. We set up the routine from the very first start, but as pupils build confidence, they start to develop it and it then becomes theirs. Once the children are comfortable with the routines, they usually find ways to improve by them-



selves and use routines spontaneously as in a game both inside and outside the English classroom.

- Provide revision: Repetition is very important because learners at these ages forget easily. So we have to take it into account when we plan our routine lessons.

- Provide a tool for effective classroom management: While doing routines, activities must be short and we have to change them frequently because pupils get easily bored. We must also use effective classroom management when we change from one activity to another, when we start or finish the lesson, when we move from one classroom to another or just in the case we want to catch the pupils' attention. Short songs are a very effective way to do so as they like them, they can sing them and get automatically involved.

## Our English Routines

We usually set pupils in a semicircle either sitting on chairs or on the floor, so we all can see each other and favour interaction.

We start our sessions with a good morning song. Then we greet each other using a range of answers to choose from: I'm fine, thank you/ I'm so and so/ not bad/ etc. We then move onto the attendance routine. We use student's pictures and names cards to stick

## Everyday routines in educació infantil

by Sònia Marcos Bou and Carme Dilmé Burjats  
<http://blocs.xtec.cat/escolaelsestanys>



Escola Els Estanys is a new school which began in September 2009 in Sils. Although we have very few economic and technical resources, we are happy to have a very good team of teachers who are very open-minded and always willing to try new things and work very hard.

This year the school has 5 units (P3, P4, P5, Year 1 and Year 2) and 9 teachers which include 4 teachers who are also English specialists, although only 3 are conducting English lessons at present. We start teaching English in P3 and pupils have 3 hours of English per week.

We know it is better to work in small groups when dealing with diversity. So we work with half groups in the English lessons while the other half are doing Maths or Catalan. All sessions include a set of routines as starters and then all kinds of activities involving games, stories, songs and hands-on tasks, both in the classroom and in our vegetable garden as part of our project "I live in a vegetable garden"

We both have previous experience in CLIL projects carried out in other schools and so we strongly believe in this method as the best way to learn a foreign language together with extended exposure to the language and lots of opportunities to use that language. As we think that pupils need consistent and repeated language input, we find Routines to be a very useful tool for that purpose.

### Why introducing English in *Educació Infantil*?

We also think that English should be introduced the sooner the better as children need plenty of language input before being able to produce language. They undergo the so called *Silent period* that covers different time length depending on each child.

Pupils also have more time for learning. What we've realized so far with previous experiences is that by beginning English in *Cicle Inicial*, by the time they are in 4th grade they are able to be quite productive. Therefore, if we begin earlier this achievement is going to be reached before. We're now stating, and evidence is showing us, that children in 1st grade who had consistent exposure to the language in P5 are now starting to

produce chunks of language on their own and are beginning to communicate with simple structures. Although not all of them are grammatically correct, they are effective from a communicative point of view. (E.g: "The dibuix is very beautiful", "very good Alcía", "In my house I ... a cat", "can you help me?", "I don't know", "where's ...?", "I'm hungry", "Can I open the window?", "today it's very cold", "tomorrow holiday", etc.

It's been proved that children develop positive attitudes toward language and cultures as they take English very naturally and by the time they are in grade 3 or 4 they do not question the fact that things are done or taught in English. They are already used

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Sònia Marcos i Bou graduated in translation from UAB 1991 and enjoyed a Year leave at Kyoto Gaikokugo Daigaku 1991-1999 She graduated from UdG in Ciències de l'Educació in 2002 and has been a Lecturer at UdG since 2006. She has been an English teacher since 1993. She was Co-responsible of PELE English is Natural at Escola Sant Jordi (Bonmati) 2006-2009 and presently she is Coordinator of PELE My vegetable Garden at Escola Els Estanys (Sils) 2010-2013.

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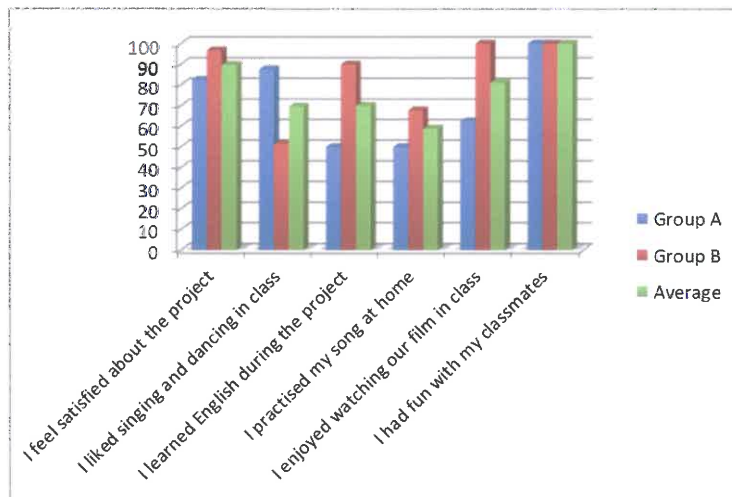
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## 12. What was the students' feedback?

At the end of the project I had my students fill out a short anonymous questionnaire. These were the results of some of the items included:

This graph shows the groups with the most radical answers. Group A represents the answers of the students with the lowest level of English and lowest acceptance of rules, and group B is the ones with the highest level of English, who were the most motivated and creative. I have also analysed the average of the two to be able to envisage a more objective perspective of my students' feedback.

In all the groups, the students' attitude was very positive during the project. Curiously enough, awareness of learning English and practicing it is higher in students with a high level in the language but the fun aspect is relevant for all students. One can say that this



was a satisfactory experience for everybody because they all:

- shared what motivates them in and out of school and what their aspirations are.
- achieved individual and team recognition.

I often meet these students in the school and they remember the project as having been so much fun, contributing to their motivation in learning English, and subsequently, their test results.

## 13. Conclusion

This project has been very much enjoyed by the students and also by the teacher. Praising is a wonderful tool and it works in a two-way direction. In fact we should enjoy the process of creation and share the enthusiasm and fun with our students. Maybe there are ways in which schools won't kill our students' creativity, as opposed to what Ken Robinson would say.

A way to become better teacher is to try to spark student motivation daily. As Zig Ziglar, one of the best motivational speakers, states: "People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing, that's why we recommend it daily." Maybe there is a way for us teachers to have the luxury of enjoying the process of teaching without needing to work so hard at discipline and classroom management and become more relaxed and emotionally calm.

As Collen Wilcox says, "Teaching is the greatest act of optimism."

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quickly and organized their tasks in an autonomous way, with scarce teacher supervision. They participated actively not only within their groups but also proposing ideas for the whole project.

Group B, the students who were the most motivated and interested in the subject, were excited to do something special. Having great writing skills, the subgroups wrote the script without much help from the teacher. They were very creative and also competitive, which benefitted teamwork. Nevertheless, the most surprising response was in the rebellious group (group A). One day, I came into class and proposed my intention of doing a musical. I told them that it was a vote of confidence. Suddenly, they showed a special interest in the project and an awakening from their usual boredom. Of course, I had to plan the lessons much more carefully, and my supervision was more important than with the other groups. As we worked on the musical once a week, it was also an object of negotiation and a way to promote their daily work. The demotivated, undisciplined ones surprised me and even themselves, doing things they were good at like acting and dancing. They changed their atti-

tude to the subject and accepted norms from that moment on, both while working on the project and in the other English lessons, consequently improving the teacher-student relationship.

I took some time to reflect on the issue of motivation and how it has affected this project and my professional praxis. Now I know that the secret is to find out what motivates our students and see if you can marry what they care about with what you care about. A key factor is to figure out a way to connect people to the best part of who they are and who they can be, and then they will take care of the rest: every person has a child inside that enjoys attention, care and affection. Sometimes a want for specific emotional needs is quite obvious: to get people to do what they do best and makes them feel good, share their skills, be creative and view their contribution to that common purpose as meaningful. Leading by example, we should give them the opportunity to learn from each other and achieve individual and team recognition. Moreover, learning has to be viewed as relevant, working on more authentic projects (realia), stepping away from the course

book for a while and assigning them tasks based on their strengths and interests.

Decalogue:

1. Know your team! (What makes them happy / satisfied?)
2. Praise!
3. Demand respect!
4. Group togetherness!
5. Social time!
6. Succeed / fail together.
7. Pick a motivated person to do the talking!
8. Be creative!
9. Be in the success vibe!
10. Be motivated yourself! It is the way to effectively motivate others.

Afterwards, the project evaluations showed me that motivation was self-correcting and self-generating. This motivation also helped me to correct my students' bad attitudes and lack of involvement. In addition, I have recovered my own motivation in hard times, and it has always generated a better group and teacher-student dynamics, more interesting projects and improved exam results in a much healthier class environment for all.

## 11. Creativity is a surprising experience

Some students enjoy showing off their artistic skills and some others simply collaborating with their classmates: their level of involvement depends on their personalities but all students want to participate to a large extent.

Asking students for creativity is a mystery. That is why a teacher has to show this ability first. Obviously, surrealism may come up, but it is worth the try. It is highly recommended that teachers have an idea up their sleeve for when the class debate cannot reach a satisfying cohesive point. When we ask our students for

some creativity, we have to be very persuasive so that they view it as something accessible for them and for us, as long as we give clear instructions and objectives.

Boys and girls equally surprise themselves and others delivering their lines or performing, because there is a role for everyone when preparing their performance and choreography, whether it be a simple or more sophisticated one. They will assume roles more or less spontaneously depending on their personality and their level of embarrassment. Otherwise, the teacher can help

groups to distribute their tasks.

Sometimes creativity can be shown in the editing process; teacher and students can add fashionable details to the video such as nice transitions, the credits list and other special effects like cloning or Chroma key (green background). As far as the creativity of the teacher is concerned, this project allows for variations: working on specific songs, composing new songs, singing instead of lip-synching, music styles, writing a more directed plot or other given details in the plot, setting or character creation.

# ELT Convention

From this point, they are going to develop five scenes: script writing and musical numbers (usually playbacks). The teacher supervises the script writing, helps with linguistic problems and suggests ideas. The level of complexity depends on the students' level of language and creativity. Once the teacher has read the script and gives his / her feedback, each subgroup can type the text in their site so that the class can read it. Then they can

start rehearsing and practising their performances and dance numbers.

Given that there are always main characters and minor characters in stories, there has to be a role for everyone, and those students with minor roles will be in charge of helping in recording sessions, as sound technicians and stage hands. They will also interview the actors and record their impressions and comments to view them on Moodle.

These assistants and

some others willing to help can help in editing the film, but most importantly, work on the musical *libretto*. The musical leaflet should include a cover, a synopsis of the story, the actors' photographs and description of their roles, the lyrics and if possible the scores to be viewed after watching the film.

Students are intended to design a poster, write a synopsis, the characters' description, type the lyrics and after watching the film, the compliments and thanks.

## 9.- How to evaluate the project

Assessment can be diversified at every step of the project. Moodle is very helpful for recording every activity in an extremely efficient way. Also, teachers can follow the process of creating the musical by supervising the level of achievement of the contents mentioned before.

This is a simplified version of the assessment sheet:

From my experience, I recommend this project for the two last months of the academic year, once a week, as consolidation. For various reasons, its success is guaranteed at the end of the last term; otherwise, students would want to

do another one the following term! Depending on the songs, there can be different objectives, but the communicative, social and motivational can be the same for any version of *My School Musical*. Students' engagement in the project can be a bit irregular but it can compensate other issues like language practice.

MSM: Assessment sheet	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4	Session 5	Session 6
Language						
Communication						
Social/group work						
Engagement in the project						
Computing						

## 10. Motivation and reward

"The task of the excellent teacher is to stimulate 'apparently ordinary' people to unusual effort. The tough problem is not in identifying winners: it is in making winners out of ordinary people." K. Patricia Cross

For several years now, I have implemented the project *My School Musical* in different groups, mostly in the second year of secondary education in Catalonia. It seems to me that this year is the most suitable one because at this stage in adolescence, they still show some childish aspects and they are not too shy to sing a

playback, and, what interested me the most is their increasing interest in music. My experience has also been very positive with students of third year of secondary school, who were extremely enthusiastic, showing excellent group autonomy and creativity.

My intentions with the groups were to motivate and to reward the students. I studied the cases of Group A (the demotivated, undisciplined students with a low level of English), Group B (the well-behaved ones with an excellent level of English) and Group C (the well-behaved students with a rea-

sonably good level of English).

For group A, I needed an engaging project, something different in my lessons, to turn the negative dynamics upside down and find a welcoming attitude in the eyes of my students, who were so used to hating the English subject.

Group B and group C deserved an awarding experience in class after having worked hard and maintained a reasonably good level in the foreign language. They already had a positive attitude to the English subject and were delighted to do something new. Most of the subgroups took responsibility very

## Watching the musical

Watching the musical and sharing with other groups' musical films.  
Evaluation.

### 9) Students' feedback

In the electronic leaflet, there is a section with the student's reactions to their experience of being part of the cast in a musical, how they felt during the creative process, and the reactions to watching themselves on the screen... with short interviews.  
Questionnaire.

### 10) Teacher's feedback

Praising the students for their efforts and collaboration.

## 8.- The role of ICT

Recently the use of Moodle has become widespread in schools. This new tool is leading the way to a new kind of communication between students and teachers. It is a new interface for sharing information, with multiple applications: as a notice board, library, search engine, and exhibi-

tion room, notebook or scrapbook for students... The possibilities are still being explored and expanded upon.

We can use this tool in *My School Musical* at every step of the process. Firstly, the group will have a course, a site area set up exclusively for the teacher and

the group. They can follow the notice board, where the teacher shows the planning of the project and the recording sessions. Once they have chosen a song (with the teacher's orientation), each student works on worksheets provided by the teacher in their subgroup folder on Moodle.

<p>MY School Musical</p> <p><b>MY SCHOOL MUSICAL</b></p> <p>Spring 2008</p> <p>NAME: _____</p> <p>CLASS: _____</p>	<p>MY School Musical</p> <p><b>SONG:</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>BAND/SINGER:</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>PLACES/TIMES/ GROUP MEMBERS:</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>MY School Musical</p> <p><b>WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS SONG?</b></p> <p>The singer is .....</p> <p>What I know about him/her is .....</p> <p>The title of the song is .....</p> <p>It is about .....</p> <p>Other songs about the same author are .....</p> <p>I like this song because .....</p> <p>When I listen to this song I feel .....</p>	<p>MY School Musical</p> <p><b>HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THIS SONG?</b></p> <p>(Mark the number 1 from 1 to 5 on your scale)</p> <table border="0"> <tr><td>slow</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>quick</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>loud</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>soft</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>strong</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>weak</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>fast</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>repetitive</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>difficult to sing</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>good entertainment</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>good lyrics</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>easy to sing</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> <tr><td>I want to hear it again</td><td>1 2 3 4 5</td></tr> </table>	slow	1 2 3 4 5	quick	1 2 3 4 5	loud	1 2 3 4 5	soft	1 2 3 4 5	strong	1 2 3 4 5	weak	1 2 3 4 5	fast	1 2 3 4 5	repetitive	1 2 3 4 5	difficult to sing	1 2 3 4 5	good entertainment	1 2 3 4 5	good lyrics	1 2 3 4 5	easy to sing	1 2 3 4 5	I want to hear it again	1 2 3 4 5
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good entertainment	1 2 3 4 5																												
good lyrics	1 2 3 4 5																												
easy to sing	1 2 3 4 5																												
I want to hear it again	1 2 3 4 5																												

Secondly, they collect information about the band or singer in particular on the internet and prepare a quiz about their favourite band for the other subgroups. This quiz is uploaded on the site and will be found in the group site, where the other subgroups can try it.

Thirdly, the links to the songs are available there and the teacher will point out the most interesting vocabulary and discuss the content of the song (worksheets). After a dramatic analysis of the song as a class activity, each subgroup can write a sum-

mary of the story in the song, and the impressions it evokes in them so that the whole group can read them and even give feedback to other subgroups with their comments.

After

that, they decide what the basic plot of the story could be, by linking the subplots of the songs. So,

they can start their creative process of building the story, the characters and the setting.

<p>MY School Musical</p> <p><b>COSTUMES:</b></p> <p>I'm going to wear...</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>SETTING:</b></p> <p>I'm in .....</p> <p>There is /There are...</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>MY School Musical</p> <p><b>PROPS:</b></p> <p>I'll bring to class:</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p><b>SCENE:</b></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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## **Setting up My School Musical**

- a. Materials: computing room, camera, video-editing software. Worksheets and Moodle (portfolios and schedule).
- b. Students' role; number of students per group: 15-20, subgroups 4-5.
- c. Teachers' role: supervisor, coordinator and director.

## **Activities and recording**

- a. "My School Musical" in the Curriculum at the end of the last term.
- b. Timing: 6-8 weeks, 1 hour a week (half a group).
- c. Evaluating: assessment sheet, part of last term.

## **7.- My School Musical: the description of the project**

### *1) Getting started*

Groups of four or five students (5 or 6 groups).  
Each group chooses the song they would like to perform.  
Fill in a chart describing the song, band or singer.  
Prepare a short biography of the singer or band and a quiz.  
Exchange the quizzes with other groups.

### *2) Reading and listening to the songs*

They listen and read the song.  
Work with vocabulary and interesting words: fill in the gap, partial dictation...  
Listening exercises for general understanding and for detailed comprehension.

### *3) Preparing the topic*

Dramatic analysis of the song: story, tone, feelings it evokes...  
Musicals: characteristics, plot, characters, musical numbers...

### *4) Creating a new story from songs*

Create a common plot linking the topics of the songs (brainstorming, class task).  
They agree on the setting, characters, conflicts and result of the action.  
Distribute 5 scenes (one per group) of 2 or 3 minutes.  
Build the characters (character chart): physical aspect (make-up, clothes, props), psychological profile, personality, situation...  
Each group writes the script of a particular scene.

### *5) Preparing the musical scenes*

The musical themes, style, costumes and props that they are going to use in their performance.  
Teacher and students decide when the playbacks can be integrated between the scenes.

### *6) Accuracy and rehearsal*

Groups show the teacher the scripts for review and receive the teacher's feedback.  
The groups check the teacher's comments and revise for a final version of their script.  
The students rehearse their roles and their playbacks at home and in class.

### *7) Recording and editing*

Teacher sets a recording schedule. These sessions can combine listening, script writing and playback recording.  
Recording.  
Editing.  
Electronic *libretto* containing the summary of the musical, the script, the lyrics, the cast, musical numbers, the information about the bands or singers they chose, pictures during the recording sessions, short interviews with the actors, the director (teacher),...

students' reach. From my experience, the most successful plot is a romantic one, to which a dramatic, mysterious or a comical tone can be added, depending on

students' creativity. The teacher can guide them to thinking of a main conflict and the objectives of the characters.

Considering all these aspects, I

thought I could motivate my students to use their favourite music by means of a project in which they used written and oral English with a pinch of fun.

## 6.- Teaching objectives

This project has some general objectives in the English classroom:

- To encourage productive skills in oral output.
- To develop writing skills in the form of dialogues and narratives.
- To work in groups.
- To use technical and computing skills.
- To encourage artistic abilities.

### Contributions to the key competences

- linguistic and audio-visual competence.
- cultural and artistic values.
- information treatment and digital competence.
- social competence.
- creativity.

### Classroom objectives

- motivate students.
- break rhythm.
- negotiation.

### Contents

#### A) Communicative dimension

- Participation in oral, written and audio-visual interactions:
  - Dialogues.
  - Acting out scenes.
- Understanding oral, written and audio-visual messages:
  - Listening to songs.
  - Understanding the ideas in songs.
  - Acting abilities.
- Expressing oral, written and audio-visual messages:
  - Performing a role, and doing playback.
  - Acting abilities.
- Knowledge of the functioning of language and its learning:
  - Present simple and continuous.
  - Past simple and continuous.
  - Strategies for memorizing their lines.
  - Vocabulary on different topics, depending on the choice of songs and story.

#### B) Formal components

- Accuracy in written output.
- Accuracy in oral output.

#### C) Extra-linguistic components

- Coherence.
- Cohesion.
- Purpose and expectations.



# ELT Convention

a nexus in the stories behind the lyrics, we could make a new story out of them all and record it. Audio-visual projects are, on the one hand, very encouraging, and

on the other, personally and technically more demanding than other types of projects. For the sake of the project a teacher must master the technological part of these tasks

and have the necessary leadership to organize and schedule the steps and tasks to carry out this project in an organized way.

## 4.- Musicals



John Kenrick (2003) defines a musical as a stage, television or film production utilizing popular-style songs to either tell a story (book musicals) or show-

case the talents of the writers and / or performers (revues). Musical theatre is a form of theatre combining music, songs, spoken dialogue and dance. The emotional content of the piece – humor, pathos, love, anger – as well as the story itself, is communicated through the words, music, movement and technical aspects of the entertainment as an integrated whole.

The three main components of a musical are the music, the lyrics, and the book. The *book* of a musical refers to the story – in effect, its spoken (not sung) lines. However, "book" can also refer to the dialogue and lyrics together, which are sometimes referred to (as in opera) as the *libretto* (Italian for "little book"). The *music* and *lyrics* together form the *score* of

the musical. The 20th-century "book musical" has been defined as a musical play where the songs and dances are fully integrated into a well-made story, with serious dramatic goals, which is able to evoke genuine emotions other than laughter. A musical may be built around four to six main theme tunes that are reprised throughout the show, and spoken dialogue is generally interspersed between musical numbers. Musicals generally have a greater focus on spoken dialogue, and the moments of greatest dramatic intensity in a musical's "book" are often performed in songs. Proverbially, "when the emotion becomes too strong for speech (or recitation), you sing; when it becomes too strong for song, you dance."

## 5.- Why are musicals interesting from a pedagogical point of view?

"Music and rhythm find their way into the secret places of the soul." Plato

The musical is a genre that children are very familiar with from a very early age, let us say Sesame Street musicals or Walt Disney cartoon productions. There is a long tradition of musicals in English in London's West End, on New York's Broadway and last but not least, in the cinema. India produces "Bollywood" musicals and Japan Anime-style musicals. So typical of the English-speaking culture, this genre is a living, growing genre that has been increasingly spreading to other countries in the European framework: Italy, Germany,

France and our country. Recently there has been a type of musical production called "juke-box" musicals with catchy, pop melodies and tunes like "Mamma Mia". These days a musical is a brilliant success in theatres and cinemas.

When creating a musical production, many songwriters and producers face the dilemma of what should come first, the lyrics or the music, and also the plot or the music. However, in this case, the challenge was to create a plot out of the songs my students liked. The students chose the songs and they would carry the character develop-

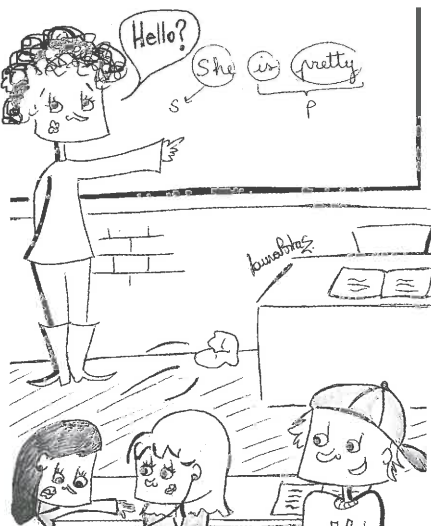
ment and story forward, "an applied composition". We needed a plot and spoken lines between all the songs to support the storyline.

The musical conveys a simplistic romantic, social or even a topical conflict. The characters are generally stereotyped, which makes students feel more confident, in that they are starting from something, instead of building up a character from scratch. This simplicity makes the musical's characteristics easy for the teacher to explain and for the students to understand. Hence, plot creation, characters and script are within the

## 2.- When groups don't work

A sufficiently experienced teacher identifies *when groups don't work*: there is a constant disturbing noise, backtalk, goofing off, scarce learning even disrespect and demotivated students. Worn-out teachers are probably demotivated, too. Teachers and some students can have a really bad time. But we all want to be successful, and maybe our students face too much emphasis on passing tests rather than sharing knowledge or having a desire to learn instilled in them. This is probably stifling creativity and imagination in classrooms nowadays.

Everyone has felt despair in his or her professional life at some point. In my personal case, I went through an especially hard year because I had a serious difficulty with one group and I could say I lost my motivation. This rebellious group was made up of students with a low level of English and low self-esteem. Due to their



personality clashes, they had problems in social and communicative skills. The general attitude was extremely negative towards norms, work, teachers and the English subject in particular. In fact, it was quite hard to get them involved in healthy class dynamics from the very beginning of

the course. There was an extremely negative leader, who was able to manipulate most of the individuals in the class. I could only manage to have a cold war atmosphere in class, while the other students witnessed our quarrels and there was an ambience of apathy and neglect.

At first I thought that my class management was failing, and, probably as a survival strategy, I took a more objective view. Thus, after analysing the factors that depended on me and those that were beyond my control, I reached the simple conclusion that "I haven't failed; I've found 10,000 ways that don't work", as Thomas Edison once said.

## 3.- From misstep to sidestep

"To teach is to learn twice." Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, 1842.

Given these circumstances, I needed a new strategy to enliven the ambience of boredom, tension, and sometimes even conflict. To win them over, I studied the dynamics of the group. Among a mass of demotivated, calm students, a girl stood out as the negative leader, as mentioned before. As business coaches would say, there had to be a leadership crisis. It was about time to start a new flow of energy inside those four walls.

The teacher had to be restored to the natural (agreed upon and accepted) position of leader: the one that recognises the differences and provides motivation, unique to the individual, or para-

phrasing John Maxwell, the one who creates the vision, while the followers help him/her to accomplish it. Besides myself, I identified a potential positive leader, whose influence I wanted to emphasize: a respectful, responsible girl who liked music, singing and dancing. I thought that the other students could be keen on the idea of incorporating music into class in a special way.

Music is usually welcome in the English class. In fact, according to the Journal of the American Medical Association, the average teenager, between 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, listens to 10,500 hours of music, slightly less than the entire number of hours spent

in the classroom from kindergarten to high school. The effects of music on teenage behaviour are very controversial, and numerous studies attest to music's powerful influence on mood and emotion.

The idea of music was also engaging for me, and, as a music and musical lover, I found inspiration in musicals, and precisely teenage musicals like *Glee* and *High School Musical*, which were all the rage at the time. However, creating a musical show from scratch was too ambitious for me and my students, so I devised a simpler version: the combination of the songs that they enjoyed (playbacks / lip-synching) and a plot with simple dialogues. Finding

## My School Musical

### *How motivation makes a project*

by Ana María Fuentes Rullo

**My School Musical** is an audio-visual drama project aimed at students of second year of ESO, in which they are encouraged to develop their productive, receptive and artistic skills by producing their own musical film. This paper tries to describe how collaborative work, combined with “the top ten”, can result in an experience that is as enjoyable as it is memorable.



*This article tries to describe thoroughly how to build a juke-box musical film out of the students' favourite songs, incorporating a new plot and dialogues. They can sing or lip-synch the tunes, work in groups with their classmates and show their talents by acting out their scenes. This set of activities aim to develop the artistic and linguistic skills of the students in secondary education. Given that students love music so much, teachers can use My School Musical as a source of motivation.*

### **1.- Introduction**

Teaching envelops educators in a mixture of habits, discipline challenges and dilemmas. Success and failure are a back-and-forth relationship in our daily routines. Some say that good teachers have to be good communicators, creative, specialized, and pos-

sess several other qualities. In the words of Lola May, “There are three things to remember when teaching: know your stuff; know whom you are stuffing; and then stuff them elegantly.” Probably one can add other ingredients to the recipe, as nowadays school is not as simple as it was some years ago. Drop-out rates are a serious problem among

today's teenagers, and it is difficult to find a way to ensure good results in our country. Some parents, students and teachers miss order, respect and motivation in our youth. But, how can teachers and students be happy to go to school and enjoy it? Is it possible? Is this too ambitious for us all?

Ana Maria Fuentes Rullo holds a BA in English Philology and a postgraduate course in Textual Translation Analysis from the University of Barcelona. She has also specialized in Text Management for Professionals at Pompeu Fabra University in Barcelona. She has taught English in Catalonia for 12 years. Currently, she is a teacher of English at a state secondary school in Martorell.

## IS THERE A RECIPE?

There is certainly no shortage of tools to motivate students to create, communicate and share online. Web tools can also be a great motivator for the teacher, who can now easily share ideas and materials with other educators around the world. Nowadays, it's all about 'sharing', whether you're a student or a teacher. The essential ingredient is MOTIVATION and willingness to try new things.

Below are some of the tools that I like using with my students:

WHAT'S IT FOR?	WEBSITE	IDEAS FOR USING IN EFL TEACHING
Presentations	<a href="http://www.prezi.com">www.prezi.com</a>	Projects about themselves Descriptions (animals, sports, etc...) Recipes
Presentations	<a href="http://www.glogster.com">www.glogster.com</a>	Posters about themselves and their hobbies Theme projects
Presentations	<a href="http://www.photopeach.com">www.photopeach.com</a>	Motivate your teens by adding music and descriptions to your photo slideshow. They love his one!
Word Cloud	<a href="http://www.wordle.org">www.wordle.org</a>	Vocabulary Building Dossier cover pages
Animated movies (Writing and Listening)	<a href="http://www.xtranormal.com">www.xtranormal.com</a>	Listenings covering any aspect that has been worked on in class. Integrating grammar into a short clip.
Dialogues with flicr images	<a href="http://www.pimpampum.net/bubblr/">http://www.pimpampum.net/bubblr/</a>	Writing practice using authentic photos
Making a comic	<a href="http://www.toondoo.com">www.toondoo.com</a> <a href="http://www.bitstrips.com">www.bitstrips.com</a>	Make comics covering any topic studied in class or JUST FOR FUN!
Collaboration and learning	and <a href="http://www.wiziq.com">www.wiziq.com</a>	Get students to share information about any topic.
Collaboration and sharing	and <a href="http://www.create.wetpaint.com">www.create.wetpaint.com</a> <a href="http://www.pbwiki.wetpaint.com">www.pbwiki.wetpaint.com</a> <a href="http://www.wikispaces.com">www.wikispaces.com</a>	The same goes for teachers! Some great wiki sites to use with your class.
Creative Writing	<a href="http://www.boomwriter.com">www.boomwriter.com</a>	<a href="#"><u>Read, Write, Read, Vote, Read, Write Again!</u></a>
Writing	(Bombay tv) <a href="http://tinyurl.com/28pvg49">http://tinyurl.com/28pvg49</a>	Writing funny dialogues to go with short video clips.
Writing	<a href="http://www.pimpampum.net/bubblr/">http://www.pimpampum.net/bubblr/</a>	Writing texts to go with images. Quick and Easy and very MOTIVATING!
Listening	<a href="http://www.eslpod.com">http://www.eslpod.com</a>	Podcasts for all levels pertaining to many different topics.
Speaking	<a href="http://www.voki.com">www.voki.com</a>	Send a greeting to your teacher or to a friend using an avatar of your choice.
Learning Lyrics and singing	<a href="http://www.lyricstraining.com">www.lyricstraining.com</a>	A fun and easy way for students to improve their language skills.

There are no recipes when it comes to choosing which tools to use. With the abundance of utensils and innovative ingredients readily available anytime, anywhere, it's a question of discovering which tools best suit your taste. Good cooks never follow one recipe; there is always room for innovation!

[http://prezi.com/rb1\\_vwahr6iw/20-web-tools/](http://prezi.com/rb1_vwahr6iw/20-web-tools/)

## Does a Good Recipe Make a Good Cook?

By Susan Dreger



CELL (Computer enhanced language learning) is becoming widely used amongst teachers in recent years and is steadily growing in popularity. This is greatly due to Web 2.0 and all the readily-available tools but also has a lot to do with curriculum changes which encourage the integration of new technologies in our classrooms. The challenges in the new millennium require that both teachers and students become competent users of ICT, able to integrate Web 2.0 tools into their everyday lives and classrooms.

As a teacher in this digital age, I am convinced that the way to reach our learners is through new technologies. We have to motivate them by exposing them to real people, real places, real situations, real interactions; especially when it comes to learning EFL. If we don't expose them to authentic materials through the WWW, they are simply not getting enough input. We therefore have to try to ENGAGE them and what better way to do this then through technology. The big questions are HOW and WITH WHAT TOOLS?

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