PROCEEDINGS APAC - ELT 2012 (part 2) & OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

apac

Associació de Professors i Professores d'Anglès de Catalunya

UPF

ELT - Convention 2013

The Value of English

February 21st, 22nd & 23rd

**Universitat Pompeu Fabra
Campus Ciutadella
Ramon Trias Fargas, 25-27
Barcelona**

Dear colleagues,

I'd like to imagine this reaches you while you are making plans to attend our 2013 APAC-ELT Convention. Our motto, "The Value of English", will be approached from multiple angles, and informed discussions are likely to spring out right from the opening session. We'll have the benefit of presentations by two distinguished researchers, Keith Morrow (opening session) and Herbert Puchta (keynote lecture), who will, no doubt, set the convention going in the right direction, creating the usual atmosphere of fruitful exchange of research findings and pedagogical practices. This is to be followed by plenary sessions by the likes of Miquel Llobera, Luke Prodromou, Tim Murphey and David Block. The traditional APAC roundtable will address the issue of the level of English in Catalonia, a subject favoured by the media and about which no one in the profession feels indifferent. You'll have a chance to share views at this year's roundtable, which will take the research documentary ("Do You Speak English?") produced by TV3 and shown on the "30 Minuts" programme (December 2011) as a springboard for the general discussion. The producers of the documentary will be present and will offer their findings... and their perplexities. As you have guessed by now, what I'm trying to say is that late February is the time and Universitat Pompeu Fabra the place: Join us again to make the APAC convention meaningful and relevant.

One of APAC's long life friends, the British Council in Catalonia, are celebrating their 70th year with us. It is no small feat. Their contribution to our society has gone beyond teaching English: it has been significant in cultural and even (for many years) in political terms. We owe a lot to the many –British and Catalan alike- who have kept the place running for seven decades. In an address for the occasion, our Vice-President, Neus Figueras, has mentioned the organization's "generous commitment to teaching and learning languages, understood in its widest possible sense, and their respect for local needs and local expertise". I couldn't agree more. And many of us, like Neus, could say that "The British Council Barcelona has always been home to me, a home where I learnt to love the English language, the British culture and the British literature with exceptional teachers, a well stacked library, unique events and wonderful colleagues. All this at a time when Barcelona was a much greyer and sadder city." May these words be taken as APAC's heartfelt toast to celebrate the British Council's "70 Years in Catalonia".

With best wishes,

Miquel Berga
President

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As our president has informed you, the APAC journal has been reduced to two issues, one which only consists of the proceedings of the APAC-ELT Convention, and the February issue, which contains late articles by speakers and contributions from teachers who have been kind enough to send their experiences in to us.

Economic constraints have forced us to reduce the frequency of the journal, but not the length or quality, as you will see.

This issue includes articles by speakers such as Josep Coral, who offers us fundamental aspects in a CLIL syllabus for Physical Education, emphasising once again the importance of learning by doing. Insisting on the importance of working on competences in the classroom, Núria Salvadó presents examples of real practice using wiki e-portfolios.

We all know that, without motivation in the classroom, little learning will take place there. In his article, Chris Roland discusses the micro-negotiations that lead to success, while Liam Fitzgerald contributes ideas on how to face ever larger and more heterogeneous classes.

We cannot forget the students in elementary school, and so we have incorporated the talk by Caroline Nixon, who, through her "Box of Tricks", orientates us on some aspects of combating restlessness and increasing motivation.

Nor must we forget the youngest among our learners, and we have an article by Maria de Mir, who, with her enthusiasm, shows us how to make the teaching of English more enjoyable.

The year 2012 was the year of Charles Dickens. We would like to thank José Luis Bartolomé for the practical work he carried out with the Department of English in the Official Language School in Figueres. We will hear more from this author in the 2013 ELT Convention.

Two more contributions we have been able to include here are the article by Maggie Stuhan on the use of interactive notebooks as a motivating tool and the article by Àngel Raluy and Anna Vallbona on the teaching of foreign languages in Catalan universities.

Now we have the next convention right around the corner. The APAC board is unwavering in its enthusiasm for organising this event which is so well-rooted among the teaching professionals here. The editorial board of the journal is also making efforts to bring you as many articles as possible, both by speakers at the convention and teachers just like you. So, we encourage all of you to send in material you think colleagues might be interested in. We would be more than pleased to make your work accessible to everyone through our publication.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue, and we look forward to seeing you at the Convention (if you can get leave from your school).

The Editorial Team

TAILORING TASKS FOR TEENS

By Chris Roland

'Tailoring Tasks' was a series of workshops and training that I gave from the summer of 2010 through to early this year when I moved onto my current 'Teen-angles' project. The main theme of Tailoring Tasks, which I have continued to try to develop, is making things as easy for the teacher and as acceptable to the students as possible.

Giving students a 'choice'

This is one of my favourite philosophers. His name is Slavoj Zizek and he's a communist thinker from Slovenia. One point that Zizek makes is that the choice between two pre-determined alternatives gives the chooser only the appearance of freedom. Nonetheless, when faced with two given alternatives, we tend to choose one of them.

At the beginning of my conference sessions, I often ask a participant to give me a word in German or a word in French. I think when we did this at APAC, the audience member chose German. I asked a second participant to either say hello to everyone in the room one at a time: *Hello, hello, hello...* or to wave her hand and say hello to them all in one go. Not surprisingly, she chose the latter. 'Vanilla ice-cream or mint ice-cream?' I asked a third. She chose mint.

Whose choices were they really though? They were mine, because I had provided all of the options. Now the radical choice, as Zizek puts it, would be to reject both alternatives and to question the thinking that lies behind their presentation. Fortunately, however, my teenage students - and I suspect yours too, unless you're giving *really special* English classes,

haven't read Zizek yet. Moreover, in general, I don't think teenagers are as radical as they imagine they are. That happens later.

So when two inseparable 14 year-old-students are chatting away instead of reading the dialogue I want them to practise to each other, I might say: *Clara, Mireia, you can either change partners for 5 minutes, and read the task with your new partner before returning to where you are or you can continue to work together but perform the dialogue in front of me at the end of the class. It's your choice. Which would you prefer?* Or if I want a student to move, I might simply say: *You can sit over there or over there. Which would you prefer?*

This is only one species of small psychological manoeuvre, hundreds of which are needed to get through a working week with teens, but each successful negotiation brings us closer to 'winning', closer that is to coming away from our classes with some sort of sense of a pedagogic result. It is these micro-negotiations that I see as constituting working (cleverly) with teenagers.

Homework or death?

One option that I gave a class of *bachillerato* level students was between homework or death. If they came to class with

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Homework or Death

the homework completed, they got a homework icon circled. If they came without it, they got a death icon circled. At the end of the month if they had more homeworks than deaths then they got to go with the angels, but if they had more deaths than homeworks, they got to go with the goats.

Now obviously this is just a bit of fun for non-essential homework activities but it's also a way of taking out the tension from monitoring homework progress as well. It's even more fun if it's one of the students that goes round asking the others: 'Homework or death?'

The little pictures here are images I took from the web (and can't seem to find again!). You can download a Word version of the above from my ELT page www.chrisroland.net or you can custom make your own which can also be quite fun.

Obviously a *Homework or death?* sheet is not going to guarantee that your teenagers do their homework, but it is going to mean that you, and they, are more regularly aware of their having or not having done so and it might help broach the matter openly in class while diffusing some of the usual related tension through a little bit of humour.

Your reactions to your reports

Whenever I give report cards back to my teenage students, I notice them do two things. The first thing they do is scan down the marks looking for any fails and the second thing they do, within a fraction of a second of the first thing, is to look at their friends' scores to compare.

Now I think most of the time we get it pretty bang on and

students accept their scores without too much fuss but on the odd occasion that a student genuinely feels badly done to on their report card, this can produce a great deal of tension that, in the case of mid-year reports, can hang around for various lessons, sometimes losing us the co-operation of that student all together. This is why I have started giving out a form for students to give back to me with their reactions to their own reports on it.

The form contains the following questions, with boxes for students' replies, in English or in L1:

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1. Are there any scores on your report which you feel are not an accurate reflection of your performance? (In other words, did you look at any of the marks and think: Only a ___?!). If so, which areas were they and what can you do to show Mr Roland that you should get a higher score next time?

2. Are there any scores that you think you can improve on for next time? If so, how do you plan to do it?

3. In which area of English do you think you are strongest? Is this the area that you scored highest marks for this term?

4. Are there any of your scores that you are happy with?

With this, as with any other handout, I'd recommend you knock out your own, using your words. That way you can fine tune the instructions to your own teaching style and to each class and it won't feel foreign or 'imported'.

Now you might imagine that the majority of students would put that they deserved more marks but so far with these response sheets I haven't found that. What I've found is that students will only 'risk' claiming they deserve more when they genuinely feel the scores are unfair. To give you an example, one of my students recently wrote (and these are her own words):

> I think participation and speaking are not correct. Because I participate a lot in class and I think I speak well when I want. Some people of this class has tell me that I participate more than them and they have more or the same note like.

And do you know what? She was right! I tell my students that most of the time, when it comes to conflicting views, they will be wrong and I will be right. That's why I'm the teacher. I'm 39. They are 14. There's not much of a competition. But sometimes they will be right and when they are, I will admit it. So when Helen handed in her report reactions and I realised she had a point, I immediately wrote on the bottom of the sheet and showed it to her:

> Okay. Sure. I think you might be right. I'll have a good look at your participation over the next few weeks and change the score in time for parents' evening if I feel it is not fair.

At the end of the activity, instead of a disappointed student who felt angry with the teacher - which is never going to help classroom dynamics - I still had this student 'with me' and even better, she had a reason to continue to participate in class.

Plasticine vocabulary

Most coursebooks include a list of the new vocabulary covered in them. If they don't, then my advice is to create your own ongoing digital word list, as I've spoken about in previous editions of the magazine. This time I stuck a printout of all the vocabulary we had covered on the wall, in different places so that everyone could easily get to at least some of the words. My instructions were simple:

1. Go to one of the sheets.
2. Choose a word that you think would be interesting to work with.
3. When you've chosen your word, cross it out so that nobody else replicates your work.
3. Make a sculpture in plasticine that you think conveys the meaning of that word.
4. Bring the finished piece to me and I will tell you if it 'works' as a 3D definition or not.
5. I will then tell you what to do next (in most cases it was
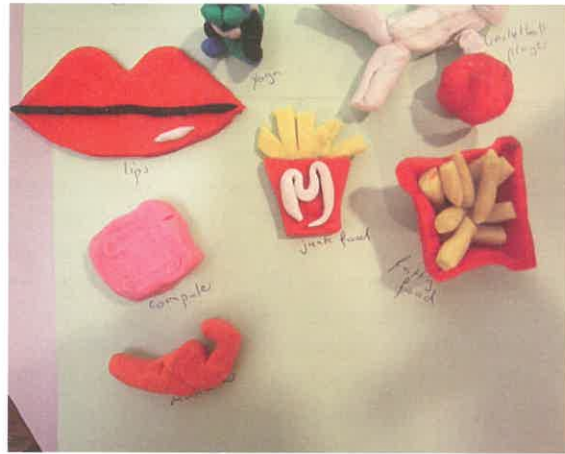
'Okay, make another' but I also had a crew responsible for positioning and photographing the pieces).
Here are some of the models that a class of 13 and 14-year-olds came up with:

Some of the words shown here are: lips, fatty food, junk food, furious, couch potato, injection, thumb, headphones, weight, put on weight, lose weight, sailor and lottery.

'They'll never do that. It's too childish' you might think. I beg to differ! It's a close run thing and getting the balance right is important but I think with this activity, there's enough face validity for teens to accept the rationale (it's centred on their current level vocabulary, there's a clear task and, after all, you the teacher have asked them to do it) whilst there's enough fun to allow them the opportunity of recapturing some of the

magic of their earlier school years when every day they were allowed to experiment with colours, shapes, materials and imagination.

'All very nice for Chris's manageable classes of 15 students in the British Council or the other academies where he works but what about my classes of 30 students?' Again, no problem. I used to teach large classes of 4ESO in a *concertado* school and I can promise you that I used to have them all coming up to the board (sometimes we had over half the class writing on the board at the same time - try that, it's fun!), I regularly tested students on a 1-1 basis, we moved tables and chairs about, did pair work speaking and group projects. It's all possible, but the micro-mechanics of the task need weighting at the front. What I mean by this is that what the task entails, from beginning to end, needs to be clear for the students from the outset - and this includes some sort of evaluation.

With the plasticine vocabulary I'd go about it like this:

1. The class is divided up into 4 groups with each group having their own vocabulary list.

2. Each group has 2 project leaders - choosing students who generally don't fit the 'responsible student' profile for this can yield surprising results.

3. Each group is responsible for producing and photographing their own presentation, with a minimum of 30 sculptures.

4. Everyone in a group will get the same score except where project leaders feel that a student hasn't contributed anything or has done more than the rest, in which case they may get a point less or a point more in consultation with the teacher.

5. Parameters for evaluation may include: care taken over sculptures, group efficiency, clear labelling in the presentation, care taken over the presentation and photographing and the level of difficulty of the words chosen.

Graffiti vocabulary

Another thing that I've noticed with teens is that many of them develop highly stylised ways of writing their own names. So if they are writing their names in graffiti style, why, I asked myself, couldn't they write out vocabulary in that style too? Here are some of the results:

Again, we need to structure a task like this fairly carefully or students will spend 25 minutes on just one word. We need to keep up a *pressure-to-produce* by specifying how many word items need to be covered (about 16 for a pair

and 24 for a group of three is the number I'm using now) and what they need to do to get good marks for the piece of work. In this activity, I also stipulated that each word should be accompanied by a small token representation demonstrating that the writer of it understood its meaning. In cases where the word was very abstract, a small translation written underneath was also accepted.

Throughout the rest of the term, there were various times when I caught students looking at the words and silently mouthing them in moments of distraction. I figured that if we can get our students to read English even in their moments of distraction, then we have to be onto a winner!

The 10 word test

One of the most successful activities I've used over the last couple of years is this one. Each lesson, or each week, depending on class size and work schedule, each student comes and sits with the teacher for up to a minute (it often takes much less than this). If the student gets 10 correct in a

This is it! Word Formation Boost!

row, they get a tick on a chart against that section of the word list (ie *Unit 2 First Column*) and next time they're tested on the next one, working their way slowly across the table/chart. If they get a word wrong, they have to wait till next time - no second chances.

It's simple but effective. The students are guaranteed some personal attention and it gives them a motive for opening their books before the teacher actually gets into the classroom - not always, but I've seen it happen many many times. While individual students are being tested, the rest of the class can be doing another activity or testing each other in pairs on their current

section, in preparation for their test this time or next time. Beware, students will develop a wide array of strategies to 'help' the person being tested, including mouthing words, miming them or asking a partner who they are practising with just the same word at the very same time by coincidence. I tell my students: *'Don't jump in to help the person being tested. Give them time. They might know the word but sometimes it takes a second. If you 'help' them, most likely I will hear and that word won't count. You might well be robbing them of the chance to get a word right that they know'*. In this way I've had the student being tested actually telling their classmates to shut up and stop 'helping' them.

The above is a typical chart I use to show students which page of the word list they are currently on. If your students can be trusted to leave this thing in tact on the wall, great. If they can't, then you can slot it in behind your class register for safer keeping.

Where is the play?

Recently I've been deconstructing my classroom activities by asking the question: Where is the play? Where is the game element for the students?

Here, I'm not necessarily talking about a planned game that I have set up. I'm talking about the entertainment factor that students will always manage to introduce, even into the most turgid of activities, in order for them to get through the lesson with some sort of sanity left in tact. When doing the graffiti vocabulary project I showed you earlier, for example, one pair decided it would be fun to make their words as confusing and incomprehensible as possible - and yet still technically be those words. During the plasticine vocabulary activity, another student was playing not at how well he could make models to represent the words, but how badly he could do so and still have me accept his explanations for the amorphous blobs he was bringing me. In another activity where students were making a PowerPoint presentation in pairs, I noticed one student dictating text to another, who was keying it in and they were having a competition to see if the reader could read out the text and check it on the screen faster than the typist could tap out the letters.

In our session I showed you my little play symbols (made with the help of the aqua ball font at www.flamingtext.com which I use to help make the point more visual. A full range of badges and t-shirts will soon be available via mail order ;-)

My point is that if there isn't an element of play, students will invent one and even if there is an element of play in an activity,

they will often invent their own. They need it to survive. If their 'play agendas' can run in parallel to the teacher's lesson aims then great, they'll normally be happy with that. But if there's no other way, their own need for play will come at the teacher's expense and frustration. I'm afraid I don't have any definitive 'play' solutions for you here but I would say that this is something to be very aare of and, if you notice that your students have made a game out of something you didn't intend to be a game - if they've reinterpreted the task that is - then before you jump on them and quash that game, ask yourself whether or not it is really doing any harm. Can their little sub-agenda happily co-exist with yours? Are they still kind of 'getting there' as far as task completion goes? If they're still getting somewhere, then I'd recommend letting it go. There's bound to be more pressing things that require your attention.

Student produced picture dictionaries

For this next one I asked my class to produce their own picture dictionary from the words we had been studying. *'How many words?'* they asked me. *'Thirty,* I said *'And I want you to write the word under each picture too.'* As this was a higher level class, you'll notice the higher level vocabulary. As always, I'd been into the CALL room earlier to make sure everything

upbringing	Upkeeping	Uprising
Uproar	Upset	Upturn
downfall	downpour	downside

worked. This was how I knew that they might need to select the pictures from Google Images manually, using the 'Select All' option from the menu as some of the right mouse buttons didn't seem to be giving the 'Copy Image' option. *'How many images per slide?'* they asked. *'Nine'* I replied. Here's how one of them looked:

Each pair of students produced several slides like this. Some of the images were spot on, like the slide that shows an *upturn* in the US economy. Some of the associations were more questionable, such as Darth Vader, who is probably more representative of the *dark side* than any *downside*, although

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in class later on, we were able to brainstorm numerous downsides to being Darth Vader - it's hot in summer, you can't wear pink and swimming's a bit tricky - and in any case, he'd frighten the fish. The important thing is that it made sense to the students at the time and later we could talk about that. It still helped us to make associations.

Digital memorisation tool

All very nice. But what can we do with that? Okay. Well, between classes I copied one of the picture dictionaries over to my classroom computer and also made a copy of all the slides, removing the words from beneath the pictures. Then, next lesson, I talked the class through each slide as it was

above before flicking a few slides on to where the images were unaccompanied by text and asked students to see if they could tell a partner the words that had been there before. Can you remember without looking at the image above?

The idea of using imagery to fix language in students' heads is nothing new. The wonderful Earl Stevick championed this in the 70's and 80's. Now with Google Images and other search tools we can have our students 'fish around' for associations and share them with the class. From a task design perspective, the teacher is taking student generated material, tinkering with it and then using the very same matter to aid whole class learning. It makes students happy when they can see that their work is actually serving for something useful too.

Input to student writing

I've noticed that when it comes to writing, my teenage students tend to use the same words over and over again. In fact, when given a choice of titles - for example in a mock FCE writing exam - they even base their choice on the words that they already know so they don't have to try anything new. Lexically they're quite conservative and not as radical as they might want to see themselves. Their principles are economy of effort and low risk.

So my first move is to let them see that where they have tried to use a richer, more varied vocabulary, I've given them credit, which translates directly into an extra mark or two, and even being more lenient, points wise, on inaccuracies in those words or throughout their piece of writing in general. The second thing I do is provide real, tangible vocabulary.

Once I've corrected a piece of writing, I staple a coloured piece of paper to the back of it. I then go onto the internet and find an article on the same topic and of the same style as the target writing. I print the article off and staple a copy of that in behind the original writing and the coloured sheet of paper.

My instructions go something like this:

1. Read through the article and underline 10 words which you think would have got you extra marks in your writing if you had used them.

2. Rewrite your piece on the coloured paper, making any changes that I have annotated on the original.

3. Where you can, switch some of your original words for some of the really good ones you found in the article. Try to fit at least 5 of them in and more if you can.

4. You will get a second mark for the rewrite which will count equally as the original mark because it's just as important, if not more, what you do with a corrected piece as what score you get the first time round.

What if I have different students doing different writings?

You find a number of different articles.

Isn't this a lot of extra work?

Not really. But if you're worried about that, try getting them to do the rewrites in class, which will give you a 25 minute break and improve their English at the same time.

Does this method really work?

Yes.

Do the students appreciate it?

Yes.

Traffic lights

Some of the course books that I use present learners not just with one reading text, but sometimes with up to three related texts on the same page. So what I do is to give them a post-it note for each text - you can get them in multicoloured packs and I tend to use pink, orange and green, hence the name traffic lights. The task is this:

1 Read one of the texts.

2 Transfer up to 15 key words or phrases onto the post-it that will help you reconstruct that text as a spoken summary.

3 Do this for all three texts.

4 Next lesson, I shall interview you one by one. I will tell you *'Orange'*, *'Pink'* or *'Green'* and then you will have one
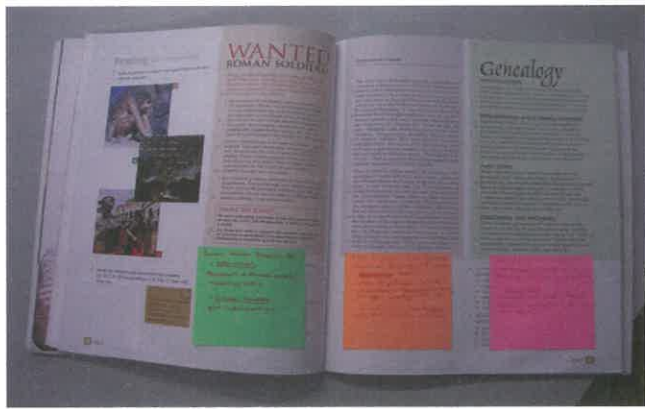
you wish (which of course they did) *but you don't have to.*

So the artists got to produce art and the storytellers got to tell stories. Here are some of the pieces they produced. Interestingly, several of the storylines involved one or both of the characters needing to wash their feet, one of them killing the other and in one story, one of them killing *me* - which I though was a bit harsh.

Now if I'd *said 'Read the grammar summary and think about how you might use the structures'* I would have got absolutely nothing from them. Instead, I used a completely fictitious and rather minimalist, on my part, scenario with just a hint of boy/girl dynamics to set my students off doing exactly that for themselves. There you have it - a task perfectly tailored for teens.

Once again, many thanks to the organisers of the APAC conference and the editorial team of the magazine for all their hard work. May your classes be happy ones!

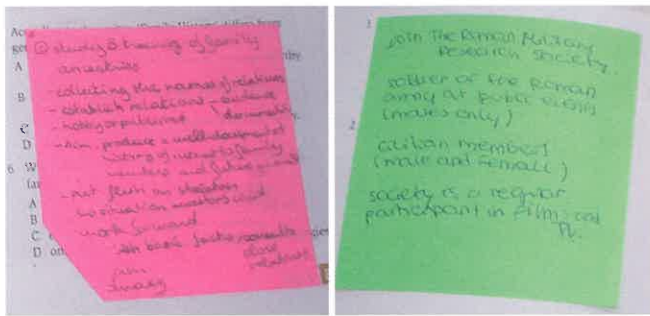minute to tell me about the corresponding text. You will be able to use the post-it note, but not look at the actual text itself.

Suddenly the students have a real reason for engaging with the text. They feel the approaching oral interview and realise it's in their interest to prepare for it. I tell them they have 15 minutes to prepare to begin with and then when they ask for more time I agree to let them have another 5 minutes and another after that. If I told them they had 25 minutes to begin with it would take them 10 minutes to get started.

As you can see from the examples here, sometimes they put way more than 15 words on the post-it. I turn a blind eye. If they are engaging with the text, and can reproduce some of it later, I'm fine with that - they will be picking up language.

Ambrosioh and Estakiah

I wanted to cover reporting verbs with a higher level class: *beg* + someone + *to*, *accuse* + someone + *of* and such like. So my approach was this: *'Think of two names that are a bit sophisticated for a boy and a girl.'* I asked my classes. One class came up with *Ambrosioh* and *Eustakia* and the other with *Petronela* and *Ursineli* (I think*!). These two are a couple, but their relationship goes through some serious ups and downs. I want you to make up a dialogue between them but for each speech bubble, you have to use one of the reporting verbs from the language summary on pages so and so. You can draw the characters if*
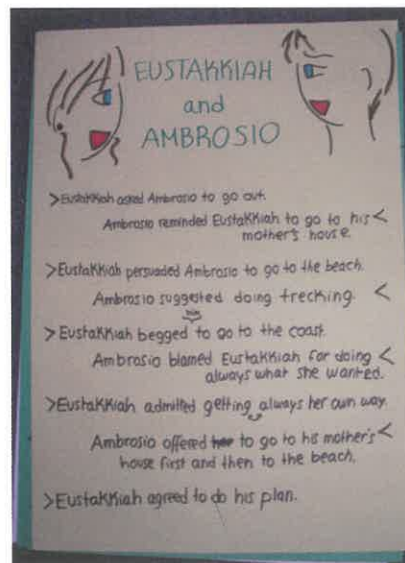
Formative Assessment using Collective Portfolios[1]

By Núria de Salvador

This contribution shares with you a competence-based teaching model that uses wiki ePortfolios and formative assessment to motivate students and improve their English. The model has evolved from practice in a state secondary school in a working neighbourhood in the Barcelona area. In this school, 70% of the students are immigrants, mainly from Latin America, and levels are well below Catalan standards.

The model was initially developed to respond to the need to make unmotivated students more active and less afraid of interacting in English. Little by little it is moving towards a more controlled design that wants to improve group work and students' strategic behaviour as learners of English.

The terminal and the enabling objectives of the wiki are summarised in Figure 1.

I will describe the objectives of this teaching model, the action taken to achieve them and the results obtained so far, based on some measurable data. I will also talk about what needs to be improved, as the design still needs to be made more effective and sustainable.

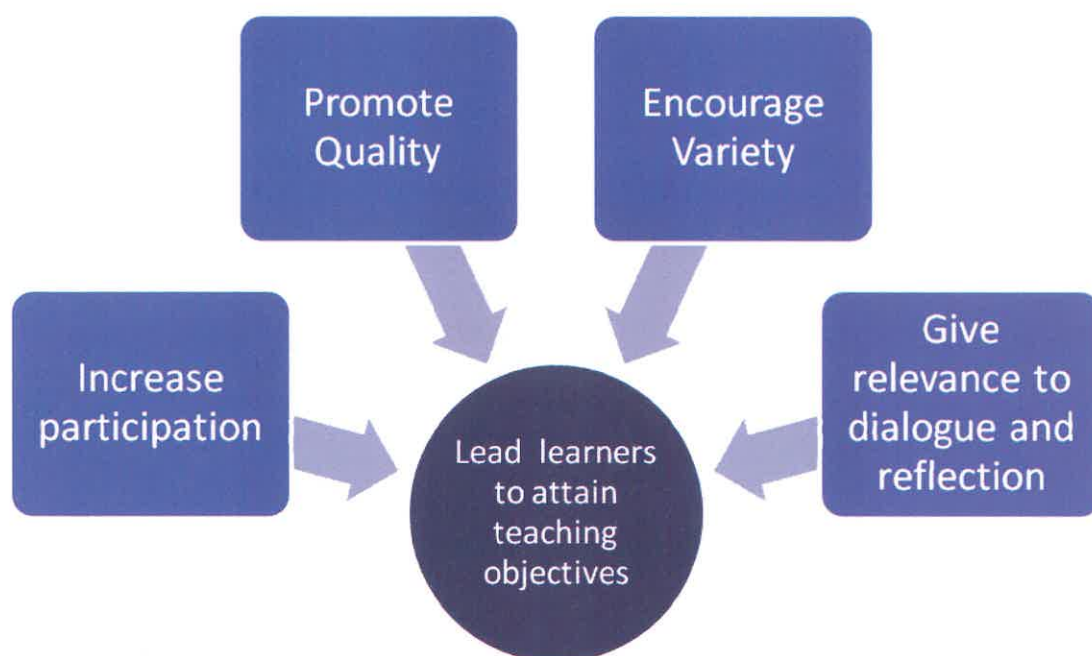## 1. A competence-based teaching model using an ePortfolio wiki and formative assessment

Figure 1: Wiki ePortfolio objectives

A couple of years ago, using wikis as ePortfolios was the solution I came up with to secure active participation and basic teaching in my secondary and vocational (VE) English classes.

A wiki allows everybody in the class to contribute on equal terms. Besides that, in a wiki:

- Pages are developed by the whole group, which allows many small productions to add up to one big one;
- Everything is visible, verifiable and measurable;
- All members have permanent access to material and are able to produce content from different locations (classroom, home, library, etc.);
- Power Point presentations, pictures, audio and video files can be embedded easily;
- Content can be edited and improved effectively by anyone;
- Dialogue between participants is possible, via email and group discussion.

To make participation in a wiki worth the effort, I designed a gold star system that promotes skill practice based on different content (textbook, commercial films, easy readers, project work, etc.).

I wanted to make the students' productions public and easy to edit. I was also concerned to do so in a competence-oriented way, creating specific spaces to practise different skills.

To make the design attractive to students, gold stars take no account of errors. Learners were given the chance to obtain gold stars for participating in class, writing paragraphs, using vocabulary and grammar in context, speaking and giving presentations, irrespective of the actual quality of what they had produced. Gold stars counted for up to 30% of their final mark.

The system has been in use for a couple of years now and has proved transferable in my school. However, making students produce in English disregarding error raised the significant challenge of how to assess quality, if students were allowed to produce anything and still get their gold stars.

I first tried to consider language correctness elsewhere, but the workload on the teacher and the students was then too big and that affected guidance. This overwork on the part of the teacher caused some problems, in the form of plagiarism and online use of translators, that needed to be controlled.

To put it simply, using the student's gold star to assess quality seemed a more sustainable option that could easily end up with bad practices. So, one of my main objectives this year has been to design a process where learners themselves improve their gold-star productions after reflection. This has had a beneficial effect on two assessment activities they do on the wiki every term: their *Gold Star Self-Assessment* and their *Learning Diary*. It systemised the use of online dictionaries and spell checkers too.

The interdependence of the gold-star model with other assessment practices, both innovative and traditional, is another of the strengths of this programme.

Gold-star tasks are often adapted to the learners' response to content and to other productions. This involves constant negotiation with the students to make assessment decisions, based on the shared objective of achieving success. This dialogue creates opportunities for engagement, where the larger number of contributors produce better solutions. As a side-effect, assessment activities that complement the gold-star mark have in turn developed great complexity (videos, vocabulary notebooks, book-reading activities, etc.) that students actively use for their own benefit in a responsible way.

However, dialogue focused on language learning is still poor. Group collaboration and interaction between students and with the teacher to complete or correct tasks need to be improved and we need to understand how they can be systemised and to provide better and more framed opportunities for peer and self reflection.

With this in mind, the four objectives that will guide the ePortfolios next year are:

1. Ensure basic learning and active participation, channelled in skill development;
2. Improve the quality of the students' productions through formative assessment;
3. Diversify assessment, including optional assessment, to engage students through norm-building and ICT;
4. Improve the learning process through reflection and dialogue.
   I will now explain each of these objectives in more detail, expanding on what has been said so far and drawing on performance indicators.

1.1 Ensure basic learning and active participation, channelled in skill development

When I started experimenting with a gold-star model a couple of years ago, my hypothesis was that if I encouraged my students to practise different skills and guaranteed success, then the vast majority would be willing to take action to improve their L2 competence.

1.1.1 Design of gold-star assessment

I use gold stars in all my classes. They tend to be even more popular with older than with younger students.

All my students have to obtain up to 100 gold stars per term based on production skills, with a maximum number of gold stars per skill.

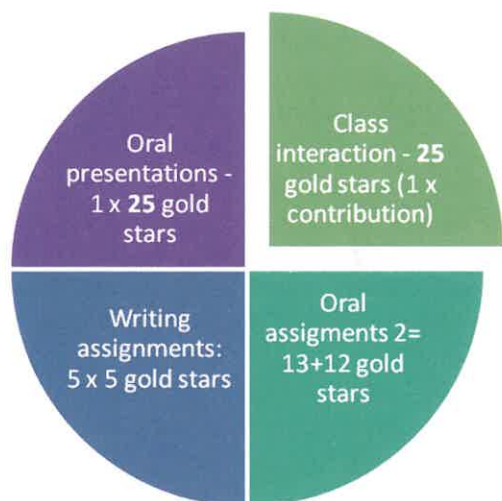Figure 2 shows how gold stars are distributed.

Figure 2: Distribution of the gold stars learners can earn per term

Gold stars are obtained for doing certain tasks, irrespective of their quality. If students complete all the tasks in the wiki, they obtain as many as 75 gold stars per term: 25 for writing, 25 for speaking and 25 for use of integrated skills (class presentations). The other 25 are for rewarding classroom interaction. Gold stars count for 30% of the term mark.

This "neutral" approach to errors makes students more willing to expose their real level of English and, at the same time, forces me to plan tasks that reinforce textbook practice and/or integrate different projects and ensure balanced development of skills.

All this creates an environment where:

- Participation and sharing are easy;
- Error is demystified;
- Different tasks are produced from different settings;
- Different levels of English and motivation coexist.

Removing pressure from 30% of the total mark frees students to take more responsibility for their own learning and make progress, by controlling their fear of failure and the resistance to make their own work public, while experiencing a completely different perspective on error treatment.

Gold stars are reported by students at the end of the term in their individual *Gold Star Self-Assessment.*

1.1.2 Performance indicators

Data collected on the first year of implementation of this scheme, where the wiki was used mainly for homework, showed that assessment based partly on gold stars was an appropriate way to promote student participation. Besides, the percentage who used it to improve their term mark was high.

In the second year, the wiki was used during class time, too. With VE students, use of the wiki in class focused on producing and correcting gold-star productions. Plagiarism disappeared, as learners were told that if they were discovered cutting and pasting, all their gold stars for writing would be annulled. The different uses of the wiki in compulsory and vocational education affect the results in their Learning Diaries, as will be explained later.

1.2 Improve the quality of the students' productions through formative assessment

This school year, I focused on ways to make sure that the assessment programme takes improved performance into account, helping students to review their gold-star productions through better guidance.

1.2.1 Design of the reflection process

As Figure 3 shows, the gold stars obtained by students had to be "claimed" on their individual Gold Star Self-Assessment page. The innovation I introduced this year was that learners had to go through a new phase (phase 2) where they were given time to correct their productions in class after they had been corrected by the teacher.

To help readers understand what I mean, an example can be seen in this screenshot.

Screenshot 1: Karla's paragraph
https://wikicfgs1y2.wikispaces.com/A+Nice+restaurant+I+went+to
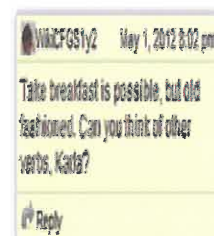
In phase 2, I commented on and highlighted errors in the students' submissions and shared these comments in class, while students were also given some time to actually improve their productions.

When the time to check their Gold Star Self-Assessment came, it was very easy to see if they had actually taken feedback into account, as I could go back to my comments and see if they had been considered and whether the highlighted code had been cleaned. A simple cut and paste would reveal if they had ignored the feedback provided.

In the third term I considered correcting the productions of learners during class time in three of the four courses I taught and managed to systemise it in two of them: higher VE II and lower VE II.

With the secondary students' class, we worked on the wiki during class time to advance in our eTwinning project, but this left no time to spend on gold-star improvement. In higher VE I, although time for correction was assigned, the group did not actually get very engaged.

Phase 1: Gold stars production tasks

- Individual or group
- Clear deadlines
- *Task page*

Phase 2: Improvement

- Teacher highlights errors and makes comments
- Group Discussion on the errors made
- *Learning Diary*

Phase 3: Corrected versions

- Clear deadline
- Pupils have the opportunity to catch up, if they did not do a task in the beginning
- *Gold Star Self Assessment*
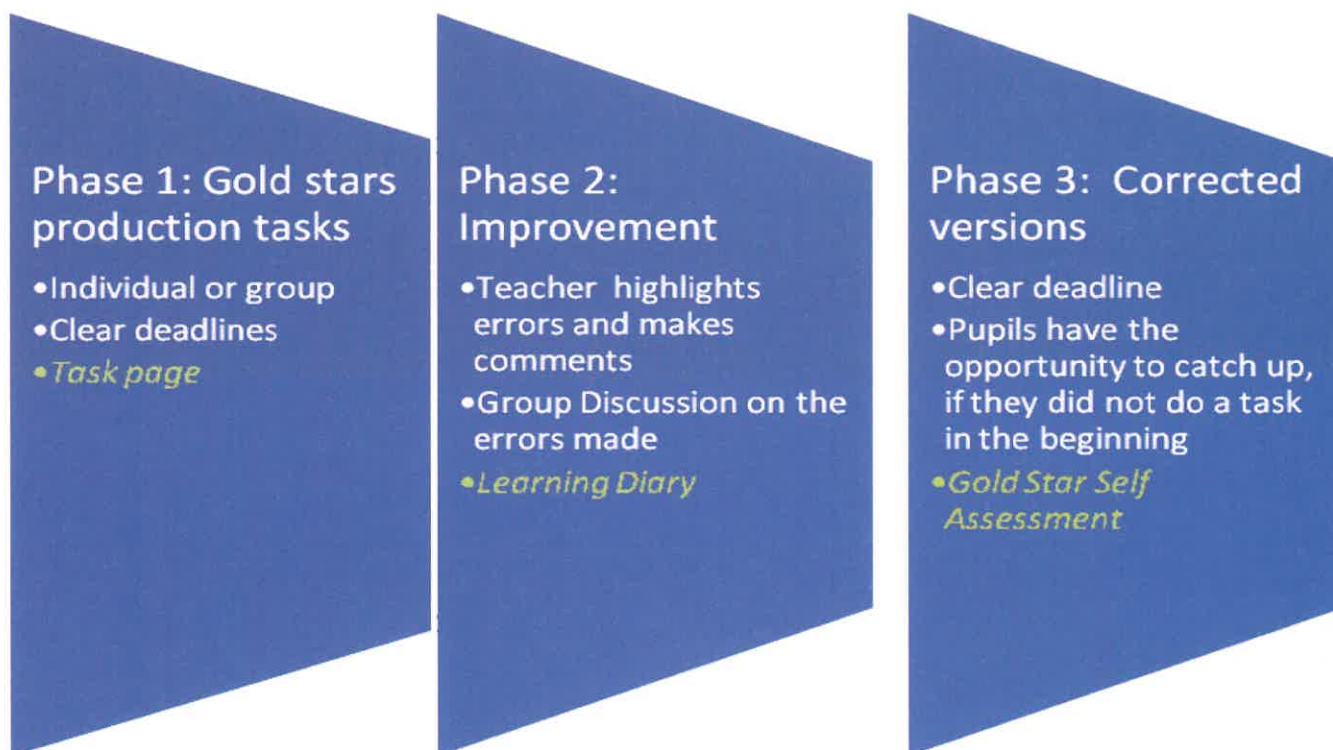
Figure 3: Distribution of the gold stars learners can earn per term

Production thus moved from a perspective that favours participation (phase 1) to one that highlights quality (phase 3), through a process of improvement that implied reflection (phase 2).

I asked my students to note down their corrections in their *Learning Diary* too. The Learning Diary is the place where they reflect about learning and it is worth the same value as a traditional exam. Reflecting on what had been learned would help the students to make significant changes and build up their capacity to learn (Black and Wiliam, 2009).

1.2.2 Performance indicators

Although very few students actually took the Learning Diaries seriously enough, focusing on correcting their productions in class seems to have had a positive effect on the quality of their Learning Diaries.

It is interesting to see that the quality of the Gold Star Self-Assessment and of the Learning Diary was higher in the classes where a feedback system was systemised and became a class routine.

The Learning Diaries were good enough in these two classes but poor in the other two. In the secondary group, which was maybe the smartest this year, 21 pupils out of 30 did not bother to fill in this assignment during the third term (the mean was 1.4 and the SD 2.8). I think the explanation for this is that most of them had good enough marks to pass the subject, as the eTwinning project was coming to an end, and decided not to complete this assignment. The excitement of being involved in producing plays did not help their focus on other things either.

In the weakest of my classes (upper VE English I) 10 of the 18 students who completed the course failed or did

not fill in their Learning Diaries, while 8 got at least a pass mark. The mean in this group was 3.6 and the SD

3.1. With my other two classes of VE students, the picture was better. Out of 19 students in my lower VE II class, only one did not do this assessment exercise, while 7 failed. Their mean was 5.4 and the SD 2.8.
In the upper VE English II class all but 2 of the 16 students did the assignment and 6 failed it. The mean mark was 4.9 and the SD again 2.8.
The data are summarised in Table 1.

similar for the four groups and quite high. Probably, this is due to different reasons.

In the first place, the Learning Diary mark basically assesses involvement and students' willingness to reflect on their own learning, irrespective of level of English, which suggests there are people who got involved and people who didn't in all the groups, and this is not related to how well they knew how to do the assignment, even if their marks were higher when there was more guidance.

Chart 1: Marks for Learning Diary for the 3rd Term 2011-12

LEARNING DIARY RE-SULTS 3rd term 2011-12	Characteristics of the group	Teacher's perception of the group	Gold-star correction during third term	Mean for Learning Diary	Standard deviation
	Lower secondary group – Age 16. Compulsory education. *The pupils with the best results were assigned to this class, together with 5 or 6 who are here for discipline reasons.*	*Bright, noisy, unruly, numerous, spoiled. Low level of English but general concern to get good marks.*	Not done.	1.4	2.8
Upper VE I	*Business administration. Very diverse backgrounds and levels of English – Age 19+.* *Almost half of the group drops out before the end of the school year.*	*Very low strategies, learning habits and motivation; lazy.*	Done, but not systemised.	3.6	3.1
Upper VE II	*Business administration. Very diverse backgrounds and levels of English – Age 20+.*	*Disciplined, great improvement since last year, generally hard working, diverse levels of English, easy to manage. High level of motivation, probably because they finish their studies this term.*	Systemised.	4.9	2.8
Lower VE II	*Administrative assistants. Very diverse backgrounds. Low level of strategies and English – Age 17+.*	*Small group. Low strategies, low level of English, easy to manage. High level of motivation, probably because they finish their studies this term.*	Systemised.	5.4	2.8

In the two classes where I spent time correcting their gold-star activities, the mean for the Learning Diary is higher. However, the standard deviation is surprisingly

The low involvement in the Learning Diary is probably also down to choice. By the third term learners understood the rules and, particularly in the secondary

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[3] The commonest marking scale in Spain goes from 0 to 10. 10 is the highest mark and 0 the lowest. 5 is the pass mark.

group, knew they would pass anyway, whether they completed the Learning Diary or not. The number of assessment exercises they had done was high, so not filling in the Learning Diary would not change their mark much.

1.3 Diversify assessment, including optional assessment, to engage students through norm-building and ICT

Although the right to choose may allow teenagers to make decisions that are not welcome to teachers, an assessment programme in compulsory education has to be diverse in order to engage pupils. It also needs to be open and to take into account that students cannot always be at their best and are easily disheartened.

Furthermore, when young adults of very different levels of English are put together in the same class, leaving each of them to improve from where they stand in their L2 development, diversifying assessment is a good approach too.

Favouring a wide range of assessment opportunities is one of the pillars of formative assessment. Optional assessment activities are quite useful to help learners take the initiative to improve their final marks by making assessment more real and motivating for them, too. Furthermore, allowing their preference for certain tasks and activities to surface and naturally allowing them to take a bigger role in the assessment programme is good for them and enlightening for the teacher.

Some students simply love to have an opportunity to show how creative they can be and are likely to impress others if given the chance. This is easier now that we can seize the possibilities opened up by ICT. Actually sticking to the learning objectives depends on the instructional design of the task alone. That is easy for any teacher with some experience, particularly as students learn to favour that fast too.

Optional activities are both summative and formative assessment. Their summative nature lies in the fact that they are assessed together with traditional exams at the end of the term. Their formative nature is related to often being designed as negotiated group activities (Poehner & Lantolf, 2005) that wrap up teaching units. They make learners use what they have just learned in situations that are close to real, and reinforce integrated skill use and learners' learning from each other.

1.3.1 Design of assessment activities

So, learners' assessment activities are quite diverse. There are five different kinds:
- Gold-star marks;

- Traditional exams, following the textbook. These act as external evaluators of the whole model;
- Project final task assessment activities. Their objective is to assess final products from project work; in this sense, they are clearly oriented to skill integration;
- Optional assessment activities, where learners integrate all the skills and have full autonomy to design their own small projects or improve their learning to learn skills;
- Reflection activities, to improve productions created for gold stars and self-regulation strategies.

The whole programme is based on a cycle that starts with language reception, to motivate learners to move to language production that would naturally lead to improving quality, reflecting on their own learning and competence building.

1.3.2 Performance indicators

Optional assessment implies extra work in classes that are asked to work hard, but was nevertheless common in the class which worked the hardest. My secondary class loved producing videos. Six optional videos were handed to me. This was also the class where assessment was more diverse, as they were doing an eTwinning project, reading adapted books in class and watching films as well as using a textbook.

The reason for them doing so many more things than the rest was that I taught upper VE classes for only two hours a week whereas I was teaching secondary for 3 hours. They were also my strongest group, while also the noisiest and the most numerous. Giving them a lot of work to do was, in a way, a strategy to keep them at bay. Videos were used by some students to escape the fail mark, while for others it was their way to excel. Often, a combination of both profiles is found in the groups who made the videos.

VE students created dictionary notebooks and wrote about relevant news as optional activities. Eight VE students handed in work of this kind to improve their marks.

1.4 Improve the learning process through reflection and dialogue

While I feel comfortable with fostering diversity, making teenagers and adults reflect about their own learning is not so easy for me. The Learning Diary has always had an experimental status in my teaching practice, even if it has gained relevance and is now worth the same as a traditional exam. Risking going further is perceived as

daring, in the same way as gold stars were felt to be in the beginning.

Research suggests that responses to learning are influenced by the kind of attitude learners' show. The contradiction I will have to fight against is that, while students tend not to complete the Learning Diary - either because it is difficult or because they do not have to - and it is the first thing they drop, research considers that it helps them improve their attitude towards L2 learning and their strategies as learners.

According to Black and Wiliam (2009), too much effort or too much well-being are not good as they can lead to burn-out or to withholding effort. To avoid both, learning needs to be mediated by positive volitional strategies. These are related to the capacity to analyse strategy failure and search for new ones. Coll, Mauri and Rochera (2011) also refer to metacognition, i.e. the knowledge learners have about regulation of their own learning.

Consistent with that, the Learning Diary can improve the learners' metacognitive strategies and make them more strategic learners if changes are made to its design that help learners improve their metacognitive knowledge.

In the assessment design for 2011-12, the fact of doing many things caused some learners to be confused but was also a strong key to success. Besides, as writing a Learning Diary is demanding, especially when metacognitive strategies are low, it was the first thing many pupils decided not to do, particularly as they could still get good marks and probably considered it "a waste of time".

My hypothesis now is that, if reducing the workload and focusing more on dialogue and reflection is in line with what research tells us, then that means not only that Learning Diaries should be more important in the overall assessment programme, but also that slowing down is important too.

On the one hand, activating students as instructional resources for one another is a key strategy in formative assessment and needs to be systemised within the learning practices through peer assessment (Black and Wiliam, 2009). Assessing this behaviour might provide some enlightenment as to how to make learning more efficient without making it boring.

On the other hand, ways need to be found to link individual and group reflection more systematically and create a more fluent dialogue on students' productions that foster peer assessment. As Mauri and Rochera (2010) point out, a good assessment design is not enough. We still need collaboration between teachers and learners to ensure quality in assessment practice. This collaboration can be boosted and traced in the wiki, and studying it can lead to improvements in learning.

As results seem to suggest that the mean which students get in the Learning Diary rises when more time is spent discussing correction of errors, it would be important to reinforce guidance while trying to lower the standard deviation by raising the percentage awarded to this mark in the assessment programme and making the Learning Diary a pre-condition for passing the term.

1.4.1 New design for the Learning Diary

To make Learning Diaries more central, I will increase the percentage of the final mark awarded to them, while still keeping the opportunities for optional tasks. Besides, passing the Learning Diary will no longer be a choice, but a necessary condition to pass the term. Furthermore, all the optional exams that are not in themselves reflections (such as vocabulary notebooks) will have to include a reflection element, added to the Learning Diary.

Clearer instructions on what to include in the Learning Diary and more guided practice are necessary too. It is important that students are aware of all the sources from which they can and must draw food for thought to develop their Learning Diaries. These are:

- Textbook;
- Exam correction;
- Teacher;
- Wiki;
- Other students;
- Films watched;
- The MP3 files they create;
- Their written productions;
- Their presentations;
- Their optional exams;
- Individual research on the Internet, private classes, etc.

To make reflection easier, dialogue is important too. The wiki offers tools to comment on each others'

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[4] Metacognitive strategies must be distinguished from metacognitive knowledge, which is related to beliefs and assumptions about learning and learning abilities. Not only are they different, but also metacognitive knowledge might even be a hindrance to efficient application of learning strategies.

Wenden (1998) describes metacognitive knowledge as "learners' naive psychology of learning". Learners "generate their own hypotheses about factors that contribute to learning" that "are not arbitrary" (1998:517).

productions, but these have mainly been used by the teacher when assessing learners and not so much by students to interact between them. Besides, very few of the comments provided have actually reached the Learning Diaries.

Creating a more fluent dialogue without risking burn-out or negative reactions is probably possible if students get organised in long-term groups where they monitor and correct each other. While still keeping the individual nature of the Learning Diary, a percentage of the mark given for it will consider how much learners have helped their group members by providing relevant feedback.

According to Coll, Mauri and Rochera (2010), assessment can help learners acquire the learning to learn competences because learning objectives influence the kind of feedback learners look for. So, putting heavier emphasis on the Learning Diary and dialogue both with the teacher and between the students themselves will, I hope, help learners to become more autonomous. Indicators to prove this is the case will have to be used and the ones these authors propose will be considered.

2 Assessment programme next year

Summing up, during the 2012-13 school year I am looking forward to successful implementation of the design shown in Figure 4, which, I hope, will make me a more efficient teacher.

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Figure 2: Distribution of the gold stars learners can earn per term
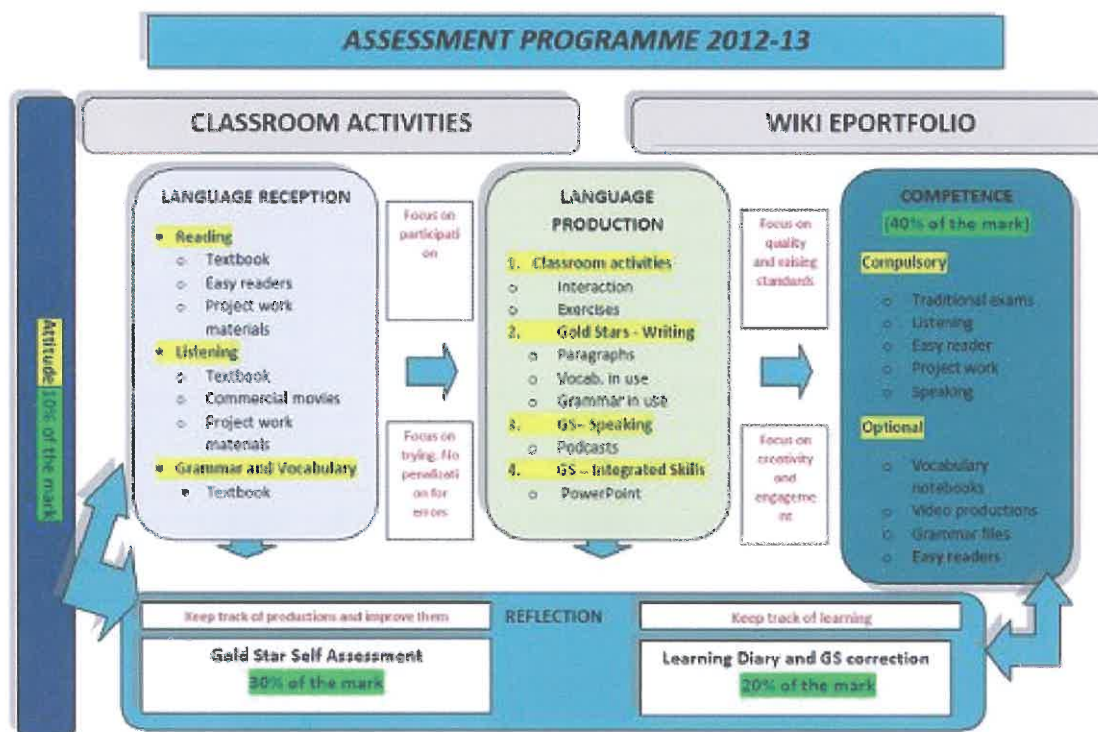
I will implement this programme in two wikis: fluwiki.wikispaces.com and futureprofessionals.wikispaces.com.

Differentiated Learning

By Liam Fitzpatrick

"When it comes to teaching, one size does not fit all".
(Toni Theisen, Educationalist, French Teacher, 2009 ACTFL National Language Teacher of the Year).

Every child is unique and is born with different talents and abilities. For each and every classroom setting (be it EFL, CLIL or otherwise), we need take into consideration our students' different individual needs, backgrounds, learning profiles and preferences. Although the literature in this area is commonly referred to as Differentiated Instruction, the starting (and finishing) point in any given teaching-learning context should be the individual student. Hence, the (learner centred) title - "Differentiated Learning" – of this article. Differentiated Instruction (as a response to Differentiated Learning) does not change what is taught, but how it is taught. All students basically work towards the same standards and objectives; the key difference is that they are provided with multiple pathways to learning the same content, and are thus given equal opportunities to acquire knowledge.

Given the direct correlation between the declining economic situation and increased classroom sizes, instructional theories or teaching approaches such as Differentiated Instruction nowadays are becoming more and more relevant. However, Differentiated Instruction for

Differentiated Learning is not about developing 35 separate lesson plans for each student in a classroom (nor is it about identifying and channelling students to "diversificación" early on), but rather providing students with multiple paths to learning, which help them take in information and make sense of concepts and skills, by taking into account the diverse range of student factors (mentioned above) when planning and delivering instruction.

> **Every child is unique and is born with different talents and abilities**

The following short article sets out to briefly define the why, what and how of Differentiated Instruction (DI) by: placing the theory in its historical context; explaining the main bodies of research that have contributed to this field; discussing the strategies for employing DI and, finally, offering some tips for getting started with DI.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

DI as an approach to teaching (whether it be in the area of language or otherwise) is perhaps as old as the teaching profession itself. Basically, it occurs whenever a teacher varies his or her teaching in order to better reach out to an individual or small group and create the best learning conditions and experience possible. As an instructional theory, this approach gained prominence in the field of education in the 1980s particularly with so-called gifted or talented students in mixed-ability classrooms. Its main exponents and key figures are Toni Theisen and Carol Ann Tomlinson (University of Virginia's Curry School of Education, Educationalist, 1974 Teacher of the Year - Virginia). Many of the examples and case studies they use to explain the theory are taken from experiences in (foreign) language classroom settings. What both Theisen and Tomlinson advocate is that DI is an approach to teaching that addresses all learner needs and profiles in any given classroom setting.

> **Differentiated Instruction for Differentiated Learning is providing students with multiple paths to learning and abilities**

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RESEARCH

The following are the 3 main bodies of research that DI draws on and is supported by:

1) Brain-based Research
Much of the work done in this area stems from the discoveries that scientists have made over the years when treating brain disorders and how this feeds into understanding how the brain actually learns in optimal conditions (see John Medina's "Brain Rules").

2) Learning Styles and Multiple Intelligences
Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences has had a huge impact on education in recent years. The three main learning styles in the language classroom are Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic. However, Gardner believes that there are up to 8 different types of intelligences and that classroom instruction should account for and address each one.

3) Authentic Assessment
This 3rd body of research directly relates to the 3rd DI strategy below. In simplified terms, it involves – where feasible - moving away from traditional assessment procedures (such as forced-choice measures of multiple-choice tests, fill-in-the-blanks, true-false, matching etc.) by using assessment instruments that are flexible and appropriate in order for students to be able demonstrate specific skills and competencies and measure on-going performance. It is probably the area of DI where a "giant leap of faith" by both teachers and administrators alike is most required so that the diverse range of learner needs and styles present in any given classroom setting are addressed in accordance with curriculum goals.

DI STRATEGIES

This is the heart of the matter. These strategies basically define the "how" of Differentiated Instruction:

1) Content
Content refers to the "input" . That is, what students must know & understand. Content can be modified by providing a variety of ways for students to explore curriculum content. In the EFL Classroom for instance "input genres" such as articles, stories, dialogues, poems, songs, mind maps, videos can all be used in varying formats in order to exploit or focus on key language points or receptive/productive skills. Undoubtedly, technology and multi-sensory approaches to content delivery have an important role to play here. How often do we make or hear these types of comments about students: "He or she just doesn't get it" or "If he/she would just pay attention, he/she would get it!" Is the content we use appropriate according to the learners' Readiness (cognitive maturity), Interests and Learning Profiles? Is the format of the content delivery stimulating and motivating enough for them?

Content can be modified by providing a variety of ways for students to explore curriculum content.

2) Process
Process refers to how we exploit content. That is, the types of tasks (i.e. variety, length, focus etc.) we use in the classroom with groups of students. The key here is to provide multiple paths for students to be able to explore the concepts that address all learning styles and needs (right-brain, left-brain, visual, auditory, kinaesthetic). Given the diverse range of learners in the classroom, one task is not normally enough to ensure that content has been processed and understood, nor can it be assumed that all students will necessarily understand what is expected of them at any given stage of the Process. "After I give the instructions he/she sits there and stares (at his/her paper)". Could it be the case that this particular student or these particular students require more direct attention than others during task explanation? Could cooperative or peer learning be employed in these circumstances? Do we need to break the task down into smaller more manageable parts?

3) Product
Product refers to students' "output" and in DI involves providing students with a variety of options through which they can demonstrate or exhibit what they have learnt. In the EFL classroom "output genres" include (but are not limited to) role-plays, presentations, multimedia presentations, brochures, posters, songs, research, essays etc. These culminating projects/tasks ask the student to rehearse, apply, and extend what he or she has learned in a lesson, unit or module.

In some cases, curriculum demands do not allow for much variety in the Product stage. Take the writing section of the Selectividad exam at the Bachillerato level for example. However, what we can do is vary the Content (e.g. format) and the

Given the diverse range of learners in the classroom, one task is not normally enough to ensure that content has been processed and understood

Process (different tasks based on the same concepts using flexible

grouping) so that, for instance, the concepts/ techniques of writing plans, topic sentences and support sentences in an argumentative or problem-solution essay are better understood and applied by all students, resulting in more cohesive and coherent pieces of written production. In other cases, Activity Choice in the Product stage may be more motivating for students. For example, listening comprehension texts can be used in a way that allows students to choose whether they prefer to listen for detail (left-brain - logical & sequential) or to listen for gist (right-brain - intuitive & random) in order to demonstrate their understanding of the concepts. When combined with the principles of collaborative, peer-based learning, it is argued that this type of Differentiated Instruction responds to the Differentiated Learning needs in the **classroom.**

The principles of collaborative, peer-based learning are also related to a possible 4th strategy in DI which is the Learning Environment. Although there are more factors to be taken into account, in simplified terms this involves modifying how the classroom works and feels (e.g. lighting, visual distractors, seating arrangements etc.).

TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH DI

1) Get to know your students.
Theories and technology aside, teaching is a human being issue that involves understanding what makes

> **Activity Choice in the Product stage may be more motivating for students.**

our students tick. All students within a collective are individual entities and should be treated as such. As Medina states, "Every student's brain …….. is wired differently. ….. Regions of the brain develop at different rates in different people. The brains of school children are just as unevenly developed as their bodies". This is applicable to both primary and secondary level students.

2) Identify areas of the curriculum that could be adapted to differentiated instruction.
For instance different activities, tasks, and assessments that address a specific concept or skill   (with differing levels of complexity) perhaps lend themselves better to DI allowing for variety in Content, Process, Product and the Learning Environment.

3) Examine and experiment with your role as teacher in the differentiated classroom.
A tangible way to start would be to target auditory, visual, and kinesthetic learners in your approaches and identify alternative methods of assessing student performance and understanding. Begin with one of the 3 (or 4) strategies for implementing DI – the one you feel most comfortable with and, if applicable to your own teaching context, build form there.

The relatively recent paradigm shift in education (from teacher-centred to more learner-centred approaches) means that curriculum goals are no longer defined in terms of what a teacher will teach to the collective but rather in terms of what each student within a given collective will be able to demonstrate. Differentiated Instruction is an approach to teaching which attempts to address this situation. For more exhaustive and in-depth explanations of DI, the key names and recommended reading mentioned below provide an excellent resource. Although critical analysis of DI is outside the scope of this article, some critical perspectives on the applicability of DI to each and every teaching-learning situation can be easily found on the Internet through forums, blogs, social/professional networks etc.

RECOMMENDED READING

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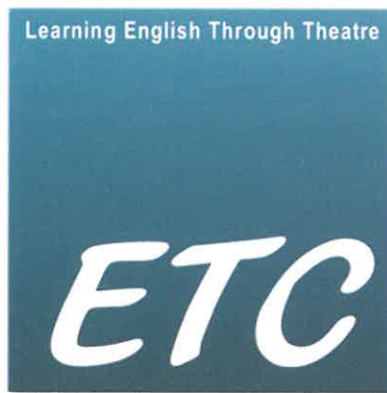
**February 21st, 22nd & 23rd**   **The Value of English**

'JOINING HANDS', A GLOBAL APPROACH TO ENGLISH

By Carme Oller

Synopsis: After some years of teaching and some experiences, I felt I had to change the concept of 'learning English' to 'learning in English', what it is more commonly known as CLIL, or in our Catalan experience, 'immersion'. Not exactly in the same conditions but they share the same aims: to be able to use a foreign language. We can put it into practice by doing a subject in an isolated way or by having different kinds of contents and contexts 'join hands' to enhance the final results. This is what we are doing in our school, Institut Escola Marta Mata, and this is what I would like to share with you.

What is CLIL?

It is an acronym for Content Learning Integrated Languages. It is learning a given set of content in another language. Content and language share the same role, they have the same importance. We plan them both, we assess them both. It needs some conditions to get started: it needs teachers prepared in language and contents; it needs appropriate material; good planning and a good amount of time for immersion. This last condition is sometimes not in our hands, so what can we do? We can take the advantage of other areas' time, and, in this way, apart from increasing the time dedicated to immersion, we will gain the use of the language in different contexts, the use of specific vocabulary and the awareness among the students of the importance of the language.
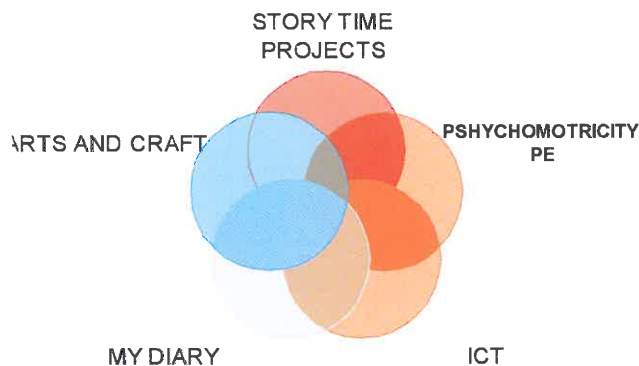
CLIL is a broad project where a context is not isolated but shares language with all the others, giving the students more immersion time and more possibilities to be in different communication situations.

English in kindergarten

We start English in the second term of P3, just thirty minutes a week. The objectives are:

- to start the 'game' of learning a foreign language in order for students to feel it is their game, as they started playing when they were very little, a game of theatre, humour, songs and stories.
- to have the first contact with new phonetics, the sooner the better.
- to meet the English teacher, who they see in the corridor and who says 'Hello' and 'Bye-bye' and other strange things. To start to develop a complicity and a special link with this teacher.
- to start communication in a foreign language (sometimes it is a second foreign language).

At the age of four they have one complete session of story time and at the age of five two sessions.

Story time is based on 'Dialogue stories' created by Josep Mª Artigal, where children play the main characters of the story and they talk from the very beginning with the help of gestures, movements and rhythm. Some of the stories are fantastic and try to awaken emotions, but some others put the children into real situations at home: a conflict with mummy, a problem with a pet, etc. They are stories that feature a language that can be used in other class situations and in everyday contexts: "It's dirty"; "Wash your hands"; "Where is the hamster?"; "Yuck, I don't like fish", etc. In other words, they are useful for creating new language.

Apart from these stories, and thanks to the present-day resources, we sing songs, we dance to songs, and we watch videos of songs and little stories, which help the students practice phonetics and learn new vocabulary and structures. The most successful are the ones that demand some acting out.

Physical Education

One session per week we go to the gym and do physical education with Jeanne, who for us it is not the teacher of English but the English teacher: she does not teach English, she speaks in English.

Sessions in the gym in English usually follow the same structure as a normal session in Catalan. We follow Aucouturier's ideas of self-learning and self-experimenting. Having a similar structure helps both the students and the teacher: the students know what is coming next and the teacher can use always the same language. It is as follows:

- A warm-up based on a 'dancing song', such as 'Head and Shoulders' or 'When Little Peter Dances', etc. or a moving chant, like 'Walking, Walking' or some invented one.
- A basic TPR game to practice vocabulary: parts of the body and instructions.
- Free game with new material or a specific track.
- Organized activities or games with this material.
- Free use of the material with music: corporal expression.
- Relaxation time.
- Self-awareness of the session: through a drawing, by talking, using some material, etc.

In these sessions we use general vocabulary for the class management and social situations, but it is an appropriate time to learn specific language, such as:

*parts of the body.
*objects in the gym.
*basic movement instructions.
*easy instructions for playing games.
*expression adjectives and movement adverbs.

In this area it is quite common that you see their comprehension increase a lot but not their production. There are some strategies that can help you find communication opportunities for your students, such as putting them into the role of the teacher, playing games which need production, playing role games, etc.

ICT / computer time

In another session per week in small groups we learn how to use a computer, and we do it in English. Sometimes children don't notice we are using a foreign language because they are so immersed in the activity that the language is not an obstacle to overcome, but another challenge in the activity they are doing.

In kindergarten, the main goals are to gain ability using the mouse, learn how to do the basic actions on the computer, enjoy using interesting web pages, get to know another way of drawing and colouring, increase their creativity by using drawing programmes, introduce them to the use of the keyboard and text. At the same time, we start using other technology media as a tool: a microphone, headphones, a digital blackboard, etc.

Here again we need to use specific language:

- computer instructions: click, choose, go to, match, print, etc.
- vocabulary used in the drawing programme (we use Kid Pix): colours, sizes, geometric figures, etc.

English in Primary Education

In Primary Education, in the First Cycle, we do English story time the following way:

• In the fist year, we continue using dialogued stories.
• In the second year, we start working on cross-curricular projects mainly related to science: 'Wild Animals', 'Farm Animals' and 'We Love Nature'. We still work on some theatre plays and stories.

In primary education, we use English in:

- Physical Education
- ICT
- Arts and Crafts
- 'My Diary'

PE, Physical Education

Our children have an advantage: they have been doing PE in English, and they have a baggage of language they can use at PE time, language about movements, instructions, gym elements and games. This will make it easier for the students and for the teacher, who is motivated to go further and enrich their vocabulary.

The teacher plans the class as he would do in Catalan, and then he looks for the appropriate language for understanding (passive), to using (active), as well as the language support needed.

ICT

Again it is not a new context for them, and it allows the teacher to go further in ICT contents and basic competence about 'learning how to learn', such as using text programmes, images, searching for information, making outlines, etc., taking the projects they are doing in class as the basic content to be worked on.

Arts and Crafts

It is a very good time to create communicative situations such as:

- asking for and giving material.
- asking for and giving opinions.
- asking for help.

At the same time, the teacher finds new structures to use related to:

- praising or asking for more effort.
- encouraging creativity.
- encouraging cooperative work.

And we can work more deeply in the high cognitive capacities: analyzing, applying, evaluating and creating. Remembering and understanding have been worked since the very beginning. (Bloom's taxonomy)

My diary

In this session we focus on the students talking about themselves: their families, holidays, pets, likes and dislikes (food, colours...), trips, presents, personal events, festivities, feelings, their house, etc.

We start by using fixed structures where they have to add their personal information. For example: I have....... (1 dog, 3 cats), and sometimes they complete the sentence using a drawing. Little by little, we ask them to build the structure with the help of a question and always after long talks.

At the beginning, we stick the sentences onto a poster so everybody can see them, and then after a week they students stick them into their diaries (the language goes from public to private). When they start creating their own structures, the language can go in the other direction: from private to public.

Examples of two pages. One about likes and dislikes and another about Christmas presents.

The importance of...

... creating communicative situations

When teaching in English, it can happen that we are concentrating so much on the content of the area that we forget about the use of functional language, such as: asking for necessities, asking for help, asking for opinions, etc., and it is in fact, an excellent time to use them. The challenge is: to create the communicative situations that don't spring up in a spontaneous way and to be sure all the students participate in them.

... giving language support

If we want to help the students to create new language, not just to repeat it, they need to have language support in hand. This language support can work as scaffolding, and you can retire it little by little, depending on the students. We can give language support using:

• substitution charts:

		bananas.
I	like don't like	pears. grapes.
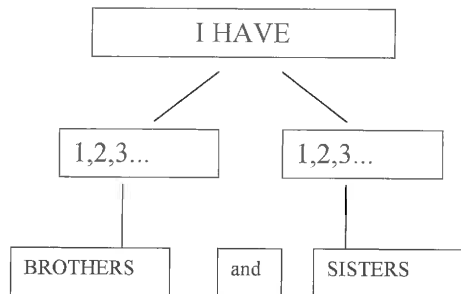
• symbols or drawings.
• language posters.
• role plays.
• plasticised cards on the table.
• gestures (they help make the language appear)
• lineal outlines

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                    I HAVE
                   /      \
            1,2,3...        1,2,3...
               |               |
          BROTHERS   and    SISTERS
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Planning

When planning for CLIL sessions, we have to think about the content we are teaching and the language we want the students to understand or use. We can not for-get the cognitive abilities we are going to work on, the basic competences and of course the activities, the resources and the evaluation activities. The following is a suggested planning table with examples:

CONTENTS	All the contents in the area
LANGUAGE (communication)	- Functional/social language - Language to work on: instructions - Specific vocabulary - Thinking language: why...
COGNITION	Remembering Understanding Applying Analysing Evaluating Creating
BASIC COMPETENCES	Having the ability to understand a word through context. Being able to understand a message with the help of body language. (...)
ACTIVITIES	To tell a story with gestures. They repeat and then they act out just helped by the gestures. To introduce new elements into the story. To create a collage using different kinds of paper. To practice the use of the mouse by drawing a picture.
MATERIAL or resources	Web pages PowerPoints Worksheets Gym material Arts and crafts material
ASSESSMENT	Oral assessment, looking at: • oral comprehension • oral production • attitude in class

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[1] Idea from Josep Mª Artigal.

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Feedback from families

What a big help it is to have the families on our team. They motivate the students, the students gain self-confidence, they can help us with homework, they can help us collect material, find information, etc. But how can we get all this? Here are some ideas to add to your own. They can:

- ask for feedback about a story children tell at home.
- receive some material to read and bring back to school.
- receive puppets that speak English to them.
- receive a DVD with their children acting out different roles.
- receive a CD with the songs we sing in class.
- receive an album to add pictures to.
- be invited to a class or to a theatre play.
- be invited to use our English blog on the internet, where they can find photos, video recordings, suggestions about interesting webs, etc.
- participate in innovative projects and get information them.
- be asked for some collaboration if they speak English: tell a story or do an arts and crafts activity with the teacher's help.

Assessment

It is difficult to assess oral language. We need to listen to individuals, and we need time to do this. But there are some experiences that can help us:

- watch video recordings.
- peer assessment: a boy / girl listens to a partner and takes some notes (colour faces) while the teacher goes around the class listening.
- students tell the story to their family and receive feedback (directed or more open).
- self-evaluation (from First Cycle up).

Conclusion

CLIL is a very interesting and valuable method for teaching foreign language. It provides a way for students to get more immersion time and also learn the language of different subject areas, like PE and ICT. In Institut Escola Marta Mata, we have been using it for some time now, from kindergarten on up, and it has proven to be very successful for improving students' foreign language skills and increasing their motivation for English and for their school subjects in general. It has also had a positive effect on parents, raising their interest in what is going on in the school and in the work their children are bring home to them. All in all, it has been a very positive experience, getting all the members of the educational community and the different subject areas in the school to join hands and create an interesting and effective programme.

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Physical Education in CLIL:
Enhancing Language through Meaningful Use and Interaction

By Josep Coral i Mateu

This paper presents the main features of a Physical Education in CLIL programme and explains how it improves English. It first introduces PE-in-CLIL, which should be understood as a holistic approach that utilises the principles of learning by doing and at the same time fosters cognition and cultural awareness. Then, it outlines a teaching proposal including planning and scaffolding. Finally, it gives reasons for moving towards a holistic pedagogy for teaching and learning both PE and languages

INTRODUCTION

Although Physical Education (PE) relates to many transferable and specific competences, it is underestimated as a subject which can develop academic and language skills. It uses students' intrinsic motivation for movement to enhance their willingness to retain information. Motivation compensates for the difficulty of learning a foreign language. PE provides authentic, real-life situations that increase both language-time exposure and oral interaction.

The programme is based on the 4Cs CLIL framework (Coyle, 2006; Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). It was accepted in the "Pla Experimental de Llengües Estrangeres" and was also awarded for innovation in the 5 International Congress and XXVI National Congress of Physical Education celebrated in Barcelona in 2010.

PE-in-CLIL should be understood as a holistic approach that uses the principles of learning by doing and at the same time promotes cognitive development and cultural awareness. Physical Education in a CLIL programme

can provide learners with motor skills, communication skills, life-long learning and citizenship skills to achieve a healthy, plurilingual, intercultural society. It's also a different and excellent way of picking up language because learners are exposed to rich, meaningful, comprehensible input in language-in-use. Furthermore, learners need opportunities to use language in trying to achieve communicative outcomes. For this reason, this interdisciplinary and learner-centred programme attempts to increase Student Talking Time (Bentley, 2007) through cooperative and collaborative learning as well as through self- and peer-assessment techniques. Different methodologies and techniques in PE combined with those in language are used to reach this goal.

Teaching PE-in-CLIL

Although Physical Education is a popular subject in CLIL, very little research has been published on it (Rottmann, 2007; Coral, 2010, 2012; Figueras, Flores & González-Davies, 2011). However, evidence shows positive effects despite the lack of specific PE-in-CLIL pedagogy to support PE teachers. Research reveals that many features of PE tasks that promote integrated learning are linked to balanced tasks. Tasks need to be balanced and efficient in order to improve integrated learning. A task is said to be bal-anced when it has a measured equivalence amongst motor, communication and cogni-tion skills (Coral 2012).

In agreement with Rottman (2007) and Machunsky (2008), a specific PE-in-CLIL pedagogy is needed. The differences between regular classroom subjects and PE are well known (Saenz-López,

Castillo & Conde, 2009; Graham, 2008; Romero, 2007; Sánchez Bañuelos, 1990) because of the specific characteristics of PE: motor learning; outdoors activities; children's intrinsic motivation for movement; the distribution of pupils over the playing field; the fact that PE is the sole subject that fosters physical exertion; the fight against a sedentary lifestyle. In addition to this, the CLIL approach applied to PE adds more specificities to these features because it uses a foreign language for teaching and learning. The hub of the question is how a PE-in-CLIL programme can enhance language and develop cognitive skills without losing contents. Increasing available time for P.E. can compensate for the delays in the motor-skill contents. Also, planning and scaffolding must be considered. Planning takes on major importance, and scaffolding becomes essential.

Planning

Below, I present a lesson plan (Table 1) created during a ten-week paid study leave in the UK, under a grant from the Department of Education in 2010. The unit "Using Cooperative & Collaborative Learning to Improve Track and Field Skills" (Coral, 2011a) was created during a specialized training course in Norwich and tested in a primary school in Catalonia (Escola Pau Boada – Vilafranca del Penedès). It meets with the requirements of the 4Cs framework (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010) and follows the guidelines of the TKT CLIL Module (Bentley, 2010). In regard to the teaching notes (Table 2), I detail the motor and communication skills, interaction type and scaffolding needed in each activity.

One of the teaching aims of this unit is to increase Student Talking Time; for this reason speaking

communication skills are divided into ten activities:

1. Responding to teacher questions.

2. Commanding.

3. Explaining.

4. Asking & answering.

5. Correcting.

6. Describing.

7. Giving opinions.

8. Comparing.

9. Making predictions.

10. Reporting back.
In PE-in-CLIL, games are by far the most used tool. Not only do they provide motivation but they also gain effectiveness when combined with five specific teaching strategies:

1. Use games to introduce a physical ability that will be practiced reciprocally in order to reinforce oracy.

2. Encourage learners to explain games in groups in order to learn how to play them.

3. Alternate highly demanding motor games with problem-solving or linguistic tasks in rest phases. This point matches up with Rottmann's (2007) proposals.

4. Divide complex games into two or three simpler, progressive sequences in order to facilitate comprehension. Thus, long explanations lacking movement are avoided.

5. Include refereeing into team sports in order to solve the lack of oral communica-tion when playing them.

Table 1: Track-and-field lesson plan.

LESSON PLAN

NAME OF THE UNIT:	*Using cooperative learning to improve track and field skills*	Level 6 12 lessons	Equipment: Cones, batons, foam javelins, balls, flashcards, low and medium hurdles.	Facilities: Court and playground.
PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE:	Teachers and students are familiar with cooperative and collaborative learning strategies. If not, the **introductory unit** to cooperative and collaborative learning should be carried out.			
WHOLE CLASS AIMS:	To know the different kinds of track and field skills and be able to do, teach and assess at least one of them.			
PERSONAL GOALS:	Choose, work to achieve and self-assess a personal skill goal.			

CONTRIBUTION TO COMPETENCES

KNOWLEDGE AND INTERACTION WITH THE NATURAL WORLD	COMMUNICATIVE	LEARNING TO LEARN:
Students... ...can use their body efficiently to develop main movement skills. ...can use strategies to improve their motor skills.	Students... ... can interpret and understand commands and explanations related to motor development. ... can explain basic motor skills and make predictions about speed and distance.	Students... ... can gain, process and assimilate new knowledge skills. ... can collaborate to reach a common goal, assess his/herself as well as his/her partners learning.
		BE AWARE OF Safety rules and risk assessment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

KNOW	BE ABLE TO
The skills related to hurdling, throwing the javelin, doing sprint events, doing relays and doing the triple jump. The basic track and field vocabulary. How to organize a cooperative group.	Explain simple instructions to practise track and field skills. Describe different skills. Organize cooperative group learning. Self-assess and assess their partners. Create or modify different track and field drills or games.

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Physical Education: Aronson's jigsaw, Mosston's teaching styles (command, practice, reciprocal and inclusion) and peer teaching (pairs and leader group technique)

English: Total Physical Response and Communicative Approach.

ASSESSMENT

FOR LEARNING	CONTRIBUTION TO COMPETENCES
Self-assessment: check their personal motor work and goals. Compare individual progress from beginning till now. Peer-assessment: check the motor development and the comprehension of the tasks of their partners, and the level of cooperation.	Level of development of their basic motor skills. Level of development of their communicative skills. Level of cooperation and collaboration in team work skills.

4Cs FRAMEWORK

CONTENT	Concepts: track and field; the relationship between weight and flight path; perception of distance. Motor skills: running for speed; running for endurance; body control; reaction time; throwing for distance and accuracy; rhythm of running; lead and trail leg action; jumping for distance; hurdling obstacles. Rules of starting for speed, jumping over hurdles, throwing the javelin, baton relay and triple jump. Be aware of safety and healthy habits.		
COMMUNICATION	LANGUAGE OF LEARNING	LANGUAGE FOR LEARNING	LANGUAGE THROUGH LEARNING
	Vocabulary: Hurdle, baton, safety, carotid pulsation, lane, ready, on your marks, acceleration, hips, reaction, distance, track and field, speed, set, withdrawal, direction, javelin. Release, approach, land, march, approach, raise, achieve, stride, assess, cooperate, collaborate. Length, delivery, recovery, lead leg, trail leg, triple jump. **Structures:** She/he is ready to … Her/his eyes are focused on … Don't look backwards before … … She has finished … In the javelin grip you have to … Her/his lead leg/foot is … His/her lead/trail leg is in front of/behind/over … I think that … / It can be a … Keep jogging / running / jumping How far will you … in … seconds?	Responding to teacher questions. Commanding. Explaining different skills. Asking & answering. Correcting. Describing skills. Giving opinions. Comparing. Making predictions. Reporting back. Making judgements. Suggesting changes to the skills and games.	Managing behaviour and dealing with behaviour problems. Dealing with bad weather or unplanned situations.
COGNITION	**Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTs)** Matching. Identifying. Comparing. Giving reasons. Analysing.	**Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTs)** Making predictions. Giving reasons. Developing ideas. Suggesting improvements. Applying evaluation criteria.	
CITIZENSHIP	The importance of collaboration to reach common goals. The importance of perseverance to achieve personal goals. The importance of risk assessment and healthy habits.		

Table 2. Javelin teaching notes.

Lesson 4 (12) – Javelin		Equipment: 1 foam ball, 1 heavy ball, 1 shuttlecock, 1 deflated ball, 5 cones, 4 foam javelins, hoops, buckets, tyres or any other receptacle that can be used as a target.		Lesson timing – 60 minutes	
	Procedures	*Motor skills*	*Communication skills*	*Interaction*	*Scaffolding*
INTRODUCTION 10 minutes	Show image flashcard 4. Ask learners what they know about the javelin throw.		Listening Speaking(1)	Whole group	Image flashcard no. 4
	Explain the **"Heavy or light?"** drill. Learners do the **"Heavy or light?"** drill.	Understanding how the weight of an object affects its flight path in throwing. Throwing for accuracy	Listening Speaking(4)	Cooperative groups of 4 players	
DEVELOPMENT 40 minutes	Explain the fundamentals of the javelin throw: The grip, the withdrawal, the crossover and the finish.	Body control	Listening Speaking(4)	Whole group	
	Learners practise the throw. Use reciprocal teaching. Change the roles of the players (reading, doing, assessing).	Throwing for distance and body control	Listening Speaking (2) Reading commands	Cooperative groups of 4 players	Flashcards speaking flashcard no. 4
	Ask learners how far can they throw safely. Use the sentence starters to help them in their answers. They throw and check their predictions. Use multi-level station challenges.	Throwing for distance Body control	Listening Speaking (9)	Multi-level challenges	Sentence starters
CONCLUSION	Learners match javelin images with the sentences used in the lesson.		Listening Speaking(4,5) Reading sentences	Collaborative groups of 4/5 learners	Matching chart no. 3

Figure 1. Previous knowledge activity.

Cooperative games *Think about...*

Are they cooperating?

What does cooperation mean?

Do you know any cooperative game?

Yes, they are...	cooperating. working together. joining forces. achieve a common goal. learning together. helping each other. teamwork games.
It means...	
I think it means..	

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is critical for reducing the gap between content and the language needed to successfully complete the PE and English integrated task. I introduce the student's workbook (Coral 2011b & 2011c), which is used to support the process of integrating motor, language and cognition. Scaffolding must be used carefully and be withdrawn progressively to help students in their self-regulation of learning.

The student's workbook includes activities that can be used in the three phases of the lesson: introduction, development and conclusion.

Figure 1 shows a prior-knowledge activity related to a cooperative games unit of work. It is used for both making prior knowledge emerge and pre-teaching new vocabulary and concepts.

Figure 2. Tee ball refereeing calls

REFEREEING CALLS

1	The bat	isn't	in the box
2	Waiting batters	weren't	behind safety line
3	He She	hasn't	stepped on the base.
			reached the base.
4	Lane	wasn't	free.
5	Fielder	has disturbed	the runner.
6	Fielders' row		
7	Fielders' call	wasn't	correct.

Figure 2 refers to refereeing calls used in a baseball lead-up game. It helps referees to justify their decisions. It is used in the development phase of the lesson involving all the students, who are divided into three groups (batter, fielder and referee teams). They take turns until everybody has been involved in each role.

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Figure 3. Introducing games.

Unit 6   *Games*

Hot potato

Players form a circle with one player in the centre. The person in the centre closes his eyes and chants while the other players pass the ball from one person to the next along the circle. He raises his right arm while chanting. When the person in the center finish the chant he counts silently. He raises his left arm while counting. When he reaches 10 he shouts "hot potato". The player who is holding the ball sits down on the ground with his legs interrupting the circle.

The game continues again, except now, in order to pass the ball to the next player, the child has to jump over the legs of the now-sitting player. The last person standing in the circle becomes the centre player for the next round.

Say the chant: I'm in the centre of the circle playing the hot potato game. One... Hot potato!

1 - _____
2 - _____
3 - _____
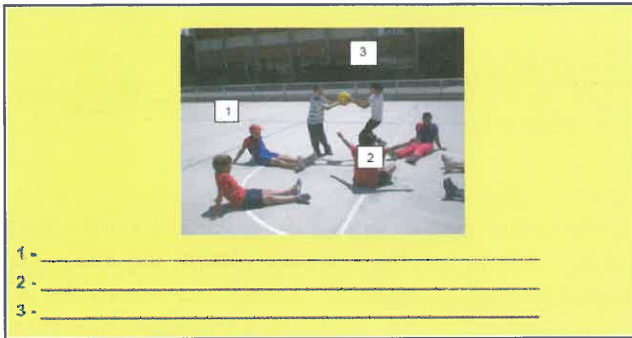
Make sentences to complete the boxes:

He They	sits hold	the hot potato. in the centre of the circle. with his legs straight.

Figure 3 is used in the introduction, it prepares learners linguistically and psychologically for the lesson. Learners skim the text in order to get a general idea of what it is about. The image provides an extra support for success, which is important in controlling frustration levels. As a consequence, the students know what the game is about and this lets teachers introduce the new vocabulary successfully. An easy substitution table gives the clues to make key sentences and match them with the different roles in the game showed in the image. It helps learners integrate the physical activity with the language needed.

Figura 4. Game calls.

Four corners relay

Game calls.

We finished	in the	first second third fourth	position.	So, we scored	four three two one	points.
One two	players	made	double-dribble travelling	So, we take off	one two	points.
Finally, the total score is				....		points.

During the development phase, game calls are introduced (Figure 4). They are used to incorporate language into movement and games without slowing down the pace of the activity. This is a critical factor because research (Coral 2012) reveals that activities with long explanations that reduce time allotted to physical activity are rejected. Students must use game calls to validate their action, that is, to get points in a match or continue playing in a game. When they have enough confidence, teachers withdraw the scaffolding tool. Scaffolding should be removed gradually and then removed completely when mastery of the task is demonstrated.

Figure 5. Basketball peer assessment

Peer assessment

Performer's name:	Shade in the bar to the point that represents your work during this unit.			
	Never	sometimes	very often	always
My partner dribbles the ball properly.				
My partner passes the ball appropriately.				
My partner shoots the ball effectively.				
My partner does the lay-up shoot correctly.				
My partner listens to the teacher and collaborates with the group.				
My partner encourages his or her teammates.				
My partner respects the rules and is a fair player.				

During the conclusion phase of the lesson, PE teachers try to calm students down and summarise what has been learned. This is also a good opportunity to ask high-order questions to promote reflection and critical thinking. Figure 5 corresponds to a peer assessment activity related to a basketball unit.

Conclusion

In electing to use CLIL approach to PE as the lens through which to view my attempts at pedagogical change, I was challenged in many ways, and now I am able to draw conclusions about PE-in-CLIL teaching. The discipline of adapting PE units of work that were flexible enough to accommodate the 4Cs framework and my teaching aims was a challenge to my pedagogy. I was challenged by limiting Teacher Talking Time and increasing Students Talking Time. I was challenged to move away from the major use of direct and re-productive styles of instruction to cooperative learning strategies. I was challenged to demonstrate that PE is a subject that can make a remarkable contribution to communicative linguistic competence. I was challenged to keep physical activity going on the track while teaching in a foreign language. The literature on using the CLIL approach to PE may be limited, but, given the achievement of pupils in both PE and English, the reactions of school colleagues and the support of the school board and scholars, I have definitively moved towards a holistic pedagogy for teaching and learning both PE and language.

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Let's English, for the Fun of It!

By Maria de Mir Ferrer

Teaching English to very young learners is a very challenging task. However, the more challenging, the more stimulating it needs to be for the learner. Add in having limited resources and you have to be even more creative.

There is a widespread tendency to forget there are certain tools and resources we always have at hand that can help us in teaching at all times. On the one hand, there are precisely our students' innate talents and their imagination; on the other hand, there is English itself plus our extremely resourceful minds. However, aren't we in the same boat? What result would we achieve if we intertwined our threads into a strong rope?

Nowadays, new technologies are starting to be available almost everywhere, and we often rely on them to prepare our lessons and turn them into successful, entertaining and vivid learning times for our young pupils. Books, photocopies, games, puppets and a wide range of other learning materials usually help us in our task. Nevertheless, we have no real control over any of these resources, and we often find ourselves improvising, adapting our lesson plans to unforeseen circumstances or situations, while trying to get the most out of them, our students, our class time and ourselves. We already know that an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure, but is there anything we can do when everything fails?

Let's turn "problems" into opportunities and take advantage of all the elements that favor us!

1. The best audience

"Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you'll land among the stars."

Brian Littrell

Who on Earth would sincerely think that learning English IS fun? Pre-k and kindergarten children, of course! Our very young learners (or "very smart learners", as I usually call them) are always eager to transform an English lesson into the best adventure they have ever had. They are always ready and motivated. Each of them has wonderful and unique abilities waiting to be developed as well as an enormous potential. Moreover, they are not afraid of making mistakes … what else could a teacher desire?

There are only a few things we need to keep in mind while working with our students. Let's have a look at some of them!

- Do not forget to keep nourishing and sustaining their motivation.
- Create a positive learning environment for them.
- Get them involved: Allow them to be part of your teaching experience and their own language learning process.

Maria de Mir Ferrer started her career as an English teacher in 1999. Six years ago she started teaching English in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten at Institució La Miranda (Sant Just Desvern). She also taught the subject "Practical English for Nurses" at Santa Madrona University School of Nursing (Barcelona) for 8 years and worked as an ESL teacher at Culver Summer Camps (Culver Academies, Indiana, USA) from 1999 to 2004. She holds a Bachelor degree in Humanities and a Master's degree in TEFL, both from Universitat Pompeu Fabra (Barcelona). Her professional interests include teaching English to very young learners, ESL, CLIL and learner autonomy at any age.

[1] Language learning is "risk taking", for you are exposed to making mistakes most of the time, even more often when you start learning a language, but children are not aware of it, at least not at the beginning.

[2] To me, a language means and is "communication"; students have to be encouraged to use it during the whole learning process.

[3] "I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand." Chinese proverb

- I remember Mr. Jorge Wagensberg saying "Let them interact with 'the real thing'" during the opening session of the ELT convention. I totally agree with him. Students LOVE interacting with "the real thing": they enjoy learning about what actually exists.
- Provide them with "hands on" activities: "Hands on" learning is learning by doing. Experiential learning is a way of learning in which children can strengthen their English skills through their abilities, and they can reach a better understanding of contents because what they are doing is meaningful to them .
- Allow them to play with the language: We are frequently afraid of showing them new words claiming that they will not understand them. I believe no harm can be done if we expose them to new chunks of language, since they will eventually hear them anyhow. They may even remember them and use them in the right context by the time they find out their meaning!
- Make the most of their talents: Everybody can do something, so give them a chance to try!
- "If you're not prepared to be wrong, you'll never come up with anything original," says Sir Ken Robinson. Creativity is one of the keys that lead to a better education.
- And always remember: Children are on your side. You just need to believe in them.
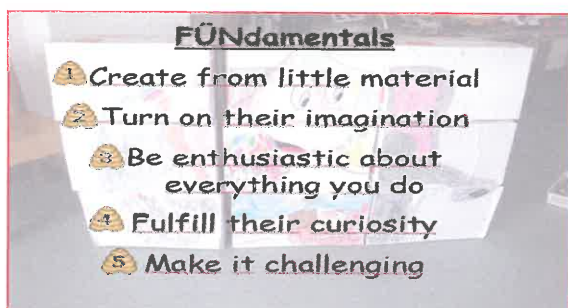
2. Be the best leader you can be

"Use the talents you possess – for the woods would be a very silent place if no birds sang except the best."
Henry Van Dyke

We all have different talents, abilities, ideas and experiences that will help us lead our students through their particular linguistic adventure. We simply have to subscribe to our possibilities and be ready to work. Or as Pablo Picasso said: "When inspiration comes, let it find you working."

Learning a language can be a fun game. Why don't we play it? Games have a certain structure and some rules that one has to follow in order to be able to play. And so does a classroom environment and English itself. Children also need rules and routines. But once the foundations are laid, there is an open range to originality and creativity that our students will surely appreciate.

3. Be ready to have some FÜNdamentals!

FÜNdamentals
1. Create from little material
2. Turn on their imagination
3. Be enthusiastic about everything you do
4. Fulfill their curiosity
5. Make it challenging

4. Now let's see some activities that follow the FÜNdamentals!

- Fingerplays

These are short poems, rhymes, chants or songs that involve hand and finger or even body actions to "act" them out. They are great resources because they easily capture children's attention and get them involved in their learning process. Moreover, they promote their creativity, help them build word skills, expand their vocabulary and improve their listening skills while allowing them to work on their fine motor skills.

Quite a well-known fingerplay is the one called "A chubby little snowman", and it goes like this:

A chubby little snowman

A chubby little snowman (hold fist up) had a carrot nose.

(put thumb in between pointer and middle finger, as if it were a nose)

Along came a bunny…

(use other hand to make the bunny. A victory sign will make its long ears)

and, what do you suppose? (shrug shoulders)

The hungry little bunny… (make bunny hop towards snowman)

looking for his lunch… (make it hop again)

ate the snowman's carrot nose:

CRUNCH, CRUNCH, CRUNCH!

(with bunny ears pretend you eat the snowman's nose and after the third "crunch" make the nose disappear in your fist)

After teaching it to the kids, I carried out a project with them. I made plasticine figures that reproduced the snowman and the rabbit and colored a winter background with pastels. During the following days, I made the two characters act out the fingerplay (I moved them when the children were not there). They loved discovering the new things that were happening in the scene. To finish the project, I took pictures of each one of the movements and recorded each student saying a couple of words from the fingerplay. Then I put everything together in a PowerPoint. You cannot hear

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[4] Playdough.
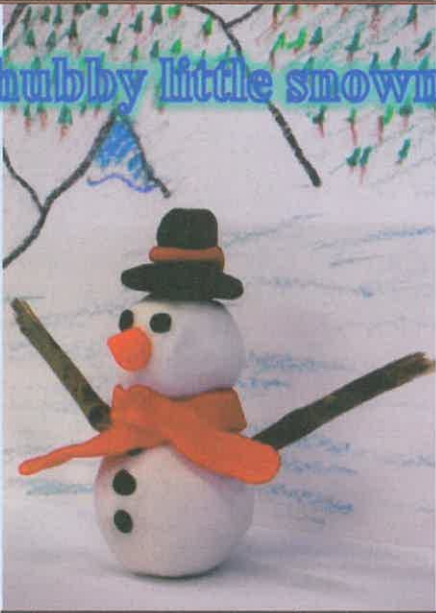
A chubby little snowman

had a carrot nose.

Along came a bunny...

and,
what do you suppose?

The hungry little bunny...

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looking for his lunch...

ate the
snowman's carrot nose:

CRUNCH! CRUNCH!
CRUNCH!

Another quite successful fingerplay I like to use is "Funny Little Caterpillar"[5]. It goes with the "Spring" theme and "The very hungry caterpillar" story. It says:

> Funny Little Caterpillar
> Funny little caterpillar crawling on the ground.
> (Crawl index finger up arm)
> Spin yourself a blanket and then go fast asleep.
> (Twirl finger around and around and then tuck finger into hand)
> Fuzzy wuzzy caterpillar wakes up by and by.
> Now you have two pretty wings. You're a butterfly!
> (Move hand into flying motion)

- "Fortune teller" game and other multi-purpose games (to learn, review and assess)

This is a very appealing and versatile origami game that primary school children often learn to make and play. I like making it with a huge piece of colored cardboard, to make it even more attractive. I specially like it because it doesn't require competition but participation. For example, I used it with my P3s when working on "The very hungry caterpillar" story to review the parts of the story and the vocabulary used in it. They colored all the pictures we needed for the game and I chose some of them every time we played and stuck them in with a bit of Blu-tack. They had to say a number from zero to ten.

Then we counted while switching the positions of the game. Once we got to the number they said, a volunteer would point at one of the pictures (related to the story vocabulary) on one of the flaps of the game and say the word for it. Then we lifted the flap and discovered a part of the story underneath and they told me what was happening there (e.g. "It is eating a cake"). One of the advantages of this game is that it is extremely adaptable to different subjects, levels and ages.

Another tool that has similar characteristics (in terms of flexibility of use) and equally desirable effects on students is a simple laminated hexagon that needs to be divided into six triangles:

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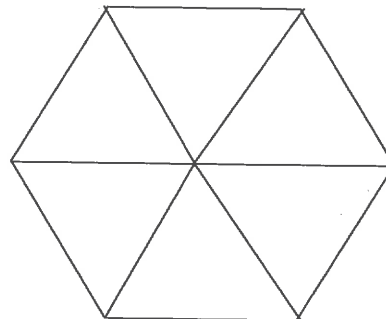
[5] By Eric Carle
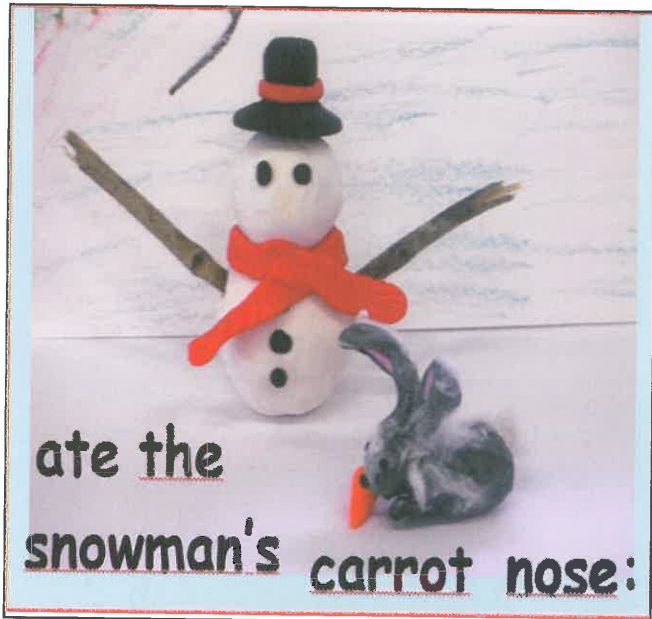
You can stick any vocabulary on the six triangles and ask students to tell you which words/ pictures/ etc are related to the unit you are working on, start with a particular sound, belong to a specified story, etc. To do so, I like them using clothespins (to reinforce their fine motor skills), but they can also use anything you can think of to mark their answers. It is easy to prepare and the only things you need are some laminated cardboard hexagons, clothespins and the material you want to stick on the triangles (which the children can help you make).

The last game I want to introduce is a seasonal game which can also be adapted really well to any winter-related theme: "The Snowball Fight"[6]. To prepare the game we only need sheets of paper with whatever content you want them to have (you can make your students fill them in as an activity prior to the fight). Then, they have to make balls out of the sheets, and get ready to have a "snowball fight" . When the teacher decides the fight is over, children sit down in a circle with the "snow-paperballs" they picked up (if there is somebody with none, we ask the ones who have more to share them) and everybody takes turns opening them and saying/reading whatever is inside them.

- Graphs

Making graphs can be a very easy and quite quick activity to do (but it can also be as difficult and long as you want it to be); it is also a remarkably complete one. Preschool children learn to collect information, organize it, count and make tallies (if you use these; if not, they can practice writing their name on a post it, stick it on the graph afterwards, or they can recognize it and then stick it, if they cannot write it yet), survey peers, sort objects, make different kinds of graphs, read graphs, make observations from them, compare results, ask questions, use "always, sometimes, never" and have an opinion about something, among other things. You can work on several areas with the children at the same time (math, science, literacy, social sciences, etc) and it can be applied to almost any kind of theme.

- Other ideas...

* **Recycling material:** boxes make wonderful pieces for puzzles. You can use their sides to build different puzzles related to any unit you are working on and children can help coloring or writing whatever you need for the puzzle.

* **Original ideas that captivated learners' minds:**
The igloo: we once made an igloo out of water jugs when studying the Inuit. They learnt so much from that theme and got incredibly involved in the project.
Here is our igloo!

[6] I ask them to bring winter clothes to play this game. We get dressed while revising winter clothes vocabulary, and then we have the fight.

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The safari: we had a corridor safari while studying wild animals. My students colored the animals; then I stuck them on the walls in the corridor right outside our classroom and used a pair of cardboard toilet paper rolls as my binoculars. I looked through my self-made "field-glasses" and told them what animal I wanted them to hunt. They took turns going hunting and bringing them back. After the hunt, we made a poster where we glued the safari animals in their habitat and we counted how many of each species they had bagged.

* Fun songs that teach and review:
from, - Jack Hartman songs (The USA)
- Eric Herman's songs (The elephant song) (The USA)
- Raffi singer-songwriter (Armenian-Canadian)

- The Wiggles (Australia)
- Hi5 (Australia)
- Super simple songs

* Some useful websites:
http://www.thevirtualvine.com/
http://prekinders.com/
http://www.littlegiraffes.com/
http://www.kinderpond.com/
http://www.learningpage.com/
http://www.kidssoup.com/ (requires a membership)

These are just a few of the things we can do with very young learners to meet the challenge of teaching them a foreign language, while fostering their motivation, creativity, and skill development. It's a question of maintaining solid FÜNdamentals!

The British Council Barcelona held a double celebration in its headquarters in Carrer Amigó last Thursday, January 24th: Robert Burns Night and the 70th anniversary of the British Council in Catalonia. The party was well attended by teachers, teacher trainers, former students and local authorities; APAC's executive committee was also represented. Scottish and Catalan poems were read, and guests enjoyed good food, good music and good drinks.

In the photos you can see:

1. Raúl (a Catalan piper!), Chris Dove (Barcelona Director), Rod Pryde (Spain Director) and Neil Reid (Barcelona Senior Teacher).

2. Neil Reid reciting 'Ode to a Haggis' – a poem written by Robert Burns and read to celebrate Burns Night.

Box of Tricks.
Combating Restlessness and De-motivation in the Primary ELT Classroom

By Caroline Nixon

The object of this talk is to take a look at some tried and trusted methods for success in the classroom, little tricks that we pick up through our teaching experience and that help us ease the way for our pupils. When we teach, we ourselves are constantly learning, improving our techniques through trial and error. We could think of our classroom as a kind of kitchen: Let's put a pinch of sugar in this, now a pinch of salt. Aagh! Yuck! Way too much pepper! I won't be trying that again!

There is very little that is innovative or groundbreaking in our basic teaching content. The vocabulary and grammar syllabus will be pretty much the same, year in, year out. We know what we're going to teach and why we're going to teach it, so here we'll focus on how we're going to teach it, to enable us to get the best out of our pupils and out of our class time.

I've always found that one of the best teaching strategies is to attract children's attention by satisfying their emotional needs. A lot can be achieved in the classroom by engaging pupils on an affective level. Most people, adults and children alike, love to have fun. Most of us like to be given the opportunity to move about and stretch our body. This creates a sense of 'liking' or 'I enjoyed that'. It creates positive emotions.

There are also some important current external influences that can affect productivity and attitude in the modern classroom.

Let's take a quick look at what's going on outside the classroom

Some children spend more hours a week with a television in front of them than with a teacher in front of them. Most children in developed countries own or have access to computer games or video consoles, which offer them 'easy' and exciting entertainment. Children can be kept occupied for long periods of time without making any effort to entertain themselves or to exercise their imaginations. Such children aren't developing the thought processes that will help them to rationalise as future adults.

The above factor can also contribute to creating an emotional or affective void in children. They don't spend time interacting socially with other children or grown-ups. There is no longer time (or inclination) to talk, listen to or play with others. I know some 10 year olds who 'chat' on the computer with other kids who live just around the corner from them, rather than playing in the park with them.

In developed, consumer societies, there's a current sociological trend towards 'immediate gratification'. This involves achieving objectives, usually in the form of acquiring consumer goods, as quickly as possible, often without any personal effort or self-sacrifice. We're bombarded by messages through advertising and marketing, which, in the long term, make subliminal inroads into our thought patterns: 'Because you're worth it' and later, 'because I'm worth it'; or, an advert for a bank offering instant credit 'For people who don't want to wait'; or the idea that only the slowest and dullest among us would make the effort to save up for a holiday or a new car.

Transferred back into the classroom, these factors could be contributing to the current trend of trying to take mistake-making out of the learning process. Thus, children are developing a low 'threshold of frustration' and a greater degree of impatience. They also lack independence and autonomy.

Modern developed societies no longer educate the child 'within the tribe'. Some children are caught in an educational void in which parents, teachers and other care-providers avoid taking responsibility for this task, claiming it to be that of the others.

Try and offer your pupils an appealing alternative

Children have gone from Gameboy to Playstation to Nintendo DS to Xbox to PSP2. They've got Wii, Wow and Woo. In education we can't change what's happening outside the classroom, but we can offer a dynamic and appealing alternative which engages children's imaginations and emotional needs inside it. We can try to fuel their desire to learn and help them perceive their learning as a personally enriching experience. We're not trying to compete with, but rather to supplement their extramural experiences, whilst being aware of their limited attention spans.

Take the ordinary out of the mundane and make it EXTRAORDINARY!

Let's look at some general ground rules for combating fidgeting. As we've already seen, the outside world has changed dramatically over the last 20 years. Children today have far more sophisticated tastes. They've progressed from Cinderella to Shrek. They've gone to using mobile phones, Playstations and the Internet. Yet, our language in the classroom hasn't changed much at all. We are still faced with the scintillating prospect of brightly exclaiming, 'This is a pencil!', while our pupils attempt to make a mass stampede for the bathroom. In addition to this, teaching young learners vocabulary and structures involves a great deal of repetition before they remember them. You have to make six ordinary classroom words appealing, through chants, for example.

Some very good reasons for fidgeting

For a multitude of reasons, children just can't keep still, so it's not fair to expect them to do so. Some of these reasons are:

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Mental
4. Intellectual
5. Boredom-related

Many of these factors are applicable to adults, too, of course. The difference lies in the terminology used: Adults 'multi-task', while children 'fidget'.

De-motivation and possible hostility can be caused by a combination of all of the above. So, we must try to avoid negative learning experiences. In this endeavour, affectivity is important, as well as creating bonds. We need to engage our pupils emotionally.

We also need to make our communication with them clear and effective. Instructions should be short and to the point. We should give examples, and, wherever possible, a precise visual demonstration of what we want. A picture is worth a thousand words. Children usually have a completely different way of understanding language. We'd be amazed if we could see how our words are actually interpreted by our pupils. For example, in a 2006 TED talk (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iG9CE55wbtY), Sir Ken Robinson tells this anecdote: In a Christmas pageant, the children playing the Three Wise Men had to each say, "I bring you gold". "I bring you myrrh." "I bring you frankincense." This went well enough until it was the third king's turn, who gave the audience the following interpretation of his line: "Frank sent this."

Prepare the terrain well, but keep the kids on their toes

For well-structured teaching practice, you need the following:

1. Preparation
2. Progression
3. Support / scaffolding
4. Variety / novelty

Because of the necessary element of repetition in language learning, it's important to keep signalling the changes, using a variety of different approaches to 'build up' solid knowledge of the language. First, presentation with realia, then flashcards, then listening and pointing using the book. Then you need to really jazz it up. However, the jazzy bit won't work without the previous necessary scaffolding to support it. We have to move from the safe to the adventurous, but without leaving pupils lost or bewildered.

The most important thing with any task is to ensure pupils have first been well prepared for it, that they know all the words they will need to use and that they understand the objective of the exercise. Now they will be able carry it out successfully. The more confident your pupils are, the more enjoyable the learning experience will be, for them and for all involved.

The context

If something is presented in context, it's easier for the students to understand and remember, because it's meaningful to them. Make an appealing context that children can identify with. Take time to find out what they like and what 'fads' they are into, and try to make reference to those, bringing their reality into the classroom and connecting with it.

By putting our content and material into a meaningful context, we can work on the diverse facets of language learning in a dynamic, child-friendly way, thus making these experiences more memorable to young learners.

For instance, my material is centred round siblings. This reflects an effort to make it realistic rather than artificial. It allows for a "narrative thread" that can help the material "grow" with the characters and with our students.

In accordance with the current shift in emphasis towards contextualised learning, ideas are placed within the framework of an ongoing 'situation comedy' involving a family with kids and their toys. This reflects the reality of our pupils. As I said before, they often spend more time with the television than with a teacher, and they watch quite a few sitcoms, be they cartoons or live-action productions. In addition, the characters in my material are developed to be very similar to people students find in real life. All of this can make the language presented and utilized fit in with the context of our students' daily lives.

However, we must also cater for the fact that, increasingly, children are not from "standard" or even "happy" families. So, my material provides room for such children to identify with it (or at least not be alienated by it). The family I have created is slightly surrealistic: a retired pop star and film star living in a mansion. It is sufficiently distant from most kids' personal experience to lie comfortably somewhere along the continuum between it and the "standard" family. The aim is to make the material sufficiently appealing for the topics to be both relevant and memorable. Each level needs to 'grow' with the children to continue reaching them, like the Harry Potter series, with a real and natural context, and sufficiently interesting for them to want to keep quiet and focused right to the end.

Remember to change the tempo!

Use different activity types in 'shorts bursts' to keep pupils' attention: moving-about tasks, listening tasks, play activities, reading activities. It is especially effective to follow a stirring activity with a settling one, or vice-versa. For example, listening activities are usually a good follow-up to a game when children need to sit down and do something quiet.

Tasks that would usually be considered "settlers" are reading, listening, and writing, while "stirrers" tend to be games, TPR, and group work. Pair work can be both.

What about technology?

Using technology in teaching is important for many reasons. First of all, it can cater for different learning styles and intelligences. As Gardner has shown, everybody has multiple intelligences. Technology can provide us with the means of generating the variety necessary in task types to address these different kinds of intelligences. This variety can also foster the elements of surprise and humour - the spice of classroom life.

Also, it can cater for more mature and less mature kids. According to Kieran Egan's mythical and romantic layers, there will be some pupils who still enjoy fairy tales, traditional nursery rhymes and craftwork, and there will be those with more 'sophisticated' or mature tastes, who will want something more dynamic and technological. They perhaps would enjoy doing web searches, which have the 'wow' factor that can grab their attention. These students may see such tasks as a breath of fresh air from the usual course book and traditional way of teaching, which they may be tiring of. Of course, there will also be pupils who enjoy both.

Thirdly, it provides a means for engaging today's 'digital natives'. It is said that they prefer games to 'serious'

work, which suggests that we need to find 'clever' ways of teaching via entertainment. So, we must incorporate edutainment into the classroom.

Lastly, and along the lines of catering for digital natives, using technology provides a way of facilitating the development of our students' digital-skill-learning autonomy. Part of growing up is taking responsibility for one's acts and for one's learning. One of our obligations as teachers is to encourage our pupils to become independent learners and to prepare them to acquire real-life skills on their own, including digital skills. In the EU, everybody should have digital skills as a core skill area.

Further activities to do at home

In the same way that we want to bring the outside world into the classroom, we want to encourage our pupils to take the classroom out into the world at large, for instance their homes. We need to look for and design tasks that students can carry out at home. This provides them with reinforcement, which helps them consolidate their knowledge (hopefully in a motivating way), and it foments learner autonomy. A good resource is the interactive CD-ROM that comes with my course material. Kids love it! It contains:

- Songs
- Stories
- Interactive Games
- Pronunciation Game

Other technological resources can be found at: www.cambridge.org

But don't forget the tests!

Examination / assessment is important for pupils, parents and teachers. For pupils it can be likened to watching hair grow. We can't see it on a day-to-day basis, but we can retrospectively. Children can perceive their language growth in the same way as they notch their height on a wall or a growth chart. Looking at results obtained at different points in time, they can reflect on how far they've come. This leads to learner satisfaction. For parents, it is way of gauging whether or not their

children are meeting the expectations of the teacher and the demands of the curriculum, and to make necessary adjustments at home and with the teacher in order to correct any problems. And for teachers, it is a way of evaluating how well the class and individual students are progressing, and how well the teaching methods and materials are working, making changes if necessary.

However, in today's society there is the danger of teaching only for or primarily for success on exams. We should avoid this and teach skills and knowledge for life. We should also avoid placing undue performance pressures on our students. For example, children feel a great deal of satisfaction and pride in learning how to tie their shoelaces, which is a necessary life skill. But, if we then pull out a stopwatch and tell them to tie their shoes in 10 seconds, this will probably lead to failure and a loss of those positive feelings toward this task. Our goal is for the child to be able to stop in the street, tie his or her shoelace as quickly and efficiently as possible, and move on.

In our assessment methods, and in the teaching that is partnered with them, we have to make sure that we do not lose sight of the fact that our ultimate goals are for the learners to be able to apply what they have learnt in an efficient way in an appropriate context and move on, and for them to maintain their interest and eagerness to learn and adapt throughout their lives.

Go with the flow, not against it!

To conclude, we need to make our teaching be in tune with today's children and society. We need to keep our pupils motivated, and this means finding out what they are keen on outside of school and bringing it into the classroom. This does not mean being "slaves" to society's fads; it simply means being aware of them and using them to our advantage. We also have to accept the fact that children "fidget" and that they have varying combinations of intelligences and learning styles, and we have to use the wide variety of resources in our "box of tricks" to cater for these factors. Finally, we have to keep assessment from interfering with our real task: educating our learners to become motivated, autonomous, independent knowledge and skill acquirers for the rest of their lives.

Celebrating Dickens

By José Luis Bartolomé
& English Department EOI Figueres

Charles Dickens (1812-1870)

2012 turned out to be a most fruitful year for major commemorative events: Captain Robert Scott's attempt to reach the South Pole (January 1912), the sinking of the Titanic (April 1912), or Dickens's bicentenary among others. Our school department engaged its English learners with Dickens through a number of practical activities marking the 200th anniversary of his birth (7 February 1812).

Three leading activities were designed throughout the spring term: a book show, a detective game quiz, a writing contest. The book-show featured eighty-two items (mostly books and a few DVDs) displayed on six different desks: books about Dickens, major novels, other works (stories, essays, letters…), graded readers, translations, film adaptations. Those items were supplied by teachers and students as well as by publishers. Some of the books were rarities, such as *La vie de N.S. Jésus-Christ,* a French translation of the story a pious Dickens wrote for his own ten children, and some old-age Spanish editions of ***Oliverio Twist*** by Carlos Dickens. The task involved the whole classes, who in rotation left their classrooms for half an hour to make a trip…into the library! In groups of four each class was requested to walk around the desks and do the questionnaire below in the speediest / most accurate way. It is remarkable that in this age of ebooks touching, feeling and browsing through printed pages became a bit of a brand new experience for some of our young

After working as a high- school teacher for twenty-five long years and leaving behind loads of complementary positions (sots-coordinador per a les PAU, teacher trainer for ICE Universitat de Girona, among others) José Luis Bartolomé took a switch to Escoles Oficials d'Idiomes in 2005 (Ripoll, Olot and ultimately Figueres). A regular contributor to APAC magazine since its early days, he has always tried to spare a little time for writing on a large number of fields, mainly on links between English and classical languages (*Auriga* journal), poetry and local issues (he currently writes for *Alberes* and *Saverdera XXI* magazines). in 2004 he was granted a "llicència d'estudis" by the Departament d'Educació, the target of his research being Multiculturalism

CHARLES DICKENS BOOK SHOW.

Team:
Level: 1-2-3-4-5
Time record:
Score: _____ / 20

BOOKS ABOUT DICKENS

1. Who wrote a novel about the last days of Charles Dickens?
2. *Dickens enamorado* by Amelia Pérez de Villar is a...
a) novel   b) biography

MAJOR WORKS

3. Which of the following is not a historical novel?
   a) Barnaby Rudge
   b) The Life and Adventures of Martin Chuzzlewit
   c) A Tale of Two Cities
2. "My father's family name being Pirrip, and my Christian name Philip, my infant tongue could make of both names nothing longer or more explicit than Pip. So, I called myself Pip, and came to be called Pip." These are the starting lines of...
   a) Great Expectations
   b) Pickwick Papers
3. "Of my books, I like this the best" (Charles Dickens). This book is...
   a) Oliver Twist
   b) David Copperfield

OTHER WORKS

6. Tiny Tim and Scrooge are the main characters of.....
7. What ship took Dickens and his wife to America in 1842?

GRADED READERS

8. What are the two cities that appear in *A Tale of Two Cities*?
9. Which Penguin Active Reader (more suitable for Intermediate learners) has a longer word count, excluding activities ?
   a) Nicholas Nickleby
   b) Oliver Twist
10. Have a look at the blurb in the back cover of the following readers, *Bleak House, Our Mutual Friend.* Which story sounds like a thriller, a whodunit? Which like a story of the supernatural?
   Thriller: Supernatural:

11. Which of the following Oxford Dominoes reader is illustrated with photos from a   BBC Television production?
a) Hard Times
b) Nicholas Nickleby

TRANSLATIONS

12. Who translated *Hard Times* into Catalan?
13. How many chapters does the French translation of *David Copperfield* have?
14. The original title for the Christmas story "El grillo del hogar" (1845) is...
15. The original English title for *El casalot* (translated by Xavier Pàmies) is...
16. The German translation for *Hard Time*s is...

FILM ADAPTATIONS

17. The oldest version (1922) of *Oliver Twist* was directed by Frank _____
18. Oliver Twist was made into a musical film in 1968, *Oliver,* directed by Carol Reed.   How many Oscars did it win?
19. Who directed *David Copperfield* (1935), the first and greatest film adaptation of the novel by Dickens?
20. *Cadenas rotas* (directed by *David Lean* in 1946) is an adaptation of...
   a) Great Expectations
   b) Our Mutual Friend

The second task was aimed at those students willing to show their Google-searching skills. The quiz included some dictionary-work items (no. III in particular) for which conventional dictionaries had been suggested, but online sources must have been preferred as shown by several recherché answers. The game could be played individually or in small groups of up to four players.

THE NO. 58 DICKENS'S DETECTIVE AGENCY

I. An admirer or student of Dickens and his work is called a...
   a) Dick
   b) Dickinson
   c) Dickensian
II. The exclamation "What the dickens ....?" and other similar ones preceded by "How", "Where", "Why" etc.
   a) show wonder and respect for Charles Dickens the writer
   b) show surprise or annoyance, a colloquial use of the surname Dickens
   c) is a catchword from Oliver, the musical
III. D-I-C-K-E-N-S. A word-hunt

How many words can you find by moving and sorting out the seven letters that build up this surname? The teachers have found about 50, but they'll be happy if you collect up to 40.

Examples:

. ___ : Roman number for 500 (1 letter)

. _____ : car plate for Danish cars (2 letters)

. Billy the _____, a famous outlaw   (3)

. _____ : a married couple with jobs but no children (4)

. _____ : "We've been married _____ 1998" (5)

. _____ : deuce, devil (in exclamations) (7)

Abbreviations also count as words. Do not collect more than five though.

1.	11.	21.	31.
2.	12.	22.	32.
3.	13.	23.	33.
4.	14.	24.	34.
5.	15.	25.	35.
6.	16.	26.	36.
7.	17.	27.	37.
8.	18.	28.	38.
9.	19.	29.	39.
10.	20.	30.	40.

V. Which of the following is not a Jewish character in his works?

    a) Riah

    b) Fagin

    c) Jaggers

V. Which name in this crossword puzzle is not a literary character ?

    (It was actually his pet bird !)

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    DORRIT
  GRIP
 SLACBRIDGE
   SIKES
LIRRIPER
   AGNES
    SCROOGE
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VI. Choose the original caption for this illustration of Oliver Twist

    a) "Please, sir, I want some more"

    b) "There's a fly in the gruel, sir"

    c) "I don't wanna be a cook no more. I rather work in the blacking factory"
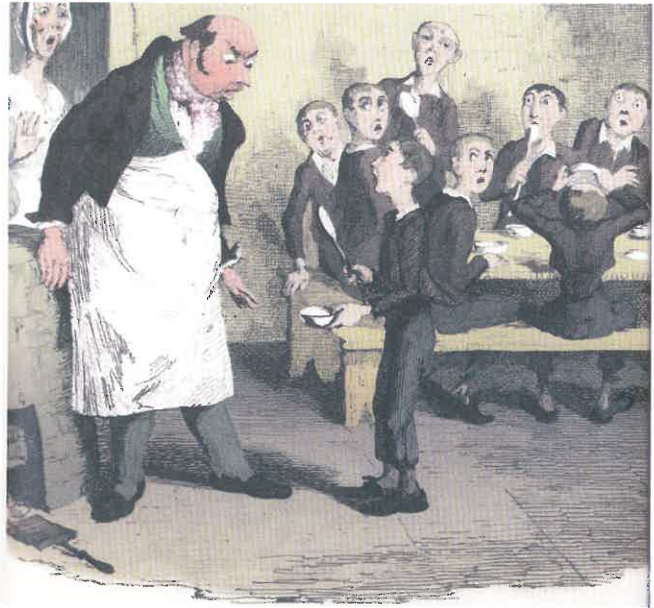
VII. Find one or two very common mistakes among Spanish learners of English in this letter from Biddy. Please, highlight it / them in yellow.

Great Expectations   179

Chapter 27

"MY DEAR MR PIP,

"I write this by request of Mr. Gargery, for to let you know that he is going to London in company with Mr. Wopsle and would be glad if agreeable to be allowed to see you. He would call at Barnard's Hotel Tuesday morning at nine o'clock, when if not agreeable please leave word. Your poor sister is much the same as when you left. We talk of you in the kitchen every night, and wonder what you are saying and doing. If now considered in the light of a liberty, excuse it for the love of poor old days. No more, dear Mr. Pip, from

   your ever obliged, and affectionate

            Servant,

            "BIDDY."

VIII. Dickens in love. Who is the woman in the picture?

a)Maria Beadnell, his first and deepest love

b) Catherine Hogarth, his wife and mother of ten children

c) Ellen Ternan, his mistress and then partner

IX. What is the indirect link between Charles Dickens and Spanish biscuits "Chiquilín". Use the following pictures as clues
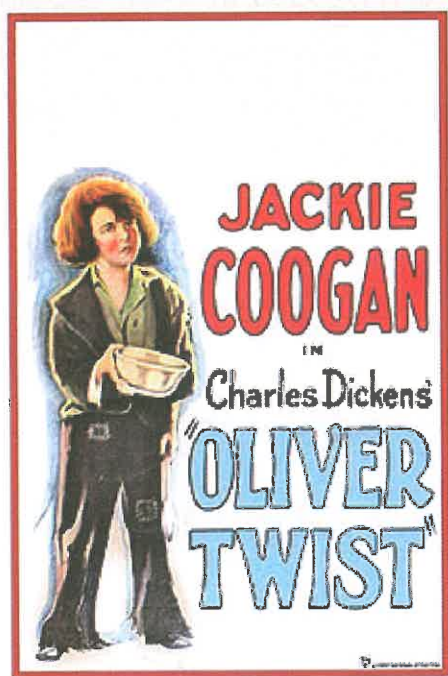
The Kid (1921)

Oliver Twist (1922)

FIRST CHARLES DICKENS FILM FOUND
111 YEARS AFTER IT WAS MADE

The headline above from *The Telegraph* refers to which film? How long was the film? Where and when was it shot? Which novel was it drawn on?

XI. Walking around Dickens's London. In which novel is this pub described?

a) The Old Curiosity Shop
b) A Tale of Two Cities
c) The Mystery of Edwin Drood

Score	question I		1 mark
	question II		2 marks
	question III	between 1-8 words	2 marks
		between 9-18 words	4 marks
		between 19-28 words	6 marks
		between 29-35 words	8 marks
		over 35 words	10 marks
	question IV		3 marks
	question V		4 marks
	question VI		2 marks
	question VII		2 marks
	question VIII		5 marks
	question IX		10 marks
	question X		10 marks
	question XI		9 marks

The winner is the player/ team that gets 58 marks or the closest
to 58   (the age at which Dickens died)

The most exciting and creative task was by far the writing contest. All the students were heartened to write a short piece of writing in no more than 140 characters. The core subject was "Hard Times…Great Expectations", and all kinds of styles (jokes, aphorisms, epigrams, poetical tones…) were most welcome to depict how we fellow citizens feel about these new hard times we are

all trying to live through nowadays. Here are the best entries short-listed by each class. The winning stories (highlighted in italics and bold) were selected by the board of teachers.

Level 1

• *Zapatero like St Peter denied the crisis three times before the cook crowed, so Spain is now at Easter waiting for the crucifixion.*

• Every time it rains and I can't get out of my house I smile and think: in two weeks I will eat French cooked snails!

• When you talk about hard times it can also mean a wake up, thinking of a different future and trying to build something from nothing.

Level 2

• All around him were bad, hard times for him, he fell in a black hole, he fell deeper than deep, but at the bottom of the hole he found oil.

• I always wondered what I could do if I was fired... Now, I know it. While I find a new job, I'll take my daughter to school every day.

• My eyes glazed over, the sky cried. Perhaps a rose is born and surely a child smiles.

• *She was fired this morning. Now she is at home and says to her husband: We can have a baby, I'll have time! Everything has a bright side!*

Level 3

• *We live in a roller coaster, it seems funny, we go up and go down, but we don't know how to get off. I hope someone gives me a refund of the ticket.*

• One day, two days, my mind doesn't stop thinking about "140-character stories", no idea, big black hole, total emptiness. At last I've found it, I won't write anything.

• I've been waiting for a long time. I know the way will be hard but I'm running with all my forces. I see the finish line. The ovule will be my prize.

Level 4

• I played with my friends there.

Nights at home are sad
Without food or money.
However, the sun will bright
Tomorrow in the square.

• "Homophonic crisis": Shipping ships shift / Cheap fish and chips chopped.

• I was happy in the haze of a drunken hour. When the sweet alcohol blew away, I opened my eyes and there was this light that never goes out.

• *I look through the window. All is dark. Only I can see a little light in the skyline. It's growing slowly. I smile and I continue to work.*

Level 5

• *"I must have been blind... Another life is possible. The future holds the best. I won't give up !" said Scrooge staring at his own funeral.*

• We got up early / Barely had breakfast / Drove 99 miles / We're there, trying to fulfill our aim / Suddenly we saw it / A magnificent sunrise / It was amazing!

• We're homeless and have an uncertain future but we're happy living for the moment. What is it supposed that we have to do? We're just cats!

As a small handsome prize the winners got free copies of some of Dickens's books, kind courtesy of some publishers whose contribution we would like to acknowledge: Oxford University Press, Burlington Books, Macmillan Readers, Penguin-Pearson.

Undoubtedly the finest way to pay tribute to a writer is to read her / his books. In our school library a Dickens bookcase holding over 40 books (simplified and unabridged) has been available since Sant Jordi's Day 2012. Reading printed books may sound like a dystopia in a near future, but teachers should have a social / cultural commitment to combine the fast pleasures of new technologies and the aesthetic beauty of slow reading. Happily a few more events of literary celebration are awaiting just around the corner: the casualty list of some leading War Poets (1914-18), or the 200th anniversary of Jane Austen's death (18 July 1817).

http://www.apac.es

Foreign Language Teaching at University and the Challenge of Multilingualism in Europe

By Àngel Raluy and Anna Vallbona

1. Introduction

Two Modern Language Association (MLA) reports on the teaching of foreign languages in American universities will serve as a starting point to present the current state of foreign language teaching in Catalan universities. This article will focus on the implementation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, also called Bologna Process) and its influence on language policies. Before starting the presentation, we will provide a summary of both MLA reports as an anchor for discussion.

The report *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World* (MLA, 2007) analyzes the current "language crisis" and proposes a change in academic programs in order to transcend the dichotomy between instrumentalist and constitutive perspectives. It is proposed to create programs with a clear aim, that is, achieving translingual and transcultural competence. This general goal requires a new organization, based on creating new cross-disciplinary studies, which will result in new department structures. The overarching aim is to go beyond the watertight compartments prevailing nowadays.

The *Report to the Teagle Foundation on the Undergraduate Major in Language and Literature* (MLA, 2009) shows the need to reform the so-called liberal studies to make them more attractive to students and also more consistent with the needs of the American society. In particular, it argues for greater emphasis on the role of literature, and highlights the urgency of an integrated degree that consists of an articulated whole of teachers and subjects and moves away from the simple list of courses and requirements.

2. Recent changes in Europe and multilingualism

The current landscape of teaching and learning of second languages in the European, and by extension, the Spanish context is marked by five closely related events: a novel concept of multilingualism, the role of two supra-national institutions such as the Council of Europe and the European Commission, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte and Instituto Cervantes, 2002), the implementation of the EHEA, and finally the Spanish sociolinguistic situation.

The way of understanding multilingualism has changed in three aspects when compared to the European Commission's perception in the 90's. The three changes can be glimpsed in the following quotation from the final report of the High Level Group on Multilingualism (European Commission, 2007):

"The first decade of the new century has seen the introduction of an inclusive language education policy, seeking to promote the learning of all languages, including regional or minority, migrant and major world languages. Moreover, the learning of foreign languages is no longer simply regarded as being beneficial to the individual citizen, but as being of special importance for the Lisbon aims of economic growth and social cohesion."

These changes are primarily due to a fact which is stated by the European Commission (2007, p. 6): "practically all EU Member States have by now become multilingual and multicultural societies themselves, requiring strategies at local / regional / Member State level for facilitating communication across language and cultural boundaries."

As regards the role of the Council of Europe, it has been considered to be of crucial importance in the promotion of languages. We must note that there is a clear distinction between the US approach, which at best advocates for tolerance toward languages other than English, and the explicit European support of bilingualism and trilingualism. In this sense, the Language Policy Division of the Council of Europe has produced a number of pioneering

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Anna Vallbona is a lecturer of English at the University of Vic. She graduated with a degree in English Philology from the *Universitat de Barcelona* and she completed her post-graduate studies in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) at the UAB *(Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)*, where she is currently doing her PhD on SLA and CLIL. She has 20 years' experience in training teachers of English as a Foreign Language.

Interactive Notebooks:
Practical Applications for the TEFL Classroom

By Maggie Stuhan

In my experience, motivation is a central issue in the Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) classroom with young learners. Often I have heard my students remark as they enter the room, "We will [sic] watch the film at the end of class?" or "We will [sic] go to the computers today?" This is particularly troubling because I post a clear agenda of what we are going to do during each lesson and if viewing a film or using the computer lab isn't part of the schedule it seems like they ask intentionally, as if to communicate their disappointment. Later, when I ask students to review an in-class piece of writing using steps, review questions and rubrics with which we've practiced, I'm often brushed off with a sincere smile and a, "Yeah, yeah. Thanks, Maggie," or even, "Is good enough [sic] already to pass." Sometimes they are right, it is just good enough to pass at the level which they are studying and it makes sense that they don't care to go back and work through it again. However, their use of English is a constant reminder to the native speaker that there is still much work to be done. Even when their work isn't quite at their level of study, this knowledge doesn't seem to affect their motivation to go back and make their work better and thereby increase their language skills. I often find myself searching for strategies to interest and encourage my students, but a "fun" or "interesting" lesson is not always enough. A more sustainable, strategic effort must be made to engage students in the process of mastering English and to develop a sense of intrinsic motivation.

Like many other TEFL teachers, I have made an effort to engage my students further with more interesting and engaging lessons using music, film, and current events, but it has proven difficult to maintain any of those in a strategic manner that has actually benefited the classroom environment consistently. However, one approach that I have now found meaningful in that regard, and with several groups of learners, is the use of Interactive Notebooks. These are a sort of elaborate and personalized journal in which students are encouraged to be creative in their thinking and writing, and the notebooks are used to organize, record, and elaborate on their classwork. The practice requires a large investment of time both within and outside of class, on the part of the student and teacher. Nonetheless, I have found that student motivation is positively affected by the extra work because it includes elements of personal expression and choice on the part of the student. I am encouraged because I feel like several things are happening:

1) I am getting more time with individuals, our rapport and relationship are stronger so they are then more comfortable taking the risks necessary to consolidate previous learning and venture into new, more sophisticated lexis and constructions;
2) Student fluency is increasing and overall writing ability is improving dramatically;
3) Student work is generally more interesting and expressive, as we're all having more fun.

Maggie Stuhan currently teaches EFL with the British Council in Barcelona, Spain and has done so for 3 years. She previously taught elementary school in the United States working primarily with intermediate grades and for part of that time as the lead teacher in a full-English-immersion and inclusion classroom. She will finish a master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction with a Literacy Endorsement in June, 2013. She is an avid cook, runner, reader and "Notebooker

Getting Started

To create an Interactive Notebook each student, and the teacher, will need a spiral bound notebook, multi-colored pens and pencils, glue, scissors, and any other creative element they might desire at any given time. Sounds like fun already, right?

Apart from the materials needed there are some basic elements that I think are best addressed from the beginning. Before anything else, students should number the pages of their notebook. On the first day we work with them, I have students take about three minutes and, in the bottom right hand corner of each page, number as many as they can in their notebook. Subsequent pages can be numbered later as needed, but this sets the foundation for important organization that will follow. Then, we set up a table of contents together on the first page using the following headings: date, entry, and page. I explain that they will then leave six or seven pages blank, to be filled up with entries in the table of contents, and we do our first mini-assignment together on page 8. For homework they are to create a collage on the cover that address the concept of, "What learning English means to me," that they will present to the class a week or so later.

In the Interactive Notebook

One of the main benefits of the Interactive Notebook is its flexibility and diversity. It is unique to the class, every teacher has different guidelines and expectations as to what will be included in the Notebook and how. It is then further distinguished by the creativity and thought processes of the learner. With that in mind, I'd like to share some of the activity types that I find particularly beneficial in the language learning classroom and some of reflections about how I see those affecting learners, particularly when it comes to supporting them in becoming more fluent and independent.

Warm-Up Activity (WUP)

This is a brief, timed writing exercise. It might take the form of creative writing in response to a prompt such as: Write for two minutes about a color – describe that color – without ever actually naming the color. In a case like this, where the task might feel very foreign to students, it can be helpful to provide them an example from which they can model their own writing:

> *I'm bright, intense and full of life. I'm warm. I sound like the whisper of a peel being pulled back to reveal rich, juicy fruit, which can all at once be sweet and sour. I smell like spice laced pie and have a bright smile and glowing eyes.*

There are those students who will simply use the example as a template for their own description, although more often than not I find that many students have created lovely images and ideas with their own words and surprise me

with their level of creativity. A quick opportunity to share and reflect on these writings generally helps motivate students who put in less effort to try a little harder the next time. I try to start every class with some type of warm-up or quick-write activity similar to the example above. On any given day the task is more or less prescriptive, but the goal is always the same: to focus, center, and calm, as a means to "get our English brains going." As the year progresses, students get better at this and need less modeling prior to the activity. It is an area in which they quickly assume responsibility and begin to practice more autonomously.

Freewrite (F)

As indicated in the title, this type of writing tends to be much more open-ended. That doesn't always mean that students write about whatever they want on a whim, although sometimes that is the case, it has more to do with them responding to some outside stimulus or idea and that they have the freedom to do so however they want. They can write a poem, make a cartoon, draw a picture with captions, create a diagram of some type with descriptors or write in a more traditional, narrative sense. Apart from one simple rule, the choice is theirs. The one simple rule, which can take quite some time getting used to, is that during this exercise they must never stop moving their writing utensil. It must always be busy. The purpose of this is to help them become more fluent and show them that the route to that fluency is via lots of stumbling and practice. Adherence to this rule often means that for a moment they might simply draw squiggles or write in a native language instead of the target language. Still, they must keep that pen moving. Again, as time goes on and students become more comfortable and confident in this activity, there is less doodling and reverting to their native language. The process itself can be very rewarding. I think that this is because they find that they do have something to say; they discover their voice and, better yet, they do it in English.

One activity type that I will often use to motivate a Freewrite is a response to music. I have had success with two different options, either selecting something I can be reasonably certain they are not familiar with, or by contrast, something that I know they hear all the time. Music often provokes an emotional reaction in the listener, and the idea behind this is to prompt an immediate, instinctive response. When students hear something for the first time they usually have a clear and strong opinion about it, which can be expressed immediately. On the other hand, when they hear something familiar—such as the latest pop song—it can evoke equally strong preferences and memories which can also be readily articulated, e.g. it's on the radio all the time and

> **The route to that fluency is via lots of stumbling and practice.**

they're sick of it, or they know the lyrics well and identify with them in some way.

Setting up the response to music is fairly easy and it is something that, once again, becomes routine with practice. The first few times, I let students know that I neither expect them to like, nor dislike the music. I'm more interested in exploring what it makes them think while and feel. I also talk to them about the fact that while I realize it may be a bit out of their comfort zone, I am asking them to put that aside for the moment and just go with it. This usually goes a long way toward alleviating any potential awkwardness and creating an environment in which everyone feels safe and welcome to participate fully. Then, as far as the actual procedure, I first ask students to close their eyes and listen, do nothing else but listen, to a piece of music for one minute. Next, we listen to the entire selection, during which they write the entire time. Later, we reflect, share, and hopefully set the bar that much higher for the next venture. A particularly nice piece of music to use this way is Pascal Comelade's Sense El Ressó Del Dring, which is, as one of my students wrote, "…all at once fanciful and melancholy. It makes me feel happy and sad at the same time."

Controlled Practice (CP)

These are writings that are deliberately constructed to practice grammar points, vocabulary and other formal input. It is an opportunity to stretch the curriculum and take what might otherwise be boring, rote or inauthentic practice and make it more relevant to students' lives. Some of the ways I've discovered that this is best accomplished is either by inviting them to write about a distinct time in their own life, a topic in which they are emotionally invested, or getting them to retell simple, yet humorous stories. Incorporating picture dictations into any and all of these creates an opportunity for extended, in the moment, practice and students seem to enjoy the opportunity to draw, as much as some of them may feign disinterest initially.

(CP Example 1) Personal photo dictation – I did not invent this activity, I'm sure that most teachers have employed it in one way or another at some point during their teaching practice but it is so wonderful and motivating that I think it is worth mentioning, revisiting and revising every year. Inevitably, I find myself asking students to bring in a favorite photo at some time during the course –with intermediate students when we're introducing or revising past perfect or with advanced students when we're getting to know one another—I find that, in terms of grammar practice and consolidation, it is particularly useful for revising present simple and continuous, in the actual description, and past perfect, in exploring the context of the image. The entire activity will easily last an hour or more and takes the form of teacher modeling, pairwork, individual writing and then

whole class revision and sharing. Teacher dictates own personal picture using target language (generally present simple and continuous). Students draw. Teacher reveals picture to see resemblance.

Students follow same procedure with each other, dictating pictures and then seeing how well they've managed to recreate the photos. Possibly share a few with the class. Teacher then tells students story of picture, to whole class, again modeling target language (generally past perfect: We had just finished singing happy birthday but she hadn't blown out the candles just yet.). Teacher passes out written example of the same story and sets assignment for student writing. Students write in Interactive Notebook.

Teacher monitors writing and provides feedback as necessary while students are working.

Students share stories in small groups.

(CP Example 2) Picture stories – Here's another one that fits nicely into the Interactive Journal and allows for the practice of just about any verb tense. Procedurally, students create a 4x2 grid on their paper so that they will have 8 equally sized boxes which they can draw in. The teacher then dictates a story, divided into eight parts. The first time, students listen with pencils down – just listen. The second time, they draw as the story is read frame by frame. Then, they retell the story, using just the pictures. After retelling, students write the story changing the tense, from present simple to past simple for example. This can be done in class or as homework. Either way, it is beneficial to start the retelling in class as a shared writing to help model how they can expand the story by adding their own additional details and ideas. Below I am including one story that I find works well with pre-intermediate to intermediate students and which is particularly good for helping students expand their vocabulary and range. It encourages them to use varied language even when expressing common, everyday ideas.

A Visit to the Zoo

1. Last week my friends and I decided to visit the zoo. We entered and walked toward the first exhibits.
2. I looked up at a giraffe and it stared back at me.
3. Next we visited the lions. One gazed at us as he lazed in the shade while the others napped.
4. Later, one of my friends knocked and then banged on the glass in front of the monkey's cage.
5. They howled at us and we hurried to another exhibit.
6. After that we rested and ate lunch.
7. Then, we headed for the petting zoo where we petted wooly sheep and the goats ate our clothing.
8. Later, our tired group followed the path to exit the zoo. We had a great day!

Adapted from: http://www.bettereflteacher.blogspot.com.es/2006/05/using-short-paragrafh-stories-to-teach.html

> They discover their voice and, better yet, they do it in English.

Responding and Marking

Not every piece of writing that students put in the Interactive Notebook will be either responded to or marked. There are a couple of reasons for this. One being that from the beginning I want my students to feel like this is, first and foremost, their space to express themselves in English. They are in charge and they own it. That being the case I don't feel that they have to share everything with me and I communicate this from the beginning. Apart from Controlled Practice and formally marked assignments anything else can be kept for their eyes only. The way I ask that students communicate this to me is simply by folding the piece of paper in half, toward the binding, with the entry on it that they don't want to share. I also leave the door open that at some later date they might want to share what they've written. If that time comes, they just open the page and I will find it. Another reason that not everything is responded to or marked is simply for the sake of time management. It is not realistic to respond to every student when they write as much as I expect. I do, however, read everything my students choose to share but I respond to those things that seem most relevant in the moment, things they appear more motivated by and/or that show clear growth, and those entries that have turned into a dialogue (as many naturally do). To those entries which I do respond, I do so in a specific, yet simple, manner. I use post-it notes. I do this, again, because I want the students to feel like this is their space, I'm not correcting, with red pen, every spelling error, every misuse or inaccuracy, I am responding to the writing and modeling appropriate, fluent writing. I prefer to do this separate from the actual writing. The one exception to this is formally marked and recorded writings. For these writings, a rubric is provided in advance and I ask that students skip lines. This both creates a clearer standard for grading and also makes it easier for me to make error corrections, more sophisticated language suggestions, and ask questions for clarification. For marking purposes I use both those rubrics provided by the Cambridge suite of exams, as many of my student are actively preparing for these exams or will be in the near future, or 6-Trait Writing Rubrics, modified for English language learning students, because I find them particularly useful in aiding the development of skills outside of typical conventional practice, and for the sake of accuracy. They contain clear language that helps to guide students toward the use of more sophisticated organization, word choice and fluency.

> **Apart from Controlled Practice and formally marked assignments anything else can be kept for their eyes only**

> **It is not realistic to respond to every student when they write as much as I expect.**

Tips and Other Information

Personalize It.

Anything and everything can go into the Interactive Notebook and it should. It is really up to the student and the teacher which elements will be included. In-class exercises, book studies, vocabulary, personal journaling, and anything else can be part of the notebook. This space is meant to be flexible, unique and personal. Every teacher who chooses to use journals in this manner will create guidelines that work for them and each student will respond in their own way. My advice is to make it in your own activity, go bit by bit, don't push too fast or too hard and try to have as much fun as possible. It is a lot of work but can be very rewarding, it is important to ease into the practice and not take on too much all at once.

Write when students write. Read when students read. – This is most important with young students but I find that older students appreciate it too. Modeling good reading and writing behaviors is fundamental in supporting any balanced literacy program. It also creates a good community of readers and writers, of which the teacher is an essential member, demonstrates these as lifelong practices, and moreover, is generally a nice break from more formal looking and listening for error correction. It's a chance to interact with students, passively as it might be, in a way we don't often afford ourselves.

> **Students need to be informed that they should not write anything that they are not prepared to have others know**

Child protection, disclosure, and responsibility. – It is very important to have a frank discussion with students, at the beginning of this endeavor, about the fact that once something is in writing and read by the teacher that it can't be undone. We are mandatory reporters and the health and well-being of our students is our priority and our responsibility. That being the case, students need to be informed that they should not write anything that they are not prepared to have others know, whether it be their classmates, their teacher, their parents, or other authorities if the situation warrants it. This doesn't have to be a conversation that scares students, or stunts their desire to communicate authentically, but it can help to avoid difficult and uncomfortable situations later.

Parents love it. – The Interactive Notebook creates an opportunity for students to read, write, and create more in English. It also documents it all in one place, providing a single product that can be carried to and from home. In this manner it strengthens the bond between home and school, and also affords parents an important window into their child's learning and classroom experience that they otherwise might not have. Parents see a clear documentation and evolution of learning over the course of the year and often feel as proud of the final product as their child. Sometimes they respond to their child's writing or to me, an interaction that I welcome, using post-it notes to do so, as they have seen me do in their child's notebook. I often feel, as the extra-curricular English teacher, that much of the relationship a classroom teacher tends to have with her students and their families is lost due to schedule, rigorous testing and evaluation standards, or any number of other challenges. However, the Notebook is an evolving document, both student-controlled and simultaneously shared, that helps to bridge some of that loss of interaction and serves to increase creativity and flexibility of the interaction between teacher and student. This creates a better picture of a student's progress and capabilities, thereby informing subsequent instructional decisions. For that reason, and the fact that they like the actual physical product, I find that parents just love it.

> **The Interactive Notebook creates an opportunity for studentsto read, write, and create more in English.**

Some words on logistics. – As I mentioned before, this process requires a large investment of time and energy on the part of everyone involved but I think the benefits are well worth it. Given that, I would humbly submit some words of wisdom based on my own experience that might just lighten the load a little bit. First, anytime students are doing something other than working in their Notebook, have them leave it out and open on their desk and make quick responses during that time. Also, never collect all journals at once, set a clear rotation and publish this for students. Make sure that students have time to regularly update their table of contents and have them include not only the date, entry and page, but also the type of entry (WUP for Warm-Up Activity,

> **This process requires a large investment of time and energy on the part of everyone involved but I think the benefits are well worth it**

F for Freewrite, CP for Controlled Practice, etc.). This will help you to find specific entries more quickly and save a lot of time as Notebooks fill up. Another suggestion is to allow students to respond to each other, sometimes the dialogues they develop with each other can be as interesting and informative as those they would have with us. It doesn't always have to be you writing back to them. Keep a checklist documenting who you've responded to and when, this will help encourage equitability. You may also want to maintain an up-to-date teacher example Notebook for those students who miss a class so that they can refer to it and keep up more easily. Encourage students to self-assess or even self-grade, especially on those entries for which they've been given a rubric in advance. Fold photocopies to fit and glue them into Notebooks as they often contain valuable and relevant information that help to create a richer, clearer context. Share things about yourself with your students when the moment is right, and push your students hard when they need pushing. Listen to great music that makes you feel happy while you write back to students. And above all, work hard and have fun!
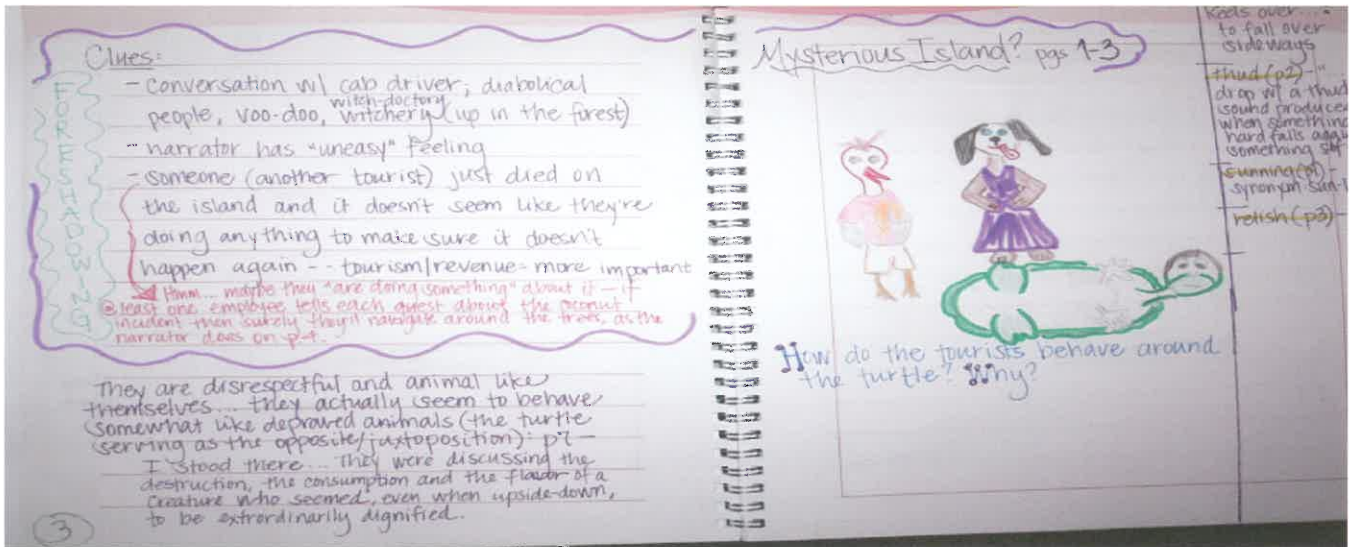
> **Work hard and have fun!**

Conclusion

Working in an Interactive Notebook helps to build positive relationships with students, making them feel like valued members of the learning community, and allows them opportunities to express themselves openly and freely outside the context of traditional, high stakes performance measures or prescriptive activities. This develops confidence and a greater sense of intrinsic motivation for learning. The nonthreatening documentation of learning via an Interactive Notebook not only opens new channels of communication, but also provides natural contexts for language and literacy development (Peyton, 2000). It also creates a venue for students to authentically and creatively thread newly acquired knowledge and language with their own experience, what they already know, and thereby values the active learning being undertaken, in addition to the student's own thoughts and ideas (Brooks, 2010; Carter, Hernandez & Richardson, 2009).

> **Working in ann Interactive Notebook helps to build positive relationships with students, making them feel like valued members of the learning community**

Student Work Samples

During reading activities to accompany the short story, The Boy Who Talked with Animals by Roald Dahl

Freewrite: Pre-reading activities for The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton.
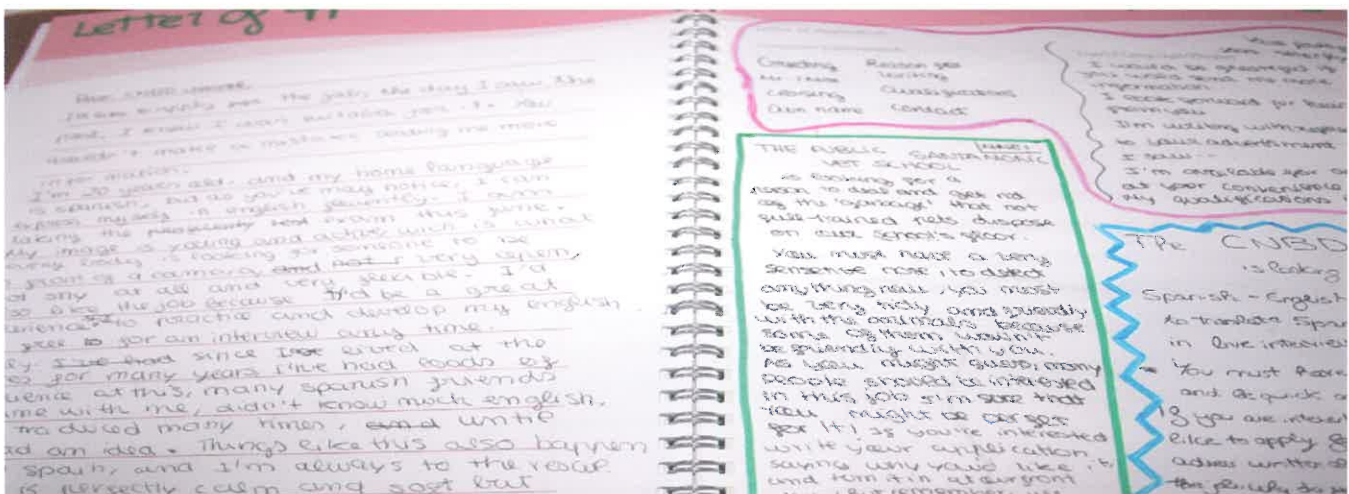
Controlled Practice: Letters of application and adverts requesting letters of application.

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Motivating Teenagers:
Some Chalk and Tals Ideas

By Usoa Sol

Teaching teenagers is not always easy since our students are going through a challenging period in their lives. That is why many factors need to be taken into account to seal the success of our lessons with them.

There are seven main elements or principles which I believe should be integrated into teenage classrooms:

1) Variety of interaction, of formats and of types of activity.

2) (Learner) Autonomy, that is, trying to boost students' initiative as learners, letting them "try things out" and giving them room without always making our presence felt.

3) Competition, building on students' competitiveness and eagerness to win.

4) Personalisation, getting more involved as a teacher and giving our students opportunities to talk about themselves and personalise content.

5) Praise, explicitly when students do well, and encouraging them about their performance in English, rewarding them occasionally.

6) Aims, providing students with a reason for doing things and choosing results-oriented activities.

7) Choice, giving students a chance to choose, and taking their tastes and preferences into account (whenever possible).

Variety
Autonomy
Competition
Personalisation
Praise
Aims
Choice

VACPPAC ≈ BACKPACK

The initials of each principle make up a word, which sounds like "backpack". This is a reminder of the equipment you need to carry in your "teaching backpack" for teenagers.

Here is a sample of tried-and-tested activities that have worked well with my teenagers and helped to engage them in learning English and to increase their motivation in the classroom.

1.- WORD BINGO

This activity can be used as a prediction exercise in listening (especially live listening). It gives students a reason for listening and activates their systems so that they get more out of the listening experience.

How to use word bingo in class

1. Tell the students about the general topic of the listening exercise (for example, describing your family or talking about a friend of yours). Note: if they are listening to an item about a person (for example, to a description of someone you know), having a picture of that person helps to get the students more interested. Give them some information about the picture or the visual prompt to put it into context, but do not reveal too much.

2. Get them to think about what they are going to hear and to predict a number of details.

3. The students have to write one keyword in each of the squares. However, they cannot write articles or prepositions, but must choose "meaningful" words such as verbs, adjectives, proper noms,

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1. dates, places, etc. To help your students think up keywords for their card, you can provide them with questions as prompts.

2. Read the text to your students or play the recording.

3. The students then have to cross out every word on their card which they hear you say (or hear from the tape).

4. The first student to get three words in a row (horizontally, vertically or diagonally) shouts "Line!" The student who crosses out all his or her words first shouts "Bingo!"

Figure 1: Example of a bingo card which students can draw in their notebooks.

2. STORYTELLING

Stories are a rich resource for teaching and do not require a great deal of preparation. They can be used to pique teenagers' interest and to get the most out of their curiosity and enthusiasm.

You can create your own "short" stories by linking together a few sentences which cover a grammar or vocabulary point (for example, present perfect and adverbials that go with it such as *for, since* or *just*).

How to use short stories in class

1. Put up a picture on the board or some kind of visual aid to catch your students' attention and arouse their interest.

2. Give them some information about the picture or the visual prompt, but try to keep it "mysterious".

3. Get them to predict who that person is or where that place is and to guess some information about it.

4. Now read your short text to the students (if possible, without sticking to the script and making it sound real!). There are two ways of doing this:

   a) Either the students have to listen and try to remember as many things as they can without writing anything down.

   b) Or they write down important words (keywords) they hear to help them write the story later. This way, they are also practising note-taking.

5. Then put the students in groups to rewrite the text you read as accurately as they can.

6. Finally, compare their texts with the original and point out any grammatical/vocabulary mistakes. This can be used as a way of introducing a grammar point or to check how confident the students are when using it.

Note: these kinds of stories should not be too long. Otherwise, reconstructing the text is too hard and, therefore, only discourages the students.

Example of a short story : JACKY

This is my friend Jacky. I met him in Beijing in August 2006 because we were both studying Chinese at Beijing University. I've known him for five years now, and we've been emailing and phoning each other very often, so I feel he's a really close friend of mine.
Jacky is Malaysian, but he's been living in Vietnam since he was a kid because his dad works there. He graduated from high school last July and he's just moved to Melbourne, in Australia, where he's going to study architecture.

This is the first time he's ever been in Australia, but he's already made many friends and he's had a great time there so far!

3. NOUGHTS-AND-CROSSES

This activity is based on noughts-and-crosses (the game you used to play as a kid!), but it can be used to revise previously learned vocabulary or to practise sentence transformation patterns (like the Use of English exercise in FCE).

How to play noughts-and-crosses

1. Draw a grid and number the squares (ideally, there should be nine in total).

2. If you're playing to revise vocabulary, every square will correspond to one word, and you should write its first letter in the square.

3. Split the students into groups and assign a shape to each group (for example, if you have three groups, you could take noughts, crosses and triangles).

4. Then get each group to throw the dice. The group that gets the highest or lowest number (you decide) starts.

5. The group who starts picks a square (they usually choose the middle one).

66

6. Tell them the definition for the word that corresponds to this square. They know the first letter, since it is written in the square.

7. If the group guesses the word correctly, they win the square (you draw their shape in it). If they cannot, the next group has a second guess with the same word. If they guess it right, they get the square, and so on.

8. The first group to get three squares (with their shape) in a row wins.

Example of a definition

It starts with the letter "t". This is a person who is going through a hard time in his or her life. He or she sometimes still behaves like a child, but doesn't want to be treated like one. These people often look like they don't care and hate being put on the spot.

Answer: TEENAGER.

4. PASAPALABRA ("WORD BY WORD")

Pasapalabra is a famous Spanish TV quiz show in which contestants are asked to guess a word from a definition. Contestants are given a definition for each letter of the alphabet and have to guess all the words in as little time as possible. If they don't know the word, they can say "Pasapalabra" (literally, "pass, next word") and go back to that definition later.

How to play Pasapalabra

1. Divide your students into four teams and give each team a section of the alphabet (section 1 letters A to G, section 2 H to N, section 3 O to T and, finally, section 4 U to Z). Remember that the last letters of the alphabet are usually the hardest to come up with a word for, so, alternatively, you could give each group six or seven random letters instead.

2. The students then have to come up with a word starting with each letter and to think of a definition for each of the words. The idea is to recycle vocabulary covered in class, but to let the students choose the words themselves, encouraging them to pick difficult words rather than too obvious ones.

3. Set a time limit (for example, five or ten minutes depending on the students' level).

4. Go round monitoring and helping. To help the students write their definitions, you could provide them with several structures for defining a word:

It starts with …
You do this when/to …
This is used for …
It's made of …
This is a person who …
This is a place where …
This is a thing which …
It sounds like …
It's similar to the word in Spanish/Catalan.
It's a synonym for …
It's the opposite of …

5. Once all the groups have their definitions ready, the spokespersons in each group take it in turns to read one each.

6. The other teams have to guess. To make the game more organised, each team could read their definitions to the next. If the next team doesn't guess the answer, the one after that gets a chance and so on.

7. For each correct definition, you award a point. The team with the most points wins.

8. Alternatively, you could cut up the letters of the alphabet and then give the letter to the team that has guessed the definition, so that, at the end, the team with the most letters is the winner.

5. SONG PROJECT

Obviously, most teenagers are fond of music. What is not so obvious is that they might not necessarily like the same type of music as their teachers. So, how can you "do a song" in class, but more or less guarantee it will be successful? The answer is get your students to choose the songs!

How to use the song project in class

1. Before getting your students to choose, you need to show them what the song project is about. The best way to do this is by giving an example yourself.

2. Choose a song that you think your students will be familiar with.

3. Play it in class without telling them anything about it.

4. Get your students to fill in the song project grid (see Figure 2 below).

5. The students then compare their answers by asking each other the questions on the grid.

SONG PROJECT!

Song number and name of the person who brought it	What type of music is it? (pop, rock, rap, heavy metal)	Have you heard it before? Who's it by? (band) What's it called? (name of the song)	What do you think of it? (your opinion) ☺ I like it because … ☹ I don't like it because …	Mark
1 (Usoa)				

Figure 2: Song project grid to be used as initial speaking activity after the first hearing.

1. Once the students have tried to guess the song and have listened to it, "present" it to them. Of course, you should adapt your presentation to the students' level.

2. In your model presentation, you should talk about the artist or band (giving some biographical information), the song (the album it is from, when it was released, what it talks about), why you have chosen it, why you like it and how it makes you feel. You can also mention any covers that have been made, or if this is a cover version itself (see the sample presentation below).

Example of an oral presentation aimed at ESO 2 students (lower pre-intermediate level)

(1) The song I've chosen is sung by Dido, who is a British songwriter and musician. Her actual name is Florian Cloud de Bounevialle Armstrong and she was born on Christmas Day 1971 in London.

(2) Dido is also the name of the band, which is formed by several musicians from New York and Dido herself, who is the vocalist and guitarist. Her first album was released in 1999 and after that she released three more: *Life for Rent* and *White Flag* (in 2003) and *Sand in My Shoes* (in 2004).

(3) This song is called *Thank You* and it's from the album *No Angel*. The song talks about Dido, who is having a really bad day and is feeling very depressed. In the song, she thanks her boyfriend for being there and helping her with her problems. She also tells him how happy he makes her feel and how thankful she is for this.

(4) Dido became very famous for this song when she did a version of it with rap star Eminem. The version is entitled *Stan* and it was a massive hit.

(5) I like this song because it's really melodic. I also like the singer's voice and the background instruments. It makes me feel good and it reminds me of when I was a teenager, because that's when I used to listen to it.

1. After your presentation, give your students the text you have just read. They should re-read it and try to write down what each paragraph (1-5) talks about. By getting students to analyse the text, you are providing them with a model to follow in their own presentation.

2. Next, divide your students into groups (this activity is best done in groups of two or three).

3. Give the students a few days to bring a song into class and the band's biographical information (which they usually get from the Internet). Make sure they know exactly what kind of song you are expecting (for example, a song in English, which tells a story and does not contain any sexually explicit language or swear words).

4. In class, give your students a session or two to try to figure out the meaning of the song and to start writing the texts for their presentations. You can go round helping and monitoring.

5. After that, the students should "rehearse" their presentations at home and then finally do them in class. Note: to make this a real oral presentation (and not just reading aloud), insist that your

students should have only a list of keywords when giving their presentation. Reading out text should be penalised to discourage them from doing so.

6. After each oral presentation, the rest of the groups award it a mark based on several criteria (see Figure 3 below). Insist that the students should try to be as objective and neutral as possible, and not mark presentations based on their circle of friends.

7. When all the groups have presented their song, the averages from the marksheet are calculated and the best song is voted for. (Depending on how many students you teach, you could vote for the best three songs instead of just one).

8. Finally, the best songs are "done" in class, once the groups in charge have prepared activities for the rest of their classmates.

Drew's Script-o-Rama:
http://www.script-o-rama.com/snazzy/dircut.html.

What activities can you do with a dialogue from a film?

6.1. PUTTING THE DIALOGUE IN ORDER

1. Get the transcript of the dialogue and cut it into strips.

2. Then give a set of strips to each group of students (ideally, you should have four students working together). They have to put them in what *they think* is the correct order.

3. Next, get them to *listen* to the scene (without watching).

Give each aspect a score from 0 to 10					
English 2nd term 07/08 ESO 2	This Love, Maroon 5	Fabulous, High School Musical 2	Where Is The Love?, Black-Eyed Peas	You're The Music in Me, High School Musical 2	Oral presentations
Visual aids (poster)					
Pronunciation / Easy to understand					
Interaction with audience					
Interesting?					
TOTAL AVERAGE					

Figure 3: Oral presentation marksheet (reduced sample)

6. FILM CLIPS

Dialogues are another valuable resource for teaching teenagers. You can find them in course books or even invent them yourself to make them more personal.

You can also find loads in films. To work on a dialogue from a film, you do not need to show the whole film to your students; just a clip will do. Select one where there is interaction between the characters, but not a very complicated scene, since it will be harder to work on later.

Where can you download film scripts from?

The Internet Movie Script Database:
http://www.imsdb.com/

4. As they are listening, they should re-organise the strips so they are in the right order (if what they had thought was wrong). In order to do this, they might need to listen to the scene more than once (turn the screen towards the board, so the image is facing the blackboard and the students cannot see it).

5. After that, let them watch the whole scene as a reward.

6.2. DUBBING (based on an idea by Mark McKinnon)

➢ Based on the transcript, the students could dub the scene you have chosen. They can use some of the sentences in the original script, but they will need to change others.

- Since dubbing a script is no easy task, you should provide them with a context or a situation to work on, so they can focus on a specific topic or lexical set. For example, with the lie-detector scene in *Meet the Parents*, the instructions I gave were: "Imagine you're a famous person who is interviewed on the TV show *El Polígrafo*. One of you should play the famous person and the other the interviewer. Invent questions the interviewer would ask the celebrity".

- With weaker classes, you could also provide them with a framework to stick to. For example, for the dialogue from *Meet the Parents*, you could propose the following structure:

JB = Jack Byrnes (the father) / GF = Greg Focker (the son-in-law)

JB: Question

GF: Short answer

JB: Short comment

JB: Question

GF: Short answer

JB: Question

GF: Long answer (two parts)

JB: I'm just kidding. / Short comment

JB: Relax, relax, the needles are jumping. / Long comment

JB: Question

GF: No. I mean…, well, I don't…

JB: YES or NO!

1. Go round helping and monitoring the students and finally get them to go in front of the class to dub their scene "live".

2. They should remember to pause when the film pauses and not to talk too fast or too slowly. They should always adjust to the pace of that specific scene.

Example of a dialogue taken from a film clip [From *High School Musical 2*]

Troy: Hey! What do you mean you're done here? I mean, you can't quit!

Gabriella: Us working together sounded good, but plans change and … people change. This club talent show's a big deal for Sharpay and evidently for your future, so it's cool, just make it happen, wear your new Italian shoes.

Troy: Hey! I'm still me.

Gabriella: Blowing off your friends? Missing dates? If that's you, it's good to know.

Troy: No, no, no, no, no. No, I was only doing that because I'm working on that scholarship thing, you know that.

Gabriella: But if along the way you act like someone you're not, pretty soon that's who you become.

Troy: I know what I said about movies, and summer, and just being together.

Gabriella: I'm sure you did … at the time. I also meant what I said. And I want to remember this summer, but not like this, Troy.

7. SENTENCE PICTIONARY[1]

Pictionary© is a very popular game most people know. Why not play it with your students, but using words instead of drawings?

How to play sentence Pictionary

1. Divide the class into two groups. The first group should be looking at the board, the second should have their backs to the board.

2. Write a sentence on the board (the one you want your students to "describe").

3. The students facing the board have to "describe" the sentence word by word to their partners (who have their backs to the board and cannot read it). In order to "describe" their sentences, students can give synonyms and antonyms, paraphrase, refer to words that sound the same, give example sentences, etc. They can basically use all the resources at hand except for saying the word straight out or spelling it.

4. The first student to finish the sentence has to say it out loud without looking at the board.

Note (1): the first time you play this game, it's best to give students an example yourself so they know how to "describe" sentences.

Note (2): if you're using sentences from songs, a natural follow-up to this Pictionary© activity is for students to match the sentences to the song titles. You could also play the songs to them to make it even more fun.

Example of how to "describe" a sentence

I need something inspiring to help me get along.

For the sentence above, you could say:

I – first person singular personal pronoun.

Need – a verb which indicates necessity.

Something – an indefinite pronoun that means a thing.

Inspiring – an adjective to describe something that gives you inspiration.

To – a preposition that sounds like a number.

Help – a verb which is a synonym for 'aid'; you could also say the Beatles have a song with this name.

Me – first person singular object pronoun.

Get along – a phrasal verb that means "to be on good terms or get on well with somebody".

You can do this activity even with low-level classes and you'll be amazed by your students' creativity in getting their message across. (After all, this is what they do every day when they don't know how to say what they want to in English).

8. AWARDS AND CERTIFICATES

Praise was mentioned previously as one of the elements that should be present in teenage classrooms. For special occasions, awards and certificates are a wonderful form of praise. You can download them (as well as bingo cards, memory cards, etc.) from http://www.dltk-cards.com/award/. They can be customised and printed in black and white or in colour.

9. CONCLUSIONS

How can we motivate teenagers?

Here are a few things we can try to do to motivate our teenage students:

- Introduce competition in class and make the class more game-like.
- Change the seating arrangements (activities in groups, in pairs, individually).
- Have some TPR activities in the class (moving around, going up to the board, sticking things,
- manipulating things, etc.).
- Use different formats and supports for our activities: white boards, blackboard, paper strips, cards, etc.
- Personalise the class (using the teacher as a tool; bringing *realia* into the classroom, etc.).
- Give the students the choice or the "vote": group names, making groups, voting for the best project, for the best song, activity, etc.
- Give the students a reason to do things, a goal.
- Praise and reward them: awards, points, (occasional!) sweet prizes, etc.

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[1] Thank you to David Spencer and Mark Ormerod for illustrating this idea in their Macmillan seminars.
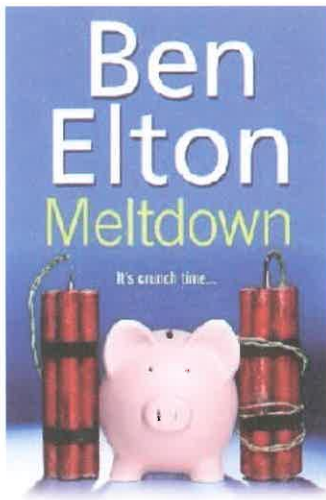

OBITUARY

John Trim died peacefully in Barking Hall on Saturday, 19th January, 2013, aged 88 years.

He was a world-renowned expert in the field of phonetics, linguistics, language didactics and policy. He was the director of the Council of Europe's Modern Languages Projects from 1971 to 1997, overseeing developments ranging from the Threshold Level to the Common European Framework of Reference, and was awarded the Pro Merito medal by the Council of Europe in recognition of his exceptional contribution to its pioneering work in language education. John Trim's remarkable legacy will continue to inspire innovation in language education policy and practice.

He visited Barcelona on numerous occasions and was an enthusiastic supporter of the work done in Catalonia to relate teaching policy and practice to European standards. He attended the international congress organized by APAC in the late 1980s and the public presentation of the Catalan translation of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. His presence will be sadly missed. His work will live on.

Meltdown by Ben Elton
(London: Black Swan, 2010)
Reviewed by Núria Casals i Arqué

Guide Error Correction
Exercises for Spanish-speaking Students of English
Reviewed by Salvador Faura, EOI Sabadell

Ben Elton can be definitely considered a well-informed popular narrator of contemporary Britain. His novels are always satirical reflections of controversial real situations and it could not have been any other way in his last book *Meltdown*. You are probably acquainted with some of his best-seller titles such as *High Society* (about the different kinds of people getting involved in drugs), *Dead Famous* (giving an unexpected turn to the idea of the TV programme "Big Brother") or *Chart Throb* (exposing the inner secrets of TV hits such as "The X Factor" and the like). This time he presents to his readers a story which revolves around the financial crisis, its origins and its dreadful consequences - a rather hot issue.

Thanks to Jimmy, the protagonist, in *Meltdown* the readers come to know a group of friends in their early forties who have managed to stick together since their university times. Each of them clearly stands for a stereotyped character playing quite a specific role in the British version of the financial crisis. Their rise and fall is used as a way to show the flaws of a society and a system which seem to be at the brink of collapse. Ben Elton is a master of situational irony and provides his readers with delightfully funny scenes and characters: an MP who claims as personal expenses his wife's new hair-dryer, a bankrupt stock-exchange dealer who unsuccessfully tries to bring to sleep his three offspring, some friends cracking jokes about their diseased mate. Some clever fictional situations which, together with others which might ring a bell to the readers, help to rise one's spirit and bring a smile to one's face.

Even if a bit superficial and with a poorly achieved conclusion, this book offers you a simple way of understanding in plain words the recession Europe is undergoing as well as a great opportunity of having it from a British point of view – though some Brits may feel rather reluctant to be considered a part of Europe. . . You may think that in this novel Ben Elton has not completely reached his own standards, but yet you might enjoy his colloquial use of language, his interweaved stories and his British social scenery. A bit of a light reading just for the fun of it!
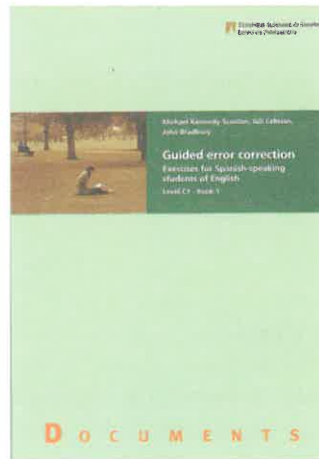
Once upon a time -and a very good time it was- there was a far far land where all students of English wrote their writing exercises without mistakes. There, good old teachers evaluated them with ever-rising marks. Alas, those very students and their accommodating teachers seem now to have vanished in Cloud-cuckoo land. In fact, all the country's modern educators are left with now is altogether the setting of another fairy tale –one of terror where compositions are involved! Indeed, most modern students are good at most skills –I never said the contrary. Many of them look for listening activities on-line, they download readings on state-of-the arts e-books, and they practise their oral proficiency via Ryanair. Yet, that is no consolation for the long-suffering professionals who correct their papers. Modern students find handing in writing exercises harder than ever before and, in the fairy tale country teachers live in now, self-correcting writing exercises are few and far between!

Opportunely, at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, Michael Kennedy-Scanlon, Juli Cebrian and John Bradbury are working to resolve this situation. Their last publication, aimed at upper-intermediate and advanced-level students, *Guided Error Correction,* helps learners recognise, and then correct, writing mistakes without external assistance. From the point of view of methodology, the activities are only one-page long. Most importantly: they have been designed to be used at the learner's convenience. The system is the following: first, students learn how to *correct* the characteristic errors of Spanish–speakers struggling to write in English. Then, they are taught to *identify* these very mistakes. Last but not least, students are shown how to *re-write* imperfect sentences without faults. *Guided Error Correction* also includes a Spanish translation of what could be called "nuances of meaning" and another section with brief explanatory notes aimed at enhancing comprehension.

Teachers! Recommend these exercises and get ready to enjoy some more quality time –well, or to find out even more about moodle and digital whiteboards! Whichever you choose, enjoy

Núria Casals has been an English language teacher at Secondary Education since 2000. She holds a degree in English Philology, a Postgraduate course in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and has recently obtained her DEA in American Literature.

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