

Issue n°78

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APAC
ELT JOURNAL

Proceedings II

... and other articles

2013 APAC ELT Convention

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Associació
de Professors i
Professores d'Anglès
de Catalunya

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**ELT - Convention
2014**

**English
in Action
24/7**

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de Professors i
Professores d'Anglès
de Catalunya



February 20th, 21st & 22nd

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

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Revista núm. 78
February 2014

D.L. B-41180/1998
ISSN 1137 - 1528

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ENGLISH IN ACTION 24/7

The huge impact that internet has had in our lives tends to obscure the fact that only 20 years ago most of us did not know what email was and had never accessed the world wide web. With more than one million users today, and plans for two million users in 2020, internet will have drastically changed the way we access information, and the way we consider education and learning takes place.

How are these changes materializing? It's not about resources any more. For some years now, teachers at conferences have been sharing links to online dictionaries, exercises, videos, podcasts, speech recognition and error analysis systems, all for free. However, the wealth of resources available were used basically as additional inputs, or extra practice materials and had not yet changed the structure of our classes, nor the role of the teachers.

Recent developments using web 2.0 technologies aimed at catering for personal learning styles and rhythms such as PLE (Personal Learning Environments) MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) are making their way into our society and will surely reshape our classrooms and our role as teachers. Connectivity, networking and life-long learning are the basis in both approaches, and full responsibility stays with the learners, who can and must decide the content, the method and the timing with learning opportunities now available 24/7.

What is the role of the teacher of English in this context? Web 2.0 technologies and free availability of courses online offer a learning paradise but they also present challenges which are diverse for the different educational levels. Many questions arise, to which we still have no answers. Will diversity in the classroom increase with 24/7 accessibility? Do we teachers still have a role as content providers? What should be our role? How can we help students streamline the wealth of opportunities according to their needs and interests? What should the links be between the classroom and round the clock accessibility?

We hope to be able to share our questions in the coming APAC ELT Convention, and look forward to finding some answers.

Apac Organizing Committee

EDITORIAL

On the eve of the 2014 convention, we bring you this issue of the journal, which includes the second part of the proceedings of the last convention and complements that with contributions which will be of interest to you and which will whet your appetite (if necessary) to attend this February's convention.

The second part of the proceedings offers a wide range of content. The articles discuss the value of culture, working with special needs students, the work of teachers in primary and secondary schools, hands-on projects carried out in and outside of classes, ideas for making learning tasks more pleasurable, activities for making classroom learning more meaningful, different ways of utilizing new technologies, ideas for implementing CLIL, and ways to do storytelling with young learners.

Among the contributors in the second part of the publication, we can read advice from Chris Roland on how to prepare more successful classroom activities, or a description of a cultural exchange program by Cristina Mallol, in which she tells us of the benefits derived from this kind of project.

There are also two articles that the Bofill Foundation has allowed us to publish, which take us away from classroom activities and provide us with reflections on the quality of teachers and educational programs. One of them, "The Future of Teaching" by J. MacBeath, focuses on the indicators that promote or diminish a teacher's feeling of professional satisfaction. The other, an excellent article by Dr. Yong Zhao, gives us food for thought in regard to education reforms. This text criticizes the fostering of homogenization and the narrowness of criteria that lead to citizens being educated and trained for a world that no longer exists. It offers an alternative paradigm, one which is founded on and builds upon what students want and what they are able to do.

We hope that reading these articles will spark new interests in you and kindle a desire to come to this year's convention and interact with the people who have written them, the people who will write the articles in the upcoming proceedings, and people like yourself who are seeking to improve their teaching, their students' learning, and their level of professional fulfillment. The convention is an excellent meeting point for English language teaching professionals, a place where new projects, ways of thinking, ways of working, and sources of satisfaction can, and often do, emerge. We hope to see you there in a few weeks!

The Editorial Team

Let's Talk about Our Town and Present It to the World

By M^a Luisa Forján Arce and Vanessa Sánchez Pleguezuelos

The project we are presenting has been awarded with the European Language Label 2012 by the European Commission. It is a good example of IAP (Investigation-Action-Participation), and it is one which involves augmented reality. Augmented reality means a direct or indirect view of reality, whose elements are augmented by/through several inputs such as sound, video, graphics, or GPS data. In other words, it deals with real objects in combination with virtual elements. In this project, the students become users and creators of information, enriching reality once the teacher geolocates the students' productions in order for them to be displayed on a smart phone. This work can be adapted to any educational level (primary, secondary, EOIs...) with unlimited timing. We developed it with 6th-grade, primary school students over the course of a school year. The project was one of the activities in the 6th-graders' syllabus in academic year 2011-2012.

See this presentation at <http://antoniroigschool.blogspot.com.es/>

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Vanessa Sánchez Pleguezuelos has a diploma in English Education. She has been teaching English at all levels for 10 years, and she has been involved in different English language projects (Comenius, workshops, theatre in English, science in English...). Vanessa is now teaching English in Antoni Roig School, in Torredembarra, Tarragona. She coordinates the PELE project called "Helping Learners to Learn to Speak".

They have both been speakers in the IX Jornades de llengües estrangeres, (Salou, November 2011), Sprint TAC (Tarragona, July 2012) and British Council Teachers Conference (Barcelona, October 2012).

Introduction

Torredembarra is a coastal tourist town near Barcelona with a rich, varied population consisting of Catalan families along with immigrant families from Africa and South America, who shape our school and help to give sense to the project. It was started in the September 2011 to apply new technologies to English language learning in a creative and meaningful way.

In Antoni Roig School, we have developed a project to create content to be used on a mobile device in order to geolocate and learn about different points of interest in our town, Torredembarra

The students were able to create virtual content in augmented reality. It allowed to them to interact with the outside world, producing new content and, consequently, enriching the students' closest reality. This virtual content can be consulted on a smart phone. They learnt about the points of interest in their town and created original material to add new value to what anybody with a mobile phone can access.

Where did the idea come from?

On the one hand, the approach behind our project is the updated Bloom taxonomy based on a former student of Bloom, Lorin Anderson, who has updated his terminology by changing nouns into verbs as well as interchanging the top two levels. From the base to the top, we come across: Remembering, Understanding, Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating, and, to end, Creating.

On the other hand, in a summer course on ICT resources, the speaker, Xavier Suñé, mentioned something that raised my curiosity: the EspiRA project. It was open to educators to create content combining mobile learning with augmented reality.



Description

Throughout the 2011-2012 school year, we were glad to have a language assistant from California, Cassie Mullendore, working with us to help our students improve

their speaking. We took advantage of the fact she didn't know our town and cultural items and we suggested to our students that we organize a guided tour for her around the main places in Torredembarra. In groups, the students searched for information about the different points of interest (POIs) they wished to show Cassie. Each group looked up information and data in English, Spanish and Catalan. It was learning based on discovery. The student interacted with objects in the real world, adding information without replacing reality but enriching it.

The previous year they had been creating videos about Torredembarra; they were therefore familiar with Windows Movie Maker (WMM) and Audacity.

As we were walking around the town, guiding Cassie, the students listened as their classmates explained the POIs to Cassie, filled in a worksheet prepared by the teachers, and took pictures of the places they were visiting.

Back at school, the students worked in groups to record their texts and match the audio with the images they had taken, to produce videos about their POI. This year they were asked to subtitle them.

They produced original audiovisual material about every POI with Audacity and WMM, which was included in the EspiRA project by the teacher in order to be watched, read and listened to with the help of a smart phone once the teacher registered and geolocated the videos.

By working in groups to produce their own videos, our students operated on two levels of communication: personal and virtual. This has become a good way to successfully cater for diversity in our groups. New technologies play an important role in this project as the access to information and previous knowledge is done on the net. The students become familiar with several browsers, computer programmes, online translators, text processors, image and audio editor programmes (Paint, WMM, Audacity).

In the end, they produced 17 videos. The teacher then uploaded them and created a Prezi to post on the school blog, "The Escaroig Eye". It was time to share their videos with the students and families, but we helped them to realize that there were permissions to ask for, as there were pictures taken in official institutions and private houses: the home for the elderly, the Town Hall, the "Indians" Houses... Letters were written to the tourism office, educational authorities, and owners of the properties involved in the project.

The students were conscious of their work once they watched their videos on the teacher's mobile phone. They realized that any person with a mobile device placed in front of any of the 17 POIs could know about it by watching their videos, and, if the church or the Town Hall were closed, they could see the inside of it by consulting the students' creations on their phones. They had interacted with the environment in a really meaningful way, and they realised the importance of English as an international language in a global world.

To see videos, readers can go to this address: <http://antoniroschool.blogspot.com.es/2012/05/6th-graders-lights-camera-action.html>

At the end of the school year, we heard about the European Commission award, *Sello Europeo para las inicia-*

tivas innovadoras en la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de las lenguas, The European Label for Innovative Projects in Language Teaching and Learning. We took part in it and were awarded 6th Prize in December 2012.

Conclusion

This project has allowed the students to become autonomous enough in dealing with new technologies. They became involved and self-disciplined in the process of learning a language in use. They fulfilled their own goals according to their needs and at their own pace through blended learning.

Globalization and international projection have become a must in today's classes. Our students interact among themselves and with the teacher in a really meaningful way. During the project, we witnessed how it helped them to develop several different areas: the four skills in language acquisition (listening, reading, writing and speaking); the social citizen competence; the ICT competence; and the cultural and artistic competences.

The material produced by the students can be exploited at different levels and in different areas, not only Education but also Tourism, Art, Journalism, Geography, History, etc.

The Project is centred on the student, and the teacher's role is just going along through the process with the student. The teachers' and language assistant's tasks are especially three:

- Refreshing previous knowledge.
- Answering our students' needs, personalizing education.
- Motivating and encouraging their work.

We really favoured a Self-Organised Learning Environment (see Prof. Sugata Mitra) that enabled the student in a 21st-century school to learn in a real autonomous way, which is what we obviously intend to do in our classes. The students search for information on their own with the teacher

playing a secondary role but with technology playing a starring one.

The smart phone is presented as an educational device, offering options our students wouldn't have thought of. A new door is opened onto the world of mobile devices as a creative and practical resource in education, too. Despite the fact that mobile phones are not allowed in school, this was not important for the activity, as its aim was the project itself: creating original material in English with a variety of ICT tools and resources.

In these kinds of projects, the students become not only users of content but creators, consumers and producers. Their productions are not restricted to the academic world and to the classroom walls but they cross borders to interact with and enrich the outside world on a real and full communicative basis.

The original material in augmented reality for mobile learning has been made possible by optimizing the resources the school offered: two teachers, split groups, a digital language lab, a computer room, an interactive whiteboard and the presence of a language assistant.

Families, students, local institutions and the school have cooperated in creating virtual content on the basis of a mobile phone, an attractive content for everybody with some knowledge of English. It can also be considered a good example of "Edutainment". In augmented reality, artificial information about the environment and its objects can be overlaid on the real world, and we think the school must offer activities in this area that foster learning, and learning to learn.

There are still points of interest left, and many topics about our town can be expanded upon in the coming years. Many projects await us, students and teachers alike, in the creation of a real, augmented-reality map. This is just the beginning...

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www.apac.es

Upgrade your Lessons and Improve Your Students' Communicative Skills

By M^a Luisa Forján Arce and Vanessa Sánchez Pleguezuelos

A new terminology has come up in our classes and in our students' lives. The role of teacher is becoming something else, something new, educating students for an unknown future. We sometimes feel reluctant to changes as they are happening so fast that our students are farther than where we are. The School should prepare them but, how? We as teachers must think over this new environment and do our best so all these changes have a place in our classes. Continuous education is a must and our students are considered as the wired generation; therefore we can't look aside and pretend to ignore reality. We are going to offer you some ideas to make it easy for you as a teacher and motivating for the student.

See this presentation at <http://antoniroidschool.blogspot.com.es/>

INTRODUCTION

Teaching has suffered from several changes from the point of view of methodology . The typical scene of a teacher in front of the students writing at the blackboard

while they are in silence working is out of date. Lots of resources have been offered to improve our teaching through technology: IWB, laptops, internet, etc. We have to face these tools as a help to make our work easier and never something to annoy us and make us waste our time. There is a time and a place for everything therefore we can

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combine online teaching environments with face-to-face learning environments and get the best and most of both.

On the other hand, today's websites are dynamically generated and content is both created by and shared by end users. Sites encourage collaboration, allowing social interaction to form virtual communities around user-generated content. In order to be effective, online teachers should consider new e-learning techniques. Familiar pedagogical concepts should be adapted and re-discovered in their online pedagogical form, a process that fosters communication and independence. We need to foster our students' communication to be creative, we need to guide them in brainstorming activities close and meaningful to our students.

WHY SHOULD WE INCLUDE ICT ACTIVITIES?

We should consider new technologies as fun and as an easy way to reach knowledge. Education is changing for young people as they experience self-directed learning about things that call their interest: video tutorials, online courses... They happen mostly outside the school. Schooling as Professor Sugata Mitra, Professor of Educational Technology at the School of Education for Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University, reveals is definitely outdated. Our goal as teacher is no longer to produce equals as was the society demand in the last century .

He started an experiment called "A Hole in the Wall" fourteen years ago. It consisted in giving access to children through a computer stuck in a wall and watch their reactions.

There should be two previous conditions:

- 1.- They knew no English
- 2.- They had seen no computer before.

Do you want to know/see what happened?

They started playing games (have fun from the beginning), later they opened Paint Brush, they were really thrilled to learn something new and then, they looked about for things they were interested in for instance astrology. As they came across interesting articles they got more and more interested.

What makes them to go to the hole, to start? Initially they came out of curiosity, then the ability to show off to each other and finally to focus on purpose to search for what they want.

How far can they go by learning things by themselves?

We are not going to devote much time to

Professor Mitra's activities but we highly recommend you to follow his experiences. It was then when the grannycloud experiment was born, to simulate the hole in the wall environment in the class. In the beginning they couldn't pass the test but if they had someone at the back asking them how they did so, they were able to explain it and consequently they passed the test. Children love the granny figure. In India they used British grannies who were asked to devote one hour of their time for free to provide "boost". This method is applied in British schools. It consists in taking a group, each group is allowed to use a computer and they are given a critical question to be answered in the group (SOLEs, Self-Organised Learning Environments).

METHODOLOGY

Dealing with technology there are important changes that we would like to highlight. In terms of methodology it's TELL vs CALL, i.e, it's not only a CALL, a Computer Assisted Language Learning but TELL, Technology Enhanced Language Learning on the basis of a [www.lesson](#) planning, which is a more modern approach and close to realia.

Does it mean we must get rid of the book? No way, the book is the scaffolding, the backbone. In order to teach a language we concentrate on using a communicative approach but we can't forget there is something else. We as teachers and our students are in Globalization, therefore we need a global approach that Technology will provide us for sure. With all the Technology we have at school: overhead projector, interactive whiteboard, CD player, computer room, DVD, internet, digital books... , we could just use them to assist the ESL Learning (CALL) or go one step forward with TELL, blending all methodologies with Technology.

However, any website is not good enough to use in our classes; we should evaluate the websites in terms of accuracy, content, age and functionality. It should be adaptable to different levels. It should be multisensorial, attending different memories, with motivating activities. The activities should link the syllabus and provide a self/automatic correction, enhancing participation and critical thinking.

MOTIVATION

We know that motivation is one of the main problems in education. And we also know that motivation is important because it contributes to achievement. But when we talk about it we usually think about students... and what happens with teachers? How many times do we feel unmotivated and we don't know what to do with

students that have a low English level? And we don't get positive feedback because our students usually think that English is difficult, they have a bad attitude and there's a lack of attention. And this problem usually has a snowball effect.

We needed to solve this problem. So, this was the main reason for us to change our methodology.

TIC-TAC... WHY?

The main reasons for using new technologies in English Language Teaching are these:

- Our students develop autonomy because they can take their own decisions, making choices, selecting... We are there as teachers but in a different way.
- They provide an English environment. The outside world can pass through the school walls and find its place in the learning process. So, children will be facing real communicative situations.
- We can post their productions by means of a school-blog. We can break the school-house wall.
- We can attend multi-ability groups. We are able to deal with all the range (from the weakest to the best students).
- ICT Activities are challenging.
- We can use realia. We can find authentic materials. It's real-life language.
- They develop an important key-competence.
- They're fun. Children like technology. They enjoy this kind of activities (rather than working with a book).
- They develop creativity and critical thinking.

TIC TAC PROBLEMS

But we must take into account that technology can give us also some problems...

- We must always have a Back-up Plan. We can't rely on internet only. There might be times when the websites are down, or the computers crash, or the electricity goes off, or it can take several minutes to open the site, or we can't open it, or the flash-player doesn't work because it's not updated... We must be prepared for this.
- We need time for searching on the net for what we need. There are hundreds of resources but we must check them.
- And finally, as Marc Prensky said, students are digital native whereas we are digital immigrants. We must be careful because our students will search for everything on the net (even things they already know!), they will copy and paste and they will use translators.

ABOUT US

The last few years our school has improved its technological equipment. So, now we're very lucky because every single classroom has an Interactive Digital Whiteboard, which is very useful.

And, the most important for us (as English teachers): we have got a fantastic Digital Language Lab. This new lab gives us many different possibilities of working on the different skills. We are trying to get the most from it. And we both agree that since we use it the motivation of both our students and us has increased.

So, once a week (from 3rd to 6th grade) we split the group. Then, half of the class goes to the Lab with one of us, and the rest of them stay in the classroom doing other kinds of activities with the other English teacher.

But the methodology and the activities we are going to explain can be developed with just a computer room with headphones and microphones.

STUDENTS CAN....

So, by means of new technology our students can...

- Learn and have fun trough websites.

If we want them to describe a character, it's better if they can create it with a funny application. (ex. Toy Story Creator)

Before they record a text, they can practice its pronunciation with an avatar (ex. Voki).

Learning vocabulary is hard for them... but they are able to learn the names of 100 pokemons... So, they can learn it through the wikiduca game. In this game the bad shadows took all the words and children must help the wikipitos to get these words again. It's very fun because by answering multiple choice questions they get points to decorate their house and to save wikipitos. They love it! And they learn the vocabulary you want (because you register them as your group and you choose the vocabulary that will appear on each level of the game). And you can use it as a fun homework assignment for preparing the exams.

- Record their productions.

We can record them while they do an information gap activity in the language lab. But we also ask them to record a composition by themselves using Audacity. We give them the instructions for this programme and they do it on their own.

- Create their own videos, reports, digital comics, digital storybooks...

Depending on their level, there are lots of free webpages you can use.

- Use realia resources.

YouTube is a fantastic source of real language. You can create lots of activities.

- Dub a film.
- Do summer homework and enjoy it!

Children hate homework. It's like punishment! We had these feeling when we were students. So, by means of a glogster presentation, you can create fun homework in which the four skills are taken into account. We have got a glogster for each level. And all of them have a song, a video with questions to answer, grammar games... see some examples: <http://antoniroidschool.blogspot.com.es/2012/06/summer-homework.html>

TAILOR-MADE LESSON PLANS EASY TO CARRY OUT WITH BASIC EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

We can create an easy and meaningful lesson plan with simple tools like eduglogster. We offer you an example we use to work on the Present Progressive Tense: "What's he doing?" students can manage by themselves to differentiate between the Simple Present and Present Progressive. They reinforce finding out rules on their own, exploiting activities, through digital e-books, videos, iussu worksheets, songs... to reach the expression of their own feelings and opinions using the present progressive tense. It starts by being a guided and closed activity to become a free last activity of self-expression. See <http://antoniroidschool.blogspot.com.es/2013/01/present-simple-vs-pres-progressive.html>

A blogpost "The Solar System" can also provide

us with tools and resources to deal with highly motivating topics such as The Solar System (Astronomy , NASA) and deal with Science contents from a linguistic point of view. It is highly motivating it develops our students' creativity ending with an imaginary solar system. See <http://antoniroidschool.blogspot.com.es/2013/01/the-solar-system.html>

An e-book "Penguin" calls our students' attention and helps us to wake their editing and creating competences. The skills associated with reading and writing pop up easily and we can witness it in a story creator to end the lesson planning. See

<http://antoniroidschool.blogspot.com.es/2012/12/reading.html>

CONCLUSION

All our lesson plans follow the same pattern. It's a template repeated: warm-up to motivate with videos, ads, realia. It's followed by websites to work on the contents proposed and finally reach the what's next activity, i.e. creating content using the grammar and vocabulary we are focusing on.

Our role as teachers is on one hand to guide our students' discoveries related to the language and, on the other hand, to be sure everybody gets a turn in the driver's seat. We will notice how they can learn to operate computers and the internet by themselves sharing in group their discoveries. Children with learning difficulties L.D., are not left on their own but the SOLE tries to integrate them in the group and the adult's role is to praise this attitude.

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ELT - Convention 2014

English in Action 24/7

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We have 13 great plays in
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including our brand-new
Secondary show, *Sherlock!*

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Speak, Record and Share Our English in the Blog!

By Oscar del Estal Martínez

The speaking activities presented in this article (chants, role-plays, card games, board games, dialogues, and oral presentations) are used in the different primary cycles at Escola Splai to encourage students to improve their spoken English. These oral productions cannot be displayed on the wall of a classroom or in a corridor, so we incorporate them into our blog. I will explain the entire process: before, during and after uploading pupils' recordings to an English Blog and how students use them to practise English at home with their families and get the most benefit from them. Finally, I will explain how I deal with the assessment of speaking activities, and we will have a look at feedback from the families and what they think of the project.

Introduction

It is always difficult to get students concerned about how important speaking is because they do not use English in their "real" lives. As English teachers, we have to make them aware of its importance. The key is to surprise them in every moment of every class and carry out activities involving situational English in class.

Oscar del Estal is a primary-school English teacher at Escola Splai in Barcelona and an IWB teacher trainer. He received the John McDowell Award in 2011 and the 2nd prize in the "II Concurs de Bones Pràctiques en TIC 2012" for running the English Blog "L'anglès a l'Escola Splai". He loves teaching children and having fun in class using TPR activities, role plays, chants and ICT. <http://blocs.xtec.cat/anglesceipsplai>
E-mail: oestal@xtec.cat Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/anglesceipsplai>

Starting point

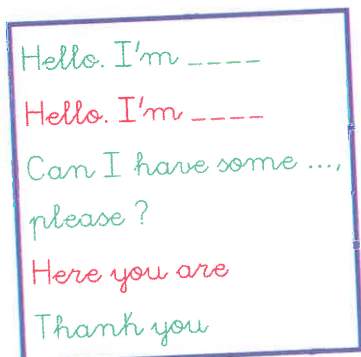


The first oral expression recording made at school was in 2007. I assigned the students to have a conversation in a clothes shop, and only 8 out of 25 of them were able to record the video properly. So, I decided to create a methodology to improve our students' communicative competence using ICT to simulate real conversation situations in half-group classes. In 2008, we created our blog, "L'anglès a l'Escola Splai", to upload our video and oral recordings to and share them with the educational community.

1st Cycle of Primary



1st-and 2nd-grade pupils take part in *videos and songs*, and we prepare oral expression, miming the song using body language and flashcards as a support. After that, using "VLC player", I slow down the song to focus on pronunciation, and we sing it chorally. During the whole process, students practise with their CDs at home, and then we record the song in class. Finally, I edit the video using Pinnacle Studio, and I upload it onto our English Blog.



We also produce short dialogues in half-group classes. First, we listen to some examples performed by older students, then we practise sentences as a rap using "Choral reading" while I try to correct all the mistakes. The next step is displaying the written dialogue on the interactive whiteboard (IWB), and a pair of students go up to the board to say the dialogue using a microphone. Afterwards, the students get into pairs and decide on roles (green/red) according to the colour of the written model. A few minutes later, we record the dialogue using *Audacity*, and I edit the recordings, upload a sample recording to *Glogster*, and embed it in the blog, so they can practise at home with their families and improve their pronunciation.



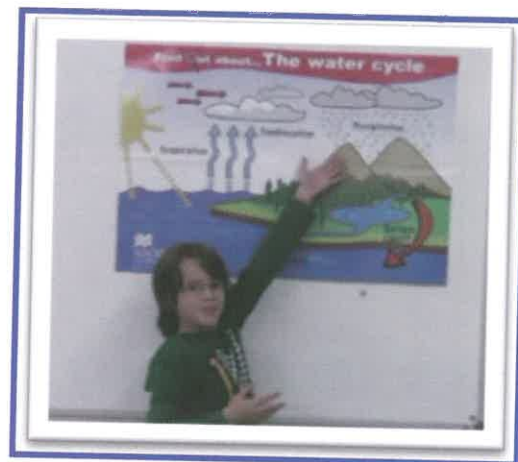
I like using PowerPoint slides when I introduce new vocabulary because the pupils can see it better and focus on the pronunciation of the different words. I also use a remote control to change the pictures and ensure they are paying attention to the IWB. Then we practise with written words and we invent chants using the words about the topic we are studying. Finally, we record these chants using the video camera, and I upload them to our English Blog.



Our students also take part in *circle games* and *TPR games* to practise structures. Moving and repeating words or sentences imitating the teacher's model is very motivating for them. They are very happy when they watch their oral productions at home because they can share what they have learnt with their families. Some parents write comments in our English Blog telling me about the student's experience when he/she was watching the video at home.

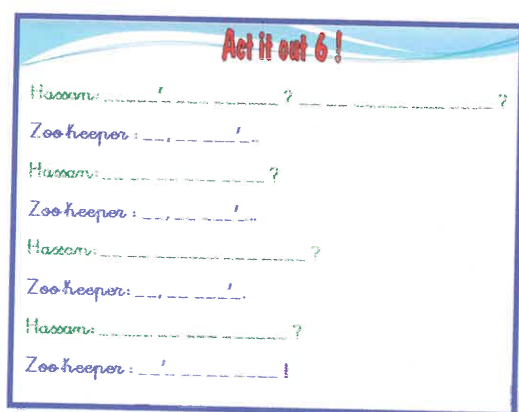
We play *board games* in class but I want them to practise at home after class, too. Some parents couldn't play using the cards that they brought home because they didn't know what to do with them or they didn't know the structure in English. So, I decided to record a video of some students playing that

board game in class and upload it to the blog. Now, some parents play the board games at home with their children helped by the English Blog. In some cases, parents and students learn English together.



Each month, students perform some short *CLIL oral presentations* about different topics: the water cycle, recycling paper, the human body, measuring time, food... In groups of three or four, they prepare short sentences, and, helped by visuals (posters or PowerPoint presentations), they record a video to tell their parents what they have learnt. After that, we use the information given to do dictations in class, and that content appears on the written exam at the end of the unit.

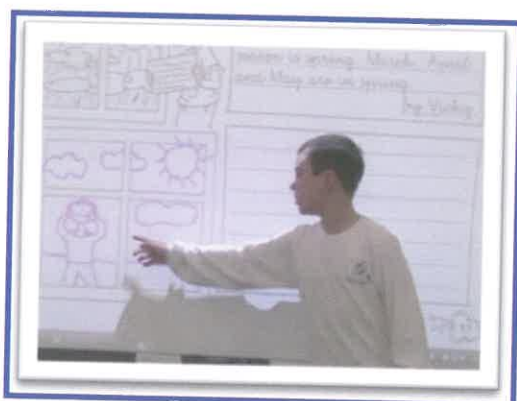
2nd Cycle of Primary



In 3rd and 4th grade, we continue practising and recording more difficult *dialogues*. They are allowed to read the dialogue while they record it but I encourage them say the dialogue by heart without looking at the written model. The pupils practise reading the dialogue in pairs, and every 2 minutes I erase some words from it, so they have to remember what's missing. Finally, they can only see punctuation marks.

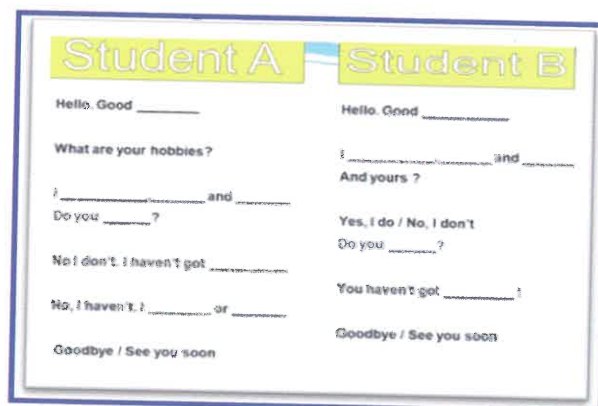


Some parents can't help their children prepare *tongue twisters* because they don't speak English. So, two random students record a video example beforehand. That way, children and parents can practise together at home. This strategy also helps pupils with special educational needs, and they achieve better results if they use the video uploaded in the English Blog for practising.

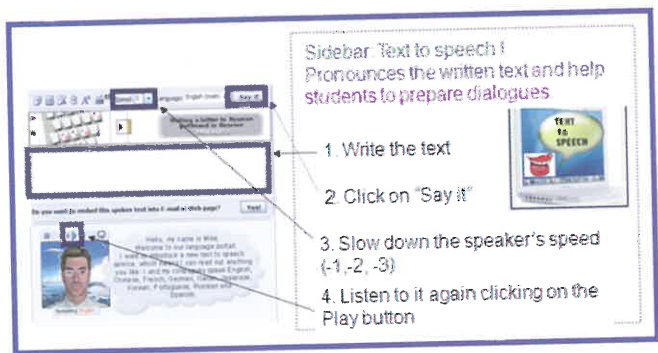


The children also start preparing *oral presentations*. They write a 40-word composition about a topic and they have to learn it by heart for the following week. In half-group classes, we listen to all the presentations and we vote for the best speech to appear in the English Blog. That way, every unit a new student can use his/her English to talk about the topics he/she is interested in.

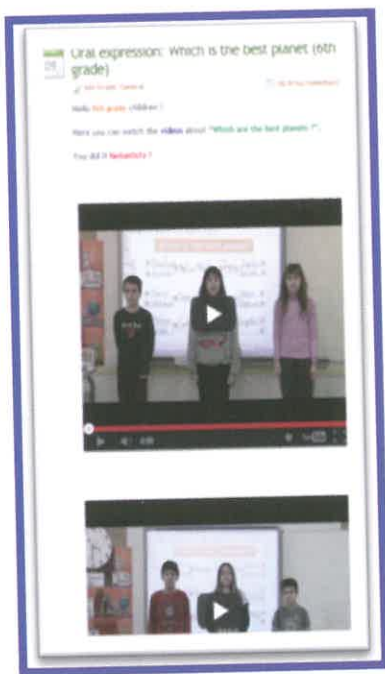
3rd Cycle of Primary



In 5th and 6th grade we prepare *oral expression* in two sessions. In the first class, we show videos of a communicative situation recorded by older students, brothers or sisters if possible, because children get a lot of enjoyment out of seeing their relatives performing the same dialogue recorded years earlier, and the current students always try to do it better than them. Then we display a written model, and they have to fill in the gaps with the information they like. After that, the teacher corrects the dialogues, and the students stand up and practise in pairs at the back of the class, preparing pronunciation and agreeing on the gestures that they are going to make the day of the recording.



Before the recording session, they can practise at home for a week. They use "Text to speech" to improve pronunciation; it's in the sidebar of the English Blog. They write the text and choose the speed of the speech. They can also watch the Best Videos from the last few years and get ideas for their performances.



The following week, the students can practise for 5 minutes at the beginning of the class, and we record the video of the communicative situation. Sometimes I give them a listening comprehension worksheet in which they have to write as much information as they can about their partners' recordings. That way, I can assess if they have been paying attention in class. After that, I upload all the videos to the English Blog because all the students like watching their performances and showing their parents their speeches.

Some examples:



- *Giving directions:* a dialogue between a tourist and a citizen. The tourist wants to get to a landmark, and the citizen helps him/her. They have to trace the route using the IWB and a Google Earth image of the landmark.



- *Weather forecast:* students invent the weather forecast of an English-speaking country (England, the USA, Australia, South Africa...). Pupils invent the name of the channel, and they can design the logo if they want. One of them is the TV presenter and the other student is the weather forecaster; he/she has to drag the symbols to the map.



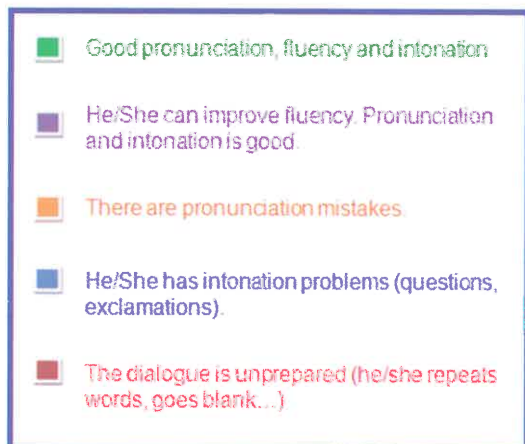
- *Which is the best planet:* each student receives some facts about a planet in our solar system. He/She has to prepare an oral presentation, pretending to be that planet. We want to choose the best planet! So, we draw the planets and place them in a tournament bracket. After each round, the rest of the class votes for the best performance, showing a red or a blue card. At the end, the three best oral presentations are given together.

Spring concert



Around the end of April, primary-school students perform an English song in our “*Spring Concert*”. We prepare songs in class for two weeks, and each cycle sings a different one. I upload the songs to the English Blog, and they can also practise at home with the Karaoke Version. The day before the concert, we have fun in class and students sing in groups using *Ultrastar*, a free programme that evaluates their singing.

Assessment



Every recording is assessed *using a colour code*, and the difficulty of the recording is also shown. The results are written in a grid including the number of mistakes in each cell. It’s a very useful method for seeing the progression of all the students during their primary education.

In 5th and 6th grade I send the students’ assessment report to their parents by e-mail with some suggestions for improving pronunciation or fluency.

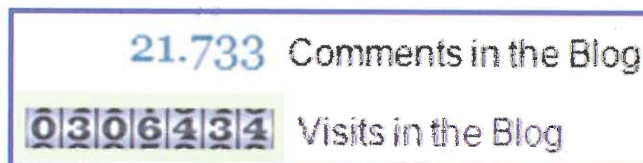
Final reward

At the end of primary education, each pupil *receives a DVD* with his/her oral productions. They have more than 100 recordings from 1st to 6th grade. That means that the

teacher has to classify the recordings, dragging them to the correct folder with the name of the student and then burning the DVDs. During the last English class, we compare and analyse their first and the last oral production in primary school, and they realise that they have really improved a lot.



Parents’ feedback



Our English Blog has been running for 5 years, and after more than 3,000 posts with online activities and more than 10,000 oral productions of the students, we have received over 300,000 visits, and families have been participating in the Blog by posting more than 21,000 comments. They really appreciate the teacher’s task, and they are happy because they can watch their children’s performances and help them prepare dictations, dialogues and oral presentations.

Conclusion

This methodology involves a lot of hours of work on part of the teacher, but the results worth the effort; our children’s oral skills in English at the end of primary education are very good, as are their results in the *Compètencies Bàsiques*.

To sum up, a lot of activities can be done to raise students’ motivation for speaking, and if we involve their families in the learning process, English becomes a language for sharing experiences in a different context or, in other words, a “bridge” that connects parents, teachers and pupils, who are all walking in the same direction, towards achieving a high degree of communicative competence in the children.

Making the Most of Our CLIL Lessons: How and Why?

By Judith Fusté and Carmen Santamaría

CLIL has proved to have a positive effect on our students and has shown to be a beneficial pedagogy as long as we take into account the crucial aspects that make it an effective approach to teaching English. In this paper, the benefits of implementing CLIL in our classrooms are discussed. In addition, activities, techniques and resources are presented for making the most of our CLIL lessons.

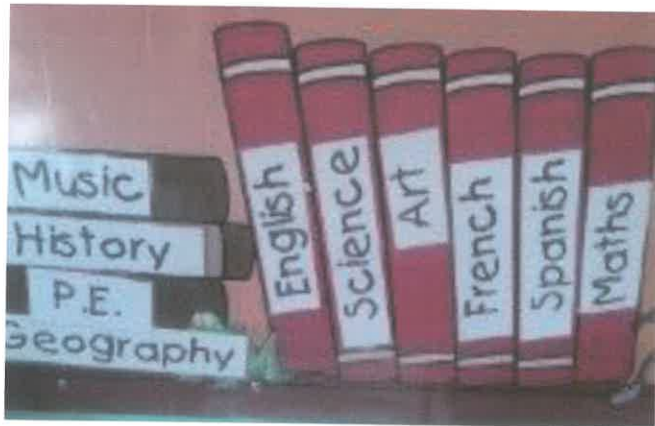
INTRODUCTION

The aim of the present paper is to provide our readers with a series of effective strategies and motivating and dynamic activities to engage their students in their CLIL lessons. From our personal experience, we aim to share the challenges we have met and outcomes we have achieved as

well as to give some theoretical background on what research has shown so far in relation to CLIL. As 21st-century English teachers, we have a common interest in CLIL that goes beyond the theoretical background, with an added, long, enriched, practical experience teaching Maths, Art and mostly Science through English in 5th and 6th grades of Primary Education.

Judith Fusté has eleven years' experience in EFL teaching to different ages and levels and is currently teaching English in the state school La Carpa. She holds a degree in English Teacher Training, a Bachelor's degree in English Philology, and a Master's degree in Applied Linguistics and Language Acquisition in Multilingual Contexts, all from Universitat de Barcelona (UB). She has published some articles in relation to how different EFL features are taught and acquired, which is her major interest.

Carmen Santamaría has eight years' experience teaching English, and for the last six years she has been working in the state school Diputació, carrying out a CLIL project in Science with excellent results in the English language competence of her students, who have won awards in several Catalan competitions. With a degree in English Teacher Training and another one in English Philology, she is very interested in language learning.



ESSENTIAL PREMISES WHEN TEACHING CLIL

1. Role and mastery of the teacher

As regards the essential premises when teaching CLIL, probably the role of the teacher is one of the most relevant to bear in mind. This means that we have to take into account two main aspects, proficiency in both language and content and motivation towards what we are doing.

“The mediocre teacher tells, the good teacher explains, the superior teacher demonstrates and the great teacher inspires”. - William Arthur Ward

Thus, first we will give an overall picture of what research on CLIL has shown so far and which aspects we consider to be essential premises in order to teach CLIL effectively. Secondly, we will recommend some interesting websites where readers can get materials to prepare CLIL lessons and where they can find interactive games. We will also give available references where they can read about theoretical and empirical research on the benefits of CLIL. Finally, readers will find five top activities we have prepared exclusively for them, taking into account all of the premises discussed. In conclusion, we will offer some available sources and resources to make the most of our lessons in order to encourage and inspire other teachers to apply this rich approach in their classrooms.

WHAT HAS RESEARCH SHOWN SO FAR?

So far, research on CLIL has proved that it is a significantly effective approach for teaching other subjects through English. For example, CLIL students outperform non-CLIL learners in all language skills and in the average English scores even when non-CLIL learners are a year older (Lasagabaster, 2008), a richer lexical knowledge (Sylvén, 2004, 2006; Jiménez Catalán & Ruiz de Zarobe, 2009; Ojeda Alba, 2009;). Besides, CLIL learners show a higher motivation towards the language and a superior self-perception of their improvement in English than non-CLIL learners (Hashim & Balakrishnan, 2006).

There are several reasons why CLIL is beneficial for our learners' communicative competence and overall proficiency. First, it offers language learners a larger quantity of input, as it tends to involve extra exposure to the target language (TL), and it has been proved that amount of exposure to the foreign language (FL) may be beneficial for FL competence (Brinton et al. 2003; Muñoz 2001). Second, it also signifies more quality of input, because through CLIL learners encounter meaningful and social situations for communication, through which language acquisition is more effective. Related to this second aspect, Navés (2002) suggests that CLIL respects the specificity of functional use and provides an environment where language acquisition and cognitive development go together naturally. However, CLIL is not a magic spell, and as Navés (2002, 2009, 2011) claims, in order to be effective, it must follow certain characteristics from which we have selected what we call *“Essential premises when teaching CLIL”*.

We think it is essential that a language teacher has a good mastery of the language he/she uses (i.e. English) to convey the information. This teacher has to believe that he/she is good at that. We as teachers have to think that we are an English teacher and not only a teacher of English. Although we are not British or American, we have to act as if we were, especially when we teach a CLIL subject, as the focus is placed normally on the content instead of the vehicular language. Thus, we should also have a mastery of and emphasize supra-segmental aspects of the language such as intonation, the stress on certain syllables, the way of expressing surprise, admiration, etc.

However, CLIL means both a focus on meaning and a focus on form, which means that while we are teaching content explicitly, learners are acquiring the vehicular language implicitly. For this reason CLIL lessons are a great opportunity for our pupils to learn specific content through English as a vehicular language, so they can enrich their vocabulary and encounter alternative ways to be exposed to the language. Consequently, while teaching CLIL, we also have to bear in mind that we must have a good knowledge of the content, which requires previous preparation, learning, time and devotion, aspects which we are conscious that sometimes are not possible because of lack of time. Thus, it can be hard; as Gail Godwin would say *“Good teaching is one-fourth preparation and three-fourths theater.”*

Last but not least, English teachers have to feel passion for the language and so convey it to their students, who see the teacher as a model. Pupils tend to imitate a language teacher more than another one because of the *“theatre”* implied. What is crucial here is the enthusiasm you show towards what you are doing. If you like it and you are really involved in it, you can easily make the others enjoy it with you. Therefore, having a positive attitude and conveying good vibrations can help a lot in our students' attitude towards the language and the activities carried out in class.

In fact, as we have already mentioned, research has shown that when CLIL is well implemented, CLIL students tend to have significantly higher motivation than non-CLIL learners. Unquestionably, the fact that we have a positive attitude towards the program and that our classroom management is dynamic are crucial aspects for such a high motivation on their part. However, learners' positive attitude towards English is also due to the fact that through CLIL they see a functionality for what they are being taught and become aware of their progress.

2. Planning and methodology

The second crucial premise to keep in mind would be related to planning and methodology. On the one hand, for a CLIL program to be effective, it is extremely important that it follows continuity over time. Thus, we should not see CLIL as an isolated subject to teach at a concrete moment, but as a well-established, stable program that offers our learners an opportunity to link prior and new knowledge. Unluckily, this is not always our choice.

“A salient characteristic of efficient CLIL is that they are long-lasting, carefully-designed programmes which provide massive exposure to the target language.”(Navés, 2009)

Closely linked to continuity, CLIL is more useful when there is inter-disciplinarity among subjects and one strengthens another. This characteristic is helpful for the development of the subjects especially if the same area is taught both in the learners' first language (i.e. *Medi* through Catalan) and their FL (*Science* through English). Moreover, in our case, the input received in these lessons is extended to the speaking sessions where the pupils have the opportunity to produce what they have learnt. Thus, they see a relationship among the three subjects. From research in SLA it is assumed that L1 proficiency has a direct effect on L2 proficiency and that knowledge through the L1 makes English input more comprehensible (Navés, 2002).

In Table 1, you can see the planning we prepared in order to work in parallel with the *Medi* subject. That is to say, if the teacher of *Medi* during the first term was working on food and the digestive system, in Science we tried to keep the same topic and deal with different activities such as nutrients, the food pyramid, food groups (i.e. lactics, pulses, meat), etc. Moreover, we wanted the science lessons from 3rd to 6th grade not to be too repetitive from one year to the other one, so we tried to tackle different topics and therefore the students got to know about diverse fields such as food, animals, the water cycle, the weather, states of matter, materials and properties, recycling, etc.

Table 1. Year Planning for Science

SCIENCE CM/CS				
1 st Term	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
BLOC I: People & Health	- body / bones / muscles	- senses: touch, smell, hearing, sight, taste	- digestive system / nutrition / food pyramid / healthy & unhealthy / diet	- digestive system / nutrition / food pyramid / nutrients / vegetables & fish / recipe
BLOC II: People, cultures & societies	----	UK, geography	- speaking English around the world (countries, cities)	- Oceans & continents / English-speaking countries / capitals / flags / languages
BLOC III: Changes & Continuity in the time	- life cycle / family tree	----	----	----
2 nd Term				
BLOC IV: The environment & its conservation	- landscapes / solar system	- the weather / orientation	- landscapes / climate	- solar system / volcanoes / landscapes / climate
BLOC V: Matter & Energy	- water cycle / states of matter (solid, liquid, gaseous)	- materials / states of matter / measuring temperatures	- states of matter / recycling / materials & properties / types of energy	- materials & properties / opaque, translucent & transparent / sinking or floating?
3 rd Term				
BLOC VI: Living beings	- animals (vertebrates/invertebrates, herbivores/carnivores/omnivores, viviparous/oviparous) / habitats	- plants / flowers / fruits	- plants / flowers	- plants / animals (different groups & characteristics) / food chain
BLOC VII: Environment, technology & society	- Recycling / Machines around us	- New technologies / mass media	- water cycle / states of matter	- machines / inventions

In conclusion, the fact that there is this inter-disciplinarity among subjects is beneficial for the learners because the students see continuity and that, of course, decreases their level of anxiety and they feel more comfortable with science. Furthermore, when they get to the *Science* class, their prior knowledge is already high, so, they are more prepared and that allows us to go a step beyond and be more demanding (increase the level). Surely this will also increase their metalinguistic awareness (i.e. the psychological process by which language learners become implicitly aware of the language patterns as well as of those similarities and dissimilarities between the different languages in their linguistic repertoire), which will enhance their communicative competence.

3. Methodology revision and recycling

Related to planning a methodology, there are two other aspects that, if they are borne in mind, make CLIL successful. The first one is the **periodical revision** of the materials we use, activities we carry out and the fact that we recycle ourselves. Thus, we change all those things that have not worked, we adapt to the new circumstances that we may encounter, and, of course, maintain all the aspects of the program that we see have been important.

We have called the second aspect **“variety of teaching strategies”**. What we mean with this is that, on the one hand, if we want to be demanding with our learners and go a step beyond their cognitive level, we have to scaffold the way we teach contents, present new input in a comprehensible and context-embedded way, monitor our students' progress and provide them with immediate feedback, so they feel more self-confident.

On the other hand, there's no strategy that works better than the other, but each student might find one that suits him/her better. Thus, we should give our pupils a wide range of tools that enable them to be more autonomous and independent in the learning process. Such strategies involve experimental learning, problem solving, reading techniques (skipping,

scanning, etc.). The knowledge of such strategies will make of our learners little “experts” and we can take advantage of this situation in order to promote collaborative teamwork in which everyone is necessary for the resolution of a task.

CHALLENGES AND DIFFICULTIES

It is worth noting that it is not always easy to carry out *Science*. In fact, it is challenging and it requires two main things. The first one is the approval of the headmaster as well as the support and effort of all the teachers involved in the project. The second one is time and devotion on the part of the teacher, especially if he/she has never taught the subject before. Here, Carmen remembers her beginnings in the CLIL world. She had just landed in a new school, and it was already one year into the program it had implemented. She received the schedule for the year, and all of a sudden she came across the brand new subject of *Science*. It was hard at the beginning to find resources, and a lot of material had to be prepared. Luckily enough, every day there are more materials available related to CLIL and we do not have to start from scratch.

A minor problem we can sometimes encounter when teaching CLIL is that the contents we are going to deal with in the science session are still new to our students. Most of the time, we expect them to have some previous knowledge of the topic because it has somehow been taught in *Medi*, but then we realize that it is not like that. This can lead to changing our planning and having to adapt our lesson in mid-session and readjust the activities.

Thus, implementing CLIL, as with any new program, is never easy and involves a series of challenges and difficulties, especially at the beginning. However, as the French proverb says, “*Patience can be bitter, but its fruit is sweet*”. In other words, once you are able to see the outcomes of your work in your learners’ command of the language and knowledge of the content it is absolutely worthwhile to have sweated throughout the process.

“The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.” - John Lubbock

OUTCOMES AND BENEFITS

As has already been pointed out, one of the reasons why CLIL is beneficial to our learners’ communicative competence and general language proficiency is because it provides a substantive basis and exposure to language learning and it provides pupils with a meaningful and significant social situation for communication. Thus, if we take advantage of the speaking sessions (if we have any) to offer them further opportunity to be exposed to the rich input of CLIL, we are promoting a greater exposure to English and giving them the chance to produce everything they have acquired such as a wide range of vocabulary and structures, use strategies they have learned in several contexts, etc. Besides, by giving them this opportunity to generate output, both we teachers and they can become aware of their speaking skills. As an image is

always a thousand times more explanatory than hundreds of words, we invite you to follow this link:

<https://plus.google.com/photos/102709021534414962657/albums/5846333959029091505>

In it you will be able to watch a *Speaking* session Carmen carried out at the school where she works. She asked students to choose an English-speaking city and present it in class after having dealt with the topic within the Geography unit in *Science*. Most of them were really motivated, as they were allowed to bring in *realia* and everything they needed for their presentation. They could work in pairs or individually. In order to do so, first she gave them some tips and strategies for giving a good presentation (i.e. no reading, voice projection, good pronunciation, use of short, simple sentences, and above all selecting the information they were going to convey, so everybody in class could understand it and not only the teacher). Furthermore, they had to keep in mind that the presentation was mainly for their classmates and not only for the teacher who was evaluating them.

CONCLUSION:

“There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots; the other, wings” - Hodding Carter

In conclusion, if CLIL is well implemented it has benefits which are not always visible in the short term. For example, once we watch the suggested videos, it seems obvious that CLIL enhances learners’ motivation and positive attitude towards the English language and their knowledge and curiosity about the content. Besides, it is positively striking to see how naturally and fluently they express themselves, which strengthens the idea that CLIL is a great opportunity for them to develop language and content together naturally. Thus, in spite of the challenges and difficulties that working in a CLIL program can have, at the end it is really rewarding to see how your students have improved throughout the year and how well they can communicate in the foreign language. What at the beginning was really hard for them, now comes very natural and their effort has decreased as they are used to the vehicular language in the class.

“If we succeed in giving the love of learning, the learning itself is sure to follow.” - John Lubbock

TOP FIVE ACTIVITIES

All the activities described below can be adapted to lower and upper levels as well as to other topics or areas. Depending on how demanding the activity is, it will be more effective at a specific stage of the unit (e.g. introduction / revision). As regards the topics for the activities described, they are all related to *Science*: materials and recycling, English-speaking countries and culture, food properties and healthy habits, and the animal kingdom. However, the

Comment → This activity is carried out after the students have orally presented the English-speaking city chosen. This is a way of observing if they have been paying attention to their mates' presentations and of doing a general review of their cultural knowledge.

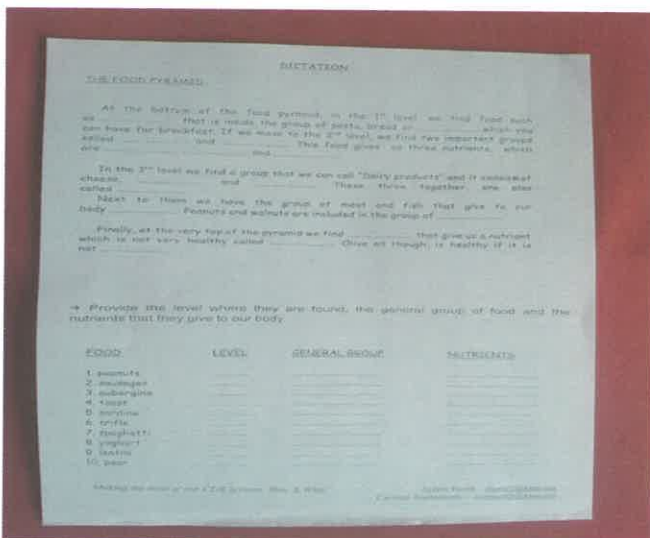


4. CRAZY ORDER & SPELLING DICTATION

Material → Worksheet with a gapped text.

Description → First the teacher reads the text aloud and the students fill in the gaps in the written version individually. What they do not know is that the teacher is saying the keywords out of order. Then a couple of students come to the blackboard and the rest spell the words, so they can write them down. Once the spelling is fine, they gather in groups and think about the position of the words and try to order them correctly so the text is coherent. Finally, some students read the correct version of the text.

When the content of the text is understood, they use its information to complete the following activity where they have to state the level, general group and nutrients of the assessed food.



5. FLIP OVER THE CARDS

Material → Word flashcards about the different animal classifications (carnivores / herbivores / omnivores; viviparous / oviparous; vertebrates / invertebrates) and a variety of animals.

Description → The teacher places the word cards on the blackboard but with the words hidden and she tells the students the topic: "Animal Classification". The pupils have to raise their hands and guess the words that are hidden on the backs of the cards. The pupil that guesses the word comes to the blackboard and flips over the card. When all the cards are visible, then it is time to classify the different animals on the flashcards. Every student has an animal flashcard and they have to say to what groups they belong to. (Ex. a tiger: vertebrate, carnivore and viviparous).

Comment → This activity is a kind of brainstorming for a new unit. In this case, students have previous knowledge about animals because they have already studied them in science in Catalan.

USEFUL WEBSITES

<http://www.ceip-diputacio.com/portada%20idioma.htm>



<http://www.ceip-diputacio.com/IDIOMA/Science/Science.htm>

<http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/science/science.htm>

<http://www.tlsbooks.com/scienceworksheets.htm>

<http://www.abcteach.com/directory/theme-units-6-2-1>

<http://www.onestopenglish.com/clil/young-learners/>

<http://eslkidsworld.com/>

<http://www.kidzone.ws/>

<http://indianchild.com/>

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Coyle, D., Hood, P., & Marsh, D. (Eds.) (2010). *CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dalton-Puffer, C. (2007). *Discourse in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Classrooms*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing.
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- Mahisto, P., Marsh, D., & Frigols, M. J. (Eds.) (2008). *Uncovering CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning in Bilingual and Multilingual Education*. (Macmillan Books for Teachers.). London: Macmillan Education, Limited.
- Ruiz de Zarobe, Y. & Jiménez Catalán, R. M. (Eds.) (2009). *Content and Language Integrated Learning. Evidence from Research in Europe*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
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Innovative Teaching Methods to Help Make the English Class More Entertaining

By Alejandro Román García, Diana Méndez Llamas
and Ana-María Díaz-Pavón Avilés

Teaching English today can be hard due to the current situation we are facing: a huge student-teacher ratio, books just focused on grammar, and a lack of speaking activities. All these factors may lead to a lack of motivation in both teachers and students.

This paper will present different practical techniques to make the English class more fun for everyone. We will start by presenting English Day, a project designed to bring culture from English-speaking countries into the students' lives. We will illustrate how we carried it out, the different workshops and resources we used and how they were developed.

Finally, we will share other useful activities which were carried out successfully at the school, such as the Spelling Contest, Theater Activities and the English Corner.



Alejandro Román García graduated in "Translation and Interpreting of English" in 2001. He also obtained the Certificate of Proficiency in English from both the University of Cambridge (June 2001) and the University of Michigan (November 2001). In 2004, he did a postgraduate course on "Usos de les TIC en l'ensenyament de llengües" offered by the UB. From 2005 to 2009, he undertook the study of English philology at the UB. He has been working as a teacher for the last ten years. The first two years, he worked in different EOI's. In 2005, he took and passed the civil servant exam and for the last three years he has been working as a director of studies at INS Roger de Flor, which is his current school.



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Ana María Díaz-Pavón Avilés graduated in "Translation and Interpreting of English" from the University of Alicante in 2005, and during her last academic year she also obtained a title as a "Sworn Translator of English". After finishing her degree, she started an M.A. in "English for Specific Purposes" at the University of Alicante, focused on the teaching, learning and use of English for academic and occupational purposes. This M.A. was a two-year program and included a five-month internship at the University of Fachhochschule in Salzburg. There, she also had the opportunity to work in the Languages Department, organizing events and supporting and guiding Erasmus students. She finished this M.A. in 2008, and for two years she worked professionally as a translator in a patent and trademark office in Alicante. Following that, she worked as a teacher at INS Roger de Flor for two years. There, she collaborated in different projects, including a PELE. In that short time, she also had the chance to be the Head of the Foreign Languages Department, and both years she was also a tutor, which was definitely an enriching experience. Currently, she is working at INS Joan Brossa.

Introduction

Given the current difficult teaching situation, teachers have to cope with some difficulties. Firstly, some grammar books are neither thought-provoking nor challenging enough for students. Cultural issues are sometimes left aside and too much importance is attached to linguistics. Therefore, students' speaking skills are not fully developed, which makes oral activities difficult to carry out. All these inconveniences discourage students, who feel they are not making headway in the target language.

This paper focus on different innovative teaching methods to counteract the above-mentioned drawbacks. To start with, we will present English Day, which is a project designed to bring the English culture into students' lives. We will also devote some part of this essay to other successful teaching activities, such as the Spelling Contest, Theater Activities and the English Corner.

1. English Day at INS Roger de Flor

In this section we will illustrate the English Day project carried out at INS Roger de Flor in Trinitat Nova. The first English Day at INS Roger de Flor took place on May 16th, 2012. It is important to remark that there are not any local students at the school, and they all come from a very poor social and economic background. In fact, only half of the students had ever been to the cinema and only two of them had ever been to the theater. That encouraged us to organize different cultural activities, all carried out in English, since otherwise they wouldn't have had the means to take part in them.



English Day basically consisted of carrying out six different workshops, all conducted in English, so that all of the students were totally immersed in the English language for a whole day. Hence, the motto of the day was "English is the lingua franca to be used and spoken at school".

2. Before English Day

Timing was the first issue to be taken into consideration. We wanted English Day to take place in May, so we started working before Christmas, that is to say, six months beforehand.

Then, we worked on the schedule. Last year we had five different groups in the school. One group of first, second and third of ESO, respectively, and two groups of fourth of ESO.

Considering the number of groups we had, we thought that it would be perfect to prepare five different workshops for the day. Thus, we had to stop classes for the day and reschedule the whole timetable. The purpose was for all the different groups to participate in all of the different workshops. That was a hard thing to accomplish, since after placing the students we had to distribute the teachers, so that all of them could monitor and help the students in all the different workshops.



The next step was to present the project before the board of teachers. All of them agreed that it was an excellent idea, but at the same time, some of them were a bit reluctant because their English was not so proficient. We managed to encourage those teachers to help in a different way; assisting with decorations, the sound system, videos, etc. In contrast, those teachers that felt more comfortable with their English agreed to participate more actively in the workshops.



Finally, we wanted to get the students engaged with the project. However, we did not want to unveil the content of the workshops, since our goal was to surprise them. Hence, we just presented the activities as something fun and that had never been done. We also requested their collaboration, as we were preparing English Day for them and it did not make any sense without their help. Therefore, we assigned different tasks to all of the different groups.

The students in first of ESO were given the task of setting up a bar that would be open during the school's break times throughout English Day. The bar would only sell American or English home-made products, such as apple crumble, scones, doughnuts, brownies, strawberry cheesecake, etc. Apart from that, the students had to prepare different posters

with useful information, for example “How much is the apple crumble?” or “Whose turn is it?” Students had much work ahead them, searching for recipes on the Internet, organizing themselves, preparing the posters, and so on.

Second of ESO students were given the task of preparing a game of clues that would be very useful for a “Guess Who” workshop that we intended to do. To design this game of clues they were asked to work in teams and learn how to describe accurately.



Third of ESO students were in charge of preparing different PowerPoint presentations about the United States. They were expected to cover some cultural aspects, such as geography, cinema, literature, food, etc. When they finished their projects, they were given the task of presenting them in front of the class. Once all this was done, we used all the PowerPoint print-outs to decorate the school’s walls.



Finally, the two groups of fourth of ESO were assigned two different tasks. One of the groups prepared PowerPoint presentations about England, as the third of ESO students had previously done. In the other group the students made two wonderful contributions specifically for that day, which were a beautifully detailed British telephone booth and a painting portraying some of the best-known landmarks of London, such as Big Ben, the London Tower Bridge, St. Paul’s Cathedral and the Beefeaters.

We must also highlight that most of the students contributed to the school’s decorations as much as they could. For instance, they either drew or printed out some English-speaking countries’ flags.



3. Workshops

On our first English Day, we organized five different English workshops in which the students had to participate very actively.



3.1. Workshop 1: “Guess Who”

This workshop took place in the school’s library, and its purpose was for students to guess the name of one of the teachers in the high school.



Beforehand, students had to prepare some clues concerning the teachers they were describing. Those ranged from very general ideas (“He is a middle-aged man. He is in his thirties. He has got brown eyes and straight hair.”) to more specific clues (“He is the biology teacher”).



To carry out this workshop, we asked the teachers to turn in some pictures of themselves from their childhood.

Then, we assembled them and posted them on a billboard that we displayed at the school library.

The final outcome was rather shocking, since some of the pictures were quite funny for the students, because they portrayed the teachers when they were very young. There was also a teacher in charge of helping a student read out the written clues in front of his or her classmates. As soon as any of them had an idea of the possible answer, they were encouraged to raise their hand and say it aloud. Then, the student had to stand up, point and try to guess who the teacher was on the billboard.

3.2. Workshop 2: Traditional School Games

In the school playground we organized a workshop with six different English games such as “Bobbing for Apples”, “Pin the Tail on the Donkey”, “Sack Racing”, “Doughnut on a String”, “Three-Legged Racing”, and “Get the Handkerchief”.

3.2.1. Bobbing for Apples

This was an individual competition where students had to kneel down in front of a bucket full of water. We placed an apple inside each of the buckets so the purpose was for them to try and grab the apple by only using their mouths, which was really difficult because of the water.



3.2.2. Pin the Tail on the Donkey



This game was played in pairs. Some posters portraying a donkey were placed on the walls. However, the donkey's tail was missing from them. One of the two students had the tail in his mouth and was blindfolded. The other one spun him around several times and then gave him instructions (“one step forward” or “one step to the left”). The purpose was to be the first couple to pin the tail on the donkey accurately.

3.2.3. Doughnut on a String

This was an individual game. It consisted of different strings which were dangling from the porch ceiling. At the very end of each string, there was a doughnut tied to it. The competition was based on being the first to eat it without using hands. Again, this was rather hard since the strings were moving all the time.

3.2.4. Sack Racing

This was an individual competition where students had to show how fast they were in a race. Still, this was not a common race since each of the students was inside a sack, which made running rather complicated. The winner was the one to get to the finish line first.

3.2.5. Three-Legged Racing

This game was played in pairs. Each pair had to show how synchronized they were. The difficulty was that each pair was like a single person because their left and right ankles were tied together. Again, they had to try and be the first pair to make it to the finish line.

3.2.6. Get the Handkerchief

Here all of the students were divided into two teams. Each of them was given a number. There was also a referee that was situated at an equal distance from both teams with a handkerchief in his hand. The game started when the referee

shouted out a number. Then, the students with that number had to run and try to be the first to grab the handkerchief and return to their team as fast as they could without being caught.



3.3. Workshop 3: Telling Horror Stories

This workshop was conducted in a regular classroom. All the students were seated in a circle and the teacher was placed right in the middle. The lights were switched off, and a dimly lit candle provided a very intriguing atmosphere. The teacher in the middle whispered and performed two horror stories (“The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Dracula”). At the same time, there was another teacher at the computer showing some slides to match the telling of the stories.

3.4. Workshop 4: English Education System



This was a more theoretical workshop, where students could learn more about the English education system. Some different points were dealt with, such as the different types of schools in England, the grading system and holidays. A comparison was also established between the English and the Catalan educational system. Students felt free to interrupt the teacher whenever a question arose, and they also reached their own conclusions.

3.5. Workshop 5: Country Dancing Lesson

The purpose was for students to learn and enjoy a country dance. With this workshop, we wanted our students to get familiar with another important part of American culture. The monitor conducting this workshop came to the school wearing a traditional outfit, such as a cowboy hat and belt, a fringed jacket, and a pair of cowboy boots. She gave instructions in English such as “Move your feet to the left” and “Put your arms on your hips”.

4. Strengths and Weaknesses

We will conclude our presentation of English Day with a view of the main strengths and weaknesses. Regarding the weaknesses, the first big difficulty was to encourage everybody to speak English. This was especially difficult with some of the teachers, who were sometimes more afraid of making mistakes in public than the students were. Another drawback was matching the teachers’ work schedules and the classes available. Finally, some last-minute inconveniences came to light and should be borne in mind. For instance, written instructions in English should be given to teachers much more in advance to prevent unexpected things from happening.

In spite of all these petty problems, English Day was a success. Students made a considerable effort to speak the target language and get familiar with the target culture.

5. Other Worthwhile Techniques

5.1. The Spelling Contest

Spelling bees are an important part of the American culture and we intended to bring this into the school. To implement this project, we took these factors into consideration: the age of the spellers and the level of the competition. We put the rules in writing and explained them thoroughly to the students beforehand. The contest took place in the school library, where we placed a desk for the judges. The tribunal consisted of a native speaker, who was in charge of reading out the words, and two English teachers, responsible for deciding whether the answers provided were right or not. It is also important to mention that the students were given a booklet with all the possible words to be spelled out, so they had the chance to practice them at home, since difficult words were included, for example homophones.

5.1.1. Basic Rules for the Contest

1. The pronouncer announces the word to be spelled and speaks clearly and slowly.
2. The speller listens carefully to the pronouncer and asks for the word to be repeated if necessary. The speller can also ask for a definition or an example in which the word is used.
3. When the speller understands the word, he pronounces it, spells it and then says the word again.
4. The judges determine if the word was spelled correctly.
5. If the correct spelling was given, the speller remains in the contest and makes it to the next round.

The aim of this activity is for the students to learn an important cultural issue and improve their linguistic skills. The winner was awarded an electronic translator.

5.2. Theater activities

In general, one of the main difficulties encountered in English classes is that students lack speaking skills and most of them are reluctant to speak in front of the class. However, as teachers, we observed that when we went to see different theater plays in English and the actors asked for volunteers, many of them were willing to take to the stage and perform in English. So, we decided to implement some theater activities in the classroom in the following way:

1. The students are divided into groups of five or six people.
2. Each group has to think of a topic and write a story.
3. The drafts are then delivered and corrected.
4. Pronunciation and some acting skills are practiced.
5. The groups perform in front of the class and each group provides the others with some useful advice.

The students performed so well and were so immersed in the activity that we decided to let them act at the school's Christmas party.

5.3. The English Corner

This activity took place each Thursday on the playground at the school's break time. The purpose was for the students to gain some oral practice on some trendy topics. The teacher brought some interesting pictures and showed them to the students. For example, American high school stereotypes, such as a photograph of a nerd, a cheerleader, a jock, a group of Goths or preps. The students were already familiar with this vocabulary because they had previously attended a lecture on it. Students had to start a discussion and think about different cultural or social issues.

6. Conclusion

We have to thank all of the teachers in the school for all the efforts they made in helping us organize the different events. We should also mention the great devotion shown by the teachers, since they had to put in lots of overtime so as to make these events possible. A very special "thanks" should also be given to the students, for all their willingness and involvement in all the different activities.

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Having Fun While Learning: English Day at INS Viladecavalls

By Alejandro Román García, Diana Méndez Llamas
and Ana María Díaz-Pavón Avilés

The English Day at INS Viladecavalls was a project that came about as a way to motivate both students and teachers to learn more English. The motto of the day was to use English as a “lingua franca” and to bring culture to life. Different workshops were carried out during the day, such as “Oliver Twist”, “Prick Up Your Ears”, “Making and Tasting a Plumcake”, “Posters and Presentations”, “Jack the Magician”, “Scottish Dances”, etc., all conducted in English. Students were able to develop all of the different language skills and had fun at the same time. In this article, we will illustrate how we carried it out, the different techniques and resources we used and how they were developed.

Introduction

Teaching English today can be hard due to the difficult teaching situation we face. Students are not motivated enough, and books are too grammar orientated. These factors lead to students' speaking skills not being fully developed. Culture is

also left aside, and classes tend to be boring because of that. This paper aims at providing teachers with a very successful experience we have had that counteracts the above-mentioned drawbacks.

1. English Day at INS Viladecavalls



This article will portray the English Day project which took place in January 2012 at INS Viladecavalls in Vallès Occidental. The school is located in the small town of Viladecavalls, but the high school is large, since it has students from nearby towns. There are five classes at each level, and English Day was carried out in 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th year of ESO and 1st of Batxillerat.

Viladecavalls' students come from middle-class families, so some of them have studied English in private English schools. They have got quite a good command of English, and they are used to speaking English in class. Therefore, the aim of English Day was not only to keep their motivation up but also to get them involved in the teaching-learning process and improve their language skills and knowledge of the English culture.

English Day basically consisted of carrying out some different workshops, all of which were conducted in English, hence the motto of the day: "English is the lingua franca to be used and spoken at school". In this article we will mention some of the most representative ones.

2. Before English Day

Students had to do a lot of previous work before English Day. That was in fact the way to encourage them and get them involved in English Day and, most importantly, in everyday classes. Teachers from other departments also collaborated with us. We started planning everything in September, and English Day took place in January.

First, we met in the English department to decide and organize the workshops we were going to do. We also got in contact with the native speakers who would be coming to our school. One of the English teachers even created a blog before the day so that both students and teachers could watch the videos and do all the activities related to the workshops that we were going to do. This blog was divided into the different levels that participated in English Day. For example, in the 1st of Batxillerat section there is a Scottish shortcake recipe and a video. In other sections we can also find vocabulary activities, literary videos, quizzes, etc.

1er	A	B	C	D	E
1	M14	M18	M16	M15	M17
	XERRADA OLIVER TWIST	VÍDEO ENGLAND	DOSSIER +POSTER	DOSSIER +POSTER	DOSSIER +POSTER
2	M18	M14	M16	M15	M17
	VÍDEO ENGLAND	XERRADA Oliver Twist	PÒSTERS + PRESENTATION	PÒSTERS + PRESENTATION	PÒSTERS + PRESENTATION
3	M16	M15	M-14	M17	M18
	DOSSIER +PÒSTERS	DOSSIER +POSTER	XERRADA OLIVER TWIST	Plumcake/Video	ENGLISH VIDEO
4	PATI	PATI	PATI	PATI	PATI
	M16	M15	M18	M14	M17
5	PÒSTERS+ PRESENTATION	PÒSTERS + PRESENTATION	ENGLISH VÍDEO	OLIVER TWIST	PLUMCAKE/VÍDEO
	M16	M15	M17	M18	M14
	PLUMCAKES / VÍDEOS	PLUMCAKE/VIDEO	PLUMCAKE/VÍDEO	ENGLISH VÍDEO	OLIVER TWIST

Secondly, we held a meeting with all the high school staff to instruct them on English Day and gave them written instructions as to what they had to do in each workshop. By way of example, we are attaching the timetable of 1st year of ESO which was given to the teachers.

3. Workshops

Four workshops were carried out in 1st year of ESO. We will focus on them.

3.1. Workshop 1: “Oliver Twist”

The aim of this workshop was to get students interested in English literature and history. We devoted two sessions to dealing with Victorian times, and we provided them with some useful vocabulary that they would need for English Day.

We had a native teacher and drama teacher carry out this Oliver Twist workshop. The session was split into two parts. In the first part a PowerPoint was shown about English cultural topics, the *Oliver Twist* book and a film version of it. In the second part students watched a short scene from *Oliver Twist* and then they had to sit in groups, read the script of the scene, rehearse and perform it in front of their classmates. Some students had time to finish it all, and they also did some other drama activities.

3.2. Workshop 2: “Prick up your Ears”

This was a more theoretical workshop, where students had to watch videos about English food, sports, family, monarchy, etc., and then do written activities in pairs related to the videos. The videos were in English and also had English subtitles. We tried to have an English teacher in this workshop or a teacher whose English was good to help students with the activities. After correcting the activities, we talked about the videos, so students had the opportunity to speak in English.

3.3. Workshop 3: “Making and Tasting a Plumcake”

One of the most successful workshops was making and tasting a plumcake. The aim of this workshop was for students to learn how to work in groups outside high school and give presentations in English. Students had to do a lot of work before English Day in class and at home. In class they used computers to search for videos with plumcake recipes and wrote down the vocabulary they needed to make their own recipe videos. At home they had to rehearse their English presentation and film themselves making the plumcake. Most of them edited the video and included music, the ingredients and outtakes. During English Day, all the videos were shown in class, and students had the opportunity to taste their classmates' plumcakes and vote for the best ones. The bakers of the best plumcakes won some candies. Students had some cards to use for voting for the best plumcake.

3.4. Workshop 4: “Posters and Presentations”

In this workshop students had to sit in groups of four and were in charge of searching for information about a topic related to England. After that, they had to make a poster with

the photographs and the information collected. Once the poster was finished, they had to prepare the presentation, rehearse and then present the outcome in front of their classmates. The other students had to listen to their classmates' presentations and fill in a chart with the most relevant information.

These presentations were assessed by the teacher in charge of the workshop. The aim of this workshop was to teach students how to work in groups, so it is important to mention that different roles were assigned to each member of the group: speakers, secretaries, coordinators, etc. This was a way for them to work together and help each other.

3.5. Other Workshops Worth Mentioning

Some other workshops were carried out at other levels at the school. For example, we had a workshop entitled “Jack the Magician”, who played card tricks on the students in English, and a teacher from Scotland that taught students how to dance and sing Scottish music. This teacher came to the school wearing the typical Scottish outfit and he also brought a bagpipe that he used while teaching the students how to dance. Furthermore, we had other native speakers from Australia, America, Ireland, etc., who came to the school to talk about their countries and their cultural roots.

4. Strengths and Weaknesses

We will conclude our presentation of English Day with a view of the main strengths and weaknesses of it. Regarding the weaknesses, the first big difficulty was to organize the teachers and have a teacher who could speak English well in each workshop. Also, we did not ask the students to bring the plumcake video before English Day to check if it was in the right format, so on English Day teachers had to spend some time making the videos work. Thus, there was not much time left to taste and vote for the best cake. In addition, in regard to the “Posters and Presentations” workshop, even though the students had two hours to make their posters and give their presentations, some classes did not have time to finish. So if we do this workshop next year, we will ask students to search for the information they need beforehand.

Despite these petty inconveniences, English Day was a big success as a whole. The students were given an assessment sheet, and they all said that they had had a terrific time.

5. Conclusion

We strongly believe that organizing and carrying out these special activities is vital for the students. We need to change the conception that learning English can be boring and only focused on tedious grammar activities. Coming up with refreshing new projects maintains students' motivation and positive attitude towards the target language.

Finally, we would also like to give a very special thank you to all the involvement shown by all the teachers in the school, who were always willing to collaborate very actively, despite the difficult teaching situation we face today.

Last but not least, we would not like to leave out mentioning our students, who make all our work and effort possible and worthwhile.



Learn English Teens

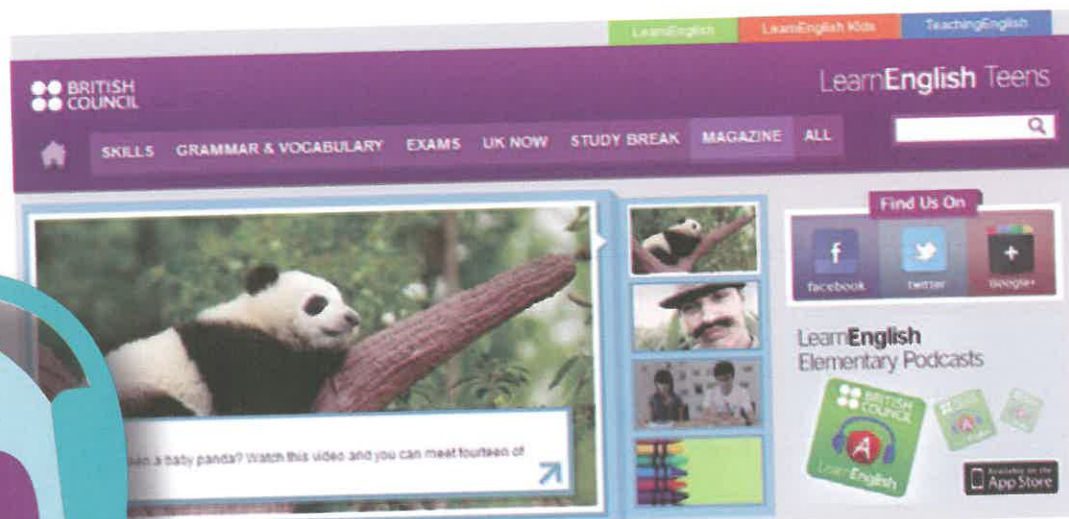
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The British Council's LearnEnglish Teens website is designed especially for 13–17-year-olds



The website helps teenagers improve their level of English with school-style language practice, tips for exams, and grammar and vocabulary exercises. At the same time, there are lots of fun activities and games including a video zone, a magazine and puzzles.



Learn English Teens



Becoming Little Scientists: A Case Study of Technologically- Enhanced Project-Based Language Learning

By Melinda Dooly, Maria Mont and Dolors Masats

This article explains a ten-week language project that made use of videoconferencing and 'machinima' (short video-clips featuring Virtual World avatars) to introduce young language learners (7 to 8 years old) to concepts of good and bad habits related to personal hygiene, physical activities, and eating. Within the project-based language learning approach (PBL), the students gained new information about the topic under study, and this information was then used to communicate (in the target language of English) in order to resolve related problems with their peers. Their peers included both local classmates and Austrian partners, whom they were 'tele'-collaborating with.

Melinda Dooly is a teacher educator in the Education Faculty of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain). She teaches English as a Foreign Language Methodology (TEFL) and research methods courses, focusing on telecollaboration in education. Dr. Dooly is a member of GREIP (Research Group on Plurilingual Interaction and Teaching) and is actively involved in various national and international research projects. Her research addresses teacher preparation and the use of Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL) and Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). Dr. Dooly's current research interest is in project-based telecollaborative language learning and very young learners.

Maria Mont is an English teacher and a translator and interpreter. After studying English language courses in the UK, Australia and Canada, she has worked as an English teacher since 2005 in both state and private schools. She currently teaches primary and very young learners at Escola Sant Jordi in Mollet del Vallès, where she implements Artigal's method and experiments with the use of ICT in the foreign language class. She has co-ordinated and been actively involved in two government-funded projects at her school. She takes part in pre-service teacher education by mentoring local and Erasmus student-teachers and is also actively involved in in-service teacher training programs and in the development of joint ICT-mediated language innovation projects. At the moment she is also the director of Xperienceit, idiomes al estranger which organizes English immersion programs for both adults and teens in the USA.

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Introduction

As part of the wider research project entitled *Plurilingual, audiovisual and digital competences as means to construct knowledge in multilingual and multicultural communities of practice* (EDU2010-17859), financed by the Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation, the project entitled '**Healthy Habits**' was telecollaborative for both the student participants and the researchers and teachers involved. Using computer-mediated communication (CMC) the primary education teachers and materials developers planned, designed and made necessary adjustments to the project during the entire period of implementation. And during the implementation, the students from both classes engaged in CMC to use the target language (English) for shared learning about healthy habits related to everyday activities such as eating, keeping clean, being active and avoiding vices.

As the use of computer-mediated communication (CMC) has emerged as a salient means of promoting language learning, telecollaboration in education has been on the rise; subsequently, several definitions of telecollaboration have been proposed. According to Helm, Guth and O'Dowd (2012), telecollaboration, also known as Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE), involves using online communication tools to engage classes of foreign language (FL) learners in online communication and collaboration with partner classes in distant locations. Dooly (2008) argues that in the educational arena, the focus should be on 'collaboration' at a distance (the prefix *tele-* signifies *distance*). In the last fifteen years, there has been a growing interest in research and practice of telecollaborative practices in language teaching and learning, especially as teachers and learners become more familiar with what Thorne (2012) calls "conventional Internet-mediated tools" (p. 19).

However, proponents of telecollaboration in language learning do not point to more facile means of communication between distanced learners as the only reason for integrating this approach into the learning process. Adherents of this approach underline the role of computer-mediated communication in shared knowledge construction, based on collaborative student interaction (Lamy & Hampel, 2007; Müller-Hartmann & Schocker-v. Ditfurth, 2008). Key to successful implementation of network-based shared knowledge construction is careful planning of the entire sequence.

[A] communicative-based environment does not guarantee that learning takes place. The task design and its implementation are key elements for

efficient language learning to develop –a carefully designed task or activity that requires online co-construction of knowledge not only provides opportunities for target language practice, it also helps integrate language use as the means of the shared knowledge-building, thus further enhancing purposeful communication. (Dooly, 2011: 69)

This was the underlying rationale for the close collaboration, facilitated through "conventional Internet-mediated tools" (Thorne, 2012: 19), between partner teachers, based in Catalonia and Austria- and partner researchers, based in Catalonia and the USA. In short, teachers and researchers 'walked the walk' before requiring the students to participate in telecollaborative events of their own. Concretely, the participants involved in '**Healthy Habits**' were two EFL primary education teachers: Manuela Ebner (Austria) and Maria Mont (Spain); teacher educators and researchers Melinda Dooly, Dolores Masats (Spain) and Randall Sadler (USA). The materials were developed by Melinda Dooly and Randall Sadler, in close consultation with the EFL teachers and with some collaboration from student-teachers enrolled in Dooly and Sadler's university classes at the time.

Project Design

'**Healthy Habits**' was designed from the perspective that language practice and knowledge acquisition are part of the same process, thus the project endeavoured to create learning opportunities that allowed the students to become immersed in the use of the target language while learning to work in groups (face-to-face collaboration and online collaboration). The students also came to relate topics across subjects and to reflect on the relevance of the learnt concepts since, apart from direct subject knowledge (good habits, bad habits, specific lexicon), students were required to reflect on 'cause and effect' of the daily actions that were the focus of the project (e.g. brushing teeth, eating too many sweets, sleeping enough, etc.). Additionally, all participants (students, teachers and researchers) gained increased awareness of the importance of opening up the learning process in order to include others outside of the classroom. And of course, as is the basis of all communicatively based approaches to language learning, students could practice and improve their English for a real purpose.

It should also be noted that the students were also carrying out transdisciplinary activities in other subjects that corresponded with the knowledge being acquired in this project. For instance, students worked

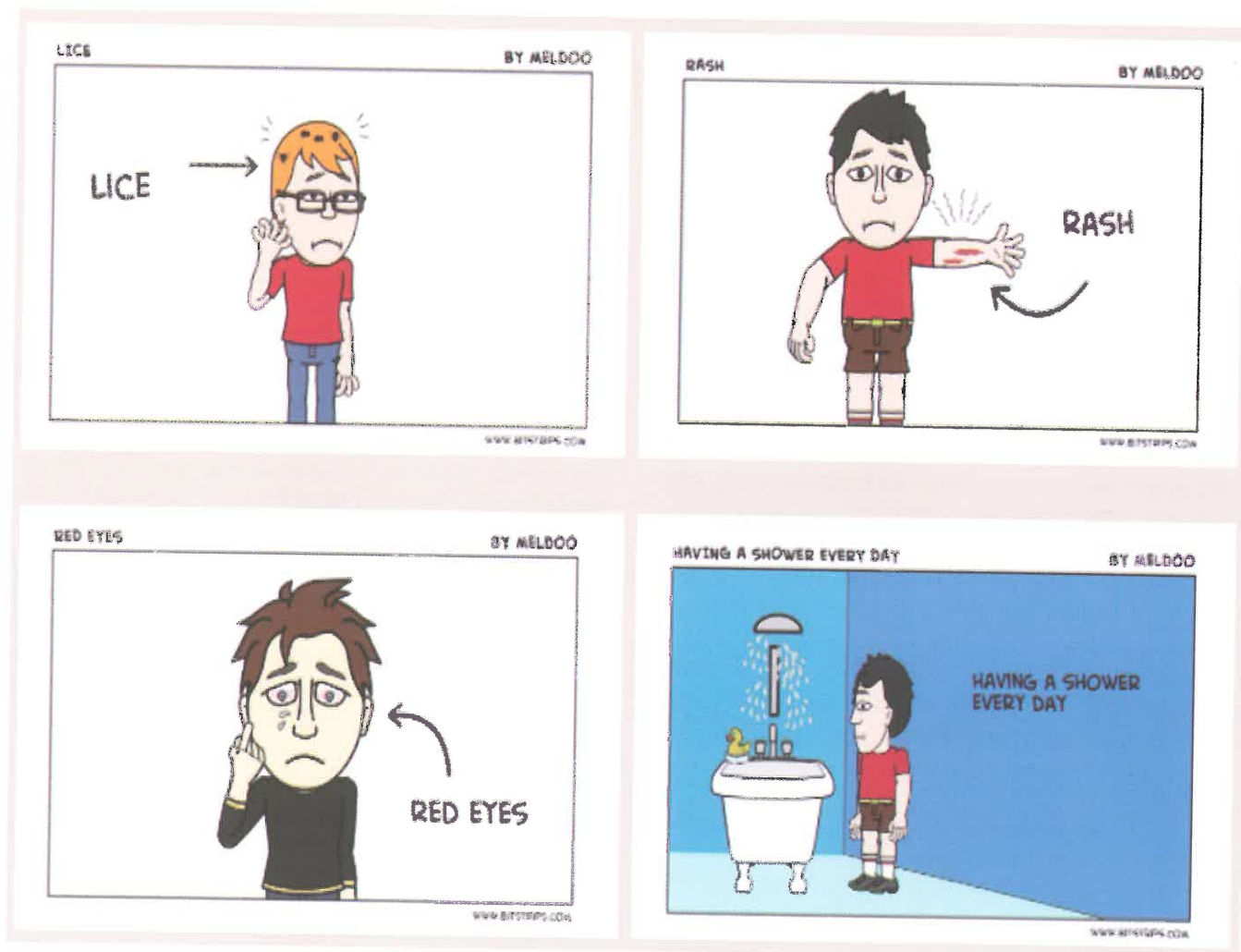
on healthy food in Catalan and Spanish language courses (thus acquiring lexicon in three languages simultaneously) and the in-school collaboration culminated in a field trip to the local market to buy fruit for a 'healthy snack-time'.

In order to introduce the students to the main ideas of the project, different strategies and materials were combined into the ten-week project. Through weekly (and at times, daily) online meetings between the EFL teachers and the materials developers, activities were conceived, discussed, and designed (note that the initial planning of the overall project began several months before first implementation, these meetings were generally for 'fine-tuning'). In-class teaching strategies included role-playing and dialogic use of common resources such as flashcards, posters, and worksheets. For instance, in order to introduce specific vocabulary that would be needed to discuss healthy and unhealthy habits, special flashcards were made that could be used throughout the project. These were 'handmade' because of the very specific nature of the required lexicon ('lice', 'bad teeth' and 'spots' are not usually high on publishing houses' lists of 'need to know' words).

Through iterative use of the materials, the students had continued exposure to the target content (both linguistic and conceptual). For example, the flashcards had a recurrent role in the on-going activities – students used them to create posters, play games, and exchange information in videoconferences with their online partners. The images used in the flashcards also served as visual aids to facilitate students' comprehension of oral texts, as in the case studies (explained in more detail further on).

The use of technological resources was also backbone to the project. Students were introduced to the general concepts of what they would be doing during the ten weeks through an initial 'meeting' with two 'avatar scientists' (characters created for this context in the virtual world, Second Life). The 'avatar scientists' explained that they "studied boys' and girls' habits" and asked both classes (in Catalonia and Austria) if they would be willing to help, thereby emotionally engaging the students in the project and building up anticipation and motivation for learning. These avatars, along with other specially created personalities, were used to create *machinima* – short video clips filmed in a virtual world

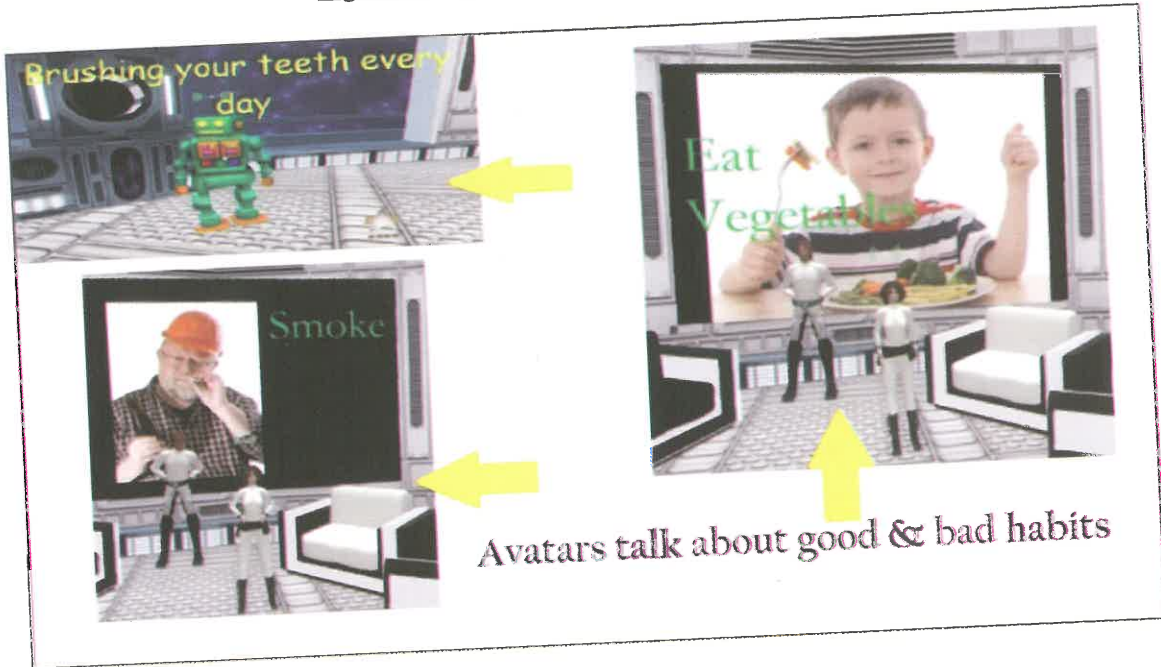
Fig. 1. Examples of Flashcards



(in this case, Second Life) – which were then used for interactive listening activities that focused the students’ attention on categorizing habits (e.g. smoking is *not* a healthy habit) and recognizing types of habits (good and bad) and the symptoms (problems) related to certain bad habits and (good consequences) of healthy habits.

students to engage with their online mates in authentic communication – whether introducing themselves or co-constructing knowledge through shared information about the target content between the two classes. The design of the project ensured that there was a real purpose for the students to use the target language

Fig. 2. Images taken from *machinima* clips



Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) was another technology that was integrated into the learning process and which was especially important for promoting oral production by the students. In this case, free Skype software was employed for videoconferencing – allowing the teachers to create periodic events that obliged

(communicating real ideas) and also reinforced the use of English as a means of authentic communication with others who do not share the same language. The students soon came to realize that they had to use English, as it was the only way to converse with their online peers.

Fig. 3. Image from the first videoconference



Project Implementation

The project was carried out during ten weeks in the 2011-2012 academic year. In a nutshell, students were asked to become 'little scientists' in order to help out Dr. Albert and Dr. Stella (the avatar scientists) in their observations of three case studies (other 'teen' avatars created for the project). In order to do so, the crucial information that they would need to understand was introduced gradually through the aforementioned flashcard images, along with worksheets to provide a framework for required language structures. A general outline of the activities is as follows (it should be noted, however, that some activities overlapped and/or were repeated).

Students were first introduced to the project through a short '*machinima*'. In this first clip, the two scientist avatars (Dr. Stella and Dr. Albert) purposefully greeted the participating teachers by name, in order to engage the students on a personal level and to personalize the learning context. In this same clip, the two avatars explained: who they were (their names), what they were (scientists who study good and bad habits) and what they did in order to study these habits (observation of boys' and girls' different habits, both healthy and unhealthy).

The scientist avatars then told the students that they needed assistance and asked the students in the two schools if they would be willing to help (videotapes of the students' reactions show a resoundingly enthusiastic affirmation). The scientist avatars went on to outline the type of help they would need; basically the students were to help in 'collecting data' through case study observation.

At the same time, the collaborative element of the project was brought into play by introducing the two classes. This was done both asynchronously through individually produced online, voice-animated presentations (the online platform Voicethread was used) along with photo 'ID cards' with text descriptions; and synchronously through a whole-class videoconference. The impetus for oral production of the target language was reinforced by the need to think of 'unique' features about themselves to be included in the Voicethreads (no matter how short the oral texts,

seventy slides that all repeat name, age and where they are from can become tedious, so students were asked to briefly explain something special about themselves). Once the students were more familiar with each other, the project moved on to focus on more content.

Through new *machinima* (produced in teacher education courses by student-teachers learning to become EFL teachers), students learnt to recognize, name and classify different habits (e.g. smoking, eating lots of vegetables, etc.). This was complemented by activities that used the flashcards, and, at the same time, students began making associations between different types of habits and possible consequences (through the use of worksheets and general classroom discussion).

Next, working in small groups, students were given three cases to observe as 'scientists' in order to gather data about the subjects' good and bad habits. The case studies (again, using *machinima*) consisted of Dr. Stella and Dr. Albert 'interviewing' three 'teen avatars' about their habits. The 'interviews' took place over three consecutive times. In each case, the 'subjects' had a few healthy habits and a predominant 'bad habit'. To give an example, Gameboy Gary was addicted to videogames and subsequently did not sleep enough, had a backache, red eyes and so forth. His problems grew worse over each interview.

Fig. 4. Dr. Stella interviews Gameboy Gary

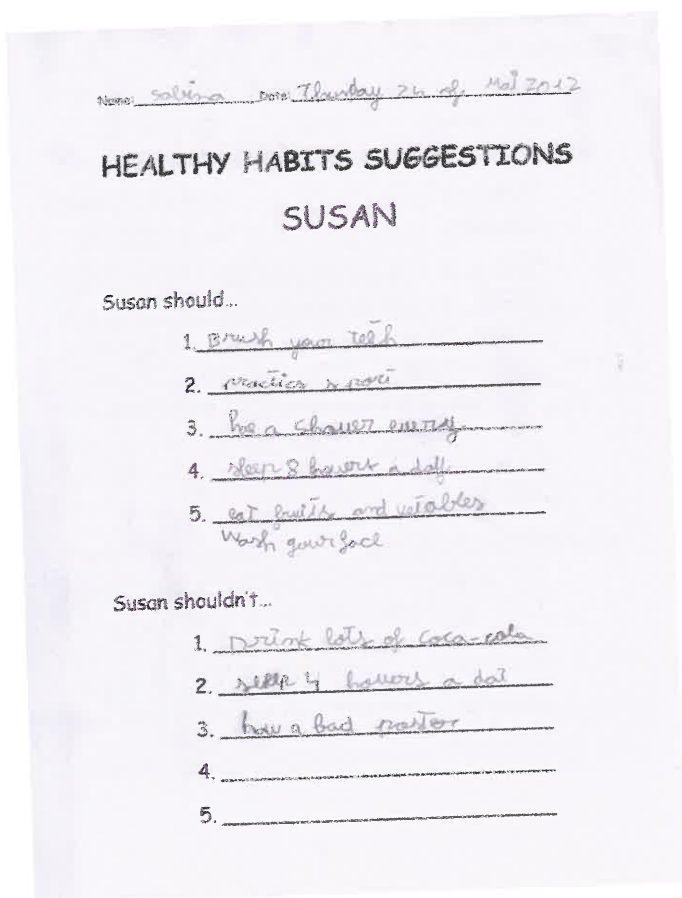


Because each group was watching a different case, the information gathered was different for each group (although in larger groups, the cases were repeated). Also, in the two schools (Catalonia and Austria) the cases were slightly different for each school. Thus, in the end, each group had gathered

different information (although language use in all the cases was similar and the dialogues were written in such a way that they would be familiar to the production and use the students had already been exposed to in previous sessions).

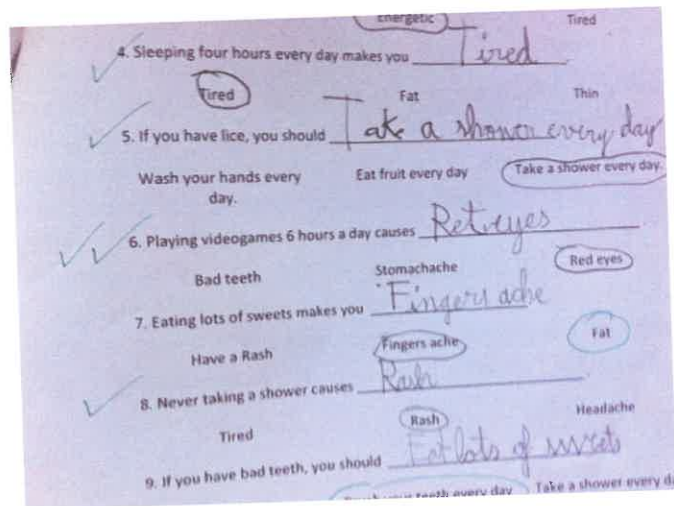
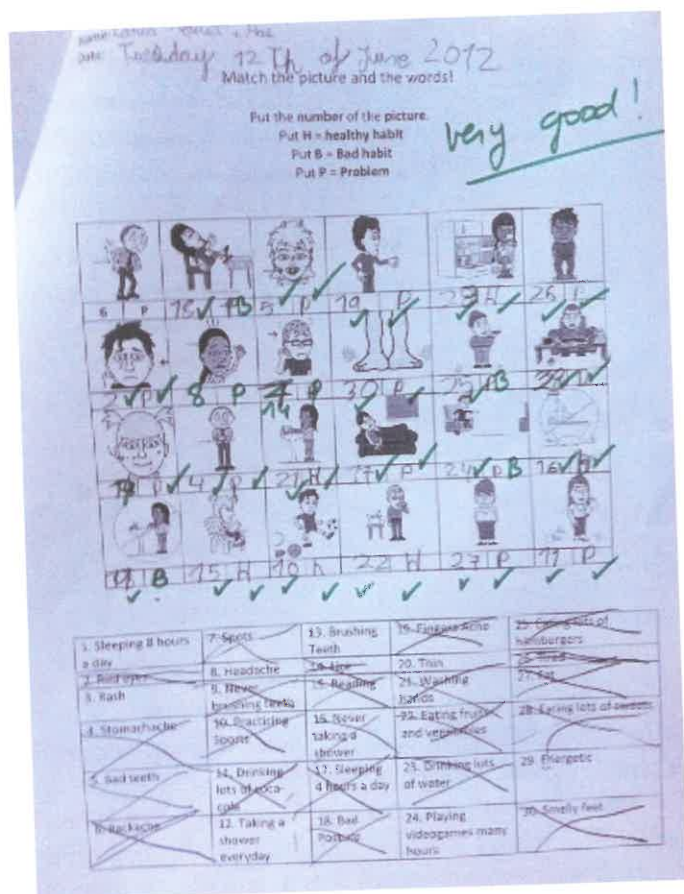
Next, using the information gathered from their observations, the classes exchanged information about the cases, filling each other in about missing information, and then putting forth ideas for the 'subjects' to improve detected bad habits. Following this, the students combined the information to make suggestions on how the 'subject' avatars might improve their habits (e.g. He should sleep eight hours a day) and these suggestions were 'communicated' to Dr. Stella and Dr. Albert.

Fig. 5. Worksheet for suggestions for Smelly Susan



The results of their suggestions were made evident by the avatar scientists (again through *machinima*) to ensure that the learners were aware of the impact of their communicative efforts. The final step, and as a means of assessing the learning that took place, Dr. Stella and Dr. Albert invited the two schools to participate in an 'online talk show' in which, as experts, the students were asked increasingly difficult questions about the language and content that they had been exploring throughout the project. A final individual evaluation was also given to the students, based on the vocabulary and concepts learnt during the project.

Fig. 6. Examples of Individual Assessment



In summary, the project was divided into four main domains or phases, although, as in any learning process, the implementation cannot be considered as linear as there is always iteration, and circular take-up of the input and communicative use of the input.

Phase 1: Introductions (first videoconference to get to know online peers and first *machinima* to meet the avatar scientists and learn about the project expectations).

- Phase 2: Learning of specific vocabulary about healthy and unhealthy habits through the use of different resources such as avatars, flashcards, posters, and games.
- Phase 3: Conceptualizing healthy and unhealthy habits (making links between language and content) through case observations, revision, and exchange of information with online partners.
- Phase 4: Connecting results with healthy and unhealthy habits, ending up in recommendations, final results, and assimilation of what the students had learnt.

Conclusions

While it has almost become a cliché to emphasize the necessity of integrating technology into language teaching in today's society, it still remains a pending issue. Even as interest and enthusiasm for the use of computer-mediated communication and social networking has grown, there is still concern that there is not enough research and practice on how to systematically and effectively integrate technology into language teaching (Hubbard, 2009).

That is why our project has been articulated through technologies such as Second Life and Skype and has been designed as a transdisciplinary project that engages students, not only in authentic communicative events, but also in challenging cognitive reflection about 'real-life' issues and motivating them to explore future activities. By encouraging students to 'act' as scientists, they could explore cause-and-effect relationships of different habits while learning to learn, that is, while fomenting research habits for life-long learning.

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English in Action 24/7

The Use of Prezi for Storytelling: Psycholinguistic Reasons

By Edward A. Lockhart

This article looks at the use of Prezi for storytelling and the psycholinguistic reasons why it might be advantageous to use this Web 2.0 tool. It explores how it enhances the process of acquisition of the target language and the storytelling experience. Also, it explores different types of pre- and post-listening activities. Finally, it recommends some ideas and tools that can help us in the process of designing our Prezi presentation.

Introduction

The world of ELT is in constant evolution. Teachers are always seeking new ways to improve their teaching. Nowadays, in the full technological age, ICT is a never-ending source for new tools that can help us teach in a better way. It is very easy to find thousands of applications and sites that can make our explanations more understandable, memorable and motivating. One of these tools is Prezi, a tool for creating stunning presentations. It plays with depth and orientation, so when we move from one object to another, we can actually see the movement. Also, the depth feature enables us to “hide” information within other objects.

Prezi is one of those applications that does not have a steep learning curve. In other words, you just need to invest a little time to learn how to use it. You can try to learn it through trial and error, or you can check the online tutorials that are available both in prezi.com and in YouTube. It is also free. You only need to create an account and start using it. If you have an educational email, you can even apply for a free educational account with certain features that the free account lacks (like keeping your Prezis private, amongst other things). For more information about this type of account, please refer to: <https://prezi.zendesk.com/entries/22174818-registering-for-a-prezi-education-license>.

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The ELT world is engaged in a very lively discussion about how to use technology in education. In every talk or article related to ICT, the term “Digital Native” comes up. There are voices that are fighting against this trend of digital nativeness (Knight, 1990 in Koutropoulos, 2011), but there is something with which most of the authors agree: children are used to receiving a lot of very attractive visual stimuli (Prensky, 2001). Prezi helps us deal with this habit (and need).

Storytelling on the other hand, is a tool teachers have been using for as long as we can remember (Dujmović, 2006). Watts (2006) gives us a comprehensive list of reasons for using storytelling in ELT. She highlights how stories give importance to the context, provide work on phonetics, enable meaningful repetition and recycling, or even become a key motivator for children, amongst other things. Wright (2008, p. 4) says “[...] stories should be a central part of the work of all primary teachers, whether they are teaching the mother tongue or a foreign language”. In this text we will explore the reasons that encourage us to choose Prezi as a storytelling support.

How Prezi supports the acquisition process

There are many reasons for telling stories in class. These reasons range from making our students listen to the target language, to getting our students ready and motivated for project work, or even for reviewing the vocabulary we have been working on throughout the module (unit). Whatever our objective is, we always have a major aim in mind: to make our learners acquire English. Prezi can enhance this acquisition process in several ways:

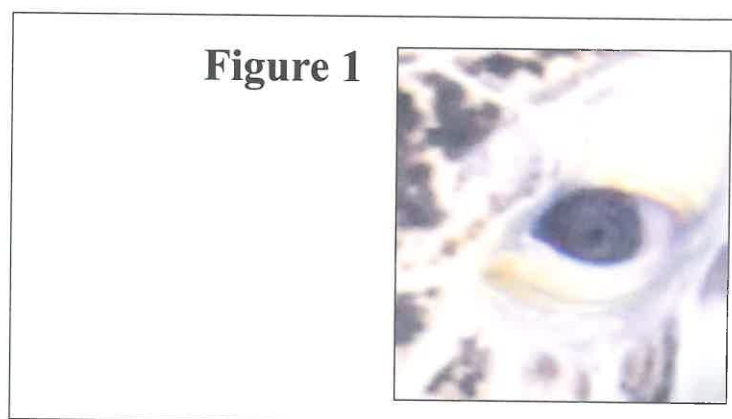
1. Through **comprehensible input**: it is widely accepted that in order to trigger language acquisition, students must receive immense quantities of input (Krashen, 1982, 1998; Krashen & Terrell, 1988). This input has to be comprehensible if we want the learners to acquire it ($i + 1$). We have several options for making input comprehensible:

- We can do **tasks to pre-teach** the language: we tend to pre-teach the complicated vocabulary that is essential for grasping the general idea of the story so our students can focus on the story rather than on the difficult words in it. This can take a whole new perspective if we do it through Prezi.

- For pre-teaching (or reviewing) vocabulary, we can include the image of what we want them to understand and hide the word deep inside it. We would try to elicit the word from the students and then we would zoom in on the word so they can see it. We could

then zoom out again and ask them to repeat the word, of course, in a way that is fun and memorable for them (i.e. using different voices and tones).

- We can show a certain spot of a bigger picture and ask our students to hypothesize what the picture is. Then we would zoom out a little asking them to hypothesize again, and at the end we would show them the whole picture and tell them what it is (see Figure 1).



- We can **support comprehension with images**: this will be explained further on, but the idea is that using images will make the students understand the vocabulary or the structures that are still too far from their interlanguage. This way we contribute to their understanding of the whole context.

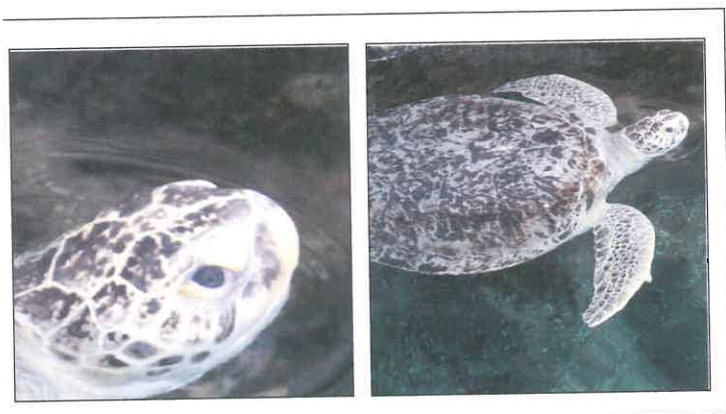
- We can scan images from the storybook or download them from the web. A very interesting resource in this sense is #ELTpics. This Flickr photo-stream, which is created out of pictures that ELT teachers from all around the globe tweet, contains more than 12,000 pictures that we can use in our English classes for free and without copyright restrictions. We only need to name the source and the author. We can even contribute to the project by tweeting our own pictures with the #ELTpics hashtag in the tweet.

1. We can thin down¹ our students' **affective filter** (AF): some of the individual differences in the speed and depth of the acquisition of English can be explained through the AF theory (Krashen & Terrell, 1988). One of the things that can make our AF thinner is the **type**

¹ Note that both Krashen and Terrell use the terms lower or higher AF but, given that it is a filter, the terms thick and thin seem more appropriate.

of activity carried out. If we like the type of activity we are doing, our filter thins down and we acquire more. Our students, especially the young and teenage ones, like attractive audiovisual presentations, so we could take advantage of Prezi to make them acquire more with the same amount of input. If we manage to do this often enough, we might even positively affect another of the factors inside the AF hypothesis: **motivation**. This is a relatively stable factor that takes a long time to change, but if we keep providing our students with good, attractive activities, we will have more possibilities to get them motivated towards learning English.

From a spot to the bigger picture. You're using derivative work: "Image made using a photo taken from <http://flickr.com/eltpics> by @elt_pics, used under a CC Attribution Non-Commercial license, <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/3.0/>



2. We can extend the use of the **VAK theory**: nowadays the idea of sensory preference is well settled in the world of ELT. Recent research (Knight, 1990; Stahl, 2002; Coffield et al., 2004 in Churches & Terry, 2007) has provided evidence that we should not try to adapt our teaching style to the sensory preference of our students but, as Churches and Terry (2007) recommend, we should try to use as many channels as possible to improve group rapport. Also, the more we link the new input to different stimuli, the better and longer the input will be retained (Sydorenko, 2010).

3. When telling stories through Prezi, we are transmitting visual information through images (and words if we include text); auditory information with our voice; and kinesthetic information through the movement in the Prezi itself and through our gestures. Not only are all our students receiving the input through their preferred channel, they are also receiving it through all three modalities, so the input will be much more memorable.

Pre- and post-listening activities through Prezi

We have already seen a couple of examples of how

to use Prezi in pre- and post-listening activities. There are plenty of other possibilities for these two stages, and now we will comment on some of them.

Examples of pre-listening activities:

- Introduction to the topic: we can introduce the topic by preparing a presentation dealing with some of the things they will hear in the story. If, for example, we are telling them a Halloween story, we could start introducing the topic and showing them typical things about this celebration, while trying to elicit related personal experiences. This should give the students a context that would help them understand the story better.
- Introductory games: we can prepare games that can help the listeners get ready for the story. One of these games could be 'Odd-One Out'. We would choose 4 pictures, one of them different from the others in a certain sense. We would ask the students to identify which one is the odd one and why. Then, we would zoom in on it so they could see the solution and we would explain how the picture differs from the others. This is a different way of introducing and reviewing vocabulary.
- Jumbled pictures of the story: we would allow them to zoom in and out of the pictures so they can look at them in more detail. Then, we would ask them to predict the order of the different pictures or to try to guess what will happen in the story. This should provide them with a good context for understanding the narrative and should increase their expectations.

Examples of post-listening activities:

- Exploiting the background: many storybooks have wonderful illustrations. We could exploit these illustrations by zooming in on objects or characters in the background that can link to an activity or a related story. To illustrate this, we are going to use 'The Smartest Giant in Town' (Donaldson & Scheffler, 2002).
 - On the first page (the giant realizes he is scruffy) we can ask the students to identify things that could be related to stories. Beside the fountain we find a couple of children that resemble 'Hansel and Gretel'. In our Prezi, deep inside Gretel's sleeve, we could hide a link to an amazing Prezi presentation by Meaghan Hendricks with this story². We could show Hendricks' presentation while we read it altogether.
 - On the other side of the fountain we see a cat wearing boots. We could give out the written story of "Puss in Boots". Inside the snout of the cat we could hide a game, 'The Crazy Professor Reading Game' (Biffle, 2007), so we could have the students play it just by

² This Prezi is online and free and be found at <http://prezi.com/gv4hgsyfvpy/hansel-gretel/>

zooming in on the step we want them to take at each moment.

- Further in the storybook (pages 25-26) there is an illustration with a black sheep carrying three bags of wool. On one of these bags we could hide the famous nursery rhyme. We could teach it to our students and, maybe, even try to get them sing it in canon.

These are just some examples of how we can use Prezi both in the pre-listening part, where we would prepare our learners for the storytelling, and in the post-listening part, where we would exploit things related to or derived from the story. It is only a matter of using our imagination and creativity.

Storytelling through Prezi

This final section reviews some additional aspects of storytelling that can be improved through Prezi:

- Focusing attention: with the feature of zooming in, we can show the listeners a detail of what we want them to focus their attention on. If we have, for example, an image of a city with many characters in it but we are going to talk specifically about one of them, we might want to zoom in on that character so the listeners identify it better. This way we avoid background distractions and we enhance comprehension.
- Animation-like experience: children are very much used to watching cartoons and playing video games. Delivering a story in a format that is already familiar to them and that

they like can be an extra point for grabbing their attention and motivating them even more. The transitions in Prezi can make us feel as if we were watching a movie or an animation rather than seeing a presentation. However, we have to be careful because too much zooming or spinning might be more dizzying than helpful.

- Enriched dialogues: if two of the characters were to interact, we could zoom in on the character who is speaking each time to help the students follow the story better. This simple thing, combined with using different voices for each character, can dramatically improve our storytelling.
- Inserting media: Prezi allows us to insert a variety of media. We can insert photos (both from our own computer and from the internet), background music, PDF's or even videos (our own or from YouTube). If we were telling the story, "Aaaarghghh Spider!" (Monks, 2006), we could enrich it with a video of 'The Incy Wincy Spider' when the spider in the story goes up to the bathtub through the waterspout. In Prezi you only need to have the YouTube link to do so. We could even "hide" the video in the waterspout and zoom in on it at the right moment.

The possibilities of storytelling through Prezi are huge. It allows us to include a technological factor in storytelling that not only motivates the students and captures their attention but also improves their learning experience by making input more comprehensible and by improving group rapport.

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Nothing. Just Games.

By Carol Ibáñez

“Nothing. Just games.” That’s what kids tell their parents right after my class. Are we simply playing for the sake of fun or is our target student defined by the content and procedure of the game? This article not only focuses on how to play variations of classic games, but also will try to encourage teachers to think about why, when and how games are played. The article will look at games as part of the students’ learning process, dividing them into three categories: self-assessment, competitive and cooperative games.

Introduction

As teachers of Young Learners, we sometimes face situations where our classes are not valued because of the types of activities or methodology we use. Playing games in class might sometimes be considered a time-filler or even a time-waster by parents and colleagues alike because students are not “really” studying in the traditional sense, rather they’re only playing games.

However, not only can we learn language through games, but there are also other non-linguistic aspects that can be reached through the use of games, such as team work, decision making or improving students’ confidence. Choosing the right game to target these non-linguistic objectives is essential to children’s social and affective development. Games can also focus on the different learning styles: visual, learning by seeing; auditory, learning by hearing; and kinaesthetic,

learning by doing. Targeting different types of learners should provide students with opportunities to practice the language in a way that feels comfortable and useful to them.

Self-assessment games

Self-assessment games are those that challenge students’ individual knowledge and can be played individually or in pairs without the teacher’s intervention. Students are in charge of their own learning process by creating the content of the game and recording their results.

Game 1: spelling bees

How to play

The teacher distributes some cards, which students take home for homework. Students write down 5 words they

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have studied. In class this game can be played individually by those students who finish a classroom activity faster than the rest. This helps students focus on the class and prevents misbehaviour. It can also be played in pairs when students finish other classroom activities or as a review activity.

Individually: the student has 1 minute to look at the words on his/her card, then turns the card face down and has 1 more minute to write down all the words that he/she can remember on a piece of paper. Self-assessment comes when the card is used to check how many words the student spelt correctly. This same student writes down his/her name and the number of correct answers on the back of the card. This will not be used as an exam, but as a reference for another day so the students can check if they have improved. Students can then play with another classmate's cards using the same procedure.

In pairs: students have 1 minute to memorize the words on the card. They switch cards and student A reads the words on the card to student B, who has to write them down. Students switch roles, and B reads the words to A. Students then self-correct by getting the card from their partner and correcting their list of words. Results are recorded the same way as in the individual game.

Cards can be kept in a box or envelope in class for easy access, and students can choose which cards to practice with according to their results. More cards can be made as homework or by those students who finish class activities faster than the rest.

When to play

As these types of games are for students' own self-assessment, they can be used to revise any time there might be some "down time" in your class. Students could get them when they finish a class activity before the rest, or you could give them 5 or 10 minutes to play at the end or beginning of class as part of your classroom routine.

Objectives and learning styles

The linguistic objective of this game is to review spelling and vocabulary learnt in class, whereas the non-linguistic objectives would include challenging students' memory on an individual basis, boosting confidence since students are not judged by their results and can try as many times as they want, involving them in their own learning process and teaching them to self-assess. This game also supports all types of learning styles, as visual students have the cards and have to look at the words, auditory learners can play with a person who will read the words to them, and kinaesthetic learners write but can also use their fingers to trace letters in the air to memorize spelling.

Competitive games

Competitive games are played either by students competing against each other individually or in teams. These might be the most common games; however, special attention should be paid to what students learn from them and the amount of participation required by each student.

Game 2: Chinese Whispers / Telephone (listen and write)

How to play

This version of Chinese Whispers or Telephone can be played with words or sentences, depending on the level. Students are divided into groups and line up towards the blackboard. The teacher tells the first student in line the word/sentence and that student repeats what he/she has heard to the next person in line. The student who is standing in front of the blackboard writes what he/she hears on the board. The first group to get the word/sentence right is the winner and gets a point. The group with the most points at the end of the game wins the competition.

This game can be slightly varied to avoid class disruption. It can also be adapted to be played in big groups. For example, instead of standing near the board, students can sit in their chairs around a table, and the last person to listen writes the word/sentence down on a piece of paper.

When to play

When should teachers play this game? It is obvious once the game has begun that stronger students are at an advantage. The game finishes when one group gets the word/sentence correct, but the rest of the groups do not get a chance to correct unless everyone is having trouble with the word/sentence. Why is this a good game then? The key is to plan it at the right time in your lesson. It should come as a review once students are confident with the words/sentences that will be used, so that playing maximizes student participation and prevents students from thinking they cannot win and losing interest in the class.

Objectives and learning styles

The linguistic objectives in this variation of Chinese Whispers would be to review spelling, grammar structures/expressions and word order. The non-linguistic objectives would be to promote competition and quick thinking. It would support visual and auditory learners, but not kinaesthetic ones.

Collaborative games

Collaborative games are those in which students need everyone's input from their teams or the class. The game finishes once each team has completed the task. Winning does not depend on another team's performance, but on completing the task correctly.

Game 3: Chinese Whispers (listen and choose)

How to play

The procedure is the same as in Game 2; however, this time the student has to find a word or picture among a set of cards on a table. Once the student finds the right card, he/she must wait for the rest of the groups to get their cards, as the cards form a "secret sentence" they have to decipher. The rest of their team can help the students with the cards by shouting out instructions on how to solve the "secret sentence".

When to play

This is a game that requires collaboration not only from the team that passes the word down the line, but also from the students who are listening at the end, as they have to work with students in other groups to solve the "secret sentence". This version of the game is most effective when students are practicing new things, as it gives them time to think and provides support from the whole group.

Objectives and learning styles

The linguistic objectives for this version of Chinese Whispers are sentence order and grammar review. As for the non-linguistic objectives, it promotes decision making and boosts students' confidence, since they are working as a group rather than competing against each other. It supports all types of learning styles, because visual students read the words on the cards, auditory students have to listen to their teammates and kinaesthetic students place the cards in order or stand in the correct order to form the "secret sentence".

Adapting games and some more ideas

Variations on well-known games are easy for both teachers and the students, since rules are already known by everyone, but they present some challenge by adding a twist. Some questions the teacher should think about when adapting games are: How does this help my students improve? Who participates and for how long? Who does this game benefit the most (weak vs strong students)? What type of learners is it aimed at? It is important to keep in mind that games do not need to cater to every single type of learner; however, knowing what the game entails will help teachers plan a variety of games to offer everybody a chance to participate.

Some examples of games that can be played for self-assessment could be "Simon" and "Trivial Pursuit". "Simon"

is a game from the 80's where a sequence of colored lights was presented and the player had to repeat it to win. Students can play game sequences with colors or words, if they say them out loud to practice pronunciation or spelling. Trivial Pursuit, just like the "spelling bee" game, can be done partially for homework, with students writing the questions and answers from what they have studied and testing themselves and each other.

Collaborative games can include other variations of Chinese Whispers such as Question-Answer, which consists of the teacher asking a question that students repeat to their team and the last person in line has to answer. If the person does not know the answer, the rest of the group can help. Bingo is also an option, where a group gets to decide what words go on the bingo cards; they also come to the front of the class in turns to tell the rest of the groups the words they need to cross out. A relay race can also be played, where students sit in groups with a set of words or picture cards that have to be matched to another set of words or pictures on the board. Students have 5 seconds to stand up and put a card next to its match on the board; but after 5 seconds they have to be back in their chairs and the next student takes his turn. The groups have to decide which words match and they can also correct if there is anything wrong when it is their turn.

Conclusion

Games are fun, but they can also be challenging. Teachers should be aware of all the implications that playing a game has for their students and their performance in the classroom. Students and parents should also be informed of what playing games in class involves, since they are not only played for fun, but also for educational purposes. Playing and learning go hand in hand in the classroom, and whether the game is played individually or in a group, collaborative or cooperative, students should go home happy, having learned something new.

Contributions

The APAC encourages teachers and APAC-ELT Conferences speakers to submit their work for publication in its journal. Here are some guidelines to help make the process go smoothly.

Length: around 2500 words.

Content and organisation:

Title – Content words capitalised and function words in lower-case letters. Centred and in bold type.

Author (s) – Each author on a separate line. Justified on the right-hand margin and in bold type.

Abstract – A summary of the content of the text in about 100 words. Justified on the left- and right-hand margins. Font: Times New Roman, 12, normal type.

Introduction – Use the word **Introduction** in bold type as the title. Leave a blank line between it and the text that follows it.

Conclusion – End your text with a conclusion, using the word **Conclusion** as the section's title.

References – If you cite sources in your text, include a bibliography after the conclusion, with the title **Footnotes** – Try to avoid using footnotes. But, if you do, make them endnotes and place them after the References section, under the title of **Footnotes**.

Biodata – Finish with a third-person singular summary of pertinent biographical information on each author.

Deadlines: Submit your article by June 15th for the September issue or by December 15th for the February issue.

Engaging Learners with Special Educational Needs

By Rómulo Neves

Our classes in regular schools are becoming more and more challenging as students have different backgrounds, expectations and needs. As far as students with special educational needs (SEN) are concerned, WE, teachers, must change our methods and teach the way these students learn. This article brings our everyday experience with learners with special needs into debate, by concentrating on real examples and successful strategies. We will try to bridge the gap between theory and practice, by sharing practical ideas and activities for learners with Asperger's Syndrome, Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder and Dyslexia. Finally, we will stress how important it is to promote integrative approaches encouraging good classroom practice supporting learners with specific educational needs.

Teaching has always been a hard job, but we can assure that in the present it is becoming more and more demanding. There are so many reasons that justify the previous statement such as bigger groups, social and economic changes, migrations, new family patterns, mixed ability classes, pupils with different goals for their own future...

That is to say that teachers should be updated at all times and be ready to face new situations!

Some years ago, in Madeira Autonomous Region, Portugal, it was not very common to find students with special educational needs at a higher level of education. Actually,

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many of them dropped out at the age of 15 with few skills and with fewer possibilities of getting a job. Others attended a special school and were kept away from society. They stayed at home doing nothing and many of them are dependent adults for the rest of their lives.

In the past years, new regulations were enforced and it was decided that every child should attend a regular school. The Government closed down special schools gradually and children with special needs moved to regular schools. Most of them were integrated in regular classes and some attended special units, but shared the same canteen, the same playground, etc.

Inclusion is the only way for every child and schools have a great responsibility in this process. Teachers have another big challenge to face and an even greater responsibility to achieve inclusion. Of course this was a tremendous issue and some argued that schools were not ready to teach these students whereas others claimed this was the best way to reach inclusion.

As a consequence of this, the Government firmly stated that it was a no-way back issue so everyone had to focus on solving the question and reflect on teaching practices rather than complaining all time and focus on the problem.

Among many other activities and strategies taken by the Heads of Education, teacher training was one of the most important steps to inclusion. Teachers needed to learn how to teach in different ways. Of course, teachers were used to teaching diverse groups of students, with different teaching techniques and instructional methods. Yet, when facing students with special educational needs, things seemed harder.

As all teachers matter, it was necessary to guarantee that every teacher was proficient in developing comprehensive lesson plans, creating stimulating thematic units and assessing individuals and the class as a whole. These professionals needed to be familiar with the characteristics of their students and how to adapt the lesson plan to their needs, bearing in mind the whole class as well.

So, at the moment in Madeira Autonomous Region, inclusion is no longer an issue and we all stand for it. In addition, we are now working to make each child believe that he or she is the only one who is taught when the teacher teaches the whole class.

In order to achieve our goal, teachers have to engage students in the learning process thus if they are aware what students' diagnosis is and how these pupils learn, everything is much easier... We will focus on three major diagnosis: Asperger's Syndrome; Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Dyslexia.

Asperger's Syndrome

Definition

Asperger's Syndrome is an Autism Spectrum Disorder and a lifelong disability that affects how a person makes sense of the world, processes information and relates to other people.

It is characterized by significant difficulties in social interaction, alongside restricted and repetitive patterns of behaviour and interests.

It differs from other autism spectrum disorders by its potential in language and cognitive development. These children live in our world, but in their own way and they have difficulties in three main areas (Lorna Wing):

- social communication;
- social interaction;
- social imagination.

Teaching strategies

- Provide a predictable and safe environment;
- Keep transitions the same for as many activities as possible;
- Offer consistent daily routine;
- Avoid surprises by exposing the student to new activities, places, ..., beforehand;
- Use visual methods of teaching;
- Create cooperative learning situations;
- Use facial expressions, gestures, and body language as much as you can;
- Think of the possibility of using a rotated peer tutoring system;
- Model language skills instead of correcting it at all times;
- Do not be tolerant of their wrong behavior;
- Apply anti-bullying rules and minimize teasing;
- Develop a system of nonverbally reminding them to pay attention;
- Provide instant and constructive feedback;
- Make your expectations for completion of classwork clear;
- Provide written information on the topic you are teaching and always refer it to their students' book;
- Capitalize on these pupils' exceptional memory;
- Break assignments down into small units and avoid using too much colour, images, tables or columns.

The thing is students diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome cannot learn if they feel anxious or nervous. Therefore the whole class environment and the strategies and methods used by the teacher must be carefully planned beforehand. By using the correct teaching strategies, we may bring out the student's abilities, skills and talents into the classroom as an advantage for all.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Definition

It is a neurological disorder that is characterized by serious and persistent difficulties in the following specific areas:

- inattention;
- impulsivity;
- hyperactivity.

Teaching strategies

- Use a communication notebook so that the student can register his own behaviour and commitment after each class so it can be assessed by himself and his parents at the end of the week;
- Use individual mini white boards when you ask questions to the class so students have to write down the answers;
- Place these students up front with their backs to the rest of the class to keep other students out of view;
- Surround students with good role models;
- Encourage peer tutoring and cooperative/collaborative learning;
- Avoid distracting stimulus, such as lots of colour, information on walls, ...;
- Try not to place students near doors or windows;
- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction;
- Make directions clear and concise;
- Simplify complex directions;
- Avoid multiple commands;
- Make sure students understand the instructions before beginning the task;
- Repeat instructions in a calm, positive manner;
- Help the student to self-evaluate his behaviour, his learning style and his mistakes in a constructive way;
- Pay less attention to a bad behaviour than to a good one;
- Avoid students' individual competition in the classroom;
- Always keep the student busy and keep the board well organized;
- Suggest an extra-curricular activity like music (play an instrument) or martial arts (karate, judo, ...);
- Play calm music (sounds of nature) when you ask students to work individually;
- Modify one behaviour at a time (for example: ask the student to finish the task by the given time; then ask him to improve his handwriting and finally ask him to check and improve his answer);
- Use the *Time Out* strategy when the student does not cope with you (this is the procedure before a serious attitude towards students' behaviour and basically it consists on asking the student to move to the back of the classroom and stand up looking to the class until he feels calmer and ready to be engaged in the learning process again. The student is the one who decides when it is the time to return to his own seat.)

Undoubtedly the secret to teaching a student diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder is to

understand his behaviour and define with the student strategies to self-recognize it. Based on consistent and positive work, it will be pretty easy to engage this learner.

Dyslexia

Definition

Dyslexia is a learning disability that impairs a person's fluency or comprehension accuracy in being able to read. It manifests itself as a difficulty with phonological awareness and decoding, processing speed, orthographic coding, auditory short-term memory, language skills, verbal comprehension and rapid naming.

Dyslexia should not be mistaken with reading difficulties resulting from other causes, such as poor or inadequate reading instruction.

There are two main subtypes of dyslexia: auditory and visual.

Teaching strategies

- Have high expectations for intellectual stimulation, but reasonable for written response;
- Allow dyslexic children to show their interest, knowledge and skills, despite their difficulties with writing;
- Be prepared to explain things many times, in a variety of ways;
- Correct only spellings they have been taught specifically;
- Try to understand the reasons for the mistakes when you are looking at students' work;
- Watch out for signs of tiredness;
- Have resources clearly marked and neatly arranged so that they can be found easily;
- Make worksheets dyslexia-friendly.

Teaching strategies (auditory dyslexia)

This student needs also to read the information in order to understand it perfectly.

- Develop the link between visual and auditory activities;
- Imitate sounds;
- Practise rhythmic codes;
- Use other technologies such as audiobooks;
- Help students understand the text they are reading. Constant reference to the meaning of what they are reading is essential and should be practised frequently. Tips include reading each word or sentence twice; reading aloud, thinking or explaining the meaning of words or sentences as they read them or picturing what they have just read at full stops or commas.

- Allow students to complete an assignment in another form rather than being written.

Teaching strategies (visual dyslexia)

This student needs also to listen to the information in order to understand it completely (audio information).

- Use a structured and systematic way to teach spelling and phonemic awareness;
- Use flashcards which are linked in some way, for instance: opposites or words that have the same ending, like 'me', 'we', 'be' or 'he';
- Practice shapes and figures discrimination;
- Use exercises which require noticing details in incomplete images;
- Give dyslexic students the books or text to be used in shared reading the week before, so that they can practice;

These students do need constant encouragement and an extra effort by the teacher to engage them further in the learning process. It must be clear for the teacher dyslexic students can succeed as any other student, but it will take them more time and effort to reach the same point.

Conclusion

Engaging learners with special educational needs is an endless topic and so much more could be written.

It cannot be forgotten that the most unequal thing is to treat equally unequal students equally so, let's grab the opportunity to rethink our teaching practice, our teaching experience so that inclusion really happens in our own classroom. It is not a law or a regulation that makes the difference!

It is time to work together as a team with just one goal, to focus on the solution, to learn from the past and to look ahead to the future instead of finding obstacles and excuses to keep a small group of learners away from a regular class.

If regular and special needs students are together, it will be a huge advantage for all. Mutual understanding, cooperation, tolerance are learnt in a natural way at the same time that we offer every single student the same opportunities to develop his abilities, skills and talents.

This is the key to success, it will make the difference in one's future and I do believe this is the real value of teaching!

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www.adhd.com

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www.studiostudio.nl

www.britishcouncil.org

CONTRIBUTIONS

APAC encourages teachers and APAC-ELT Conference speakers to submit their work for publication in the journal.

The Value of English Culture

By Christine Wilson

Creativity and culture are entwined; the tangible aspects of a culture are expressed through acts of creativity, such as architecture and the visual arts. ‘From science one expects discoveries, from technology one expects progress. For creativity the outcome may not be as apparently useful or productive.’(From a study prepared for the European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, June 2009)

Not being clearly useful or productive is probably the main reason why creativity and culture are at the bottom of the educational agenda.

Nurturing something is how we demonstrate how much we value that thing; actions speak louder than words. For that reason, I decided to create a painting during the talk. I am an artist, I value culture, and I think that no opportunity should be lost to do something creative or cultural!



“a cultural world”

Christine Wilson is a teacher and teacher trainer with the British Council in Barcelona. She is also a practicing artist. She has given several sessions at the ELT conference for the British Council, and recently has given two mini-courses on contemporary British Art as part of the British Council's Cultural Programme. Christine is passionate about using authentic material drawn from all areas of culture, and making these accessible to learners so that they too can be inspired by some of the greatest minds and most influential figures.

The idea was to create, in our one hour, a 'cultural world' – both literally in my painting, and intellectually as we thought about the various issues involved. The audience participated by contributing their ideas, writing them down on pieces of paper which were later added to the painting, creating the heart of the 'cultural world.'

But to go back to the original thorny question, how do we value culture? Should it be, can it be, measured in time, money or wellbeing? Culture provides 6.25% of employment and at least 11.5 million pounds worth of export industry. It occupies 20.6% of waking time and 5.2% of waking time excluding TV. Regarding *wellbeing*, various factors in your cultural environment determine your quality of life, for example:

- Income
- Whether you live in a house or flat, and its size/condition
- Whether you have a spouse or partner, or family
- Whether you have a job or not
- Your social life, amount of leisure time, your use of leisure time.

(statistics <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Research/About/Social-research>)

DEMOS claims that 'the value of culture cannot be expressed only with statistics. Audience numbers give us a poor picture of how culture enriches us.' However, because we have great difficulty in putting a value on culture, it doesn't mean that there isn't one, or that it deserves its low hierarchical status.

British culture is rich and diverse and provides no end of material to use in the classroom; the problem is how do we access it and use this material? Here is a minimalist formula which I use myself when adapting material for the classroom:

- Source
- Text
- Questions raised
- Understanding the text
- Re-presenting / reformulating the text.

The internet is the initial starting point in many cases. There are talks, radio and TV broadcasts, podcasts, images and texts - any of which can be your source. To teach English we usually need, in the end, a text. This can be subtitles, transcriptions, lyrics etc. derived from the source. What makes this text interesting? What might the learners be interested in? Does the text raise questions? The teacher decides, and exploits the material accordingly. The learners need first and foremost to understand the text (sometimes there are opportunities for the learners to create the text itself), and there are a variety of ways the teacher can lead to this understanding – through discussion and reading for example. Then comes the most interesting part, when the learners do something with the material; they transform it in some way and contribute their ideas. For example, they write about it, talk about it, or do something similar....

Some of the main sources are:

The BritLit project by the British Council

<http://teachingenglish.org.uk/britlit>

The media

TED talks <http://www.ted.com/talks>

TV <http://iplayer.bbcworldwide.com>

Radio <http://bbc.co.uk/radio4/programmes/a-z>

The Internet

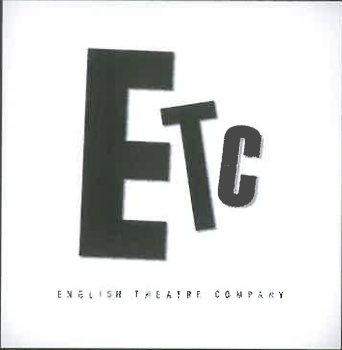
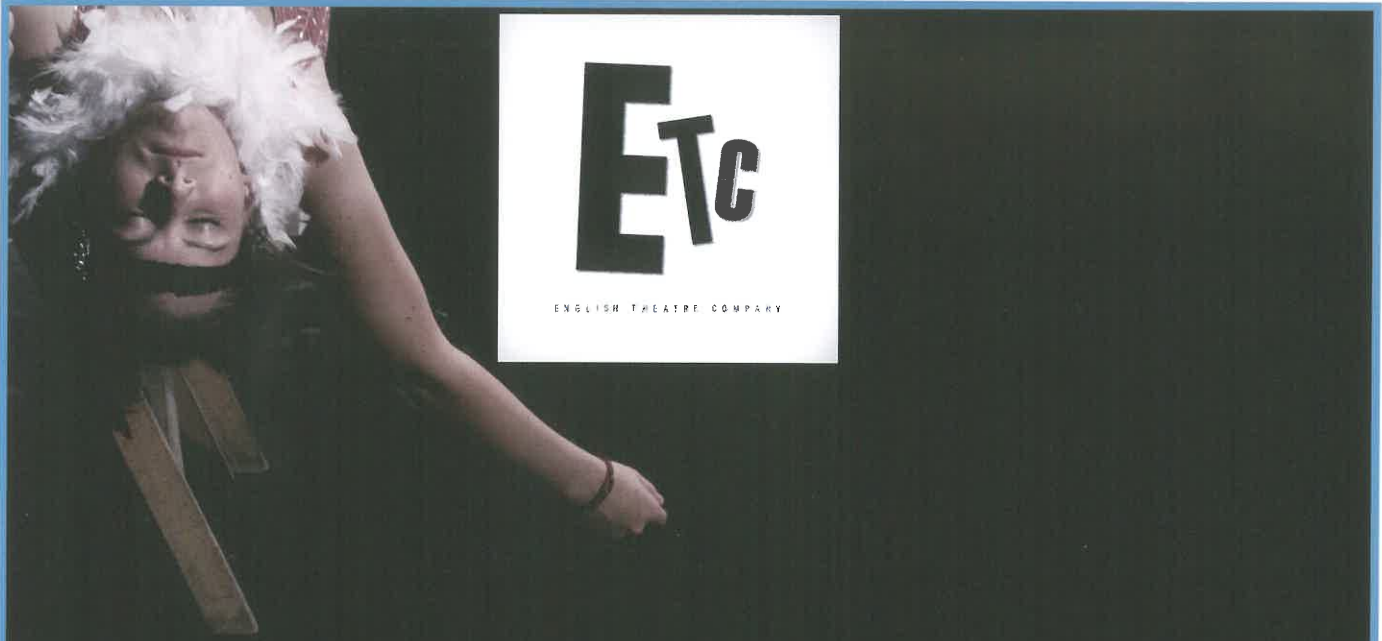
Lyrics

One of the simplest ways to motivate learners is to inspire them by bringing them into contact with *the best* – the best writers, the most exciting film makers, the most interesting designers etc. – *the best* from whichever sector interests you.

Sir Ken Robinson, an advocate of creativity in education, argues that precisely because we don't know what the world will look like in even 5 years time, is the reason we need to educate young minds creatively. They will need to be able to find creative solutions to the problems they will face.

I advocate the use of cultural and creative activities for adults in their learning of English - why stop creative activities when children get older? I find that learners demonstrate improved autonomy and motivation in their learning as a result of this cultural and creative focus. Let's all think outside the box!

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A Paradigm Shift: Questioning the Global Education Reform Movement¹

By Yong Zhao, Ph. D

Lecture given by Yong Zhao in the MACBA Auditorium on November 29, 2012, in the Debats d'educació lecture series organized by the Fundació Jaume Bofill and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. For further information: www.debats.cat Document reproduced with permission from the Fundació Jaume Bofill and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya.

Today's education is inadequate for preparing tomorrow's citizens. That is the consensus across the world. International organizations, national and local governments, educational institutions, business enterprises, and the public all over the world have put forth tremendous efforts, with unprecedented courage, to improve education for their children. But, as former U.S. president John F. Kennedy once said, "efforts and courage are not enough without purpose and direction."

The purpose is clear — a better education capable of preparing our children to live successfully in the future; the direction is not. In other words, we know the destination but not the path, as there are so many paths before us and not all of them lead to the destination. Some are a waste of time,

but others move us even farther away; in fact, the path most countries have chosen is unfortunately both, because they have been infected with the GERM.

The GERM, short for the Global Education Reform Movement, was coined by the Finnish education scholar and author of *The Finnish Lesson: What the World Can Learn from Finland*, Pasi Sahlberg to summarize education reform efforts undertaken by many nations around the world:

Curricula are standardized to fit to international student tests; and students around the world study learning materials from global providers. Education reforms in different countries also follow similar patterns. So visible is this common way of improvement that I call it the *Global Educational*

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Reform Movement or GERM. It is like an epidemic that spreads and infects education systems through a virus. It travels with pundits, media and politicians. Education systems borrow policies from others and get infected. As a consequence, schools get ill, teachers don't feel well, and kids learn less. (Sahlberg, 2012)

Competition, choice, and standardized-testing are some of the "the inconvenient symptoms" of the GERM that has infected schools globally, according to Sahlberg. Countries infected with the GERM push schools and teachers to compete with each other, using parental choice of schools as the motivator, with standardized testing scores as the selection criterion. The goal is of course to improve education for their children, to better prepare them for the future. However these efforts will not usher in a better tomorrow. Instead they take us farther away from the destination.

Perfecting the Horse Wagon: The Global Homogenization of Learning

The GERM is intended to fix the presently dominating, yet horribly antiquated, paradigm of education created to meet the needs of an old world that no longer exists. The goal of education within this paradigm is very straightforward: to produce millions of employees and citizens with the same knowledge and skills. This paradigm is about reducing human diversity into a few desirable skills. When executed well, this paradigm is effective in producing people with similar skills and conformity, indicated by test scores or academic performance. A well-executed education within this paradigm is effective in having students focused on studying and motivated to excel at only the prescribed knowledge and skills and quick to weed out those who do not fit through tightly controlled and meticulously designed gateways of assessment. It also has an army of well trained and highly motivated enforcers and transmitters, i.e. school leaders and teachers, who are skilled at effectively guiding students' attention to and imparting the prescribed knowledge. The essence of this paradigm is a homogenized, standardized learning experience imposed upon by the authority: government, adults, teachers, and parents.

As a result, countries, schools, and teachers that do well have students with better academic performance than those who do not. Better academic performance, indicated by test scores, is thus the measure of education success and global competitiveness. Consequently the reformers all over the world have engaged in ways to better homogenize and standardize student learning. For example, "to compete successfully in the global economy" the U.S. has been working hard to produce and implement the Common Core State Standards Initiative (Common Core), an effort to provide a national uniform curriculum for all its students:

The Common Core State Standards provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them. The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our

young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in the global economy (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2011b).

The Common Core standards are purportedly going to make all students ready for college and career in the global economy by addressing three ills that have long plagued American education: equity, quality, and efficiency (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2010) (Goertz, 2010) (Mathis, 2010). "We need standards to ensure that all students, no matter where they live, are prepared for success in postsecondary education and the workforce. Common standards will help ensure that students are receiving a high quality education consistently, from school to school and state to state" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2011a). Common standards are also needed because they "provide a greater opportunity to share experiences and best practices within and across states that will improve our ability to best serve the needs of students" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2011a). Furthermore, they make test results across schools in different places more comparable, thus making it easier to hold schools and teachers more accountable for learning (Tienken & Zhao, 2010; Zhao, 2009). Most importantly, the Common Core standards are supposedly internationally benchmarked so that they embody the highest expectation for students. "The Common Core State Standards have been built from the best and highest state standards in the country. They are evidence-based, aligned with college and work expectations, include rigorous content and skills, and are informed by other top performing countries" (Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2011a).

National Homogenization: Increased Centralized Prescription of Student Learning

The Common Core State Standards Initiative represents the increasing trend of national homogenization of student learning in the world. The homogenization is achieved through increased national control of what children should learn. Such control is exercised through three interconnected measures: 1) the identification of core subjects, 2) the development of centralized curriculum standards, and 3) the use of high-stakes testing to enforce standards of core academic subjects.

The movement toward more central government control of student learning is evidenced in both traditionally centralized education systems and traditionally decentralized systems. Roughly speaking, there are two types of educational systems in the world. The first has a central government education authority that prescribes and enforces what students should learn through national or state curriculum and assessment programs. China, Singapore, Finland, and Korea are examples of this first type. Most of the world's education systems fall into this category. The second type has no national control of student learning experiences, leaving much of the curriculum decision to local education authorities. The local can be instantiated at the state or provincial level. In some

contexts, the local has been defined in an even more granular or grass roots policy grid that places the determinative decision-making at the community or even school level. The United States, Canada, and Australia are traditionally the prime examples of the second category.

While some of the educational systems that have traditionally practiced national centralized curricula have attempted to decentralize parts of their curricula, the proportion remains small and the extent of success uncertain (Zhao, 2009). In comparison, efforts to develop centralized curricula in traditionally decentralized educational systems are gaining momentum. As a result, the number of decentralized education systems, which was small to begin with, is quickly dwindling.

Australia is a telling example. On December 9, 2010, Australia marked a turning point in its educational history with the endorsement by Australian education ministers of a national curriculum that includes content descriptions for Foundation to Year 10 in English, mathematics, science, and history (McGaw, 2010). To be expanded to include other subjects, the "Australian Curriculum sets out what all young Australians are to be taught, and the expected quality of that learning as they progress through schooling." The rationale behind the Australian Curriculum, according to the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA) are similar to that in the U.S.: equity, efficiency, and quality for all students "to compete successfully in the global economy." (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2010).

Countries that already have a more flexibly defined national curriculum have been working on standards to specify in more detail what students should learn at what grade level. For example, New Zealand, which had a more flexible national curriculum framework, published its national standards in 2010. The national standards that "set clear expectations that students need to meet in reading, writing, and mathematics in the first eight years at school" (Ministry of Education, 2011). They specifically describe what students should know and be able to do at different points of their schooling. And the reason:

National Standards are a tool to help teachers and schools understand the expected levels of achievement at stage/year-appropriate levels, know how to measure the achievement of each student in relation to the expectations, and to improve teaching and learning for better student learning and progress in all areas of the curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2010).

Another example is England. England is in the midst of another round of review of its national curriculum, initially established in 1988 (Department for Education, 2011) (Oates, 2010). More specification and focus are what is needed, according to Michael Gove, England's Secretary of State for Education. "While other countries have developed coherent national curricula that allow for the steady accumulation of knowledge and conceptual understanding, our National Curriculum has, sadly, lost much of its initial focus," writes Michael Gove, England's Secretary of State for Education

in the Foreword of a report on the review of the National Curriculum by Tim Oates of Cambridge Assessment (Oates, 2010). "What is crucial is first identifying the crucial concepts and ideas that each year group should learn," he adds.

The objectives of this round of review of the English national curriculum are many, but international comparison and efficiency feature prominently:

- *ensure that the content of our National Curriculum compares favourably with the most successful international curricula in the highest performing jurisdictions, reflecting the best collective wisdom we have about how children learn and what they should know;*
- *set rigorous requirements for pupil attainment, which measure up to those in the highest performing jurisdictions in the world;*
- *enable parents to understand what their children should be learning throughout their school career and therefore to support their education (Department for Education, 2011).*

In a nutshell, these efforts, if successful, will not only prescribe what students learn, but also when they should learn what. Enforced with high stakes assessment, either for individual students or for schools, these common standards and curricula in essence push teachers to ration learning to all students (Booher-Jennings, 2006). In the pursuit of efficiency, equity, and national consistency, these standards and curricula essentially homogenize children's learning, serving the same educational diet within a nation.

Global Homogenization: International Benchmarking

The attempt to homogenize children's learning goes beyond national borders and is becoming global. England's objective to ensure the content of its national curriculum "compares favourably with the most successful international curricula in the highest performing jurisdictions" is a common theme across the various national curriculum and standards efforts. International benchmarking, that is "the alignment of standards, instruction, professional development and assessment to those of the highest-performing countries" (Education Commission of the States (ECS), 2008, p. 5), has become the buzzword among educational reformers around the world. The U.S. Common Core initiative, the Australian Curriculum, and England's National Curriculum review all strive to create standards and curricula that match the best in the world.

In the United States, the nation's state education policymakers pledged to use international benchmarking as a way to make the "efforts to raise standards, advance teaching quality, and improve low-performing schools" more effective (National Governors' Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, & Achieve Inc., 2008, p. 6). A report jointly released by the National Governors Association (NGA), the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), and Achieve, Inc., called on state leaders to take five actions to ensure a world-class education for American students. The number one recommended action was to "upgrade state

standards by adopting a common core of internationally benchmarked standards in math and language arts for grades K-12 to ensure that students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to be globally competitive” (National Governors’ Association, Council of Chief State School Officers, & Achieve, Inc., 2008, p. 24). Writing about the Australian curriculum, Barry McGaw, chair of the Australian body that oversees the development of its national curriculum, says, “The Australian curriculum has been benchmarked against curricula in high-performing countries to ensure that we expect no less of our students than they do of theirs” (McGaw, 2010).

International benchmarking effectually has the result of developing a globally homogenous learning experience for all students. When content and standards are aligned across different countries, students learn the same thing at the same time. And when professional development and pedagogy are aligned, teachers are asked to deliver the same content through the same method. When international assessments are applied, nations have even more reason to teach the same thing to their children.

International assessment programs have added fuel to the global homogenization movement in the new age of globalization by showing the relative standings of different nations. While the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA) has been conducting international comparative studies in mathematics and sciences regularly, and literacy and other subjects occasionally, for half a century, the newly developed Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has come onto the scene with even more force. Both the IEA’s Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the OECD’s PISA have captured the attention of national and local education leaders, researchers, and the media (Breakspear, 2012). Because many view the results of TIMSS and PISA as indicators of national education quality and global competitiveness, TIMSS and PISA are now viewed as the gold standards of education. The relative standing of each nation on these assessments is automatically equated with the quality of education in each nation and consequently with the nation’s future competitiveness in the global economy. A recent report by the OECD makes a direct and explicit connection between PISA scores and economic gains:

A modest goal of having all OECD countries boost their average PISA scores by 25 points over the next 20 years ... implies an aggregate gain of OECD GDP of USD 115 trillion over the lifetime of the generation born in 2010. Bringing all countries up to the average performance of Finland, OECD’s best performing education system in PISA, would result in gains in the order of USD 260 trillion (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2010, p. 6)

It should then come as no surprise that nations want to improve their PISA scores. The best way to improve performance on the PISA is then naturally to align one’s curriculum and standards with the top performing nations on the PISA.

International assessments such as PISA and TIMSS have certainly served as a major motivator for the homogenization of curricula, as Professor Geoffrey Howson of the University of Southampton observed in the case of the English National Curriculum a decade ago, saying that it “was probably expedited by the nation’s poor showing in the Second International Math Study (SIMS) and in similar, smaller, studies undertaken in the 1980s” (Howson, 2001, p. 261). Joel Spring, a prolific education author and professor at the City University of New York made a similar observation about the role of PISA:

OECD has played a major role in the global standardization of education through its assessment program PISA. By becoming an international standard, PISA has the direct potential for determining the curriculum content in the areas tested, which are mathematics, reading, and science (Spring, 2008, p. 62).

Moreover, international studies have helped identify curricula and standards to align with. Top-ranking nations in TIMSS and PISA have been viewed as nations with excellent educational systems that are worth emulating (National Research Council, 1999; Common Core State Standards Initiative, 2009). A recent report by the National Center for Education and the Economy entitled *Standing on the Shoulders of Giants* called for learning from Canada (Ontario), China (Shanghai), Finland, Japan, and Singapore because they are the world’s education giants, at least according to their performance on the PISA exams (Tucker, 2011). And TIMSS held Singapore, Korea, and Japan to be the world’s examples of educational excellence due to their outstanding showing. The Singaporean math curriculum, in particular, has been the target of alignment by many countries.

The outcome of international benchmarking is inevitably and expectedly a globally homogenized learning experience for all students. And, if all goes as planned by the advocates, students will be taught the same thing at the same pace by the same methods. This is of course a stretch, given the diversity of educational systems around the world, but it is certainly a goal of many governments and policy makers. Regardless of the degree to which policy makers can successfully align their own nations’ education to top-performing nations on PISA or TIMSS, various governments are working diligently toward the goal that one day all their students will enjoy internationally benchmarked content, be held to internationally benchmarked standards and expectations, and be taught with internationally benchmarked teaching methods. And that is, according to the advocates, a world-class education, which will prepare their students “to succeed in the global economy.”

Betting on the Future: The Core Subjects

The efforts to define what students should learn are not a free exercise of governments or well-intentioned policy makers. They have a cost, a huge cost. It costs money to define and develop curriculum and standards. It costs political and social capital to debate what should be included for what age. Once developed, it costs money and energy to have them adopted and implemented by schools and teachers. It costs

to develop assessments and other mechanisms to ensure that schools and teachers teach accordingly, that students learn accordingly, and that parents provide assistance accordingly. There is also the opportunity cost. When all energy and resources are poured into defining and enforcing the common curriculum and standards, nothing is left to pursue anything else.

But it is not the money, energy, political and social capital that should be of most concern, although they are so high that they cannot be ignored. The most important is the children's future. Asking a child to devote 12 years of his life to the study of something is akin to placing a bet on his future. It is a promise to the innocent child and his parents that if the prescribed curriculum is mastered, he will have a bright future because he will be ready for college and career and able to succeed in the global economy. What if the bet is misplaced and the promise broken? That cost is unbearable and can never be recovered.

The stakes are high, how good is the bet then?

Before questioning the bet, a description of what exactly the advocates are betting on, that is, what is included in the internationally benchmarked curriculum and standards, is in order. *Mathematics, literacy/reading, and science* are the primary subjects most countries have placed their bet on. In the United States, the Common Core State Standards Initiative has put out standards in mathematics and English Language Arts as the core for all students. Science is in the works. In England, "the core subjects of English, mathematics and science will remain subjects within the National Curriculum" (Department for Education, 2011), meaning that the inclusion of these three subjects are not subject to discussion during the review and will form the core of the new national curriculum. The Australian Curriculum pledges to include a variety of subjects but for now includes English, mathematics, science and history, to be "followed by geography, languages, the arts, economics, business, civics and citizenship, health and physical education, and information and communication technology and design and technology" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, 2010).

While many countries may have on paper a broad range of subjects included in their national curriculum, the ones that carry the most stakes become the core subjects. For example, Singapore's primary education curriculum is comprised of languages, mathematics, science, social studies, arts & crafts, and music (Ministry of Education, 2011). But what really matters are languages (English and mother tongue), mathematics, and science because they are the subjects of the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) that determines what type of secondary school a child can enter, and subsequently their future (Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board, 2011). The same is true for Korea. While students may be offered a wide range of subjects, the core subjects required of all students and that count the most on the high-stakes Korean College Scholastic Ability Test are Korean language, Mathematics, and English (as a foreign language). Over a dozen other subjects in social studies and sciences are offered as electives (Korea Institute for Curriculum and Evaluation, 2011). China follows the same practice. A broad range of subjects are offered in the national curriculum, but the College Entrance Exam, which practically determines

one's future life, tests Chinese, English, and mathematics as the core subjects for all students, while students can pick and choose other subjects.

The popular international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS further affirm the core status of math, literacy/reading, and science. PISA tests 15 year olds' abilities in mathematics, science, and, reading, while TIMSS, as its name indicates, tests mathematics and science. IEA, the same organization that offers TIMSS, also conducts the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS).

Questioning the Bet: The World Has Changed

But the bet that many governments are placing on behalf of millions of children around the world will have little chance to prepare future generations to live successfully in the era of globalization. Even in the most optimistic situation when all wishes come true, which is unlikely, the outcomes will not be globally competitive citizens. At best, all these exercises will be a futile waste of resources and opportunities. At worst, these actions will lead to irreversible damage. This is because our children will face a society that has been fundamentally changed by globalization and technology, while the efforts to develop and implement nationally and internationally homogenized curriculum are working on fixing an educational paradigm that has outlived its utility.

The paradigm evolved at a time when the world was separated by geographical distance, when most societies were insular, and when changes happened much more slowly than today and tomorrow. For most of human history, before this wave of globalization and massive technological changes, economies were mostly local and slow-changing. In those economies, most people undertook similar jobs that satisfied the local needs. And in many cases, the jobs and their required knowledge and skills did not change very fast, making it possible to predict and thus prescribe a curriculum that by and large could prepare children to find employment. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills required of workers were fairly basic and most people could be asked or forced to acquire them. Only a relatively small number of individuals were engaged in jobs that required creativity, uniqueness, and high-level cognitive skills.

But the world is drastically different now. Firstly, with only a few exceptions (e.g., North Korea), geographical distance and political boundaries no longer divide the world in terms of economic activities. Virtually all economies are globally interconnected and interdependent. Employment opportunities are thus no longer isolated to specific locations. Jobs can be outsourced to distant places physically or performed by individuals remotely. In a world where jobs can be and have been moved around globally, anyone could potentially go after any job he or she desires. Whether she can be employed depends largely on two factors: qualifications and price. All things being equal, those ask for a lower price for the same qualifications will receive the job.

With over seven billion people living on Earth today, there is plenty of competition for everyone. But due to the vast economic disparities in the world, there exist tremendous differences in labor cost. The hourly compensation costs in manufacturing in 2010 varied from \$1.90 in the Philippines

to \$57.53 in Norway, according to data released by the U.S. government in 2011 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). If a Norwegian is doing exactly the same job as a Filipino, it is very probable that his job will be gone soon. For the Norwegian to keep his job, he had better be doing something that the Filipino is unable to do.

Here lies the first problem of the global homogenization of learning. If all children are asked to master the same knowledge and skills, those who cost less will be much more competitive than those who cost more. There are many poor and hungry people in the developing world willing to work for a fraction of what workers in developed countries need. Thus for those in developed countries to be globally competitive, they must offer something qualitatively different, that is, something that cannot be obtained at a lower cost in developing countries. And that something is certainly not great test scores in a few subjects or the so-called basic skills, because those can be achieved in the developing countries.

Secondly, old jobs are rapidly being replaced by new ones as old industries disappear due to technological changes or existing jobs move around the globe. For example, existing firms lost on average over one million jobs annually in the period from 1977 to 2005, according to a report by the Kauffman Foundation, while an average of three million jobs were created annually by new firms (Kane, 2010). As a result, there is no sure way to predict what jobs our children will have to take in the future. As the head of PISA, Andrea Schleicher, recently said: "Schools have to prepare students for jobs that have not yet been created, technologies that have not yet been invented and problems that we don't know will arise" (Schleicher, 2010). Here lies the second problem of the move to prescribe knowledge and skills. If one does not know what careers there will be in the future, it is difficult, if not impossible, to prescribe the knowledge and skills that will make today's students ready for them.

Thirdly, jobs that require routine procedural skills and knowledge are increasingly automated or sent to places where such skills and knowledge are abundant at a lower cost. As a result, as best-selling author Daniel Pink observed, what will be of more value is traditionally neglected talents, which he refers to as right-brain-directed skills, including design, story, symphony, empathy, play, and meaning (Pink, 2006). Economist Richard Florida noticed the increasing importance of creativity in the modern economy 10 years ago in his best-seller, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (Florida, [2002] 2012). And economist Philip Auerswald convincingly proves the case for the need of entrepreneurs to bring the coming prosperity in his 2012 book (Auerswald, 2012). These are antagonistic to the core subjects that are being prescribed by many governments and tested on international assessments such as PISA and TIMSS, which are mostly left-brained cognitive skills. This is the third problem of the movement to prescribe knowledge and skills for all schools because what they are prescribing is not necessarily what is needed.

Fourthly, the world our children will live in is global, not local as before. Given the interconnectedness and interdependence of economies, the rise of global challenges such as climate change, and the ease of movement across national borders, one's birthplace no longer determines his or her future living space or whom he or she may be working for

or with. Thus being ready to live in this global world requires the knowledge and abilities to interact with people who are not born and raised in the same local community. But the core curriculum of most nations does not include an element to prepare the future generations to live in this globalized world and interact with people from different cultures. The focus on local values and the needs of the local society represents the fourth problem of a national core curriculum and a global curriculum that narrowly focuses on numeracy and literacy.

Lastly, globalization and technological changes, while presenting tremendous challenges, bring vast opportunities. Globalization, for example, vastly expands the pool of potential customers for products and services. Niche talents that used to only be of interest to a small fraction of people may not be of much value locally because the total population is small in a given community. In the globalized world, the potential customers could be seven billion people. Even a small fraction of seven billion can be significant. Additionally, talents that may be of little value in a given location can be very valuable in another country. Globalization and technology today enables products and services to reach almost any corner of the world. But the traditional paradigm, by forcing children to master the same curriculum, essentially discriminates against talents that are not consistent with the prescribed knowledge and skills. Students who are otherwise talented but do not do well in the prescribed subjects are often sent to spend more time on the core subjects, retained for another grade, or deprived of the opportunity to develop their talents in other ways.

In summary, the traditional education paradigm may have worked before but is no longer adequate for the changed world. The efforts to develop common curricula, nationally and internationally, are simply working to perfect an outdated paradigm. The outcomes are precisely the opposite of the talents we need for the new era. A well-organized, tightly controlled, and well-executed education system can transmit the prescribed content much more effectively than a system that is less organized, loosely monitored, and less unified, while a less organized system has more room for individual exploration and experimentation and allows for exceptions. The question is, then, what matters in the future? Do we want individuals who are good at taking tests, or individuals who are creative and entrepreneurial? The answer, I believe, is the latter.

The Alternative Paradigm: Following the Child

There is another paradigm of education. This paradigm does not presuppose or predefine what knowledge or skills are worthwhile. In this paradigm, the "curriculum" is one that follows the child. It begins with the children: what they are interested in, what excites them, what they are capable of, and how they learn. This paradigm does not assume all children are the same; therefore it does not impose artificial standards or age-based, grade-level expectations. It helps children move forward from where they are. Furthermore, it does not believe children are simply empty vessels ready to be filled with knowledge, but rather it assumes that each child is a purposeful agent who interacts with the outside world.

The great American educator and philosopher John

Dewey summarized the differences between the two paradigms almost 80 years ago in his *Experience and Education*:

To imposition from above is opposed expression and cultivation of individuality; to external discipline is opposed free activity; to learning from texts and teachers, learning through experience; to acquisition of isolated skills and techniques by drill, is opposed acquisition of them as means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal; to preparation for a more or less remote future is opposed making the most of the opportunities of present life; to static aims and materials is opposed acquaintance with a changing world. (Dewey, 1938, p. 5-6).

Education following this paradigm aims to guide, support, and celebrate individual students rather than reducing human diversity to a few employable skills. It is designed to enhance and expand human talents and exceptionalities instead of standardizing them. Outcasts are the new normal in this paradigm. Great creative people are not accidents, but deliberately cultivated and supported.

It would be a mistake to say that this new paradigm denies the importance of common and essential knowledge and skills; they are required of all citizens in order for a society or community to function. By promoting child-centered learning, this paradigm places the responsibility of learning on the child, instead of external agencies. By following the children's passions and interests, this paradigm capitalizes on their intrinsic motivation and natural curiosity to learn. When a child has a reason to learn, the basics will be sought after, rather than imposed upon. If they are true basics, they are hard to avoid.

This new paradigm also recognizes the arrival of the era of globalization. Children will no longer live in isolated societies, and thus their context of learning and living should not be confined to a physical location anymore. They must become citizens of their local community, nation, and also the world. Hence the new paradigm asks that the education we need make the global society the default context of learning.

Shifting the Paradigm: Asking the Right Questions

As the GERM sends nations, schools, and teachers down the path to perfecting the existing education machinery, that is, to perfect its capacity to produce students who master the knowledge and skills prescribed by national and international bodies of authority, many questions have been raised and debates carried out in different circles. Debates and discussions have mainly focused on what knowledge and skills should be required of all students, what are the best ways to make student master them, and how do we know students are making good progress toward mastery. These debates and discussions consume a great deal of energy and resources, as people disagree in virtually all aspects: Should the curricular focus be exclusively on literacy, numeracy, and science or it should also include the arts, music, and humanities? Or should it be the so-called 21st-century skills? How much are teachers responsible for students' test scores? What are fair ways to evaluate teachers? How much should we expect student to grow each year? How do we accurately and reliably assess student learning of the prescribed content?

These questions are reasonable within the existing paradigm, just like debating over how to find stronger horses to pull a wagon, how many horses are needed to maximize the speed of the wagon, or what size wheels makes the wagon more efficient. But these debates will not lead to a horse wagon that can take us to the moon.

To get to the moon, we need rocket science, a different paradigm of transportation. Likewise, to prepare our children for the future, we need a different paradigm of education. And we need to ask a different question: How to ensure that every child's talent is enhanced, difference respected, curiosity protected, interest supported, creativity promoted, entrepreneurial spirit cultivated to meet the needs of a globalized society? This should be the new measure of educational success.

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Notes

¹ Adapted from *World Class Learners: Educating Creative and Entrepreneurial Students* by the author and published by Corwin Press, 2012.

ERROR 47 CORRECT: COFFEE



COFFE

ERROR 45 CORRECT: DIFFERENT



DIFERENT

ERROR 40 CORRECT: POLLUTION



POLUTION

ERROR 46 CORRECT: COMMUNICATION



COMMUNICATION

ERROR 08 CORRECT: BICYCLE



BYCICLE

ERROR 17 CORRECT: ADVERTISEMENT



ADVERTISEMENT

ERROR 06 CORRECT: BELIEVE



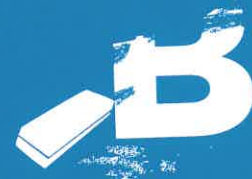
BELIVE

ERROR 14 CORRECT: DEMONSTRATION



DEMOSTRATION

ERROR 19 CORRECT: RUBBER



RUBER



What do these words have in common? They are all errors made by Spanish speakers in the Cambridge English Assessment exams. Each year we analyse more than 200,000 examinations in order to build the Cambridge English Corpus from which our linguistics software allows us to recognise the most common errors and to understand what areas are most difficult for students.

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The Future of Teaching

By John MacBeath

A lecture given in the Debats d'Educació lecture series (Fundació Jaume Bofill-Universitat Oberta de Catalunya), May 7, 2013. Document reproduced with permission from the Fundació Jaume Bofill and the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya in the *Debats d'Educació* program.

In 2013, we can say with some confidence that schools are today better places for children, better resourced, more humane, more intelligent in respect of diversity and individual needs, more likely to reach out to parents and communities. Children, it is increasingly accepted, have rights, too. The UN Convention on Children's Rights, ratified by governments around the world, came into force in 1990. Article 19 defines a right for children not to be 'hurt' or 'mistreated'. Article 37 prohibits 'harmful' punishment and Article 12 asserts the child's right to be heard and his or her opinions to be respected. These are, states UNICEF, 'a universally agreed set of non-negotiable standards and obligations..... founded on respect for the dignity and worth of each individual, regardless of race, colour, gender, language, religion, opinions, origins, wealth, birth status or ability and therefore apply to every human being everywhere'.

Better places for everyone

To be heard and to have your opinions be respected! How true was this of schools in the past? How true in the present? And what of the future? If schools are becoming better places for children may we attribute it to our enhanced understanding of the following?

- The complex relationship between sanctions and incentives, motivation and demotivation.
- School and classroom environments which can both promote and inhibit learning and effective teaching.
- The impact of parents, home and peer groups on children's values, attitudes and dispositions to learn.

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- The damaging effects of discrimination by sex, race, class and 'ability' together with enhanced opportunities for access and progression.
- Learning disabilities and special needs with access to improved diagnostic tools and remedial strategies.
- A discursive language which prohibits demeaning terminology and encourages positive affirmation and formative assessment.

Table 1 Satisfiers and dissatisfiers

Satisfiers	Dissatisfiers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Autonomy • Being valued • Being trusted • Being listened to • Time for learning, teaching planning • Collegiality • Initiative • Creativity • Contact with pupils • Scope for experimentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling of not being in control • Lack of time • Isolation from colleagues • Prescribed/ inflexible curriculum • Bureaucracy • Testing • Policy initiative overload • Pressure to meet targets • Lack of parental support • Poor student behaviour • Stres

The term 'intrinsic satisfiers' is used by the Institute for Public Policy Research report (Edwards, 2002) to denote those things which are essential to teachers' sense of professional fulfilment. Edwards argues that professional wastage will only be reduced by enhancing the positive features of the job — the core work of classroom contact with pupils, enhancing responsibility to determine the course of events in the classroom, with scope and freedom to apply initiative and creative skills to both content and pedagogy.

1. Theoretical knowledge and concomitant skills: Professionals are assumed to have extensive theoretical knowledge and, deriving from that, skills that are exercised in practice.
2. High quality pre-service academic and professional preparation: Professions usually require at least three years' academic accreditation plus professional induction, together with a requirement to demonstrate professional competence in the workplace.
3. Legal recognition and professional closure: Professions tend to exclude those who have not met their requirements nor joined the appropriate professional body.
4. Induction: A period of induction and a trainee role is a prerequisite to being recognised as a full member of a professional body together with continuous upgrading of skills through continuing professional development.
5. Professional association: Professions usually have professional bodies organised by their

members, intended to enhance their status together with carefully controlled entrance requirements and membership.

6. Work autonomy: Professionals retain control over their work and also have control over their own theoretical knowledge.
7. Code of professional conduct or ethics: Professional bodies usually have codes of conduct or ethics for their members and disciplinary procedures for those who infringe the rules.
8. Self-regulation: Professional bodies are self-regulating and independent from government.
9. Public service and altruism: Services provided are for the public good and altruistic in nature.
10. Authority and legitimacy: Professions have clear legal authority over some activities but also add legitimacy to a wide range of related activities.
11. Inaccessible and indeterminacy body of knowledge: The body of professional skills are relatively inaccessible to the uninitiated.
12. Mobility: Skills, knowledge and authority belong to professionals as individuals, not the organisations for which they work and, as they move, they take their talents with them. Standardisation of professional training and procedures enhances such mobility.

The challenge for pre-service education is to help neophyte teachers to deal with the dissonance between their own conservative experience as pupils and the transformational demands of the teacher, between their own lack of agency as a pupil and the authority of the teacher. Induction into the profession means 'rendering visible' previous experiences, the unconscious and latent models that students bring with them when they start their training programmes.

Meeting the criteria to be a teacher goes beyond these formal categories. For example, in a policy paper on the quality of teachers by the Association for Teacher Education in Europe (Smith, 2006), teaching is described as 'a profession that entails reflective thinking, continuing professional development, autonomy, responsibility, creativity, research and personal judgments'. They add, 'Indicators that identify the quality of teachers should reflect these values and attributes' (p. 7).

The Australian Council of Professions defined a profession in this way:

A profession is a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and who hold themselves out as, and are accepted by the public as, possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level, and who are prepared to apply this knowledge and exercise these skills in the interest of others.

Taking a *Teenangle* on Task Design

By Chris Roland

I would like to present you with some snapshots and discuss ways we might load activities for success. I find it useful to think about three different elements when considering an activity: order and control, the language it will teach and finally the fun element that will encourage students' engagement. Each of these three elements can be broken down and analyzed in detail with a view to tweaking them for the better, and together these three elements constitute what I call the *micromechanics* of an activity. This is the how-it-works, the real nuts 'n' bolts of an activity or a lesson.

When considering or planning a class activity, I give equal weight to the above three areas — and I want all three of them. In this piece though, I am going to focus on *fun*. Teenage students will perform a task they do not like for a variety of reasons: fear of the teacher, coercion, a sense of duty, because they are “good students”, to get high marks or just to get it over and done with. If a task includes an element of fun however, then our role as teacher, at least

for the duration of that task, becomes a lot easier. The more stimulating a task is, the less the teacher has to be goading their students along with: “*Come on! Come on!*” “*Have you finished yet?*” “*Two minutes left!*” or similar such prompting strategies.

Fun for me involves movement away from our default expectations, and I talk about that movement in



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terms of *shifts* (Roland 2013). Fun is surprise. Fun is something different. Now if we sat down and tried to design a handful of fun activities from scratch, it would take a long time. We do not have that sort of time. So what I suggest is to take existing activities and tweak them so they contain a novelty element, and I believe that just 5% of a full surprise is sufficient to throw our tired, restless, teenage students a lifeline and help them get through the (other two) study and self-constraint elements of the activity in hand. In my talk I called this 5% of a full surprise a *teenangle* and I would like to give you five illustrated examples of this at work.

Teacher in the middle

In the picture below you can see I had a very small group, but I have regularly done the same with groups of up to fifteen students in split classes or *desdoblaments* lessons. This is more of a seating arrangement than an activity in itself. The teacher sets up a pairwork speaking activity for the students. The more self-sufficient they can be during the activity, the better (as it frees you up to monitor), so a long list of questions or lots of pictures to talk about is good. It also helps to prime students with the idea that if they do not understand a question in this activity, they either ask the pair next to them or simply move on. The teacher then places a sheet of paper in front of each student, with their name on, but on the teacher's side of the table (these are the yellow pieces of paper in the photo). They operate as a kind of open file during the activity with the teacher shifting positions, monitoring and writing down language feedback (errors, extra language or strong points) on respective students' papers.

of paper *in front of them* with their name on it, on which someone who is *not* them is writing things *about* them — to really anchor students to the speaking task itself.

Classroom snapshots

We spend hundreds of hours teaching our teens vocabulary but very often they are unable to name the objects in the class itself (the common space we share with our students), which they see every day, such as: *overhead projector, board rubber, coat pegs, metal cabinet, air conditioning unit, cork board, fire escape, window sill* or *drawing pin*.



With the aim of enabling students to describe their class and their experience of it (including simple things like: *I sit on the front row, or I sit at the back*), you might take a photograph of your classroom then print it out in black and white. In the example above I adjusted the lightness using Photoshop before printing. I then gave each student a photocopied handout and the following instructions:

- a) In BLACK pen, label all the different pieces of furniture and equipment in the picture i.e. 'data projector'.
- b) In BLUE pen, write a factual piece of information about the item, i.e. 'It projects images.'
- c) Use RED to write a negative feeling about it, i.e. 'Sometimes it makes an irritating noise'.
- d) Use GREEN to write a positive thought about it, i.e. 'I like being able to see films in English here'.

The novelty of having the teacher 'trapped in the middle' (which I would term *spatial shift*) combines with a teasing tilt on ownership — the fact that there is a piece

Here are some close ups of my students' work.

outside of the classroom to write about external locations.

With a particularly responsible class of advanced-level teens, we visited two clothes shops, and they rated each for factors such as product range, staff friendliness, changing room facilities, layout and price. For the second part of the task they worked on a review of the stores, and I think this mirrors real-life writing paradigms of research and observation, with field notes followed by a more detailed write-up, better than just staying in the classroom.

If leaving your students to go into shops unsupervised is not possible within your particular teaching constraints, you might still be able to take them all to one place at the same time and have them write a review, say of a local square or a park. To stimulate students' evaluative capacities, you might discuss possible criteria with them beforehand. Regular attendees of my teens sessions may recognize the template format below — which has appeared in a previous edition of the journal. This time, the criteria are for external locations.



Finally there is a range of locations that students could visit and evaluate *within* a school — and for this, the larger the school, the better. They could visit, evaluate and review the playground for things like size, surface quality, seating, shelter and shade, sports courts/pitches and a whole host of other criteria they come up with themselves. The same could be done with the school eating area, gymnasium facilities or communal thoroughfares such as entrance, corridors, landing and notice board areas.

Information Sheets

-Imagine [I say to my students] that you are the boss of a multinational company that produces... something. A big, famous, multinational company, like Nike or Coca Cola or Inditex, and imagine you are going to have an open day where people can come and look round your factory and the offices and learn about you. Now as they come in, you're going to give them an information sheet, a bit like when you visit a museum. Are you with me so far?

-Yes, teacher.

-Okay, so what kind of information do you think you'll need to put on the sheet?

We arrive at things like when the company began, how big it is, what it produces and what people can do if they want to work for that company or even what the company does to help the environment or its plans for the future.

-Very good. Now you're going to work in groups of three. Everyone needs to write on the information sheet, so I need to see three different types of handwriting. I'm going to give each group the choice of three companies. When you choose your company, you get something like this. This is the Wikipedia entry for Blackberry or for Research in Motion, which is the company, and, as you can see, I've copied and pasted it as a Word document and printed and stapled it for you. Now obviously you can't include all the information here. That would be crazy. There are about fifteen pages of text — and a few pictures. So, what you need to do is to divide up the information, you can rip the pages from the staples, and go through, looking for the good bits that you're going to include on your sheet. You can write on these. You can highlight the good bits and cross out the bits you won't use. You can even cut out the images. You can copy any sentences you want, but you have to know what they mean because I will ask you to talk me through the information sheet later.

One piece of advice if you are printing out Wikipedia

entries for your classes is that it is much better to cut and paste to a Word document first. That way, you avoid printing out what can be pages of references and supplementary data or links at the end of the entry.

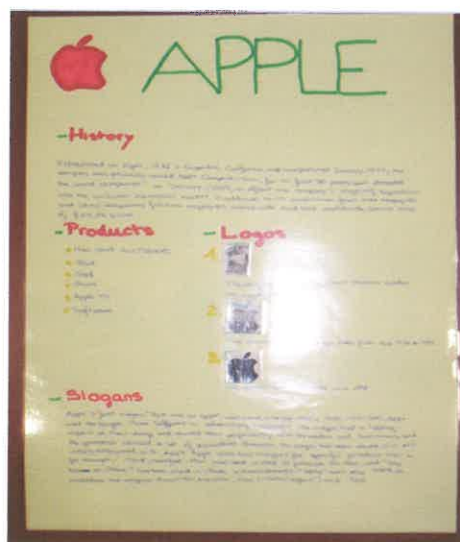
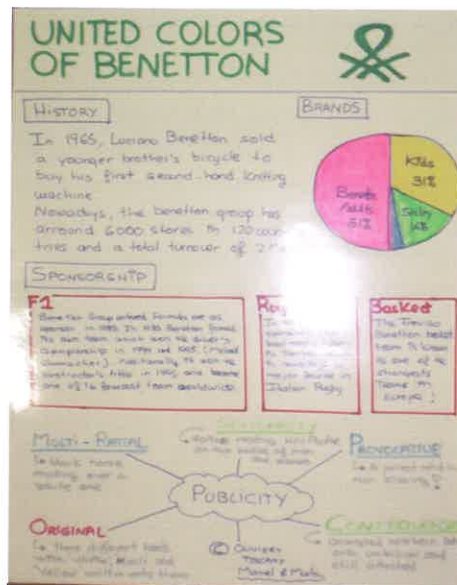
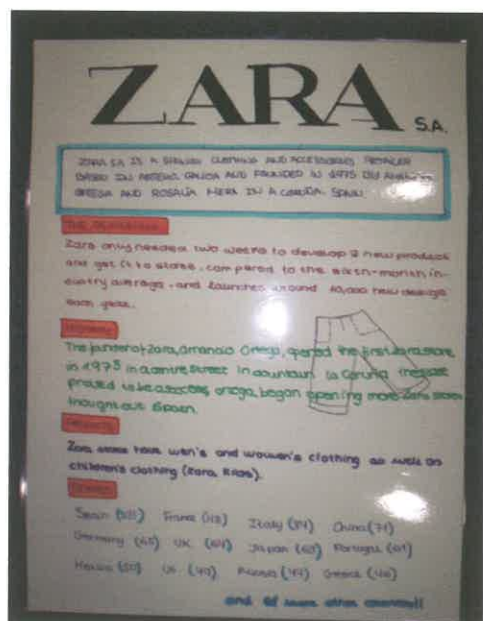
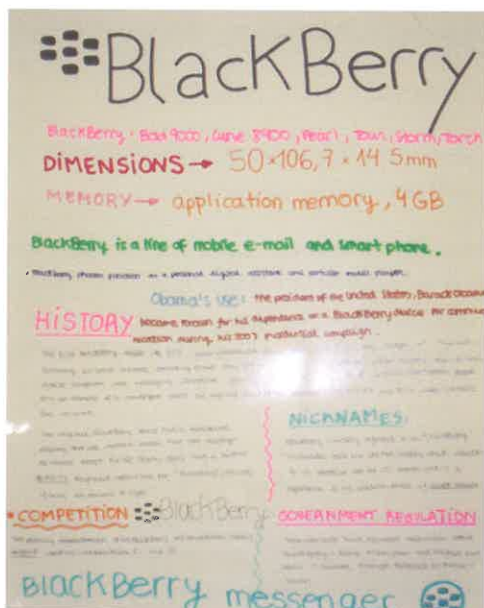
-So this first group gets a choice of Blackberry, or Honda or Levi's.

-We'll have Blackberry, teacher.

-Okay, and you next group get a choice of Honda, or Levi or Nintendo.

Allowing groups to choose like this (replacing the chosen option with a new one to maintain a pool of three) gives each group the sensation of choice without you the teacher having to have printed three times the amount of company profiles as there are groups.

-Class, you're looking to produce something like this, this, this, or this or this:



About 2 hours is good for this task. I did this activity with a group of 13-year-olds, a group of 16- and 17-year-olds and two adult advanced groups. The choice of companies that I gave to the classes differed — for example, I did not give Wonderbra or Calvin Klein to the teens, but it is not always obvious which work was done by the kids and which by the adults, which is nice, because it means that we have given the teens a chance to produce something that looks grown-up — that looks good. They are also working with information that is straight from the real world of things and at a level of real detail that might actually be relevant and interesting to them if the company is one whose services or goods they either use or are familiar with.

This project also breaks the traditional paradigm of giving our students a title and asking them to create a lot of information from a little. Here they have an excess of information, and the skill of the task lies in sorting through the text, identifying, classifying, prioritizing, choosing and re-organising. It is as much about what not to say as what to say. The *teenangle* here is that we are presenting our students with the bulk of the linguistic work already done and allowing them to enjoy an element of *power shift* by

emulating the work of an editor. There is also something of Dr. Frankenstein in the language work here, as they have to sew together original sentence snippets and make them work in a new context.

- Teacher, can we just do this on the computers?
 -No, because the computer room is busy today.
 -It can't be, because we're the only class in this particular building right now.
 -No...it's because there's a deadly virus that has somehow got loose in there.
 -Is that true, teacher?
 -No. I'm covering because the truth is that much uglier. There was a nasty homicide in there, and forensics have the place cordoned off. I saw a man with ginger hair and shades spraying stuff into the air before. I think it was Horatio Caine from CSI.
 -So, can we go to the computer room really, teacher?
 -No.
 -Why not?
 -Because we don't have a computer room any more.
 -Oh yeah.

The real reason is that if they have to copy out the info manually, students are much more selective about what they choose, and they actually read it.

- Teacher, how many words do we have to write?
 -Two hundred.
 -Ofuuu!
 -And... and you've got two hours only, starting now, and you all get the same nota (mark) as the other people in your group and there are points for: including good information, organisation and layout, accuracy, working well as a group and actually finishing. Oh yeah, one last thing. Ojo. Be careful. These Wikipedia entries sometimes include controversial information about the companies, such as if they had money problems, or one of their products was dangerous or if they had a big argument with another company. Do you want to include that on your information sheet for the visitors?
 -No, teacher.
 -Ready, steady, go!

Campaign Poster

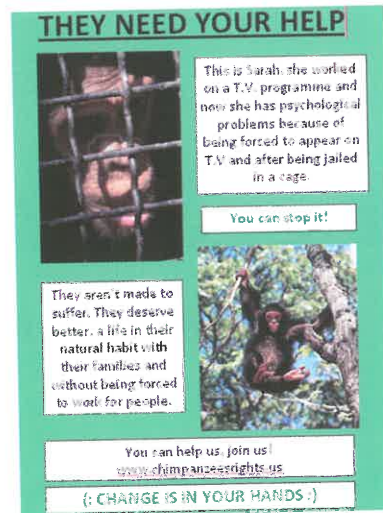
The final *teenangle* I would like to describe involves information transformation along two dimensions — format and language. Learners watch and listen to a short video clip in their L1, and the task is to take brief notes as they do so (in any language) and then transform what they have noted down and what they can remember into an A3 campaign poster in L2 (English).

The clip that I used was produced by the Fundación Mona primate sanctuary in Riudellots de la Selva in Girona to object to a television channel's use of a baby chimpanzee on one of its shows. In this clip, a representative of Mona explains how the classic chimpanzee sound that we hear on TV is actually a sound of panic and that the familiar chimpanzee 'smile' we often see is also a sign of fear.

The clip is available at either:

<http://antena3pasadelsufrimientoanimal.com/> or
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eMtEDuIZUU>

It resulted in pieces such as this, which came from a class of 13-year-olds:



For this type of task, any argumentative or documentary-style clip designed to raise public awareness of an issue can be used — whatever fits best with the topics in your course book. This activity, I believe, makes good use of students' mother tongue because, unlike a lot of other tasks, the students start off with a very good idea of what they want to say and how they are going to organise it, leaving you the teacher to do your real job of helping them to say it.

As with all our students' work, let us not forget the value of asking them to talk us, the teacher, through what they have produced when finished. Not only does this give them extra language practice but it also helps make meaning for them of the whole creative process and the time and effort put into it.

Many thanks to APAC for having me once again at the conference and to the editorial team who make these articles possible.

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Competencial Benefits of a Linguistic and Cultural Exchange

By Cristina Mallol i Macau

Learning English as a foreign language is nowadays a trendy topic in our country due to the poor level of most Spanish students. This poor level could be due to the fact that learners do not see the real relationship between the theory they learn in schools and its practice. The main objective of the exchange presented in this article is to make the usefulness of language learning visible. Fifty-two students from two different state high schools, one in Spain and the other one in the Netherlands, spent two weeks together. The process showed that the value the learners gave to their increase in motivation, the significance they granted to culture — being able to interact in a given society — together with the importance of the uses of ICTs are worth mentioning. The article concludes with a reflection on the advantages and disadvantages of linguistic and cultural exchanges.

Cristina Mallol has been teaching foreign languages (English and French) in primary and secondary schools for more than 14 years. She is now working as a secondary English teacher in INS Vilafant. She is a member of the research group “Competència interlingüística i intercultural en l’ensenyament i l’aprenentatge de les llengües” at the Ramon Llull University. She got her Ph.D with honours in 2006 with the thesis “Learning English through Translation: The Affectivity and Diversity Approach”. She is interested in using new and eclectic approaches to engage every individual student in the classroom.

1. Introduction

Lately, one of the pedagogical investigation spotlights in most high schools has been how to improve the English level of our students. The language learning process constitutes a mixture of formal and informal learning, theory and practice, which comes together in what we call effective communicative competence. This academic year, 2013-2014, in most secondary schools, teachers have been dealing with PILEs (Pla integrat de llengua estrangera) and TILs (Tractament integrat de llengües). This is a way to practice and think about what students have learned in their lessons. But again, learners are in a formal setting. We, as teachers, should also try to give our students opportunities outside of the formal setting to learn and practice the foreign language. Maybe with the aid of new technologies we will help them to open to a world full of possibilities and opportunities for real communication. But is this enough?

Teachers and especially their curiosity to go beyond classroom borders influence the students' learning interest. This fact obviously has an effect on making the teaching-learning process meaningful.

2. Theoretical framework

According to the latest surveys, published in 2012, the European Commission confirms that 88% of the population thinks that knowing foreign languages is very useful. The most frequent obstacle to learning languages is, according to the survey, the lack of motivation. So, let's start defining this term. Michael West (in Asher, Heys & West, 1995) points out that there are two types of motivation: 1) inner (e.g. personal interest in discovering a new culture) and 2) outer (e.g. need to pass an exam). In both cases, we can define motivation as an internal state that drives and maintains our behaviour in one direction (Woolfolk, 1993). Motivation is essential for any type of learning to be meaningful. So, for a foreign language student, a very important motivation factor is to confirm the usefulness of what (s)he is learning in a formal setting, such as the classroom.

We ought to remember that foreign language students should not only know about grammar and vocabulary, they should also know how to use the language in a culturally and socially acceptable way (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). In the same line, the Common European Framework of Reference emphasizes the importance of intercultural competence and existential competence in helping students interact with native speakers. Human beings communicate with each other through verbal and non-verbal language, consciously and unconsciously. We communicate through words, gestures, postures, etc. Each individual belongs to a social and cultural group, and this fact influences what one says, how one says it and the interpretations of others' utterances. Thus, the social identity of each individual is of utmost importance. Communicative competence wants to keep these social identities in mind to ensure success in a communicative exchange among individuals.

As stated by Oliveras (2000), the communicative notion goes beyond the linguistic code; it is also the capacity to know what to say, to whom and when to say it. Consequently, intercultural competence is an essential factor in communicative competence. To give a proper definition of cultural competence we should first define culture as the group of knowledge, experiences, values, beliefs, attitudes, time notions, roles, spatial relationships and acquired concepts for a group of people in the course of several generations (Samovar & Porter, 2004: 8). Now, Siever's cultural competence definition can be useful. He says that cultural competence is everything a foreigner should know or should believe in order to be able to get along in any role as a member of a foreign culture (Siever 2006).

As foreign language teachers we now could seriously reflect upon the idea of helping our students to be able to enrich themselves with other cultures, always preserving and improving the perception of their own identity. But how do we reach cultural fluency in any communication? Applying an elemental principle of empathy, that is to say, placing oneself in the position of the speaker and immersing oneself in his/her culture (Santiago-Guervós, 2010: 122). We may ask ourselves now: which is the most effective way to immerse our students in a foreign culture? And we could answer: through real communication experiences, such as linguistic and cultural exchanges.

John Carroll (1967) was one of the investigators that first analysed the benefits of studying a foreign language in a foreign country. He concluded that the time spent in the foreign country was one of the main indicators of the student's competencial level. After Carroll, many more scholars have investigated this issue: DeKeyser (1991), Coleman (1996), Pérez-Vidal and Juan-Garau (2011). Most of the studies have concluded that linguistic exchanges have many advantages for foreign language learners: they increase their linguistic abilities and social abilities, they offer a new way to see the outside world, they provide different methods of learning, they improve the learners' capacity to take decisions and solve problems and consequently they help the maturation process.

This is the reason why there are currently so many European programmes to foster the students' mobility throughout Europe. The learners that have participated in any type of exchange in a foreign country have experienced personal and academic benefits that are hard to forget. Any exchange, in addition to encouraging the "know what" to say in every moment, also promotes the "know how" to say it in a proper way, that is, intercultural competence. But every exchange goes even further: it involves the affective field of every individual. According to NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming), this affective field is one of the pillars of motivation, and motivation and action go hand in hand.

We are living in a visual world; therefore, to involve the learners to the maximum in their exchange process, we need to incorporate new technologies, mainly the ones that involve internet and collaborative work. This is an essential way of working for the present and future of our students. We are forming our future society. Individuals will need a great deal of creativity, excellent skills in working in groups,

and a high-quality technological command. ICTs (information and communication technologies) are more than a group of tools for teaching and learning, they are gear for giving learners different opportunities to be more creative and have and give access to varied and valuable information.

Summing up, we think that the theoretical framework presented here concerning motivation, interculturality and new technologies will enable us to understand the reasons why this exchange has been so useful to our learners.

3. The participants

The participants in the exchange were a group of 1st-year batxillerat students chosen from among three classroom groups. They were chosen according to their level. Every student was assigned a correspondent from the Netherlands. We chose the Netherlands because, according to the Eurobarometer, it is one of the best countries in regard to the English level of its students. Both groups of students, Dutch and Catalan, had an adequate English level so that they could communicate easily.

4. Exchange steps

The exchange was split into three phases throughout the academic year: a) preparation, b) action and c) consolidation.

- a) In the preparation stage, the teachers responsible for the exchange in both countries met to pair students up. The matching process was not random, it followed some guidelines. We took into account: interests and hobbies, allergies and other physical conditions that could make the stay difficult.

After announcing the matches, the communication among the participant students was immediate. Learners used their mobile phones, their computers and/or their tablets to get in contact with their partners. This had advantages and disadvantages. One of the advantages was that they immediately started to communicate in the language under study, and one of the disadvantages was that some students realized that their partners were not what they had expected. Some problems were solved immediately and others were harder to solve.

Before the trip, the teachers responsible for the exchange planned several meetings with the Catalan students to work cooperatively and try to talk about the cultural differences between the Catalan society and the Dutch society. Teachers wanted to minimize the cultural problems that could appear through the exchange process. In heterogeneous groups, students worked on different scenarios (see Appendix 1). Some contextualized situations were read, discussed and some possible solutions were given. At the end, the agreed-upon solutions were

presented to the whole class, and everyone could give his/her own opinion. In this way, students tried to solve hypothetical problems that might crop up at some point. These meetings were also useful for involving the students in their own teaching-learning process and for increasing their self esteem. Students were dubious about their possibilities to achieve proper communication while being in the foreign country. Teachers gave them a principal piece of advice: the key to preventing problems was "to talk". Communication was essential for solving any type of inconvenience.

In the English class, teachers in the Netherlands and in Catalonia were following their curriculum, but they also tried to carry out common projects where students had to create output to share. Afterwards, this output was valued and/or discussed.

Obviously, before the trip, a meeting with the parents of the participant students was also needed. Teachers had to inform families of their rights and duties and encourage them to get involved in their sons' and daughters' learning process.

- b) The action stage can be divided between: the Dutch students' visit to Catalonia and the Catalan students' visit to the Netherlands. In both stages there was formal and informal instruction both in high schools (e.g. the teacher explanation of the day timetable) and outside of them (e.g. the explanations given to different groups while doing the planned cultural visits. These groups also prepared simple but enjoyable tasks for their partners in order to foster interest in their culture). (See Appendix 2.)

During the action stage, apart from the main communication process among students, teachers prepared an assignment that students had to complete. It was about the contrast between cultures. Students had to ask, observe, analyse and compare cultural differences. This was also to encourage the use of English in the foreign family context. The topics the students had to deal with were varied: daily life, living conditions, personal relationships, values, etc. Summing up, there was work on customs and social habits based on the recommendations of the Common European Framework of Reference (Instituto Cervantes 2002: 97-98) that students had to hand in at the end of the process (see Appendix 3).

Another chunk of content that students had to complete with documents, photos and videos was a personal blog annexed to the exchange website. It was created to share a kind of personal diary with family and friends. It was also very useful because students could remember what they had been doing from the very first day of the exchange process.

- c) Finally, when the trip was over, a phase of reaction

to evaluate the exchange process started. It was time for the evaluation of the tasks, trips, experiences, etc. It was also time for self-evaluation. (See Appendix 4.) Moreover, in the English class, teachers also worked to reinforce the functional learning reached.

5. Conclusion

The objective of this article is to point out the importance of realising that formal learning is the previous step to using the knowledge acquired in a real context. The students participating in the exchange described their experience as: real, unique and very enriching. These observations are tightly related to their perception of the project's usefulness and to the value of their cultural and linguistic learning during the exchange period.

Even though the English language is perceived as a useful subject for the students' future, the formal learning of this subject is eminently carried out inside the four walls of a classroom -though Internet helps teachers to temporarily break these walls. The application of formal learning is a compulsory step for learners, and the exchange aimed to transform unwillingness, resignation or conformity into interest in improving one's English level to be able to achieve significant communication.

In an exchange any communication is contextualised and real. Thus, the cultural factor is also present. So, interculturalism is dynamic in any communicative interaction and allows learners to reveal whether they are using the appropriate utterances at an appropriate time in a concrete situation.

Learners, together with their families, valued the exchange process very positively because they stated that this project improved the students' autonomy towards their learning but also towards life itself.

As said before, new technologies were frequently used during the process. ICTs helped us communicate and exchange different types of projects throughout the academic year. Therefore students also realised the usefulness of these tools in the learning-to-learn setting. Students stated: "I would have never imagined the efficacy of Facebook, Skype or Whatsapp to know so much about someone, to be able to maintain contact with this person and to improve my language level while enjoying myself". These assertions go beyond the learners' present; they deal with their future and their ability to progress in their own learning process.

Learners build up their own professional and human profile through their experiences. I would conclude this article with an appreciation by one of the participant students that made me think and that I hope will also make you think. She said: "Gràcies per l'intercanvi perquè ens ha permès conèixer el que realment sabem".

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Appendix 1: Sample scenarios

Situation: The Netherlands –Family home-

In my partner's house there aren't blinds on the windows. I'm not used to it. What can I do?

Situation: The Netherlands/Catalonia –My partner-

My partner does not like to go out with friends very much and I love to. What can I do?

Situation: Catalonia -Friends-

My friends say my partner is boring. They don't like him/her. What can I do?

Appendix 2: Some tasks planned by the students

Task in Girona:

We are going to visit the city of Girona today. After our explanations about the Cathedral, the Arab Baths, the Girona Wall and the Devesa Park, you are going to have free time. We would like you to take photos and we will organize a competition to decide on:

- a. The most beautiful photo.
- b. The sweetest photo.
- c. The most original photo.
- d. A complaining photo.
- e. A compromising photo.

Appendix 3: Assignment to be completed

Family

What is different about family life?

What is different about Dutch television?

What is different between Dutch youth and your friends?

What is different between Dutch houses and houses in your country?

What do your correspondent's parents do for a living?

Area

What is different between the Dutch landscape and the landscape in your area?

What are the main economic activities in the area?

Why do you think Dutch people use bikes so much?

If you wanted to buy a typical souvenir, what would you buy? Why do you think it is typical?

Food

What do you have for breakfast in Holland?

Is it the same as you normally have? What is different?

What do you have for lunch in Holland?

Is it the same as you normally have? What is different?

Do you have something at tea-time?

If so, is it the same as you normally have? What is different?

What do you have for dinner in Holland?

Is it the same as you normally have? What is different?

What food is typical in Holland? Why?

Write down the times when you eat.

Holland

Breakfast:

Between:

Lunch:

Between:

Dinner:

Evening:

Catalonia

Breakfast:

Between:

Lunch:

Between:

Dinner:

Evening:

Why do you think is so different?

School

What are the differences between the Dutch school and your own school?

Outside:

Inside:

What do you like about the Dutch school?

What don't you like about the Dutch school?

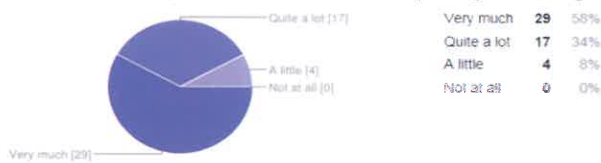
Appendix 4: Final evaluation questionnaire and results

EXCHANGE Figueres-Massluis 2013

The Exchange between the students in the Cendrassos High-school from Figueres, Spain and the students in the Revislyceum from Massluis, Holland is over. As a participant in this activity, we would like you to answer these four questions to value the significance of the exchange.

- To which extent are you satisfied with the fact that your high-school organizes exchanges for students?
 - Very much
 - Quite a lot
 - A little
 - Not at all
- Do you think this activity has helped you to improve your level of oral comprehension in English?
 - Very much
 - Quite a lot
 - A little
 - Not at all
- Do you think living with a mate and a family, till now unknown for you, has helped you to grow and enrich yourself as a person?
 - Very much
 - Quite a lot
 - A little
 - Not at all
- To which extent do you agree with the following statement: "The 14 days of the exchange have helped me to improve my general English level."
 - Very much
 - Quite a lot
 - A little
 - Not at all

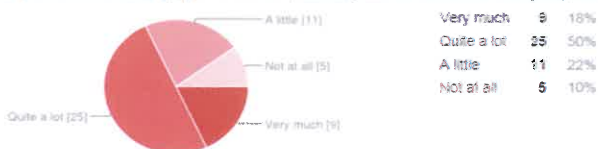
1. To which extent are you satisfied with the fact that your high-school organizes exchanges for students?



2. Do you think this activity has helped you to improve your level of oral comprehension in English?



3. Do you think living with a mate and a family, till now unknown for you, has helped you to grow and enrich yourself as a person?



4. To which extent do you agree with the following statement: "The 14 days of the exchange have helped me to improve my general English level."





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The APAC encourages teachers and APAC-ELT Conferences speakers to submit their work for publication in its journal. Here are some guidelines to help make the process go smoothly.

Length: around 2500 words.

Content and organisation:

Title – Content words capitalised and function words in lower-case letters. Centred and in bold type.

Author (s) – Each author on a separate line. Justified on the right-hand margin and in bold type.

Abstract – A summary of the content of the text in about 100 words. Justified on the left- and right-hand margins. Font: Times New Roman, 12, normal type.

Introduction – Use the word **Introduction** in bold type as the title. Leave a blank line between it and the text that follows it.

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Paragraph style – Block style: justified on the left- and right-hand margins, with no indentation of the first line but each paragraph separated from the next one with a blank line. Separate the last paragraph of a section from the next one with two blank lines.

Conclusion – End your text with a conclusion, using the word **Conclusion** as the section's title.

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Biodata – Finish with a third-person singular summary of pertinent biographical information on each author. Begin with the author's name, like "Joan Bosch is a teacher in La Farga Elementary School in Manlleu...". Fifty to one hundred words should be sufficient for each author.

Deadlines: For the APAC_ELTC Convention speakers, preferred date: March, right after the annual Convention. For other APAC members: June 15th for the September issue or by December 10th for the February issue.

Send it to info@apac.es or apacconvention@gmail.com both in Word format and pdf.

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