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As Media Officer for TESOL-SPAIN, I am delighted to welcome you to the first online publication of our Collected Papers. In 2012, after TESOL-SPAIN’s 35th annual convention in Bilbao, our monthly newsletter went online, and that same year saw the first edition of Selected Papers, which brought together articles based on convention sessions. Since then we have printed our Selected Papers every two or three years for members of TESOL-SPAIN, but now, in 2021, faithful to the sentiments voiced in our Green Policy, the time has come to put paper-based publications behind us.

My thanks go to all the authors whose articles appear in our 2020 Collected Papers who were either speakers at the Madrid 2018, Oviedo 2019 or Salamanca 2020 conventions, or submitted their article for publication in our e-newsletter. Thanks too to Kate Marriage, Hilary Plass, Lourdes Molejón, Ana Elena Martínez Vargas and Birgit Strotmann for all their help in proofreading this collection, and the Media Team, Ceri Jones, Daniel Brint and Ryan Gornall, for their hard work throughout the year.

Rebecca Place
Media Officer - TESOL-SPAIN
It gives me great pleasure to collaborate in this edition of TESOL-SPAIN Collected Papers with articles from the 43rd Annual Convention of TESOL-SPAIN, which took place in Salamanca, March 6th to 8th, 2020, with the support of the Faculty of Philology and the Department of English of the University of Salamanca. When reading these thought-provoking papers, you will most probably recall the exciting atmosphere of this event, attended by more than 450 participants from Spain and abroad.

In this volume, you can find contributions that make us reflect on the many challenges and barriers to education that are still present in our daily teaching, and the ways in which they can be met and overcome. You will read about special education needs and inclusive practices, multiculturalism, critical thinking and problem solving. Other papers address issues that are of wide general interest for language teachers working in different sectors. We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to all the authors for their contributions.

Nora Kaplan
Convention Coordinator Salamanca 2020
It was a great honour to coordinate the 42nd TESOL-SPAIN Annual National Convention celebrated in Oviedo from the 8th to the 10th of March, 2019, at the beautiful facilities of Palacio de Exposiciones y Congresos Ciudad de Oviedo. It was indeed a great opportunity for all English teachers to share best practices and learn more about the latest trends in EFL teaching: innovation and creativity, critical thinking, learning to learn approaches, inclusion, etc., in line with the Convention theme: “Dream big: Changing the world through education”. The convention talks and workshops were enormously valuable in our role as teachers of English, making people feel closer to other cultures and removing communication barriers, in order to embrace diversity and make our society more culturally and linguistically inclusive.

My sincere gratitude to all who participated in this event: Town Council and University of Oviedo, TESOL-SPAIN Board members, volunteers and local team, TESOL-SPAIN members, publishers and sponsors, and specially, our warmest thanks to all speakers and authors for their outstanding contributions.

Lourdes Molejón
Convention Coordinator Oviedo 2019
The 2018 convention theme invited us to reflect on the interrelationship between language learning and culture and the dynamic and complex nature of the community of classroom and school contexts. Our world is changing and becoming increasingly complex. Today’s social and cultural dynamism and the perceived vulnerability of certain social groups requires timely solutions to overcome the problems people are facing and prepare the younger generations for what lies ahead. It is time to continue our journey as educators, exploring the complexity of present-day classrooms and aiming at creating a responsive educational model that is culturally, socially and linguistically inclusive. Therefore, we specially welcomed presentations which dealt with multiculturalism, special educational needs, creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem solving, communication, cooperation, learning to learn approaches, literacy and bilingual education as well as those which were of wide general interest for language teachers working in different sectors and with students of all ages, from early infancy to adults.

Ana Elena Martinez
Convention Coordinator Madrid 2018
There are two main issues that have preoccupied me during my professional life.

The first is, does it really matter if the person giving a plenary or a keynote at an international ELT conference is a man or a woman?

Your reply will most likely be: No, it doesn’t matter, as long as the speaker is a professional. However, for many years, I wondered whether there were no female Big Names in ELT precisely because the vast majority of plenary and keynote speakers were, and in many events still are,
men. Women are under-represented at the top of the tree even though ours is a profession where most practitioners are women. I don’t mean to say that conference organisers actively discriminate against female speakers. Maybe they just don’t think about it, and I do see that as a problem, because there are many women on the organising boards of these conferences.

THE SECOND ISSUE IS A PASSPORT-RELATED ONE.

I arrived in Spain 16 years ago, and soon afterwards I started offering my services as a teacher of English. Although I had considerable experience teaching a range of levels and ages, was in possession of a post-graduate degree from a British university, had served as a Cambridge Oral Examiner in my home country, Argentina, and was already a published ELT author, I found I lacked what apparently was ‘the most important qualification’: I wasn’t a Native Speaker. ‘You have a fantastic CV but you’re not ‘a native’ was the mantra I kept hearing. And I wasn’t the only one! However, I have discovered that native English teachers could also be discriminated against. Some employers demand specific accents: British as opposed to American or Scottish or Irish, not to mention African native speakers of English.

In due time, I joined TESOL-SPAIN and I must say I have been very lucky to find a group of like-minded fellow members and Board members, male and female, native and non-native, who actively work to eradicate discrimination in all its forms.

For many years, even when gender balance was not an issue in ELT, TESOL-SPAIN Annual Conference Coordinators tried hard to ensure equal representation in the line-up of their plenary speakers. In recent years, we have extended our efforts to ensure that this balance is also present in our line-up of keynote and general speakers for our Annual Conventions as well as in our regional events.

AWARDS

In 2018 and 2019, we received EVE (Equal Voices in ELT) awards for our Madrid and Oviedo Annual convention line-ups, for which we are deeply grateful.

As for the NEST/NNEST issue, TESOL-SPAIN is particularly worried about the situation in Spain, where it is common for non-native English speaking teachers to be discriminated against, in favour of native English speaking teachers, regardless of their respective qualifications, even for positions in official government organisations.

TESOL-SPAIN STATEMENT AGAINST DISCRIMINATION

Back in 2014, the Board issued the following position statement against discrimination:

In compliance with Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU, TESOL-SPAIN stands in opposition to discrimination against teachers on the basis of their national, ethnic
or linguistic background, religion, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation, in terms of hiring, promotion, recruitment for jobs, or employment conditions.

With respect to the common, long-standing notion, unsupported by research, that a certain ethnicity, accent, or national background gives a person an advantage as a teacher of English, TESOL-SPAIN firmly believes that all teachers should be evaluated and valued solely on the basis of their teaching competence, teaching experience, formal education and linguistic expertise. Therefore, TESOL-SPAIN does not condone job announcements that list “native English,” “native command of English,” “native-like fluency,” “standard accented English,” or similar, as required or desirable qualities.

There’s still a lot to do to achieve equality in the workplace at all levels, but we feel that if teachers’ associations, researchers and teachers all work together, we can make the change and set an example to other sectors. We are educators, and we can fight against discrimination at all levels through education.
Students can learn how to use grammar in their own writing by studying how poets do - and do not - abide by traditional writing rules in their work. Poetry enables teachers to teach their students how to write, read, and understand any text, and it can also be used as a means to build empathy and understanding. In this way it can be a vehicle for messages of social justice, focusing our attention on, and better conceptualizing injustices, and helping us cope with such injustices.

Through a practical classroom-based approach, I will show how to enable students to engage confidently with poetry while becoming aware of social issues.
INTRODUCTION

Reading original poetry in class can foster trust and empathy in the classroom, while also emphasizing writing, speaking and listening skills. Students who don't like writing may like poetry as it can become a gateway to other forms of writing. Students can learn how to use grammar in their own writing by studying how poets do - and do not - follow traditional rules for writing in their work. Poetry can teach writing and grammar conventions by showing what happens when poets strip them away or pervert them for effect.

Poetry enables teachers to teach their students how to write, read, and understand any text but it can also give students a healthy outlet for surging emotions.

I would like poetry to become a choice that enriches the time spent in the classroom for teachers and students, letting poetry be poetry by working with it, in all its forms, in ways that foster memorable and informed encounters and create satisfying experiences that can potentially live creatively in future activities. If a poem is to become more than the object of critical attention, it has to be lifted off the page through voicing the text either out loud or to our inner ear. Therefore, there is great potential for it to be used to build empathy and bridge gaps of understanding between people who come from differing backgrounds, making it a vehicle for messages of social justice.

I will now present four activities on the topic of being displaced, based on a poem by Carol Ann Duffy, which can be used with adolescent and adult students.

‘ORIGINALY’ BY CAROL ANN DUFFY

Dame Carol Ann Duffy, Britain’s Poet Laureate from 2009 to 2019, is the first woman, the first Scot, and the first openly gay or bisexual poet to hold the position.

In her autobiographical poem, ‘Originally’ (available here), Duffy considers and explores the sense of isolation and confusion she felt as a child when her family moved from Scotland to England. She describes both the literal details of the journey as well as the deeper, metaphorical journey that she and her family experienced as a result of this decision.

The initial catalyst for the poem, the memories of the move and her gradual assimilation into her new home, provokes a more philosophical meditation on the subject of childhood itself. Perhaps the most significant line in the poem comes at the start of stanza two when she asserts that “all childhood is an emigration”, clearly revealing the universal truth that the process of growing up is always synonymous with change.

THINK – PAIR – SHARE: WHAT IS ‘HOME’?

Write the word HOME in big letters on the board. What associations can you make with that word? Ask students to create their own mind map with ideas. Then ask then to share their
ideas with a friend and then with the class. How similar or different were their perceptions of HOME?

Write the name of the poem ‘Originally’ on the board and ask students what the relation might be with the word HOME.

PERSONALISATION

Show the poem to the whole class or give a copy to each group. As a class, explore the language. Then offer questions to consider:

What does Duffy mean by ‘our own country’?

Where do you come from originally?

Have you ever had to move to another country / city / region / neighbourhood? How did you feel about moving?

If you haven’t moved, how do you think you would feel? What would you miss most?

How does your mind create images of that past place?

How does it differ from the reality of that original first experience?

THE MEMORY TELESCOPE

Ask students to pick a moment from the discussion of their memories, and to think about it really carefully. What details can they add – where, when, what, how, who, why?

They keep homing in closer and closer on the event, as if they had a memory telescope, trying to think about what they could see, hear, smell and feel. Did anyone say anything? What, and how was it said, and to whom? They tell these details to a partner and jot them down in an informal list.

They use the moment they have chosen in the previous activities to create a still image. Then they add sticky notes to each person in their picture – what are they saying, what are they thinking, how do they feel?

They add what happened just before their chosen moment; then what happened straight after; now run these scenes together in a slow-motion action replay of the event. They take ‘photos’ of each stage of their memory using comic strip software to produce a comic strip of their memory on the computer.
'I' POEM

Students use the informal list they have written to create an “I” poem. Its rules are as follows:

I am (two special characteristics you have)
I wonder (something you are actually curious about)
I hear (an imaginary sound)
I see (an imaginary sight)
I want (an actual desire)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)
I want to (something you actually want to do)
I feel (a feeling about something imaginary)
I touch (an imaginary touch)
I worry (something that really bothers you)
I cry (something that makes you very sad)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)
I understand (something you know is true)
I say (something you believe in)
I dream (something you actually dream about)
I try (something you really make an effort about)
I hope (something you actually hope for)
I am (the first line of the poem repeated)

CONCLUSION

Whether a particular poem translates the human ephemeral phenomenological experience in general into words, or translates the experience of one group of people to another, one thing is for certain: poetry isn’t going away any time soon. Like society itself, it is likely that the role of poetry will be forever-changing, adapting itself to the needs of society as poets see fit, and as the human experience necessitates.
Content assessment: The blind spot of bilingual programs

Daniela Avello García

BIODATA

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ABSTRACT

The scant evidence on content knowledge assessment has shown the impossibility of detaching content from language. Therefore, the use of instruments that clearly assess both components seems to be crucial when trying to achieve a fair integration. In addition, the limited empirical findings suggest that highly-proficient CLIL learners may be affected by language-switching costs in response time and/or content accuracy when the language of assessment (L1) differs from the language of instruction (L2). This article summarizes, in a teacher-friendly manner, the contents from my MA thesis (Avello, 2017) and my presentation at the TESOL-SPAIN convention 2019 (Oviedo), which intended to bridge the gap between research and practice.

KEY WORDS

language-switching cost, primary school education, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), content assessment.
INTRODUCTION

The term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL henceforth) was first coined in 1994 in the European context to label the teaching practices in which the learning process was done in an additional/foreign language. It emerged to fulfill the current demands of a globalized world, where students need to attain better language and educational results in the shortest time possible (Coyle, Hood & Marsh, 2010). From that point onwards, CLIL has increasingly been adopted due to its distinctive dual objective which may allow students to develop foreign language skills while learning contents from specific non-language subject areas (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula & Smit, 2010).

However, despite its dual objective, most of the studies conducted to ascertain the actual effects of CLIL have been devoted to L2 outcomes rather than content learning (Dalton-Puffer, 2011). In the words of Massler, Stotz and Queisser (2014), assessment has been addressed as a blind spot of the CLIL approach. Therefore, the guidelines provided by CLIL tenets seem to be insufficient to allow any safe conclusions concerning effective ways to approach the content and language assessment process in detail and accurately measure their learning. Given that diversity in assessment procedures to test content knowledge might result in different outcomes, it is of paramount importance to shed light on, at least, two important questions: Should CLIL practitioners measure the vehicular language when assessing content? And, which language should we assess in? L1, L2 or both? The following sections move on to discuss these questions.

CONTENT AND LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

In light of CLIL's dual objective, i.e. content and language learning, a common debate among researchers and practitioners has been on the role of language in content assessment (Hönig, 2010; Llinares, Morton & Whittaker, 2012). General CLIL guidelines suggest that content should be given priority over language since the latter is the unit of progress in the curriculum of each CLIL subject. In other words, content should subsume language in the assessment process since instruments should be an accurate reflection of the emphasis given to each objective during the lessons (Coyle et al., 2010). Nevertheless, research findings have revealed that despite the existing guidelines, “CLIL assessment practices prove to be a highly challenging area for teachers, who feel insecure about what to assess and how to address language corrections” (Fuentes, 2013, p.71). What is more, the evidence has shown that there is a gap between what practitioners claim to do and the criteria of assessment that are actually used in CLIL settings (Hönig, 2010).

As a result, different assessment tools have been developed so as to achieve a fair integration of language and content (see Hofmannová, Novotná, & Pipalová, 2008; Llinares et al., 2012; Massler et al., 2014). By way of illustration, Hofmannová et al. (2008) developed an integrative approach to assess Mathematics at secondary school level. Based on the fact that language and content are inherent components of CLIL lessons and assessments, they proposed a scale that systematizes their hierarchy. To put it in simple terms, a student who is able to solve a mathematical problem and shows an average command of the target language must
receive a higher evaluation than a student who is not successful at solving a mathematical problem but has an excellent command of the target language. Nonetheless, research that further investigates the actual administration of assessment tools that systematically integrate content and language is still needed.

**LANGUAGE OF TESTING**

To start with, the main issues concerning language of testing may be discussed by referring to two factors: L2 proficiency and the disadvantages some learners may experience when translating disciplinary vocabulary items from the L2 to the L1. With respect to the former, Coyle et al. (2010) indicate that an important point to consider regarding language of assessment is the fact that, at lower proficiency levels, learners may understand the contents but their insufficient mastery of the target language may prevent them from demonstrating accurate content knowledge. Therefore, the point for concern here is that teachers may be uncertain about the actual knowledge their learners have developed throughout the lessons and to what extent their L2 proficiency becomes a constraint during the assessment process.

At lower proficiency levels, some practitioners may recommend the use of assessments in the learners’ L1 since, according to some research findings, learners have been found to show a better performance due to their superior skills in their mother tongue (e.g. Bernardo, 2002). In contrast, Coyle et al. (2010) suggest the use of methods that mitigate language demands. For instance, completing grids, correcting wrong statements and answering questions that do not elicit complex language. As a result, CLIL learners would be encouraged to increase the use of the L2 over time so as to gradually master the target language (Coyle et al., 2010).

Regarding the potential disadvantages associated to the use of the L1 during the assessment process, Coyle et al. (2010) assert that L1 use would not only be unsuitable for multicultural classrooms but also for the cases where learners share the same L1. They contend that assessing CLIL learners in their L1 may have a counterproductive effect since the learning of specialized vocabulary is done in the CLIL language. Therefore, the use of the L1 to elicit content knowledge may hamper learners’ performance due to their inability to translate the key vocabulary items from the CLIL language to their mother tongue. In light of this issue, a number of CLIL programs have decided to instruct some non-language subjects through the medium of both languages: learners’ L1 and L2 (e.g. Ouazizi, 2016; Serra, 2007).

The possibility that learners’ performance in assessments may change according to the language of testing may also be discussed from the viewpoint of a language-switching cost (also labelled in the literature as cognitive cost). Based on this concept, CLIL learners might show an unequal performance in terms of response time and/or content accuracy when being tested in the language of instruction or in a language that differs from it. Although evidence is still scarce, a few studies have shed light on this enquiry.

As regards secondary school and university students, research findings suggest that the extent to which learners might undergo language-switching costs would partially depend on the subject areas instructed through the medium of the L2 (e.g. Mathematics), as well
as students’ L2 proficiency (e.g. in the case of high-proficiency learners). However, due to the high variability among research designs and the contexts where they have been applied, comparisons and conclusions among their findings should be done with due caution.

Concerning language-switching costs at primary school education, it is important to mention that poor attention has been placed on this context (Kempert, Saalbach, & Hardy, 2011). Furthermore, studies have been mostly devoted to content accuracy rather than response time. With the aim of filling this gap in the literature, this researcher (Avello, 2017) conducted an experiment with two groups of primary school learners (CLIL) in Chile (second and fourth grade), who were assessed on Mathematical word problems in both languages (L1 and L2), so as to reveal whether their performance significantly changed as a function of the language employed to elicit content knowledge. The results suggested that participants had already developed the minimum L2 proficiency level required to undergo language-switching costs either in response time (second-grade learners) or content accuracy (fourth-grade learners), providing a mismatch between the language of instruction (L2 English) and the language of testing (L1 Spanish).

These findings are in line with previous studies indicating that learners’ content representation may be closely tied to the language of instruction (Marian & Fausey, 2006; Saalbach, Eckstein, Andri, Hobi, & Grabner, 2013). A possible explanation for the discrepancy in the outcomes obtained by both groups (second and fourth grade) might be associated to the effects of age and the number of hours of exposure to the target language (time and intensity), which, in turn, may have an impact on the participants’ L2 proficiency levels (see Muñoz, 2015).

**CONCLUSIONS AND PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The findings of the study conducted by this author (Avello, 2017) have a number of practical implications. To start with, testing bilingual learners through the L1 may not be an accurate means to determine CLIL programs’ effectiveness if certain level of L2 proficiency has already been attained (e.g. Anghel, Cabrales, & Carro, 2016; Fernández-Sanjurjo, Fernández-Costales, & Arias, 2013). However, considering the impossibility of administering local examinations in the CLIL language, future research should seek strategies which may somehow diminish language-switching costs in bilingual learners. Further to that, school authorities should make informed decisions regarding the learning goal that should be given priority at their institution: results in local examinations or L2 learning.

Regardless of the drawback implied by the findings on language-switching costs, the evidence strongly suggests that appropriately implemented early-immersion CLIL programs may be sufficiently effective at enhancing learners’ proficiency in the foreign language. Likewise, contrary to stakeholders’ concerns regarding learners’ ability to give a full account of content knowledge through the L2 (Coyle et al., 2010), the evidence provided by Avello (2017) indicates that this issue did not mean an obstacle for most of the students.

Finally, by way of explanation, it is of paramount importance to emphasize that this article attempts to review the literature on content assessment in CLIL programs by connecting
research and practice. Therefore, the speaker does not aim, at any means, to criticize CLIL programs but to raise awareness of the challenges faced by teachers and students on these matters, so as to allow practitioners and stakeholders to make informed decisions in the implementation of this educational approach.

REFERENCES


It is during elementary school that girls exhibiting symptoms not in keeping with age-appropriate developmental expectations may be noticed. The aim of the article is to help teachers understand how the three presentations of ADHD (hyperactive/impulsive, inattentive, and combined) manifest in elementary school girls, so that they might be able to refer a learner to an early diagnosis or at least discuss worrying behaviours with parents.
WHAT IS ADHD?

ADHD stands for attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, which is a lifespan spectrum condition characterized by distractibility, impulsivity and hyperactivity (Quinn 2011: 2). ADHD is present from birth and emerges in childhood, but some individuals, many of them females, are not recognized and diagnosed until they are teenagers or even adults (Hinshaw and Ellison 2016: 3). ADHD is inherited (Quinn 2011: 2) - if one of the parents has ADHD, the child has up to a 57% chance of having this disorder (Barkley 2015: 357). Clinicians refer to three presentations of ADHD: inattentive, hyperactive/impulsive, and combined (Hinshaw and Ellison 2016: 5).

The *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM), a classification of mental disorders published by the American Psychiatric Association, lists typical symptoms of the inattentive presentation of ADHD as being easily distracted and forgetful, making careless mistakes, and having difficulty sustaining focus, especially when listening to instructions, finishing tasks, and organizing materials. Furthermore, individuals with this presentation are likely to avoid labour-intensive activities and they usually do not remember where they put things. According to DSM, individuals with the hyperactive/impulsive presentation talk, fidget, and tap excessively, have trouble staying seated, run about or climb excessively in situations in which it is inappropriate, blurt out answers, and have difficulty awaiting their turn (Hinshaw and Ellison 2016: 5).

Girls who meet the criteria for ADHD are more likely to be diagnosed with the inattentive presentation of the disorder than boys. Moreover, their symptoms frequently emerge later. Boys are also usually diagnosed with the combined presentation of ADHD (Almagor *et al.* 2011: 262).

THE IMPORTANCE OF DIAGNOSIS

The inattentive presentation of ADHD is the most difficult to spot, especially when a child is intelligent and has supportive parents (Grant 2017: 68) and it is highly intelligent girls with the inattentive presentation who are at the greatest risk of a delayed diagnosis. High intelligence allows them to compensate for their difficulties and makes teachers ignore their shyness or odd behaviours. Furthermore, boys are more frequently referred to a diagnosis, because they are usually more disruptive than girls in the classroom. Additionally, girls tend to try harder than boys to meet the expectations put forward by their teachers and thus mask their struggles with ADHD (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 255). Yet another reason why teachers tend to refer more boys than girls to a diagnosis is that the only ones who suffer from behaviours such as forgetting lunch money, losing homework, or seeming unmotivated in class, are the girls themselves (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 253).

A proper recognition and an early diagnosis of ADHD is extremely important, as it releases girls from self-blame that accompanies their lives prior to diagnosis (Quinn 2011: 11). The later the diagnosis, the more severe the symptoms of psychological stress and what
follows the greater the likelihood of adjustment problems in adolescence (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 1227). However, even a late diagnosis makes girls feel more in control as well as more forgiving of their past mistakes (Quinn 2011: 11).

The importance of an early diagnosis is unquestionable and teachers who spend so much time with elementary school girls should be able to notice some symptoms of ADHD. However, in order to be able to refer a girl to a diagnosis or at least to discuss worrying behaviours with parents, teachers need to have at least a basic understanding of what symptoms to look for in a child. The following part of the article can serve as a guide to the most common ADHD symptoms which girls are likely to exhibit in elementary schools.

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL GIRLS WITH ADHD**

**a) The hyperactive/impulsive presentation**

It is easy to identify elementary school girls whose most overt symptoms are characterized by hyperactivity and impulsivity, as they behave similarly to boys with ADHD. It should be stressed, however, that hyperactivity in girls might manifest more through hyper-verbalization and emotional excitability. Girls are also less physically aggressive than boys. Instead, they engage in verbal aggression, gossip, and social exclusion. Moreover, boys with ADHD show more conduct problems or oppositional defiant disorders than girls with this disorder (Arnold 1996).

We recognize hyperactive/impulsive girls because we find their behaviour inappropriate, especially relative to social expectations towards gender roles. Society is not fond of hyperactive, messy, disorganized, or tomboy behaviours in girls (Quinn 2011: 26). Furthermore they have more problematic relations with peers, due to, for instance, bossiness, interrupting, or excessive talkativeness (Quinn 2011: 10). Instead of compromising to maintain good relationships with their peers, they might demand to do things their way. They are less able to pay close attention to verbal and non-verbal communication of people around them and consequently it is difficult for them to participate in typical social interactions of elementary school girls. It should be stressed that the symptoms of hyperactivity/impulsivity decline with age, consequently making this presentation less visible over time.

**b) The combined presentation**

The hyper behaviours of girls with the combined presentation are more gender typical, i.e. being animated and talkative, and they find it hard to focus on the task at hand, as they are easily distracted. Their behaviours might be disruptive and impulsive, but they are not angry or aggressive. Girls with the combined presentation are seen by their parents and teachers as “silly, having chutzpah, or as being obsessed with the drama of their social lives” (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 1183). Their parents report problems related to symptoms of inattention and disorganization rather than to conduct problems.
c) The predominantly inattentive presentation

As it was mentioned before, girls are most frequently diagnosed with the inattentive presentation of ADHD. Since their symptoms are more internal and difficult to observe, they tend to be mislabelled, misunderstood, or completely overlooked. They are usually more passive and less direct than girls with the combined presentation and their behaviours are more in line with what is considered feminine. In the classroom they do not draw attention to themselves, because they are likely to internalize their symptoms. They are afraid to be the centre of attention and dread criticism. Consequently, they might be cooperative and compliant in order to win the approval of their teachers. They seldom have confidence in their knowledge and do not like to participate in the lessons. They process information slowly, and are likely to speak hesitantly with awkward pauses (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 1200). They find it hard to follow complex instructions and frequently miss deadlines. They daydream in class, while their desks and backpacks are messy and disorganized. Moreover, girls with the inattentive presentation have significantly more academic difficulties than boys with this presentation i.e. they are less motivated academically, have lower academic expectations, lower Grade Point Averages (GPAs), and lower IQs. As for social relationships, girls with the inattentive presentation fare worse than inattentive boys. Because they process information slowly, they might not be able to keep up with the quick repartee of other girls. They are also significantly less popular and more likely to be the victims of bullying (Elkins et al. 2011).

SELF-ESTEEM, SCHOOL PERFORMANCE, PERFECTIONISM, AND GENERALIZING

Interestingly, elementary school girls with ADHD have too high an opinion of their social competence, despite experiencing almost constant social failures. This tendency might be an attempt to hide their shame, might reflect their inability to accurately assess their own social participation, or may be an act of sheer bravado characteristic of a defensive coping style (Ohan and Johnston 2011).

Apart from describing their social difficulties in a positive light, elementary school girls perform inconsistently in school, which is hardly surprising as “inconsistency of attention can lead to inconsistent performance” (Strauss 2016). Furthermore, the conditions that allow the executive functions, such as the ability to organize, to plan, to self-monitor, to maintain time awareness, to problem-solve and shift focus intentionally, to work together vary from day to day and are beyond the control of girls with ADHD (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 1280). They also seem to be unable to learn from their mistakes and seldom make adjustments to their behaviours to not repeat the same mistakes all the time (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 1281).

Society does not approve of tomboy or masculine behaviours and girls, not only ones with ADHD, feel the pressure to be neat, organized, and well-behaved. In order to face these challenges, girls develop perfectionist tendencies, which allow them to become hyperfocused to complete assignments. As Nadeau, Littman and Quinn (2018: location 1275) observe: “(…) girls with ADHD feel they must force themselves to attend to every detail in response
to societal expectations that females have it all together, and be neat, as well”. However, perfectionism does not just mean doing a good job on a task. Perfectionism makes learners too anxious about every tiny detail. As a result, they get stuck and are unable to complete an assignment on time (The Understood Team).

In order to solve problems effectively people need to learn how to generalize from specific situations. However, girls with ADHD rely heavily on routines and structures and the novelty of a task or situation can negatively affect the skills of generalization these girls have mastered. Even when teachers or parents make efforts to anticipate challenges their daughters or pupils might face, small changes to, for example, routine activities can easily make the familiar unfamiliar (Nadeau, Littman and Quinn 2018: location 1286).

CONCLUSIONS

ADHD is a brain-based condition (Hinshaw and Ellison 2016: 30). Both teachers and parents need to understand that children cannot overcome ADHD by “trying to focus harder” or by making themselves “pay attention” (Braaten 2017). However, nowadays there is a variety of research-based therapies that can relieve the symptoms of ADHD, but before teachers refer their learners to a diagnosis they need to understand how these symptoms manifest in different age groups. This means that they need to constantly broaden their understanding of what ADHD is.

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Quinn, P. (2011). *100 questions and answers about Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in women and girls*. Washington, DC: Jones & Bartlett Learning, LLC.


In January 2017 there were over 1.5 million students in UK schools with a first language other than English (DfE Census, 2017) and the number is increasing year on year. Since 2010 there has been no ring-fenced government funding for ethnic minority achievement; therefore, specialist support for students learning English as an additional language (EAL) has declined rapidly. EAL Consultants in Local Education Authorities (LAs) have been made redundant and EAL provision in schools has increasingly been transferred to the Inclusion Manager (usually the Special Educational Needs Coordinator – SENCo). Trainee teachers receive very little training for EAL and in their course evaluations regularly state that they feel least prepared for teaching EAL. There are just 94 words referring to students with EAL in the Statutory Requirements of the National Curriculum (DfE, 2014):
4.5 Teachers must also take account of the needs of pupils whose first language is not English. Monitoring of progress should take account of the pupil’s age, length of time in this country, previous educational experience and ability in other languages.

4.6 The ability of pupils for whom English is an additional language to take part in the national curriculum may be in advance of their communication skills in English. Teachers should plan teaching opportunities to help pupils develop their English and should aim to provide the support pupils need to take part in all subjects.

This tells teachers what they must do but not how they should do it. EAL students have to learn the content of the national curriculum whilst learning the English language and they are assessed the same as native English speakers so there is a danger of considerable underachievement.

According to NALDIC, the (British) national subject association for EAL, five principles underpin good practice for pupils learning EAL (Table 1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. NALDIC Principles of Good Practice (South, 1999)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Activating prior knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Providing a rich contextual background to make the input comprehensible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Actively encouraging comprehensible output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Drawing the learner’s attention to the relationship between form and function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Developing learner independence</td>
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Drawing on research and many years of experience teaching students with English as an Additional Language (EAL), the author considers the principles of good practice and demonstrates some of the ways they have been successfully integrated into mainstream teaching and learning in one school to enable pupils, at different stages of English proficiency to gain confidence and raise self-esteem, accelerate English acquisition and ultimately attain more of their potential.

THE SCHOOL, ITS STUDENTS AND STAFF

For more than 16 years the author was the English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Literacy Coordinator in a British state-funded Muslim girls’ high school in the ethnically diverse City of Bradford, in the industrial north of England. Most students, aged between 11 and 18, were born in the more deprived areas of the inner city and 34% qualify for free school dinners. Most have had at least six years of education in the English state system by the time they reach high school but their ethnic origins are generally in Pakistan, India or
Bangladesh and 90% have English as an additional language to at least two others, such as: Urdu; Panjabi; Hindko; Pashto; Mirpuri and Bengali as well as Arabic, the language of Islam. Thus they are regarded as ‘more advanced bilingual learners’, (DCSF, 2009), although some of their languages are only spoken and many students are only literate in English yet have little experience of academic English in their home environment. A high percentage of the students have not attained the required standard by the end of primary school.

Compared with some Bradford secondary schools, relatively few students are totally new-to-English but, throughout each year, a few students are admitted from a variety of overseas countries such as: Algeria; Hong Kong; Iraq; Japan; Jordan; Libya; Saudi Arabia; Sudan and Tanzania. In recent years three new arrivals were refugees from Syria and two were Somali Oromo speakers from a refugee camp in Kenya. The school values their diverse cultural backgrounds, varying experiences and first language (L1) skills. Most staff are English-born - some from similar ethnic origins to the students - and about half are non-Muslim, including the author, who was the EAL Coordinator.

IDENTITY TEXTS FOR INITIAL ASSESSMENT

As part of the admission process, the new arrival’s listening, speaking, reading and writing skills in her L1 are assessed by a teacher, learning support assistant (LSA) or older student with a shared L1. Where no such support is available, the EAL teacher is usually able to assess how advanced a student’s L1 literacy skills are by observing the speed of writing, fluency, quantity, size and neatness when asked to write in L1 about herself. Where necessary, careful question and answer techniques, gestures and pictures are used to ascertain what has been written in L1. A student with some English skills will be asked to write the same story in English (Fig. 1). These language assessments are then recorded as starting points on a framework of language steps such as: Bell Foundation, (2018) or NASSEA (2015), linked to the UK English Proficiency codes, (DfE, 2017):

- **Code A:** New to English
- **Code B:** Early Acquisition
- **Code C:** Developing Competence
- **Code D:** Competent
- **Code E:** Fluent

The descriptors on the frameworks are then used to set targets for language development and recorded to show progress.
In Fig. 1(a) ‘my live’ is an indication that Al-Maha from Saudi Arabia has age appropriate literacy skills in Arabic, whereas in Fig. 1(b) Samiya’s L1 written work indicates weaker skills in Bengali. Their translated versions indicate weak areas in English skills for both students. Al-Maha’s English proficiency could be recorded as within Code B and Samiya’s between Codes A and B. This information is shared with mainstream colleagues along with an Individual Language Plan (ILP) using targets for progression from the descriptors in the EAL Assessment Framework. (Excell, 2018)

Fig 1. Two Initial Assessments: (a) Al-Maha; (b) Samiya
INITIAL DEVELOPMENT STAGES

If there is a written version of a student’s L1, she is given a bilingual and/or illustrated dictionary to use as reference at home as well as at school. The 100 Word Exercise Book series by GW Publishing (2006), with versions in e.g. Arabic, Urdu, Panjabi has helpful flash cards and scenarios about school, home, clothes, body parts, etc. in both English and first language. Digital tools such as Google Translate might also be employed, although, beyond single words and phrases, its use may be limited (Excell, 2015).

The school library has many bilingual story books and digital resources, which also aid language acquisition in the initial stages. Reading skills in both L1 and English can be assessed as the student reads both versions of the text and encouragement can be given by praising the student’s ability to switch between languages, especially if the teacher or LSA only speaks English.

LSAs and other students who share a L1 are invaluable for instant translation to aid access to teaching and learning in mainstream classes. LSAs may also use L1 in 1:1 sessions used to either prepare a student for future lessons or to consolidate what has been taught, thus ensuring that the student understands both the work and the homework set.

CASE STUDY: USE OF L1 AND IDENTITY TEXTS WITH A RELUCTANT ENGLISH LEARNER

May came to Bradford from Saudi Arabia when aged 10. After one year in primary school, she was still within the ’Early Acquisition’ stage (Code B) of English Proficiency. Lack of cultural vocabulary hindered development in listening so instructions such as ‘draw’, ‘colour’ and ‘tick’, prepositions and colours posed problems. Speaking was restricted to short understandable responses using single words and phrases and pronunciation was inaccurate. With support, she could read short pieces of text aloud, although her refusal to use phonics reduced her ability to decode and she often reversed words. Her writing in English was immature compared to her fluent Arabic. She could copy words but confused ‘bp’ and ‘bd’. With support, she was beginning to recognise some English grammar and syntax in sentences. Her lack of achievement suggested that she may have learning difficulties. However, although she was a reluctant English learner, she was able to achieve an A* in Arabic GCSE when aged 13. (Excell 2018)

After not making expected progress in the mainstream, she was withdrawn for language support during timetabled Arabic lessons, which were too basic for her. The EAL teacher had successfully used stories from Gordon Ward’s (2007) ‘Racing to English’ CD with previous EAL learners. Written in simple language by newly arrived children from many countries, these stories share their own experiences. Beginning with a story and picture to read and discuss, the four-sided booklets contain several enjoyable related activities which follow NALDIC’s five basic principles:
1. sequencing - the story cut into strips ready to re-order;
2. key words, based on the story, which can be translated;
3. questions requiring ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answers (orally);
4. questions requiring ‘Yes I have’ or ‘No I haven’t’ (orally);
5. questions requiring a longer answer (rehearsed orally, scaffolding answers before the student writes them);
6. longer writing task, encouraging students to write in their home language and English;
7. a wordsearch of key words;
8. making up questions which don’t have an answer in the story;
9. writing a longer story, using the new questions to add detail.

The ‘Spider in the Shoe’ story had been particularly popular with students from diverse linguistic backgrounds because all had prior knowledge of spiders, so May was encouraged to read the story with an EAL teacher who used gestures and illustrations to provide context to aid understanding. Afterwards activities 1 to 5 in Gordon Ward’s sequence were completed. For activity 6, May was asked whether she had ever been frightened by a spider. She said she had, so the teacher actively encouraged comprehensible output by discussing the experience with her in English, using actions and prompting answers with ‘who?’, ‘where?’, ‘when?’ to ensure that she understood May’s story. When writing her story in Arabic, May wrote quickly, neatly and fluently. After more questioning to elicit the story, the teacher scribed the ‘English version’ of ‘Spider in the Bathroom’ making the grammatical elements explicit. Later, the Arabic teacher confirmed that the English translation of the Arabic story was accurate (Fig. 2).

Bernhard and Cummins (2004) refer to the creation of such stories as ‘Identity Texts’ which ‘hold a mirror up to the students in which his or her identity is reflected back in a positive light’.

May was pleased with her achievement and was keen to type up the story in Arabic and English. At that stage she was reluctant to use phonics for letters so, as she typed, the teacher spelled out the words phonically and the only errors were with vowels. To extend May’s English cultural knowledge, the EAL teacher explained the nursery rhyme ‘Little Miss Muffet’ about a spider. She enjoyed the story so much that she typed it up, finding illustrations on the internet. Mounting her efforts on a wall display raised her self-esteem. She selected key words in the story to create a wordsearch and solution (developing learner independence). Her English teacher made copies for the other students in the class to solve. (Excell (2018) 

Active learning continued with ‘When I hurt my brother’, a story in Arabic and English, about a time when May’s parents were angry that she had fought with her brother when he took her mobile phone. Without encouragement she was eager follow Gordon Ward’s (2007) sequence of related activities. Bernhard and Cummins (2004) explain that, by promoting active learning, the teacher allowed May to take ‘ownership of the learning process’, investing her identity in the outcome of her learning, which suggests that ‘the resulting understanding will be deeper than when learning is passive.’
The stimulus for the activities in Fig. 3 was a true BBC news story (March 2009) about a sandstorm in May’s home city of Riyadh - something she had experienced many times. Building on prior knowledge, supported by the EAL teacher, she read the news page and wrote a simplified version of the story in English with minimal help. She was encouraged to rehearse the sentences out loud at each stage so that they could be corrected and typed. Her ICT skills enabled her to add a few pictures from the BBC story. The booklet that followed included all the features in Gordon Ward’s – sequence, key words, longer questions and some extra activities, including the Arabic version of the story - which was evidence of how much she had progressed into English Proficiency Code C.

Bernhard and Cummins (2004) state that: “When students share identity texts with multiple audiences (peers, teachers, parents and grandparents) they are likely to receive positive feedback and affirmation of self in interaction with these audiences.” This certainly was the case when the finished versions were shown to May’s English teacher. She asked her to teach the whole class about the sandstorm in both languages - which she did very confidently, leading the activities. As a consequence, all the students in the group wanted to write their own stories. The English teacher changed her lesson plans to allow the students to produce
similar books and the EAL teacher supported individuals in the same way as she had with May (Excell 2018).

![The Riyadh Sandstorm: BBC News 08-03-2009](image)

**Some of the activities included**

Please use long answers for the next questions.

14. Where is Riyadh?
15. Why did the sandstorm come to Riyadh?
16. Why did the people cover up their faces?
17. What happened at the airport when the storm came?
18. Why did the schools have to close?
19. Why were there traffic jams on the roads?
20. How many days did the sandstorm stay?

Now think of the answers to five questions about the sandstorm that we do NOT know the answer to. Did the buses stop running? What time did the airport re-open? Did anyone die? How can people see in the storm? What do people say to each other?

Now re-write the story about the sandstorm but include more detail to make it longer.

**Fig. 3. BBC News story activity**

Although many students only had spoken knowledge of their first language, they still managed to include relevant L1 vocabulary such as places and people’s names. They used their ICT skills to integrate pictures and WordArt titles. As Bernhard and Cummins say, “Technology can increase the audience for the students’ books and provide reinforcement for students’ literacy practices.” The students took turns to ‘teach’ the rest of the class about their language and culture. From Pakistan there was a Factfile which included cities, mountains, languages, currency; fashions such as salwar kameez, dupatta and chunni; foods such as naan, gulab jamun, jalebi, halwa and chapattis; flooding events which involved place names Attock, Balochistan and Turbat; and weddings with nakkah, mehndi, matali and rukasti. From Bangladesh students learned about Cyclone Sidr and Dhaka - using Sylheti; how to write Bengali letters; foods such as paratha, rasmalai, thoya, khoi, lassi, panta; and Bengali poetry. They also learned about the school day in Saudi Arabia with students such as Abdulatef, place names including Jeddah and Mecca and festivals such as Id ul-fitr (Excell 2018). As a ‘Literacy Specialist’, said (Bernhard and Cummins) “…they shared it with the class and they just beamed. They were so excited to show their book and felt so proud.”
**THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE IDENTITY TEXTS**

An innovative programme of learning making form and function explicit was developed from a British Council competition “Old Tales Retold”, for a 100-word story which included 10 words in L1 or another language. This provided Grade 8 students with an opportunity to use their identities and L1 creatively in a range of English schemes of work – creative writing, play scripts, persuasive writing, collaborative group work, speaking and listening, drama… allowing students in English Proficiency Codes B and C to progress to Code D – ‘Competent’.

**Stage 1 of this activity** involved creative writing: individual students choose a traditional story; rewrite the story changing the context, setting, names etc; use 10 key words in another language; write a glossary; share the story with the class; explain the moral of the story; create an activity to consolidate the learning (e.g. quiz, word search, gap fill…) (Table 2 and Fig 4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2. Old Tales Retold – can you guess the original?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Elves and the Curry Maker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akbar’s New Clothes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yusuf and His Grandfather</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salma and her Silly Slipper</td>
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<td>Arooj the Slave Girl</td>
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<td>Hamza and the Cornfield</td>
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<td>Hoicconip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ruby in Dubai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Badsha Akbar and the Ice Touch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumpunzel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Killing and Karma (Macbeth)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris and Amirrah (Romeo and Juliet)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Stage 2:** Convert the story into a play script (Fig. 5)

**Stage 3:** Advertise the play with a poster

**Stage 4:** Collaborative Group work to choose one playscript to dramatise with stage directions, music, costumes, props…; rehearse; perform; vote for best playscript, play, actor, costumes, make up etc; role play an academy awards ceremony; video the performance and include Oscars, red carpet, vox pop, ‘and the winner is…”
**HARRIS AND AMIRAH**

Amirrah, a girl from Azad Kashmir with strict parents, and Harris, a young man from Mirpur, loved each other but… their parents were enemies. When Amirrah asked her father,

"ںیم ےن بتراح ےک ےئل یداش انرک ےتہاچ وہ "

"Nay!" screamed her father.

**YUSUF AND HIS GRANDFATHER**

(The Hare and the Tortoise) retold

Yusuf and his Grandfather were at the annual _کٹا_ in _نیکی_ کSHA in زید لیهک. Yusuf was eager he had ائل تیج every race he participated in.

**Fig. 4. Two Old Tales**

**DUMB PUNZEL THE PLAY**

*Scene 1.* - The King and Queen holding baby Dumb Punzel up, all the villagers watching. *(Camera angle-low angle shot looking up)*

**Narrator:** She is the cutest, adorable, lovable princess.

**Villager 1:** She’s so cute

**Villager 2:** Adorable

**Rest of the villagers are whispering and admiring her.**

**Wicked Witch:** And very, very useful

**Narrator:** Unfortunately, Rapunzel grew up to be as dumb as a box of rocks and as clumsy as a drunk. Everything she touched broke; Dhaka had constantly been building and fixing stuff. Behind her back her people used to call her, ‘Dumb Punzel’.

**Fig.5. Conversion into a Play Script**

Some members of the school’s senior management were invited to the final outcome of Stage 4 and were astonished by the language learning that had taken place and the self-esteem gained by the students. *(Excell 2018)*

Identity texts allowing students in English Proficiency Codes C and D to progress to Code E – Fluent – came through the literacy charity ‘First Story’, whose strap line is ‘Changing lives through writing’. A writer-in-residence is provided to work with a group of students as an extra-curricular activity, eventually leading to the production of a professionally published
anthology of their best work celebrated by an official launch and book signing event. (Fig. 6)

Fig. 6. Examples of ‘First Story’ anthologies

The Anthology titles were chosen democratically by the students: ‘Into Our World’, ‘Where Thoughts Can Lead’, The Boombox of Words’, ‘Spilt Ink’. The blurb always reads: ‘First Story believes that there is dignity and power in every person’s story and here you’ll find young people expressing themselves in their unique voices.’

Throughout the year there are other stimulating opportunities – events with other schools in universities, galleries, museums... competitions, residential... Student experiences, identities, concerns, opinions etc. are encouraged and explored in the writing activities (Fig. 7, 8 and 9) (Excell 2018).

Islam

It’s my religion, not my mind.

So don’t discriminate against me for who I am.

Love me, like me, just don’t judge me.

After all, I’m not so different from you.

Modesty shouldn’t make me strange

Fig. 7. Poem by a Grade 8 student aware of prejudice

Confidence and attainment are evidenced by several students having been winners or runners up in national writing competitions; some students have read their work on the stage in university lecture theatres, the O2 Arena in London, prime-time on BBC Radio 4 and one student was invited to a reception at 10 Downing Street – residence of the British Prime Minister.
**Fig. 8.** Poem by a Grade 8 student revealing her thoughts on being a Muslim

**Authentic**

New beginning, new life, new air but the road seems long

I look up at the sky wishing to be clouds

I love the quote “I’m a doer not a waiter” but

some thoughts and the fears of the past paralyze me.

I’m no Christian but I want to believe in the word

“resurrection”; I want to wake up for the first time,

Smell the air like I have never inhaled before and

Take my first step like a new born baby.

The road is not smooth, the grass is hardly green

but the more I walk the more I see the new me.

**Fig. 9.** Poem by a Year 9 Yoruba speaking student who recently arrived in England from Nigeria.
The EAL teacher worked with a group of students from Bangladesh, Libya, Pakistan, Qatar and Saudi Arabia, working within English Proficiency Code C ‘Becoming Competent’ to produce PowerPoint Identity Texts about their home countries in the form of tourist guides. The students decided on the slide titles to explain all aspects such as scenery, climate, animals, cities, government, food and clothes. This was detailed, meaningful, cross-curricular work involving independent learning. Internet searches and other ICT skills allowed them to check spellings and grammar, although teacher-supported if necessary. These were shared with their classes as PowerPoint presentations and then with the rest of the school and visitors (via plasma screens) with the same sense of excitement and pride.
Bernhard and Cummins on Slide 29, explain that in identity texts, the essential elements are that ‘children see themselves’ and ‘talk about themselves’. There is ‘identity investment’ and ‘increased pride’ which develops an ‘affective bond to literacy’ and ‘cognitive engagement’. It is therefore rewarding to see that other English teachers have now included identity texts into the grade 9 curriculum in the form of holiday brochures, information posters and persuasive texts to advertise features of their home countries. Self-esteem is created when students identify with work displayed on classroom walls or more widely on the plasma screens around the school.

Furthermore, a Heritage Project in Grade 7 English uses group work to explore Pakistan’s Heritage, as part of Southeast Asia, ranging from The Harappans, Silk Routes, Spread of Islam, Mughal Emperors, The East India Company, The Raj and Independence. (Fig. 11) For these an additional audience has been created by taking groups of students out to local primary schools to ‘teach’ them about their shared heritage (Fig. 12) and two students were filmed for a Teachers’ TV programme on Community Cohesion (Dickey, B. 2010).

**Fig. 11.** Examples of group work in the Grade 7 Heritage Project exploring ethnic origins and celebrating Pakistan’s historical culture

**Fig. 12.** Two students filmed for Teachers TV whilst teaching primary school children about their heritage
Evidence of attainment is demonstrated by the school’s ability to unlock the potential in its students as shown in Fig. 13. Students arriving in Year 7 have achieved below national average scores in the final primary school assessment tests (KS2 SATs). Five years later, in GCSE exams, their progress is well above the national average.

**Fig. 13.** Simple graph created by students to show pride in their achievements at GCSE: improvement of the cohort over 5 years is illustrated.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Effective and successful classroom interventions involving identity texts in a school predominantly containing EAL students have been presented and discussed. Evidence of the effectiveness has also been presented. Experience of this type at the working face of the education system is essential in developing strategies for improving the performance of this increasingly important class of students.

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Educational Systems, Scottsdale, AZ, November.


A creative writing journal with multimedia prompts such as pictures, songs, and videos engages TESOL students and encourages self-expression. The development of creative thinking skills allows students to practice different text types naturally while gaining confidence in the language.
INTRODUCTION

Creativity, in my view, is an essential part of the learning process, and by extension should be present in the language classroom. I have applied this to the teaching of writing in the form of a creative writing journal. Many students are familiar with standard weekly journals and prompts such as *my favorite thing about fall*, *if I could be any animal which would I be*, or *describe your room*. These are, in fact, the type of prompts I like to use in a creative writing journal, because they are open-ended questions without an ostensibly correct answer. The most significant difference between what I did in school as a student and what I do now as a teacher lies in the available technology. I use multimedia prompts such as songs, videos, or pictures in order to create more visual/auditory stimuli rather than a simple phrase on a piece of paper. My students write the journal using a platform such as Google classroom, or in a notebook, depending on objectives and resources.

I would like to first emphasize the idea of creativity in the classroom and then discuss the methodology behind the writing journal. Next I will give some examples of how I use multimedia prompts and what types of activities can be done, and to conclude I will discuss perhaps the most ambiguous part of the journal, the evaluation.

CREATIVITY

I consider a writing journal to be a regular writing activity done in response to prompts. I do it once a week, and the prompts I use most often are popular songs, books read out loud, video clips, TED talks, interviews, and paintings. One of the major advantages of this type of exercise, and I will come back to this, is flexibility. It is flexible in terms of type of prompt, in terms of methodology, in terms of evaluation, and in terms of content.

The first journal prompt I use is a picture of a tree, and my instructions are simple. I tell the students to write, and that they have five minutes. When I tell students to write, with no further instruction, they tend to ask a lot of questions before they start. How long does it have to be? Can we describe the tree? How do you say foliage? How many points is this worth? Do I have to use the grammar we have been looking at? What type of tree is it?

I gently brush off all these questions and tell students they are free to write about anything they want, based on the picture. In this first journal entry there is normally a description and perhaps a timid attempt at some type of narrative. I then give them the same picture at the end of the year, after writing weekly journals, with the same instructions. This way they can see the difference between the first and last one (even though the prompt is exactly the same), and more importantly they can see their own progress in creative thinking and creative writing.

In the twenty-first century, creativity in education is essential. Sir Ken Robinson (2006) sustains in a popular TED Talk that “creativity is now as important as literacy.” I believe that the two go hand in hand. At a school in Saskatchewan, Canada (2017) they have encouraged creativity by instituting a kind of Genius Hour—time set aside for students to pursue creative
projects such as creating a video game or making a mini-planetarium to give a lesson on black holes.

These are some wonderful ideas and initiatives that serve to bring creativity back into the classroom. Creativity, in my view, is fundamental to language learning and communication in general, and I have found that an effective way to teach it is to first focus on content rather than form. On a practical level this means that I tend to stay away from correcting grammar and spelling, especially at the beginning of the year, and focus more on things such as complete ideas, answering the question, thinking outside the box, integrating personal experiences or affinities, and developing points of view. Then using correct grammar, punctuation, spelling, and register follows more naturally.

A few months ago, in a class with 16-year-olds, we were practicing possible exam prompts for the writing section. One of them was something along the lines of the following:

Write a letter to your employer asking for time off to go to a week-long training course.

An adequate response to this prompt comes in two parts. It first requires critical and creative thinking, and then execution of a text type. I will deal with each of these in turn. As far as critical thinking goes, students should realize that this question assumes at least three things:

1. I have an employer.
2. I have a training course to go to.
3. These should be connected in some way.

Here is where creative thinking comes into play. Students need to answer the following questions:

1. What is my job?
2. What course am I going to?
3. How will this help me at my job?

Finally, the students can sit down and write. They probably realize by now that the text type should be a letter or an email, asking for permission and necessarily explaining the importance of the course. This would be a viable process for answering this type of question, and it includes both a critical thinking and a creative thinking component.

I would like to take a moment to integrate an Ani DiFranco song into this idea. In the spoken word track “My IQ” from the album Puddle Dive (1993), the last line is “every tool is a weapon, if you hold it right.” I believe this applies to writing, as it is all too often used by teachers to punish students, rather than being an outlet for expression and creativity as well as a way to practice critical thinking and communication skills. In my opinion, this requires a rethinking of how writing is approached in the classroom.

This brings us to the following question: How can creative writing be a tool in the classroom? Firstly, it introduces creative writing as a process. In this way it is possible to engage the
students with interesting themes. The journal encourages self-expression as well as risk-taking in that it is done individually and not in front of the class. Students develop creative thinking skills thanks to the prompts, as well as practicing different modes of expression related to different text types. Finally, they gain confidence with the language as a tool for expression.

It then follows that the objective is to create dynamic writing tasks along with a meaningful, structured writing time. This allows students to use prior knowledge, make connections, and analyze critically (all steps towards critical thinking), and in the end produce more. Here it is also possible to emphasize the difference between writing and typing, where one can be done on a digital platform and the other in a notebook. I normally start with a notebook at the beginning of the year and then work my way to a digital platform.

MULTIMEDIA PROMPTS

I have used *The Green Dancer* (1879) painting by Edgar Degas as a journal prompt. In it there are three dancers dressed in green in the foreground, but only one is in full view. I practice research skills by having students write a short history of painting or a short biography of the painter. They can listen to a report about the painter and summarize it. They can do the same with an article about the painter or the painting. They can evaluate the painting by writing a review. Here is where scaffolding can be used to guide students as to the structure of a review. They can create a life story for the ballerina, imagine a day in the life of the dancers, or write a free composition based on the painting. They can imagine the painting was a movie poster or the cover of a novel and extrapolate what the plot would be.

This approach allows for the content to be flexible; the activity can be adapted according to level or objectives. The methodology is also flexible. It is possible to do backward planning in order to reach certain goals by the end of the year, especially if you know this will be a sustained activity done on a regular basis. It is not difficult to differentiate the same content, proposing more complex vocabulary, structures, or text types to more advanced students. It is also possible to use scaffolding to demonstrate and model structure and register prior to engaging with the prompt.

I would now like to mention how I have used some prompts recently in the classroom. I have categorized them by multimedia type:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Multimedia Prompt Type</th>
<th>Example</th>
<th>Writing Prompt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Born in the USA, by Bruce Springsteen (1984).</td>
<td>Write two sentences about the song before listening. Watch video with lyrics. Write two sentences afterwards. Compare.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painting</td>
<td>Van Gogh Self-Portrait (1889).</td>
<td>Write a one-paragraph biography (that is made up OR researched).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cartoon</td>
<td>The Far Side by Gary Larson. A man is walking out of a happiness store.</td>
<td>Write for five minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TED Talk</td>
<td>Sam Berns TED Talk (2013). A 16-year-old boy with progeria talks about his philosophy for a happy life.</td>
<td>Write in four points your philosophy for a happy life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have also used Shel Silverstein’s *The Giving Tree* (1964) to practice different text types. I show only the cover of the book and have students describe the main character based on the cover. This is a descriptive writing assignment. I then show the drawings on the first and the last page and have them write a story of what happened in between to practice narrative. Lastly, I have them listen to the story being read on YouTube and have them answer questions such as the following, in short essay form: Who is the better friend? How is this a metaphor for humans and the environment? In this way, with one book they can practice creative writing in different formats.

The inherent flexibility of multimedia prompts means that they can be tailored to the class, the level, the age, and of course the interests of the students and teacher as well. Things that I have found to work well are popular songs, spoken-word poetry, articles, paintings, short films, trailers and children’s books read on YouTube which include the illustrations.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Now we have come to the part that seems, on the surface, to be the most challenging in terms of doing a journal in class, the evaluation. I give a daily mark for completing the task in terms of formative assessment, as well as a final mark for turning in a complete journal with all the prompts, and a self-reflection sheet detailing what has improved, what areas need work, what was interesting, what was challenging, and suggestions for prompts. In terms of summative assessment, I use a rubric for both the planned essays and for the day of organizing the complete journal at the end of the year. My main goal with assessment is to bring focus away from the mark and move it towards creativity, and to do this by a combination of evaluation and useful feedback.
I have been using a journal in different formats over the years, and have found that a creative writing journal with multimedia prompts is an engaging process in which students are able to build a positive relationship with writing, practice expression, exercise critical thinking skills, and cultivate creativity in the English classroom.

REFERENCES


A few years ago, I came across an article by Mandy Len Catron in The New York Times called “To fall in love with anyone, do this”. In this article she talks about her own personal experience after going through a set of 36 questions with a university acquaintance.
The questions were written by Arthur Aron at Stony Brook University in 1997 for a study called “The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings”. The experiment tried to assess whether intimacy could be generated in a lab setting. Aron paired up a group of people and gave them a list of 36 questions to go through. With every question the list got increasingly personal (from “Whom would you want as a dinner guest?” to “Share a personal problem with your partner”). After finishing the 36 questions, participants were asked to look into each other’s eyes for 4 minutes.

I have to say that I immediately fell in love with the whole idea of using these 36 questions in my English classes. I thought the questions were a brilliant way of getting my students to speak. I was tired of uninspiring speaking assignments and role plays and I was looking for something that would motivate my students.

Finally, I decided to take the plunge and do something similar to what Arthur Aron did, but with a group of 30 16-year-old students who had a reasonable level of English (mostly A2 and a few B1).

**Level:** Intermediate and advanced

**Age group:** Secondary school to adults

**This activity practices:** Speaking and Listening

**You will need:** The list of 36 questions from the study “The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: A procedure and some preliminary findings” by Arthur Aron et al. (1997).

I decided to get my students to work on one question in every class and, as I only had 3 lessons a week, it took my students 12 weeks to get through the 36 questions. Every morning, as they came into the class, I wrote one of the 36 questions on the board. I never told them where I got the questions from or what the original experiment was about, as I did not want them to think that I was trying to get them to fall in love with each other.

So, the class always started this way: We would read the question aloud, translate it if necessary and then in pairs they had 5 minutes to talk about it. At the end of the 5 minutes I would choose 5 students who would have to tell the class what they and/or their partner had been speaking about. These 5 students were given a grade.

After 12 weeks, 2 things surprised me the most. The first one was how keen students were to share their personal lives with their peers. We started with the first questions (the more impersonal ones) and week by week questions started to get more and more personal. To begin with I thought students would not want to answer some of the questions, but to my surprise, they were always keen to answer.

The other thing that really surprised me was how well my students were able to speak in front of the whole class. And this made me think about how often, when I asked a student a question of the whole class, I would not get an answer. I realised that this was not because
the student did not want to speak, but because very often, they needed time to reflect on the question and articulate a coherent answer in their mind, and I was not giving them the time to do this.

Answering the questions, first in pairs and then in front of the whole class, gave my students a much-needed chance to reflect on what they wanted to say and, secondly, to rehearse their answers with their partners. After that, if they were chosen to speak in front of the class, the majority of the students felt confident enough to answer the question.

I know by now you all want to see the original 36 questions from Arthur Aron study, so... here they are, all yours!

**SET I**

1. Given the choice of anyone in the world, whom would you want as a dinner guest?
2. Would you like to be famous? In what way?
3. Before making a telephone call, do you ever rehearse what you are going to say? Why?
4. What would constitute a “perfect” day for you?
5. When did you last sing to yourself? To someone else?
6. If you were able to live to the age of 90 and retain either the mind or body of a 30-year-old for the last 60 years of your life, which would you want?
7. Do you have a secret hunch about how you will die?
8. Name three things you and your partner appear to have in common.
9. For what in your life do you feel most grateful?
10. If you could change anything about the way you were raised, what would it be?
11. Take four minutes and tell your partner your life story in as much detail as possible.
12. If you could wake up tomorrow having gained any one quality or ability, what would it be?

**SET II**

13. If a crystal ball could tell you the truth about yourself, your life, the future or anything else, what would you want to know?
14. Is there something that you’ve dreamed of doing for a long time? Why haven’t you done it?
15. What is the greatest accomplishment of your life?
16. What do you value most in a friendship?
17. What is your most treasured memory?
18. What is your most terrible memory?
19. If you knew that in one year you would die suddenly, would you change anything about the way you are now living? Why?
20. What does friendship mean to you?
21. What roles do love and affection play in your life?
22. Alternate sharing something you consider a positive characteristic of your partner. Share a total of five items.
23. How close and warm is your family? Do you feel your childhood was happier than most other people’s?
24. How do you feel about your relationship with your mother?

SET III

25. Make three true “we” statements each. For instance, “We are both in this room feeling ...
26. Complete this sentence: “I wish I had someone with whom I could share ...”
27. If you were going to become a close friend with your partner, please share what would be important for him or her to know.
28. Tell your partner what you like about them; be very honest this time, saying things that you might not say to someone you’ve just met.
29. Share with your partner an embarrassing moment in your life.
30. When did you last cry in front of another person? By yourself?
31. Tell your partner something that you like about them already.
32. What, if anything, is too serious to be joked about?
33. If you were to die this evening with no opportunity to communicate with anyone, what would you most regret not having told someone? Why haven’t you told them yet?
34. Your house, containing everything you own, catches fire. After saving your loved ones and pets, you have time to safely make a final dash to save any one item. What would it be? Why?
35. Of all the people in your family, whose death would you find most disturbing? Why?
36. Share a personal problem and ask your partner’s advice on how he or she might handle it. Also, ask your partner to reflect back to you how you seem to be feeling about the problem you have chosen.

You are probably wondering now how my students felt after going through the 36 questions and sustaining uninterrupted eye contact for 4 minutes at the end. These are some of the comments I got from my class:

- “I felt a strange feeling. I don’t know why but I wanted to cry although it was only for a moment.”
- “I believe this experiment changed my relationship with Raul.”
- “I would like to try this with my friend Candela.”
- “I think this experiment has helped us to be closer.”
- “I think this experiment is not just for falling in love but for improving relationships.”
- “It was fun.”
- “I have realised that the way I see a person changes when I know more things about him/her.”
- “I think that Carmen is a lovely person and I feel bad because I didn’t know how lovely she was before.”
- “I will love her forever.”
- “I feel I am with the best person in the world.”
- “I felt uncomfortable because I don’t normally look people in the eye.”
As for me, what I got from the whole experience was a lot more than 25 students practicing their oral skills. Indeed, I did achieve that, and I was happy to see that week after week, my students were communicating in English, but at the same time, something a lot deeper had happened in the class.

Students had opened up, they had spoken about and listened to very personal things and this had created a sense of belonging, a bonding between my students and myself. Arthur Aron’s experiment had brought us closer together as a group and, consequently, made the whole process of teaching and learning English easier and a lot more enjoyable.

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Are your learners developing 21st century skills?

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BioData

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Interest in 21st Century Skills

The skills necessary for living and working in the twenty-first century have been examined by a wide range of public and private organizations for purposes that range from education to business. For example, the European Union has defined Competences for lifelong learning (Council of Europe, 2018) and educational authorities may mention skills in official curricula.
The *Comunidad de Madrid* 2014 curriculum for natural and social science describes student abilities in terms similar to the EU competences (BOCM, 2014). The Research Division of Cambridge Assessment, University of Cambridge, examined several approaches to developing and assessing these skills (Suto, I., 2013). Private organizations also promote 21st century skills. The Partnership for 21st century skills, an organization that collaborates with educators, businesses, community and government leaders in the United States, aims to prepare learners to take part in the workforce, become effective members of the community and excel in real world learning environments (Bishop, 2011). Three technology companies, Cisco, Intel and Microsoft, funded *The Assessment and Teaching of 21st Century Skills* (ATC21S, 2009 - 2012) to define the skills and ways to measure them.

**WHAT ARE 21ST CENTURY SKILLS?**

As might be expected, skill definitions vary. ACT21S defines 10 skills and classifies them into four categories (ACT21S, n.d.). The Council of Europe (CE) defines eight *Lifelong Learning Competences* (Council of Europe, 2018). The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) offers a three-part skills framework: Life and Career skills, Learning and Innovation skills (the 4Cs), Information, Media and Technology skills. Hughes and Acedo writing for the International Academy of Education (IAE), a not-for-profit scientific association, propose ten areas for learning that are “particularly significant in the present world’s educational climate”: core areas of knowledge, competences, attitudes and broad approaches to learning (Hughes and Acedo, 2015, page 7).

Despite the disparity in the number and grouping of skills, some overlap exists. Communication, critical thinking and collaboration together with information and communication technology are cited by several organizations (P21, ACT21S, EU, IAE and BOCM). Other skill areas are also worthy of note. Creativity, (one of P21’s 4Cs and an IAE competence) is similar to the EU competence, *Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship*. The *Living in the World* skills defined by P21 include citizenship and personal and social responsibility, both of which overlap with the *Social and Civic Competences* defined by the EU and an attitude proposed by IAE, academic honesty.

**DEVELOPING 21ST CENTURY SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM**

When twenty-first century skills are expressed as general objectives for an entire educational level, as occurs in the *Comunidad de Madrid* 2014 curriculum for natural and social science (BOCM, page 24), they may not receive explicit attention in teaching materials. Furthermore, given the number of explicitly stated objectives, teachers may find it difficult to incorporate more.

This paper offers suggestions for developing 21st century skills in natural and social science classes taught through English within the existing curriculum. Taking the curriculum of the *Comunidad de Madrid* as a starting point, general objectives that resemble 21st century skills have been selected for the subject areas of native language, English, natural and social science (BOCM, pages 12-13, 16-17, 24-25).
Drawing on the ATC21S framework and a selection of the 21st century skills it entails (ATC21S, 2009-2012) this paper offers activities to develop the skills in four areas:

A. Ways of thinking: creativity and innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, decision making

B. Ways of working: communication and collaboration (teamwork)

C. Tools for working: information and communication technology

D. Living in the world: personal and social responsibility including cultural awareness and competence

Two other resources have proved valuable in the development of the activities proposed in this paper: Bloom’s revised taxonomy (Anderson and Krathwohl et al, 2001), a resource often used by teachers of natural and social science through English in order to focus on critical thinking, and the implications for educators put forth by Hughes and Acedo (2015). The latter have served as a reference for developing activity characteristics.

**A. WAYS OF THINKING: FOCUS ON CRITICAL THINKING**

Critical thinking has been described as the ability to analyze facts. The 2014 natural science curriculum in effect in the Comunidad de Madrid introduces learners to a multitude of facts regarding the characteristics of living things. At the remember level of Bloom’s taxonomy, a lower order skill, learners may simply memorize the characteristics of a group of plants or animals. However, once the characteristics of several groups of living things have been studied, the teacher can introduce a guessing game that asks learners to apply skills at the analyse level, a higher order thinking skill, to discover the living thing being described.

The game uses simple English vocabulary and language structures that students are familiar with. The teacher describes five characteristics of a living thing sequencing them so that the most general characteristics are described first and the most unique last. She asks learners to write the numbers 1 to 5 on a piece of paper, then listen and write down the name of the living thing that first comes to mind as they hear each characteristic.

Learners work individually at this stage. As each characteristic is described, they mentally sift through the characteristics of known living things and select one that has the characteristic being described. As the teacher states each characteristic, the learners’ analysis becomes more focused. The five sentences below are examples of the five characteristics. Each is paired with an analysis, in brackets, that a primary level learner might produce.

1. It’s an animal. [It is not a plant.]
2. It has four legs. [It is not a snake or a bird.]
3. It eats leaves. [It is not a carnivore like a dog.]
4. It lives on the savannah. [A zebra, a hippo or a giraffe.]
5. It has a very long neck. [Only giraffes have very long necks.]

At the next stage, after learners have discovered the animal, they share their notes with a partner, and compare their analyses. Similar responses may reveal similar personal preferences within the world of living things. Dissimilar responses may reflect cultural differences.

The game can be transformed from teacher-created to learner-created in order to foster further analysis and creativity. In the learner-created game, learners work in groups. They select a living thing and write five sentences that describe its characteristics. They organize them from most general to most unique, then the groups play their games. Creating a game in a group also develops collaboration, another valuable 21st century skill.

Examined from the perspective of Hughes and Acedo’s guiding principles (2018, page 14), both the teacher-created and the learner-created games encourage learners to observe the world around them and share personal experiences. Hughes and Acedo also emphasize the need to teach learners what makes a good question (2018, page 14). In this game, learners become aware of how good statements can elicit different responses.

B. WAYS OF WORKING: FOCUS ON CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATION

Hughes and Acedo suggest that teachers should model skepticism when they are confronted with unproven information (2018, page 14). They encourage teachers to show learners how to do research in order to determine whether information is true. They note that “…media plays a crucial role in forming public opinion” and advocate helping learners to develop a skeptical attitude towards supposedly factual media.

Vallely (2004, February 18) describes several examples of how distorted or edited images have been used for political reasons or as pranks. His examples could be used to initiate a discussion of the media with older learners.

With regard to creativity, Hughes and Acedo (2018, page 16) propose that learners use it “to rethink situations from new perspectives, to see approaches that are not apparent at first, and to respond to situations with elegance, utility and novelty.” In their opinion, many definitions of creativity share these three essential elements:

- Utility: plausibility, suitability, appropriateness
- Aesthetics: emotion, elegance
- Originality: little c – newness to the individual; big c – newness to the world or society.

For this activity, teachers select plausible photo montages created with digital programs. Each photo montage should consist of one or more embedded images which create a new,
aesthetically pleasing image that seems real. Textbook images may be useful for these montages because they reflect aspects of topics studied in natural or social science. The embedded image could be an extraneous element, for example, a montage of a Roman temple with a stained-glass window or Velázquez’s painting of Las Meninas with a woman in the doorway instead of a man. National Geographic Kids offers photo montages online that may appeal to younger primary learners (Silen, A., n.d.).

The photo montage activity stimulates critical thinking at levels like remember (identifying known elements), analyse (the parts of the montage) and evaluate (deciding on the authenticity of the parts). Learners work in groups: each receives a different A4 size photo montage. They discuss the real and fake elements in their photo montage and then select a real element which will probably be recognized by other groups. They cut a window into an A4 sheet of paper to reveal only the selected element. They place the photo montage and the paper with the window in a clear plastic sleeve to keep both together and the window in place.

Four basic steps for creating and using this type of photo montage are shown below. In this case, both the main photo and the extraneous element reflect topics taught in social science. Learners will have seen architectural remains similar to Figure 1 in real life or in history lessons. The building shape, construction materials and the columns will help them to identify the remains as of Greek or Roman origin.

**Figure 1. Antique Temple**

![Antique Temple](https://unsplash.com/photos/wWx65wVFlBs)

*Note.* From *Antique Temple at Selinunte, Sicily* [Photograph], by S. Maage, 2019, Unsplash [https://unsplash.com/photos/wWx65wVFIBs](https://unsplash.com/photos/wWx65wVFIBs)

The stained-glass technique is also studied in social science. Developed in the Middle Ages,
it was often used in churches to depict religious themes like those in Figure 2. For the photo montage, the window on the far right will be copied and inserted into the photo of the temple. The resulting montage is shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 2. Stained Glass Window**

![Stained Glass Window](https://unsplash.com/photos/lJyzWxFTV44)

*Note.* From *St. Columb’s Cathedral, Londonderry, Northern Ireland [Photograph]*, by K. M. Hodge, 2019, Unsplash [https://unsplash.com/photos/lJyzWxFTV44]

**Figure 3. Photo Montage of Temple and Stained Glass Window**

![Photo Montage of Temple and Stained Glass Window](https://unsplash.com/photos/lJyzWxFTV44)

*Note.* The photo montage was created with GIMP, a free software app. The intelligent scissors tool was used to select one of the stained glass windows and its destination.
In Figure 4, the photo montage has been placed in a plastic sleeve and covered with a sheet of A4 paper. A window cut into the paper focuses attention on one part of the photo montage, a column, and encourages viewers to deduce the whole, a temple.

**Figure 4. Photo Montage in a Plastic Sleeve with a Window**

_{Note.} The window should show a representative element of the whole photo.

Groups exchange plastic sleeves. Each group observes the element in the window carefully. They draw on prior knowledge to predict what the entire photo montage will show. In doing so, group members apply their collective knowledge to support their predictions. Finally, they remove the paper window sheet to discover the complete photo montage. Group members now must explain why the extraneous element cannot be part of the original photo. For example, “stained glass windows did not exist when Greek and Roman temples were built”. If necessary, group members do research to substantiate their conclusions: “We have seen other versions of Velázquez’s *Las Meninas*, and the person in the doorway is a man.”

Analyzing this activity using Bloom’s taxonomy, several critical thinking skill levels come into play. Learners must remember features of real elements they have seen before: Graeco-Roman temples and *Las Meninas*. They analyze the photo montage and detect the extraneous element. They evaluate the veracity of the photo montage and explain why they believe the extraneous element to be false.

Hughes and Acedo suggest that “play and joy in the flow of creative thinking are essential; teachers should not be afraid to let students play with ideas” (2018, page 16). In effect, this activity includes a playful dimension, but at the same time it stimulates creative thinking skills as will be further discussed in the next section.
C. TOOLS OF WORKING: FOCUS ON INFORMATION LITERACY AND ICT SKILLS

In the previous activity, learners examined teacher-selected photo montages. Learners can create this type of montages using digital programs. In one secondary school project for *Educación plástica y visual* (“Viajeros del futuro en cuadros famosos”, 2011), learners used GIMP, a free software program that permits the creation and manipulation of images. In that project, the emphasis seems to have been on ICT, but the use of famous paintings like Van Gogh’s bedroom adds a social science/history dimension that can be exploited through English. Similar photo montages can be found on the blog by Cavalleto (2009, July 28). Both sites could be used to introduce the activity to learners.

The steps involved in creating a photo montage might resemble those proposed by Hughes and Acedo (2018, page 17):

- **Preparation**: learners detect a problem and gather data
- **Incubation**: learners take time away from the problem
- **Illumination**: learners unexpectedly generate a new idea or a solution
- **Verification**: learners examine or test the new idea

Teachers can help learners develop their creativity by asking questions that encourage higher order thinking like evaluating, synthesizing information and creating alternatives. Hughes and Acedo suggest (2018, page 17) that creativity should be encouraged in all disciplines. In the photo montage project above, creativity has been stimulated within a technical subject and branched into art history. Regarding IT skills, the instructions for creating the montage with GIMP (“La imagen digital”, 2011, and “Viajeros del futuro en cuadros famosos”, 2011) are helpful.

Having students explore creativity in contexts like these, requires that they extend their knowledge, in this case of history, and make their creativity visible using a digital image. Another benefit of this type of creative project is that when learners create their own photo montages, they discover how easy it is to create ‘fake’ images. This discovery can stimulate skepticism when learners observe images presented as ‘real’.

D. WAYS OF WORKING: FOCUS ON COMMUNICATION

Fake news has been with us for a long time, but given the pervasiveness of social media, it has become much more prevalent. In its Living in the World dimension, ATC21S cites personal and social responsibility, a skill that resembles what Hughes and Acedo call academic honesty. Both seem to reflect the need for learners to develop values of honesty and be able to carry out research effectively and with integrity (Hughes and Acedo, 2018, page 8).

Activities of varying length and complexity have been devised to create awareness of fake news. In France, a media education course helps learners to detect internet misinformation (Satariano, A. and Peltier, E., 2018). In that course, teachers and journalists come together in workshops that introduce basic journalism skills, stimulate trust in the media and show
learners how to view online information critically. Creating workshops may not be feasible in all contexts; however, relevant 21st century skills can be developed with shorter activities.

In an effort to educate readers regarding fake news, Thurrott, writing on NBC, a U.S. based news website, challenged readers to detect fake news on social media feed (Thurrott, S., 2018). She asked readers to start by assuming that not all the news they obtain via social media is true. Her five strategies to help detect fake news can be incorporated into lessons:

- **Question the source:** Find out where the news comes from. Is the source reliable?
- **Look for confirmation:** If mainstream media does not carry the news, there must be a reason because that media wants an audience.
- **Check the facts with third-party sites:** Snopes and Politifact are offered as examples of such sites. However, fact-checking has its limits.
- **Call out fake news you see in your network:** Thurrott suggests that doing this privately is more effective because it avoids making people look gullible for posting fake news.

These four strategies can be used to explore news on social media, but also to explore in greater depth the content area issues presented in textbooks. For example, what scientific evidence supports the theory that a meteorite caused the extinction of dinosaurs? What evidence proves that Neanderthals and Homo sapiens coexisted? Learners can do research to look for confirmation, check the facts and call out discrepancies. All of these strategies involve communicating findings honestly, without plagiarism and citing the sources used.

If learners undertake the research collaboratively, using the Internet and traditional press, they develop their communication skills at the same time as they develop social responsibility and become better citizens.

**E. WAYS AND TOOLS OF WORKING: SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

A creative application of Thurrott’s strategies from the previous activity prepares learners to be good journalists. They choose a topic, research it using the Internet and other resources, interview witnesses and experts, and finally present their findings. In a writing or speaking activity like this, Hughes and Acedo (2018, page 9) emphasize the importance of fomenting honesty, avoiding collusion or infringing intellectual property, using authentic images and citing sources responsibly.

Learners in one French internet workshop were told to create fake news using the tools of the journalist listed in the previous paragraph. When learners shared their work in class, many were surprised at how easy it was to deceive others (Satariano, A. and Peltier, E., 2018). Some might feel the project taught learners how to lie whereas others believe it taught them how easily they can be lied to.
CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The activities presented in this paper offer a brief introduction to 21st century skills and how they can be developed in the classroom. All encourage the development of several skills simultaneously, for example: collaboration plus technology, critical thinking plus creativity. Most can be modelled by teachers, and then used as a stimulus for learner-centred follow-ups.

21st century skills deserve attention in the classroom. Teachers may start by having learners observe and question the images and content in their textbooks on a regular basis. They can move on to projects once or twice a year as time permits. Future studies can propose additional, simple ways of working with these skills. Creating awareness among the learners of how 21st century skills relate to their lives now and in the future could be one of the most important goals in today’s classrooms.

REFERENCES


I’m an English teacher and I have been teaching English at our primary school for almost twenty years. I love working with children and teaching them English. My job is really demanding and may get really stressful at times but all in all, I love what I do and here are my top 20 reasons why. Dear teachers, I hope you find some inspiration in them and I am sure we have some in common. So here goes:
1. STAYING YOUNG

When being in the classroom with children they make you feel young. It is your vocabulary, sense of fashion, music taste and tech inventions that remain current and relevant. Years go by really quickly but at the same time you stay young and full of energy. The children help you to stay in touch with the world of today and they often bring about ideas you never thought of; they find new ways of solving things; they freshen up your world and keep you young at heart. Their energy is contagious and so is their joy for life.

2. BEING A ROLE MODEL

Children look for advice and guidance in the teacher. It is the teacher who sets the example by not only speaking, but more importantly, by doing. Then, children look up to you and see you as a role model. Therefore, the teacher’s job is of crucial importance because it is the teachers who inspire and encourage students to strive for more and to live to their fullest. Teachers display behaviors that are reflective of moral virtues, such as kindness, fairness, compassion and respect.

3. BEING GENUINELY LOVED

The little ones show you their true feelings and express them vividly, may it be in the form of hugs, drawing nice pictures, praising you, smiling, nodding and the like. They show their gratitude and happiness whenever possible. It is usually so that what you give is what you get. The children appreciate the teacher’s honesty and straightforwardness, they recognize true feelings and emotions. In return, they are honest, gentle, loving, caring and supportive.

4. THE CAPACITY TO INFLUENCE YOUNG PEOPLE

The teacher is the one who truly does make a difference; children take your words of wisdom; they follow the teacher’s advice, react, do and live accordingly. The teacher is a person they spend a lot of time with and is therefore an important part of their lives and beliefs. They follow in your footsteps. Effective and engaging teachers are able to shape an individual and allow opportunity, growth and progress. They inspire and have a great impact on the students, teaching them the important life lessons that will help them succeed beyond term papers and standardized tests.

5. IGNITING THE SPARK FOR LEARNING

When the teacher aims to achieve various goals and teach the students different aspects of the English language, i.e. communicative skills (listening, reading, speaking and
writing respectively), grammatical issues and all the other beauties of the language, they try out different teaching techniques and strategies. There are times when you see the children truly understand things, getting the feel of the subject, being actively involved and immersed in the process itself - what a bliss. In order to see progress a teacher should match inspiration with opportunities for students to develop their own ideas, collaborate with peers and provide real-world experiences.

6. SEEING EXCITEMENT IN CHILDREN

In the classroom there are many opportunities for the children to express their feelings, and when they’re positive, everyone is happy about it. Then they show their interest; their motivation grows; they are excited about learning new things, have fun with it and a magnificent feeling of happiness and success surrounds the class. The positive atmosphere enables the students to learn far more effectively and successfully.

7. WHEN HARD WORK PAYS OFF/WHEN YOU SEE A STUDENT GET IT

There are times when some students just don’t seem to be making any progress at all, they get stuck in a vicious circle of not knowing how the English language works and they can’t seem to find a way out of this. But then, amazingly, a surprising breakthrough happens, followed by studying, learning from mistakes, patience and persistence. It is usually the case that when somebody makes a real effort, hard work pays off. It is just so that sometimes you have to wait a bit longer.

8. LEARNING NEW SKILLS

It should be noted that the teachers learn many new activities and skills during and after their working hours. Surely, it is not only classroom work that counts, but also additional activities, such as counselling, organizing activities, camps, sports days, administration work, attending meetings, writing reports, grading student’s work, breaking up fights, doing arts and crafts, promoting healthy lifestyle etc. Learning is a life-long process and new skills and competences are gained on a regular basis.

9. EXPANDING CREATIVITY

At school there are numerous ways to explore and expand the students’ as well as the teacher’s creativity. It is different with every single class and during every single lesson. The children never cease to amaze us and it is the teacher’s job to nurture that creativity and at the same time model their own creativity in the way you speak and act. Experimenting with new ways of teaching, switching up the daily routine every now and then, using new tech inventions help the teachers to stay fresh and interesting.
10. GAINING FLEXIBILITY SKILLS

In teaching, there is a lot of flexibility and adaptability involved too. A teacher should be able to adapt to new and challenging situations and then be able to get the most out of them. Sometimes the lesson plan proves to be just a part of the scheme, a simple outline that can surely be adjusted depending on the subject matter, the students, the topics, and the level of interest and motivation. The teachers definitely become masters of improvisation and flexibility is their middle name. Moreover, it does not hurt if a teacher possesses some acting skills.

11. BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH STUDENTS

During classroom work there are numerous opportunities for both parties involved to build on establishing respectful, enjoyable and positive relationships. Teaching with enthusiasm, positive energy and passion attracts the children’s attention and interest, and at the same time increases their motivation, which results in more effective learning and better understanding. Do not be afraid to show the real you and do share some personal information in order to get close to them. They will appreciate your trust and feel much safer and more welcome, ready to work hard.

12. THE STUDENTS TEACH YOU A LOT

When a good relationship is established and the students feel safe, important and heard, then many things can be achieved. In turn, they give back as much as you give them and they teach you how to be patient, caring, forgiving, innovative, flexible and compassionate, just to name a few prominent features. The world of the students appeals to the teachers and the children share their views and opinions, as well as information about the topics close and important to them. They ask questions a teacher might never think about, prompting you to study the subject material in greater detail and be open to discuss anything and think outside of the box.

13. BEING A LIFE-LONG LEARNER

A teacher should adopt a lifelong learning mindset, keeping in mind that the best lifelong learning happens on the job, from other teachers, the students, and parents, be it directly at school or during after school extra activities. One should not forget about various seminars and conferences teachers attend because a teacher must go beyond the textbook and attend workshops, lectures and be an intense part of ongoing education courses in order to truly master the practice. A teacher thus accepts new challenges and ideas that they can incorporate into their teaching.
14. NO DAY IS EVER THE SAME

At school, life is very dynamic and no day is ever the same. The diversity and dynamics of school life are ever changing and never boring. Even if the subject matter is the same, there is no fear of repetitive nature in teaching. The students are different and the teachers keep innovating their teaching methods and adapting them according to their class, the student’s interest, knowledge, understanding and age level. This gives the teacher a daily channel to experiment and explore various teaching techniques and strategies in their classes. A change of routine is also welcome every now and then to stir things up and to avoid getting bored. Variety and change play an important role in the teaching and learning process.

15. INCORPORATING LAUGHTER INTO THE CLASSROOM

Keep in mind that teaching is (also) fun and exciting. The more the teacher enjoys teaching and is enthusiastic about it, the more students will enjoy learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills. Well-planned and contextual humor can help student learn more effectively. Adding a funny story about yourself or a funny video/quote will help the students feel relaxed and comfortable, the learning process will be far more enjoyable and the results better, reducing stress as well.

16. SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Teachers work in a sociable atmosphere all the time and are a part of a team with the students and work colleagues. The teachers foster and promote social development in the students in order for the class to cooperate more efficiently and be connected in various ways, working like a big family. Teachers and parents should work in collaboration in order to encourage and nurture the development of social skills in children, thus creating a safe and loving educational environment.

17. BEING ABLE TO USE (FAMOUS) LYRICS

Songs have proven to be a very useful tool in learning a foreign language, helping to improve listening, speaking and pronunciation skills, vocabulary acquisition and getting the feel of everyday language. I have always loved music and I truly love sharing this passion with my students. By listening to (and reading and singing) different lyrics the students get the gasp of natural repetitive rhythm and have an element of fun. The effectiveness of using songs to learn English lies in creating positive attitude and learning environment, which makes song-based lessons a real success.
18. WORK SCHEDULE

Truth be told, the job schedule of teachers is quite appealing: a work day usually ends at around 3 p.m. Surely, there are extra hours outside the required workday (e.g.: grading papers, preparing lesson plans, attending meetings and parent-teacher conferences) but overall, a teaching career can leave you with a life outside your job. The schedule works well for raising children - once they are school age, the teacher’s work calendar is synced to their children timetable (being a mother of two primary school children). This allows me to be available for their after school activities and events.

19. SO MUCH MORE THAN TEACHING

Being a teacher is so much more than teaching itself. The teachers are able to express themselves and to inject their own personality into their classroom and making decisions on what’s best for their students. They combine various teaching techniques and methods to reach the goals, they share opinions, views, beliefs that effect student performance and achievements, going beyond the classroom. Thus, teachers are responsible for more than just academic enrichment.

20. LAST BUT NOT LEAST

Teaching is not merely a job with nice long summer holidays as others like to put it but it’s a lifestyle. In fact, I would say that teaching profession is a lot more of a passion (or a calling, if you want) than merely a job, giving the teacher the opportunity to inspire, motivate and educate lives every day. Teaching is giving ourself to others, pouring out all your knowledge, skills, information and wisdom to be used by the students. It is building people and having the opportunity to shape their lives.
The top 10 ways to enhance the learning experience

David James
British Council Madrid

BIO DATA

David is a teacher and teacher trainer with a Master’s in Education and Applied Linguistics and also the Trinity Diploma in TESOL. He is an experienced teacher of adults and young learners and has taught for the British Council in Bilbao and Valencia and currently in the Madrid Teaching Centre. He has also taught English for Academic Purposes at The University of Liverpool. He has a particular interest in improving learner motivation, participation.

1. USE BACKGROUND MUSIC

Background music can break the ice. Create an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable to talk. They should feel they are not being listened to – though of course you may be listening. The music should be instrumental so that students can concentrate on their task without wanting to sing-a-long. Chakra music also works well.

2. INTRODUCE LESSON THEMES WITH MUSIC

Students guess the song titles and write them on laminated card. The song titles provide clues to the theme of the lesson. This works particularly well with lessons on Verb + Gerund/ Infinitive.
3. CREATE GRAMMAR/ USE OF ENGLISH TASKS FROM LYRICS

In this activity students do the activity and then listen to check their answers. Many songs have a range of grammar points, collocations, dependent prepositions, interesting words etc. that can be exploited to make into an enjoyable learning activity. Rolling In The Deep by Adele is a good example.

a. Supporting Material For Discussion or Grammar Topics

Discussing finance - The Complete Banker by The Divine Comedy

I wish I knew how it would feel to be free by Nina Simone is excellent for discussing issues related to American history and slavery. It also provides practice of the 2nd conditional and introduces some excellent vocabulary, e.g. to long for something.

Other grammar often featured in songs is modal verbs, e.g.

It must have been love
If you liked it then you should have put a ring on it

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**Task:**

In the lyrics there are 11 questions.

1) Questions 1, 2, 4, 8 and 9: choose the correct word/ collocation
2) Questions 3, 5, 6 and 7: key word transformation
3) Questions 10 and 11: complete the sentence so it is grammatically correct
4) Listen and Check

There’s a fire starting in my heart. Reaching a fever pitch and it’s bring me out the dark.
Finally I can see you 1) brightly/ crystal/ diamond/ shiny clear.
Go 2) forward/ up/ ahead/ down and sell me out and I’ll lay your shit bare

See how I’ll leave, with every piece of you
Don’t 3) ____ the things that I will do
There’s a fire starting in my heart. Reaching a fever pitch and it’s bring me out the dark
The scars of your love 4) speak/ remember/
show/ remind me of us
They keep me thinking that we almost had it all
The scars of your love, they leave me 5) ____________
I can’t help feeling

We could have had it all. Rolling in the deep
You had my heart inside your hand and you played it to the beat
4. Dictogloss

In this activity, the teacher reads several lines of text and the students take notes and reconstruct the text from what they hear. This works particularly well with used to and would for past states and activities, so why not use the first lines of a song that include these grammar points, e.g. Viva La Vida by Coldplay. The text may sound familiar to some students if they know the record, but that should only heighten their engagement in the activity.

I used to rule the world
Seas would rise when I gave the word
Now in the morning, I sleep alone
Sweep the streets I used to own

To confirm the correct text, the teacher can play the relevant part of the song.

5. Pronunciation/ Phonemic Script Practice

Remove key words from the lyrics & write them in phonemic script. Students decipher the words and insert them back in to the lyrics. They then listen to check. This can be done at individual word level, multiple words, and even to raise awareness of features of connected speech such as linking, intrusion, elision and assimilation.
Ex’s & Oh’s – Elle King

Questions 1 and 6: guess the missing word
Questions 2,3,5,7-13: select the correct option
Question 4: write the missing words from the phonemic script
First, do the exercise & then listen to check

Well, I had me a boy, turned him 1) _______ a man
I showed him all the things that he 2) not/ didn’t/ no understand
Whoa, and then I let him 3) to go / go / going
Now, there’s one in California
4) /ˈhuːz bɪn ˈkɜːsɪŋ maɪ neɪm/

Cause I found me a better lover in the UK
Hey, hey, until I 5) did/ made/ ran my getaway
One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
Cause I’m the best baby that they never gotta keep
One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
They always wanna come, but they never wanna leave

Ex’s and the oh, oh, oh’s they 6) h_ _ _ me
Like ghosts they want me 7) make / to make/ making / ‘em all
They won’t let 8) to go / go / going
Ex’s and oh’s

I had a summer lover down in New Orleans
Kept him warm in the winter, left him 9) freeze/ freezing/ frozen in the spring
My, my, how the seasons go 10) by / out / in
I get high, and I love to get low
So the hearts keep 11) break / breaking / to break, and the heads just roll
You know that’s how the story goes

Chorus

One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
12) climbing/ climb/ to climb over mountains

And 13) sail/ sailing/ to sail over seas.
One, two, three, they gonna run back to me
They always wanna come, but they never wanna leave

Review

a) ‘let’ is followed by to+infinitive, bare infinitive, verb+ing
My example _______
b) To escape after a crime or from a boring social event is to_______ a getaway. My example______

c) Time goes___________. As time passes
My example_______

d) ‘Keep’ is followed by to+infinitive, bare infinitive, verb+ing. This action happens
frequently and might also annoy the speaker.
My example_______

**Up The Junction – Squeeze**

Up the junction is an English phrase that means you are in a bad/ hopeless situation. This song tells the story of a boy who meets a girl on Clapham Common, which is in southwest London. The couple are in love, have a baby but in the end the girl leaves him, mostly due to his drinking.

The song is composed in rhyming & semi rhyming couplets, e.g. in 1 and 2, the weak ending of happen is a semi rhyme of Clapham. The same with common & forgotten.

**Task.**

Transcribe the phonemic script of the words in the box & put in their correct place in the song.

| /ˈleɪə/ | /ˈsʌndeɪ/ | /ˈleɪə/ |
| /ˈhændi/ | /ˈteli/ | /mei bɪ/ |
| /ˈsmeli/ | /tɒk ʌp/ | /ˈbɪtə/ |
| /sʌm ˈflaʊəz/ | /ɪnˈsaɪd hə/ | /ˈwɔːkə/ |
| /fɔː ˈfɪfti/ | /enˈgeɪdʒmənt/ | /ˈsəʊldʒə/ |
| /ˈkɪtʃɪn/ | /feˈgɪvnəes/ | /ˈpæʃənz/ |
Listen and complete the spaces. The missing words are sung in connected speech.

I sing myself to sleep
A song from the a) ________  ________
Secrets I can’t keep
b) ________  ________the day
Swing from high to deep
Extremes of c) ________  ________ sour
Hope that d) ________  ________
I e) ________  ________ pray

Drawn by the undertow
My life is f) ________  ________ control
I believe this wave will bear my weight
So g) ________  ________ flow

Oh h) ________  ________ X3
i) ________  ________ ________  ________ me

In sympathy

Now I’m relieved to hear
That you’ve been to some j) ________  ________ places
It’s hard to k) ________  ________
When you feel l) ________  ________
Now I’ve swung back m) ________  ________
It’s worse than it was before
If I hadn’t seen such riches
I could live with being poor

Oh h) ________  ________ X3
i) ________  ________ ________  ________ me

Those who feel the j) ________  ________ sadness
i) ________  ________ ________ me
Those who find they’re touched by madness
i) ________  ________ ________ ________ me
Those who find themselves ridiculous
i) ________  ________ ________ ________ me
in Love, in k) ________  ________ hate, in tears
The top 10 ways to enhance the learning experience. - James, David

This text has been written in phonemic script and it also shows connected speech.

/ˈpiːpələstreɪndʒ/  
wenʃəˈeɪ streɪndʒə fəˈsiːlʊk  
ˈʌgli wenʃəˈeɪ laʊn  
ˈwɪmɪnsiːmˈwɪkɪd  
wenʃəˈ仑ˈwɒntɪd strɪ.tsəˈɭən  
ˈɪvən wenʃəˈdəʊn  
wenʃəstreɪndʒ  
ˈfeɪsɪskʌmaʊtəvðəreɪn  
wenʃəstreɪndʒ nəʊˈwɒntɪd  
ˈmembəzjəneɪm  
wenʃəstreɪndʒ wenʃəstreɪndʒ  
wenjoʊ streɪndʒ/  

Questions

1. The words ’you’re’ are pronounced in 3 different ways: These are  

2. Why do you think this is?

People Are Strange

/ˈpiːpələstreɪndʒ/  
wenʃəˈeɪ streɪndʒə fəˈsiːlʊk  
ˈʌgli wenʃəˈeɪ laʊn  
ˈwɪmɪnsiːmˈwɪkɪd  
wenʃəˈ仑ˈwɒntɪd strɪ.tsəˈɭən  
ˈɪvən wenʃəˈdəʊn  
wenʃəstreɪndʒ  
ˈfeɪsɪskʌmaʊtəvðəreɪn  
wenʃəstreɪndʒ nəʊˈwɒntɪd  
ˈmembəzjəneɪm  
wenʃəstreɪndʒ wenʃəstreɪndʒ  
wenjoʊ streɪndʒ/  

People are strange  
when you’re a stranger  
faces look ugly when you’re alone  
women seem wicked  
when you’re unwanted  
streets are uneven when your down  
when you’re strange  
faces come out of the rain  
when you’re strange  
no-one remembers your name  
when you’re strange  
when you’re strange  
when you’re strange  
when you’re strange
**Beatles – When I’m Sixty-Four Lyrics**

**Task**

a) First write the words from the phonemic script. The utterances are how you would hear them.
b) Then put the words in to the text on the next page.
c) Then listen and check

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phonemic Script</th>
<th>Words</th>
<th>Comments &amp; observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>/ˈɡræntʃɪldrən/</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elision (Omission) of /d/ in grandchildren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/kʊdæsk fa mə/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/biːəolde/</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/miːləlain/</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>/aɪləvwaɪt/</td>
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<td>/biː hændi/</td>
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<td>/fɪlɪnə/</td>
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<tr>
<td>/joː.sinˈsiːli/</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>/ɡedaʊlda/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ˈbɒtələvwaɪn/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/ˈkoːtəθriː/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>/fərəraɪd/</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When I __________ losing my hair,

Many years from now.

Will you still be sending me a Valentine

Birthday greetings _ __________

If I’d been out till __________

Would you lock the door,

Will you still need me, will you still feed me,

When I’m sixty-four

You’ll __________ too,

And if you say the word,

I could stay with you.

I could ___________, mending a fuse

When your lights have gone.

You can knit a sweater by the fireside

Sunday morning go __________,

Doing the garden, digging the weeds,

Who ____________ _?

Will you still need me, will you still feed me,

When I’m sixty-four

Every summer we can rent a cottage,

In the ____________, if it’s not too dear

We shall scrimp and save

__________ on your knee

Vera, Chuck and Dave

Send me a postcard, drop __________

Stating point of view

Indicate precisely what you mean to say

__________, wasting away

Give me your answer, ____________ form

Mine for evermore

Will you still need me, will you still feed me.

When I’m sixty-four
6. NARRATE THE VIDEO

This is great as a warmer activity to encourage fluency, and also to practise the present and past continuous. This is a ‘backs to the board’ activity where half of the students sit with their back to the screen & the other half sit opposite them facing the screen and have to describe what they see in the video. The teacher then stops the video in the middle and students who have been listening must recount what they have heard. The students then swap places and roles for the second part of the video.

Higher levels may not need to be pre-taught vocabulary, but this activity can be easily differentiated for lower levels by pre-teaching key words, or by using a bingo style sheet where they tick off the verbs that they hear.

Finally, students can see the whole video to check and also to ask about vocabulary.

For the video for *So What* by *Pink*, the following vocabulary could be pre-taught, or used to tick off the verbs heard.

*Which words did you hear? Tick (√) the words that your partner used.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verbs</th>
<th>✓</th>
<th>Nouns</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tree</td>
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<td>Sit</td>
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<td>Neighbour</td>
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<td>Drive</td>
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<td>Burn</td>
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<td>Jump</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drink</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7. ORDER THE LYRICS

Give students strips of paper with lyrics from a song. Students read the lyrics & put the paper away/ in their pocket. They then aim to order themselves according to the lyrics. The students listen to check & to make any changes as they listen. This requires good student interaction & listening skills. Songs with a story work best for this activity.

8. AUGMENTED REALITY

A fantastic way of bringing a page to life. Students create work on paper and add a trigger image that activates a video, which has been created by the students. So a two dimensional poster includes a video. The application Aurasma is a popular tool for this.

Organising Thoughts

Planning and essay or talk can often be a cause of frustration for learners. Here are some ideas for helping them focus on the key points.

9. MESSAGE MAPS/ THE 15 SECOND PITCH

Students pitch an idea within 15 seconds using 3 key supporting points. This focuses on identifying the important aspects, using powerful adjectives, and clear and persuasive pronunciation. Here is an example for Lush soap. https://www.forbes.com/sites/carminegallo/2012/07/17/how-to-pitch-anything-in-15-seconds/#6f1dd1541dd9

10. PAPERSLIDES

Students create a plan or storyboard on 6 pieces of paper. A key piece of information is written on each piece of paper. The papers are stacked and the students film themselves reading the information.

This is good for all levels. Higher levels can summarise films, events in history or even course book listenings and videos.

https://paperslide.wikispaces.com/Guidelines
Well, what a strange rollercoaster we’ve all been on over the past few months. Not even 4 days after the end of the TESOL-SPAIN Convention in Salamanca we were frantically preparing for the shutdown of our centres and the prospect of teaching online for the next few weeks, a month tops (oh, the optimism). We called all the teaching and administration staff in for an emergency meeting on the Friday and I gave them training on a platform I had only heard about 18 hours prior to the meeting, before sending all 36 of them off on a magical mystery online teaching adventure from the comfort of their own homes. Sounds like so much fun, right?
As I’m sure many of you reading this have discovered, yes it can be fun, but it can also be incredibly draining and time-consuming, especially when it comes to teaching YLs online. In our first teachers’ meeting of the quarantine, we all shared stories of how we were getting on and things that had gone right (students being engaged), things that had gone wrong (not knowing how the interactive material worked) and things that made us laugh (a student miraculously stranded half in one class and half in another). We found it comforting to find out that we were all learning as we were going along and that some days were good whilst other days weren’t so good. As we have travelled along this magical online teaching journey there are a few things that I have picked up along the way and thought were worth sharing with the wider teaching community. So here are ten tips for teaching YLs online:

1. **GET THEIR ATTENTION FROM BEGINNING.**

It’s really important with YLs to engage them from the beginning of the class in order to start with energy and enthusiasm. We have found that a great way to do this is with a short video or the use of images to introduce a topic. Taking this opportunity to get their attention will mean that they interact more from the beginning of the class and will help maintain this engagement throughout the class.

2. **PREPARE PLENTY OF UP-YOUR-SLEEVIES.**

As you’ve probably all realised yourselves, an hour of class online is nothing like an hour in class. The great thing is that you can finally get through everything you have planned; the downside is that you sometimes find yourself with some extra time at the end of the lesson. With our younger learners, it’s essential that we anticipate this and think about how we are going to fill this time. Think vocabulary revision or short speaking tasks which will get students to use their language productively.

3. **MIX UP ACTIVITY TYPES.**

As a child or teenager, sitting at home all day without the company of your friends is the last thing you want to be doing. There are going to be days where energy will be higher than others and this will have an effect on your classes. When planning online classes (exactly like a face-to-face lesson) you need to make sure there is a good variety of activities so that the class doesn’t become too repetitive. Make sure there is plenty of meaningful communication, too.

4. **MAKE SURE YOU HAVE TRIED OUT THE MATERIAL FIRST ONLINE.**

As I mentioned before, this is a learning process for us all and we have all had to adapt to teaching online very quickly which means we haven’t had a lot of time to get used to this way of working. When using any new material in class, make sure you know how to use
it before starting the class. There’s nothing worse with YLs than having them sitting there doing nothing whilst you’re trying to work out how something works. It’ll slow down the pace of the lesson and students could lose interest and become less engaged.

5. AVOID THE TENDENCY TO OVERLOAD THE LESSONS WITH ‘GAMES’.

I have seen many teachers stress themselves out with lesson planning over the last few months over the quantity of material they think they need to prepare to keep the students entertained, making every coursebook activity into an online interactive game. Whilst this is great occasionally, we shouldn’t feel pressured to put on a show every time we teach online. Use the same material you would use in class and only incorporate extra online material if it contributes to your overall lesson aims.

6. USE WHATEVER YOU HAVE AROUND YOU.

Now is the time to be resourceful and get creative with the material or objects you have around you. Not only does this apply to you, but also your students. Getting them to use what they have around them in class allows you to add a real-life element to the language you’re teaching as well as giving the students a chance to share a little bit of their lives with you. Get them to find something or tell a story about one of the objects in their houses, the possibilities are endless.

7. SILENCE IS OK.

Another common issue being faced by teachers as they transition into online teaching is that they feel like they have to fill silence. They are worried that if there is a moment of silence, the students will lose interest and they won’t enjoy the class. Just like in a face-to-face class, students need time to think and that silent time in class is crucial for them to process the information and complete their work well. So, make sure you allow for thinking time and don’t worry too much about a little down time in classes of YLs- they need it as much as you do.

8. USE INTERACTIVE FUNCTIONS.

Online classes can feel a lot more teacher focussed than face-to-face classes and the students tend to take on a much more passive role in the learning process. In order to combat this, make sure you maximise the use of any interactive functions that may be available to you with the platform you are using for classes. If you can, allow students to share their screens and show you something they have been working on or present something. You can also give remote control of your screen to students to allow them to complete an activity themselves.
9. GET THE STUDENTS OUT OF THEIR SEATS!

Being slumped over a computer all day is no good for anyone’s energy levels and even less so for our younger learners who are used to running around the park and the playground. If you can, plan a part of the lesson in which students have to get out of their seats for a moment or two. This can work as a good stirrer if students’ energy levels are dropping and gives them a chance to use movement to help support their language learning.

10. DON’T DEVIATE FROM YOUR NORMAL CLASSROOM ROUTINE.

This is especially true for VYLs who are used to a set classroom routine. Keep the different elements of your classroom routine as you would in the classroom and don’t feel like you need to change everything for online classes. Children will appreciate the familiarity and it’ll give you a clear structure on which to base your lesson plans.

There is one thing, however, that we know for sure - this isn’t going to last forever. Our skills and knowledge gained during this time, on the other hand, will and we will be the better off for it. Online teaching and learning will continue to grow, even after we go back to ‘real-life’ teaching, and we will be much more flexible as teachers. We will use more interactive material, we will throw away those old CDs and we won’t be too scared of something going wrong to introduce a bit more technology into our classes. Now is the time to really expand your teaching skills and try new things out in every class. You (hopefully) won’t get this opportunity again, so make the most of it as an experience to develop and become an even better teacher!
 Turning mixed-ability classes into teaching opportunities

Encarnación Pérez Pulido

**ABSTRACT**

The present paper aims to provide a rough look at how to cope with the ESL challenge of teaching mixed-ability groups. Some strategies on how to face this difficulty through group work and peer evaluation will also be presented.

**KEYWORDS**

challenge, mixed-ability, ESL, teaching.

**BIO DATA**

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INTRODUCTION

It is a general assumption that no two students are alike, for students, generally speaking, learn at different paces. The different rhythm in their learning leads to what is called heterogeneous classes. According to Penny Ur\(^1\), a homogeneous class is a class of one; a heterogeneous class is a class of two (or more). Following this assumption, and as Prodromou stated back in 1992: “All classes are, of course, mixed ability” (p. 7). Ur prefers to use the term heterogeneous, whereas some other teacher trainers (Prodromou, 1992; Scrivener, 2012; Harmer, 2012; or Thornbury, 2017) refer to this as mixed-level or multi-level classes. Natalie Hess (2001) establishes a distinction between multilevel classes and heterogeneous classes. The former has to do with language aptitude, language proficiency, general attitude toward language, or learning styles, whereas the latter is linked to the gender, maturity, occupation or cultural and economic backgrounds of the students. Taking not only Hess’ statement, but also that of Prodromou’s and Ur’s aforementioned, it can be concluded that, whenever our context is composed by more than one student, it can be considered a multilevel class. In the present paper, all three terms – mixed-ability, multilevel and heterogeneous- will be used.

The key to understand and to cope with this teaching environment is context. Context is where it all happens. The context where learners’ progress is constantly assessed, or where all are expected to achieve similar results, does not help students to progress in their learning of a language (Thornbury 2017, p. 169). Considering all learners are alike and demanding the same performance from them might turn the learning experience into an unsuccessful and frustrating scenario. Each student brings into the classroom different personal experiences, backgrounds, interests, or expectations that will affect their attitude towards language acquisition. Thus, treating all students similarly and expecting the same outcomes will result, more often than not, in learning failure.

Therefore, interpreting context and working with the different variables that teachers may encounter in the classroom becomes one of the most challenging goals to achieve in the teaching process. But teachers not only learn by teaching, what Schön (1983) defines as “reflecting in action”, but also by thinking over what happened in class, that is, by “reflecting on action”. Thus, in order to achieve the moment where teachers are able to interpret and handle the different contexts they might encounter, a post-teaching reflection and self-assessment on their performances should be done. Teaching does not end when leaving the class; it actually begins right there.

The present paper aims at providing some tools to help in the interpretation of the different multilevel teaching contexts. After a quick state-of-the-art and a discussion on some of the advantages these classes may have, some relevant techniques and activities are presented, together with some suggestions for a more effective way of teaching in a mixed-ability language environment.

\(^1\) Some of the ideas in the present paper have been taken from the talk given by Penny Ur in 2013 in the frame of the International Teacher Educator Conference in Hyderabad (India). The talk can be found here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WU81k3AVFU
LITERATURE REVIEW

Nowadays, some of the most influential teacher trainers devote either a full manual or at least part of their manuals to ways of coping with mixed-ability classes. Strategies and different techniques on how to teach in this specific context can be found in the works of the already mentioned Prodromou (1992), Harmer (2012), Scrivener (2012) and Thornbury (2017). To the previous, some others can be added, whose statements and ideas on the matter do not deviate substantially to the former. Rinvolucri (1986), Ur (1994), Hess (2001), Bowler & Parminter (2002). In some other cases, some of this literature is devoted to categorizing the students by means of their learning styles or their different intelligences (Gardner, 1983; Kolb, 1984; Lightbown & Spada, 2006; Pritchard, 2009; Rosenberg, 2013, among many others). However, a quick look at some of the recent scientific literature on learning styles finds insufficient evidence to clearly support the idea that outcomes are best when instructional techniques match with individual learning styles. It is worth noting the works of Pashler et al. (2009) or Rogowsky et al. (2015), whose research found out that, although it is clear that people have a strong sense of their own learning preferences (e.g., visual, kinesthetic, intuitive), the extent to which such preferences actually matter is certainly not so clear.

Most of this literature ends up reflected in the classroom in terms of teaching methods. What appears to be a theory on the different ways students learn becomes a teaching theory on how to cope with these scenarios. What we teachers usually do is to reflect the different cognitive abilities in our teaching: fast / slow learners become fast / slow finishers, learning styles become teaching styles, learning strategies become teaching strategies, or the different personalities are usually taken into consideration when addressing the students. And all the above can be achieved by means of understanding the context, since it will give us tools to solve the awkward situations that may arise during a class. One of the aims of the present piece of work is giving out ideas on how to understand the context and how to cope with the different problems that may arise in the class.

To this extent, Prodromou (1992) claims that “one way of building teachers’ awareness and self-assurance is to encourage them to relate theory to practice and practice to theory” (p. 10). He also defends that teaching methodologies can be a useful source to provide teachers with valuable resources to draw on freely. Thus, “the best way of coping with a mixed ability class is to select what is most relevant to the particular needs of the learners, from the existing mosaic of ideas, materials and activities now available” (p. 11). In order to do that, experience and personal understanding of the relevant theories are needed. And sometimes, those theories are not always within easy reach for inexperienced or untrained teachers. Finding a bridge between theory and practice, between the literature and what happens in class, becomes crucial. It is important to know not only the theory, but also how to put it into practice, to overcome the possible challenging situations we may encounter. This paper will focus on the second half of the previous statement by presenting some teaching strategies to make the life of a mixed ability group teacher easier.
CHALLENGES

From a teaching perspective, providing for the students’ learning can be considered one of the most challenging problems in a multilevel class, since we teachers need to make sure to provide enough suitable opportunities for their learning. As Penny Ur says, paraphrasing the famous song “Get up, Stand up” by Bob Marley and The Wailers, we can reach some students all of the time and all students some of the time, but we cannot reach all the students all of the time\(^2\). It is therefore a real challenge to make sure that all students have the chance to be part of their learning process. By doing this, we also promote the sense of belonging to a group, and that all students are part of a whole.

Discipline might sometimes become a real problem in heterogeneous classes and it is usually linked to boredom. The task level of difficulty might be a problem: if the task is too difficult, some students might get bored and cause discipline problems; if it is too easy, some able students may finish their tasks too soon and get bored; this may lead to disruptive behaviour. Same thing might happen if a particular task is not suitable to a student’s learning style or interest. One of the possible ways of overcoming boredom is by using some students as teaching assistants. This way, the teacher is not the only pedagogue, and it helps to shift the focus from teacher to student, making the class more learner-centered, which is also one of the basic premises of any Communicative Approach. The usual way to select these assistants is by looking at their language level. The strongest students can be recruited as assistants specially when working in groups. These students could help the weaker ones with their doubts, or encourage them to participate, making them both, the assistant and the assisted, feel useful and, therefore, building their self-esteem.

If we accept that our teaching context is mainly one of the mixed-ability kind, rather than feeling overwhelmed, we should consider it a great and challenging teaching opportunity. All possible awkward situations can be overcome by using some simple teaching strategies, just a twist in the traditional way of handling a class. In the next section of the present paper, the macro-level, that is, the theoretical background, gives way to the micro-level of exercise type, the practice, where some of these strategies and some activities will be presented.

SOLUTIONS

Motivation plays an important role in the context of a multilevel class. In fact, Thornbury (2017) regards motivation as “a key factor determining success or failure in language learning” (p.137). Motivated learners may well be perfect allies in class. However, motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Extrinsic motivation is usually imposed from the outside, usually in the form of tests and their respective grades. Intrinsic motivation is more difficult to achieve, since it involves the interest or utility the subject may have for learners. Setting achievable and short-term goals may encourage them to keep interest in their learning. Motivating your students can be achieved in several ways, such as varying the speed of the class by changing topics, skills, the organization of the activities, the level of difficulty, or the material that we use.

\(^2\) The Wailers (1973) Burnin’.
Together with motivation, variation, individualization and personalization of the activities also play an important role in the success of a mixed-ability class. The following pages are devoted to analysing the different ways motivation can be achieved.

**VARIATION**

Tasks can be differentiated in diverse ways to suit learners with various language levels. The materials often used in class contain mainly “closed-ended” activities, that is, activities that provide only one right answer. Additionally, we teachers tend to seek for a particular answer, narrowing the possibilities of participation on the part of the students, regardless of their level. A better way to reach more students and avoid the only-one-answer scenario would be to use “open-ended” activities. Prodromou (1992) defines these activities as “the ones that allow learners to work in their own way, at their own pace, within the framework of one and the same lesson” (p. 73). These activities allow many possible right answers, hence providing opportunities for response at various levels. That way, more learners can get to respond, raising their self-esteem and getting all the class to participate. Everybody adapts the activity to his or her own ability and his or her own level; everybody achieves something.

With “open-ended” activities, all learners in the class can get to respond, and to respond at different levels. That is to say, by being flexible and allowing a wider range of answers we are providing all students with achievable tasks, and encouraging participation. The aim of the teacher should be to find the kind of exercise that will provide a partly right answer, “to enable them to be constructive with their knowledge and develop their conscious strategies and intuition, rather than display their ignorance.” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 75).

Here, two possibilities can be given to avoid the closed-endedness of the activities in textbooks: one is to create your own material. Sometimes the teacher may have to create their own tasks to supplement those in their textbooks. Unfortunately, this option requires time and expertise on the part of the teacher. An alternative option is to transform those activities from “closed-ended” to “open-ended” or to use simple strategies, a simple twist to the activity provided by the book.

An accessible way of achieving this is to give a time limit rather than a quantity-of-work limit. This helps to adapt a particular exercise to the different level or work speed of individuals. In addition to this, we could ask the students to answer any of the questions randomly, rather than following the usual order (1, 2, 3 …). Weaker students may go straight to the easiest answers, but by doing this, we get more students to participate, making them feel able to

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3 Ur (1992) refers to this strategy as “compulsory + optional”, and she describes it as follows: The “compulsory+ optional” strategy means that the class is given material or a task and told that a certain minimal component of it has to be learned or done by everyone, the rest only by some. The basic attainment requested should be accessible to all, including the slowest; but provision should be made for more, or more advanced, work by those for whom it is appropriate. (p. 136)

4 Both Prodromou’s (1992) and Hess’ (2001) manuals contain a great number of “open-ended” activities, strategies or a close detail explanation on how to transform “closed-ended” to “open-ended” tasks.
respond and building their self-esteem; moreover, it reduces the teacher-talk time as well by making the class more learner-centered. Students could also be asked to ignore any of the questions they consider uninteresting, or to add further ones. The latter is also a helpful way of coping with fast-finishers. Another strategy is to make comprehension questions more flexible, to transform yes/no questions into wh- questions, or any dichotomous cue into “open-ended”.

**INDIVIDUALIZATION**

Individualization can be achieved by just a simple twist in the way activities are faced. Adapting activities or exercises so that they adjust to the different levels or speed of work of individuals is a simple way of reaching more students, and it holds many positive implications. In this line of thought, and in order to offer some ideas to help to individualize activities, Harmer (2012) includes the concept of differentiation. He claims that “teaching different individuals in a different way means trying to provide different learning experiences for different individuals” (p. 97). Individualizing activities help to make sure that all students are provided with opportunities for their learning. He also states that students should be made more responsible for their own learning and progress by including learning training (ibid). As Hess (2001) explains, “individualizing student work helps us to deal with the problems of finding the person in the crowd” (p. 12).

**PERSONALIZATION**

Personalization, on the other hand, can be promoted by providing students with possibilities to express their own experience, preferences, opinions or ideas. As Penny Ur (1999) suggests, “whenever possible design or adapt tasks in order to allow for different individual responses, based on learners’ own experience, opinions or imagination” (p. 135), so that all students feel confident with the topic at hand and engaged in the activity. This can be achieved, again, just by a simple twist in the structure of a task. Comparing their own ideas or experiences to the characters of a reading or a listening comprehension exercise could help. Asking them to create their own piece of language, using the particular grammatical point or vocabulary field they are practicing in class, or letting the class decide on the discussion topics, can also help to “personalize their learning and take positive steps to acquire a new language of self-expression” (Prodromou, 1992, p. 70).

When dealing with mixed-ability classes, one of the most repeated premises is how classes are organized. Depending on the context of the class, groups can be organized attending to their age, their native language—in the case of multilingual classes—, or their target language level. In all cases, only positive results can be gotten. Hess (2001) explains that through collaborative learning, students participate more, they learn how to compromise, they negotiate meaning, and they become better risk-takers and more efficient self-monitors and self-evaluators; classroom atmosphere and efficiency improve as does student self-esteem (p. 10).
Thornbury (2017), on the other hand, mentions differentiated instruction, that is, to group learners “according to their abilities and set different task objectives” (p. 169). Scrivener (2012) offers two options, either to divide the class separating the different levels out, or offering differentiated work, that is, different work to different people (p. 88). Collaborative work becomes, as can be inferred, a great tool to build rapport in class, to encourage participation.

However, how to organize the groups can be a sensitive matter. It is essential to handle the groups with care, since some students may feel categorized and diminished. It is advisable to organize the groups or pairs with the task to be done in mind, rather than considering only the linguistic skills of the students. This way, we teachers release tension and students feel relaxed and willing to participate in class.

Pairs can be organized just for a specific task, -Scrivener (2012) refers to these as “short-term pairs”-, or in “long-term pairs”; or groups, set at the beginning of the course and working together for the rest of the term (p. 89). These groups can be organized attending to their language level, where one of the students, usually the strongest ones, can act as guides and support to the other students, thus promoting peer teaching.

In order to match the needs and learning styles of all the students, and in the interest of personalizing and individualizing the learning process, the preferences of all students such as topic interest, skill or activity preferences etc., need to be taken into consideration. Varying the class organization may probably be the best option in this case: in the same session, toggling between a collaborative, individual and a teacher-centered lesson might provide all students with opportunities to match their learning preferences to the content of the lesson. It is also important to make sure that the task is such that it is likely to be better done by the group or the pair than by an individual. Collaborative work certainly has positive educational implications, and promotes the feeling of teamwork, although some students may prefer to work alone. In this case, allowing these students to work individually and not forcing them to be part of a group may help them with their self-confidence and self-esteem.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES

In the following pages, three different activities will be presented. The link between them is that they help the students to be motivated through individualized or personalized activities. They also help to encourage students to participate in the class. The aim of all activities is to get the students to communicate according to their language skills, thus can be used with any student and in any level.

a) Activity one

The first one has a picture as the main ingredient. Penny Ur (1999, p. 50) uses a picture with people doing different actions to practice the present continuous. Almost any picture can be used, depending on the particular grammar point or vocabulary field that we want to work with in the class. Pictures with different people may be used to practice clothes, or people practicing sports in a park, parts of a city, parts of a house, etc.
Once the picture is chosen, students are divided into groups and one of them is appointed the secretary. The teacher sets a time limit (a minute or two should be enough) when the students have to say as many things or describe as many actions as they can see. The secretary has to tick every time a correct word or sentence is conveyed. Any word, chunk or full sentence are accepted, so that all students can help and participate no matter their linguistic competence. When the time is up, groups compare the number of ticks they have. What makes this activity motivating is timing, and that it is presented as a game. A game is basically an easy task made more challenging by the addition of a limitation or a rule of some kind. In the case at hand, the description of a picture becomes a real challenge just by adding the ingredient of the limitation of time; that, and the fact that almost any reply can be accepted, regardless the language level of the student.

The goal of the activity, that is, to practice a particular grammar point or piece of vocabulary by means of a game, can also be achieved by replacing the picture with chunks or propositions. Rather than showing the students a picture with actions or objects, they are provided with pieces of language that they have to use to build either questions or sentences of any length and any kind. Thornbury (2005) presents it as a way of working with grammar, where students are given three words (Princess, kiss, frog) and students need to build as many sentences as they can (p. 11). In this case, verb tenses are meant to be practiced. If rather than verb tenses, our goal is to practice questions, auxiliary verbs, pronouns and predicates can be provided (does, chicken, he, eat).

b) Activity two

Dictation is key in the second activity. Dictating has countless benefits, the most remarkable being that it is discipline-friendly, since it does not cause too much disruption in class. In the matter at hand, a “dictogloss” will be used. The difference between traditional dictation and “dictogloss” lies in both procedure and objectives. A “dictogloss” can be an effective activity for focusing on a specific grammar form since the text is prepared by the teacher. If the text is told rather than read aloud, an element of authenticity can be added. The text should be short and pitched according to the students’ current competence. In a “dictogloss”, a short text is read at normal speed while students write down notes or chunks as they listen. As students have to process the whole text for meaning, they are more likely to remember the general idea rather than the exact words. At the end of the dictation stage, students will probably have just a bunch of chunks or isolated words. Now, in small groups, the students put their fragments of language together to reconstruct their version of the text. In order to complete the task successfully, collaboration becomes key, and it not only fosters a positive group dynamic but also reinforces the role of the teacher as a facilitator. All students, regardless of the level, can collaborate in the re-building of the text, helping the weaker ones feel useful so that they can see that their contributions are also part of the outcome.
c) Activity three

The last activity can be found in the inspiring *Multiple Voices in the Translation Classroom*, by González Davies (2004). Although the book is devoted to activities meant to teach translation, many of them can be easily adapted to any language-teaching context. The one at hand is a very simple activity, meant to develop mental agility and the beginning of code switching. In addition, it encourages creativity and imagination. The idea is to stimulate an act of communication between two people that speak different languages with the help of an interpreter. The class is divided in groups of three. One of the students in the group acts as the interpreter in a dialogue. Depending on the level of the students, prompts or model conversations can be provided to help them develop a conversation. These prompts can be easily found as role-plays and alongside material that presents and practices functional language in many coursebooks. Student A can only use his/her mother tongue; student C can only use English, whereas student B is allowed to use both languages, acting as a bridge to make the other two students be understood. Multiple areas can be practiced using this activity: at customs, asking for directions, at a restaurant, at a party etc. It is also particularly useful when working with functions, such as inviting, offering, suggesting, etc.

**CONCLUSION**

As Rinvolucri (1986) states, “We do not teach a group, but thirty separate people” (p.17). There are no perfect recipes especially in teaching mixed-ability classes, but knowing that there are advantages will remind the teacher that some pluses in this setting can also be found. Knowing some of the activities and different ways of grouping the students in these types of classes will definitely help them manage this context better. Also making students be partly responsible for their learning process, and also in evaluation and assessment of their own development will be helpful. There are always ways to make learning easier for the teacher and students, so it is important to keep looking for more effective ways of instruction.

This article has attempted to explore some aspects of mixed-ability classes, their advantages, their challenges and some ways to deal with them. Considering this teaching scenario as a challenge and a way of improving our professional development will probably help us to cope with it in a better way.

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5 Additionally, this activity would be a perfect example to practice mediation skill, which is explained accurately in the Companion Volume with New Descriptors of the Council of Europe (2018, p. 103) as follows: In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps to construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation). The focus is on the role of language in processes like creating the space and conditions for communicating and/or learning, collaborating to construct new meaning, encouraging others to construct or understand new meaning, and passing on new information in an appropriate form. The context can be social, pedagogic, cultural, linguistic or professional.
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In an interview way back in 1999, David Bowie explained to a perplexed Jeremy Paxman about how the internet, still young but growing, was going to bring upon its shoulders a profound global change, breaking down the barriers that separated the artist and the audience in terms of his own work, “where the interplay between the user and the provider will be so in simpatico that it’s going to crush our ideas of what mediums are all about”. Paxman, the sceptical journalist, saw the internet as simply a tool but Bowie, who was already distributing his music and reaching out to fans online, saw a coming revolutionary battleground, both exhilarating and terrifying in his own words.
The ever-innovative Bowie lived to see many of his bold predictions become a reality, passing away in 2016, a year much noted for featuring an abnormal amount of celebrity deaths, a fact all the more publicised by the very tool he had gushed about pre-millennium. His claim concerning the evolution in the relationship between the provider and user is certainly one to look at in terms of our more everyday jobs. The explosion in online services has made intercontinental communication almost instantaneous and jobs such as teaching and teacher training have a global reach, giving classrooms planet-sized possibilities. Indeed, for certain jobs associated with intercontinental travel such as English Language Teaching (ELT), it is becoming easier to train for these from the comfort of your own home.

Many of those working in ELT may start out teaching as a way of travelling and seeing the world, but a good few abandon the job as they return to their home countries to settle down. Others stay in the trade and settle in one of their ports of call, perhaps marrying and putting down roots there. The remainder may not fancy the idea of enhancing their prospects of promotion by spending an important chunk of their time heading off to another city or even another country, paying for accommodation and so forth in order to do a higher teaching diploma such as the DELTA in a face-to-face classroom. Therefore, the possibility of facilitating such a course online, in your pyjamas without even having to leave your house, must certainly be enticing and something educators should pay heed to as teaching becomes an increasingly online and technologically-related affair. Online facilitation of such a career-changing course may just entice a few of the leavers into staying in ELT too.

But is online training as effective as face-to-face study, especially when you think of the gremlins which still dwell within cyberspace? It can certainly be frustrating when trying to conduct a class with a language learner or even talking to a teacher trainer over Skype while the internet is on the blink. Furthermore, many complain of a superficiality in communication between people when online and, at times, online discussion forums in courses have been accused of having a lack of authentic interaction.

Take my own personal example for instance. I have been studying courses online almost constantly for the last eight years, having just finished a distance Masters in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages with Aston University in Birmingham, England, a city which I have yet to set foot in. I had done a short pre-Primary teaching course with the Norwich Institute of Language Education, more commonly known as NILE, just previous to my dissertation stage. For the dissertation itself, I looked at the intended effects of online teaching, focusing on this NILE course which I and several colleagues in British Council Spain had completed. Again, the English town of Norwich is another place I have never visited. Anyway, colleagues who participated in my series of questionnaires and interviews generally reported themselves as being reasonably happy with course content and how it was transmitted to students, who were spread across several continents on the British Council network. Positively, participants spoke well of collective wikis, in which we had to add our own ideas for activities so as to create a base of ideas. The use of video and recording equipment was encouraged and generally commented upon in a positive manner too and I personally felt that these audio-visual elements could form the basis for observed teaching practice in the future.
A few voices felt that the use of online forums was, as I was previously warned, a little inauthentic as the course organisers obliged us to comment on at least two others’ posts, and this felt quite superficial to some. However, in the course organisers’ defence, I would say that this is sometimes necessary to kick-start interaction in a situation in which the participants are ostensibly together online but geographically isolated or chambered off from one another. I remember doing CELTA back in 2007, the Cambridge certificate which acts as a well-recognised preliminary English language teaching qualification, and a few of my peers used to lock themselves away and scowl at anyone who dared ask them for an opinion or a hand.

A lack of authentic communication between course participants can also exist in the world of face-to-face teaching. The question is, how do we make it more meaningful, especially online, as here is where much of our teaching and preparation to teach, is headed, not to mention positions in the worlds of arts and culture. As Paxman’s tool and Bowie’s revolutionary battlefield grows in size and influence, we must make it specifically more authentic. But does this authenticity lie in our attitudes to our learners and tutors as Bowie suggested, as opposed to the technology itself?

My personal attitude to classroom teaching has always been influenced by progressive educational specialists like the Brazilian educator and philosopher Paolo Freire (1921-1997), who promoted a more egalitarian relationship between the students and the teacher. While this might be considered a little idealistic, especially if most of your students are younger learners, it would certainly be worth promoting in a classroom of adult trainee teachers, and the internet as an online agora might just be the place to exploit and develop it to the full. And the relationship between tutors and trainees, providers and users, might just become even more two-way in terms of teaching each other something new. Freire talked about dialogues being created through the teacher posing problems to students, thus making the learning process a shared responsibility between everyone in the classroom. But what would this look like in the online classroom, what activities would work best and what tools would facilitate it best? And importantly, how can learner or trainee attitudes be transformed into something more affirmative, given that many are still of the attitude that they are there simply to learn from their tutors?

I would suggest collaborative projects between several students, organised into study groups of three or four with contributions from a course tutor, which would oblige the students to work together and communicate in a meaningful way. When I did the CELTA face-to-face way back then, we were put into study groups of four. While some preferred their own company during study, the majority of us found ourselves cooperating with each other, and this especially helped me as I had never stood up in front of a class of learners, whereas the others started the course with at least some teaching experience under their belts. While the NILE course had projects and activities in which we could produce videos, we did these alone. So for me, given that at times I have felt a touch of cabin fever while studying via internet, a collaborative project based on ideas generated from the wikis to which we added individual contributions could make online learning experiences less lonely. Collectively-written wikis in which trainees could strike out and add in another colour then negotiate the content’s transformation through a video link or discussion board might produce something special in
terms of shared outcomes. And course forums, or even social media groups like Facebook, would easily facilitate the discussion required for production.

Most people, however, do want to create something to call their own and the NILE course and my Masters study with Aston did indeed provide me with that opportunity. Trainees do need that opportunity so, to give teachers-in-training the opportunity to express themselves fully, discuss their ideas with peers and maybe even rob a few ideas, this type of editable wiki is required alongside discussion boards and plenty of supplementary reading or audio-visual content for ideas and methodology input.

The attitude of the online trainee towards the demands of online study should be dealt with sympathetically by the course coordinators and trainers at the beginning of the course, or even previous to the course kick-off. Since there are also those who are naturally more timid than others, they may benefit from a little coaching to make them more comfortable and confident in expressing their ideas when physically alone but in the company of others via cyberspace. These courses, especially in such a diverse context when trainees in Spain are sharing a platform with others in the Middle East or East Asia, are the perfect place to really open up debate and learn new teaching perspectives through discussion and simultaneous or subsequent document building.

And that’s really how Jeremy Paxman’s simple tool has metamorphosed into David Bowie’s global revolution. The ability to access and interact with geographically distant cultures in an instant, while the kids are asleep and you only have a few hours in the day to get a potentially career-changing piece of training done or simply for the love of learning, has become terrifyingly and exhilaratingly fast and accessible. And maybe, as the technology develops, we will come full circle and find ourselves once again doing face-to-face teaching and training, only this time on a global level and with holographic classrooms.
Should EFL teachers teach Business English or General English language in company classes?

**Maggie Quintané Hierrezuelo**

**BIO DATA**

Maggie Quintané Hierrezuelo is a bilingual writer and teacher-trainer settled in Bilbao, Basque Country. From 1989, she has dedicated herself to teaching English language as a teacher-trainer for the Foreign Languages Faculty of “Enrique José Varona” of the University of Pedagogical Sciences in Havana City. A passionate linguist, she also studied German in the same university. Having taught in the US, Germany and Spain, she has experience in the public, state-assisted and private education sectors and has taught young learners, teens, and adults. She has also studied some French and Basque in Bilbao. Maggie has been a member of the Word on Word Writers Club and she is co-author of the book Relatos +2012, a project born in the heart of a Google + community and she has also had a bilingual blog on literature.

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The increasing use of English for international purposes has brought about the birth of English as *lingua franca*. Its growing domination has been shown in social and trade communications not only in Europe, but also in many other non-English-speaking countries all over the world. Hence, EFL courses like Business English (BE) have sprouted in different countries. Some definitions of Business English state that it is the type of English used in business contexts such as international trade, commerce, finance, insurance, banking, and many other office settings. Thus, it focuses on particular vocabulary, and grammatical structures used in such environment (Spencer, 2017). Context is relevant in English for Specific Purposes, so Business English is a specialism within English learning and teaching. Recent research done in the field argues that a learner needs to have a good understanding of the culture, circumstances, purposes, incentives, goals of a specific academic genre such as Business English, so as to communicate properly with it. Business courses are designed to help workers, professionals and businesspeople improve communication skills. In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in BE courses in Spain. Most EFL teachers working for language schools teach in-company classes and so do I. However, I have the impression that many a time some company associate workers and managers who have been learning English for years cannot manage to communicate as fluently and accurately as they should. For this reason, a decision needs to be made whether to teach Business English or General English and most of time I go for the latter, or a mixture of both.

Consequently, at the beginning of a course, after the first preliminary classes, it is important to assess students’ strengths and weaknesses to design a syllabus that fits their necessities. It is highly important to have them explain their roles and working environment. Skills training, error correction and communication achievement become my general goals. We can complete the syllabus by asking students what their goals are and adopting them as well. Company learners work not only in business, but also in finances, technical and other areas, so the teacher needs to have some knowledge. Nevertheless, the vast majority of learners have good knowledge of the genre they use, especially in writing, while they do need to develop the ability to speak in their social career environment. In case they use some technical vocabulary you do not know, rely on them to explain it to you. It has proved to be very useful for students to define, explain and describe the materials, the parts or machines they are constantly dealing with. Consider their contributions to design your syllabus.

“Personalize the learning process.”

Given the fact that some learners endure the pressure of improving their communicating skills at work and at business meetings while travelling on business trips, they all may need to refine their preambles to talk about their career experience and expertise, the history of the company and other facts and issues related with their field of work. These speakers may also have to work on presentations, and attend, supervise or conduct video conferences, so accurate and fluent communication becomes more relevant. Working on the appropriate language use and pronunciation is necessary to fill those gaps in their knowledge. Thus, building up a repertoire of practical phrases – using collocations and idiomatic phrases, may help them feel capable of speaking in an authentic way. As a result, their confidence may improve.
INSPIRE YOUR STUDENTS

Even though motivating and stimulating your learners are considered the requirements of every kind of lesson, it is sometimes forgotten when teaching English foreign language (EFL) in companies. On the contrary, this target learner needs to be more driven and stimulated in a way that EFL classes become fun and worth attending beyond “the (common) choice of a particular action, the persistence with it and the effort expended on it”, known as motivation (Dörnyei, 2009, p.9). Teachers need to prepare materials that may provoke interest in EFL learners, improve the attitude toward this second language (L2) community, better the attitudes toward learning L2 and push the desire to learn it, (Dörnyei, 2006, p. 11). Your own behavior, your motivation has to serve as a model to drive your students’ motivation. Set a personal example with your own behavior.

That is to say, icebreakers and warm up activities, such as association games to guess a word or chunks of phrases, word races, or tongue twisters to improve pronunciation offer the opportunity to make learners get the “jitters” out, feel comfortable and expectant. Make the classes more interesting.

Although some think that the development of the lesson should be “less recreational”, class material can be relevant, topic related while being enjoyable too. Be it a group or a one-to-one class, the syllabus has to be suitable for your learners’ needs. Hence, activities carried on during English sessions should be practical to empower working adult learners to face real life situations, such as making and closing a deal, presenting a product, conducting a meeting or a debate, supporting arguments and making proposals.

Moreover, if you use a course book, use it as a guide, not as the only source. Online newspapers, company blogs and sites, products and services advertisements like brochures, are sources of authentic material that we can use. They are very suitable to enrich vocabulary, improve the use of grammar, reading comprehension and speaking skills as well as pronunciation. Studies state that working in collaborative tasks with feedback provided whenever needed, make learners feel more encouraged to try what they learn outside of the classroom boundaries. Promote learner autonomy.

Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom

To date, little attention has been drawn to the classroom atmosphere even though is one of the different external factors that influences learners’ motivation. A pleasant and comfortable ambiance will incite more participation and thus, learning. Most working learners attend classes at their place of work, the company, which may mean making an extra effort to focus on English classes. They often find it hard to leave work issues aside; therefore, it is better to use that energy they bring forth. Allow them to talk about what worries them or keeps their minds busy: a delayed shipment, an urgent offer to place, deadlines, etc. If you have agreed on it, try recording those real conversations or monologues and work on them later. Show interest and respect for their speech, so that they can give vent to what bothers them. Provide direct corrective feedback, if they cannot correct themselves. Similarly take advantage of the situation to revise grammar, vocabulary providing the appropriate collocations and
new vocabulary. Do not forget pronunciation. Teach and practice word stress, rhythm and intonation. Relax the atmosphere with any pronunciation drill like holding a sheet of paper in front of their lips to produce P, T, K, B, D, and G. Use minimal pairs to drill long and short vowels. End with a tongue twister or watch a video clip, if necessary. Adults are open to talk about non work-related topics. Adjust your lesson to their mood and prompt them to write a short text about any news. Then, ask them to comment it. In other words, encourage their learning process in any possible way having handy solutions or improvising. Using new technologies in class will help you in those moments in which your class plan cannot be followed.

To sum up, in-company EFL teaching is a challenging teaching environment. You will need to have corporate learners get out of their comfort zone to learn how to communicate in different situations, so that their skills can be enhanced. A balanced mixture of both Business and General English will provide you with the tools to face in-company lessons. They are willing to raise their abilities to higher degree and you are the service provider to lead them achieve their goals. Why not follow Dörney’s & Csizér’s commandments for motivating EFL learners?

Table 4. Ten commandments for motivating language learners: final version

1. Set a personal example with your own behaviour.
2. Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.
3. Present the tasks properly.
4. Develop a good relationship with the learners.
5. Increase the learners’ linguistic self confidence.
6. Make the language classes interesting.
7. Promote learner autonomy.
8. Personalize the learning process
9. Increase the learners’ goal-orientedness.
10. Familiarize learners with the target language culture.

(Dörney & Csizér, 1998, p. 215)
REFERENCES


Neuropsychological research has shown the effectiveness of storytelling as a technique to make content memorable and transformative. The present talk shall give an overview — along with practical examples — of the use of storytelling techniques in EFL (English as a foreign language) and EMI (English Medium Instruction) contexts, relating storytelling to key elements in relevant methodological frameworks.
**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ABBREVIATION</th>
<th>FULL TERM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CLIL</td>
<td>Content and Language Integrated Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFL</td>
<td>English as a Foreign Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMI</td>
<td>English-Medium Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOTS</td>
<td>Higher Order Thinking Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOTS</td>
<td>Lower Order Thinking Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td>ZPD</td>
<td>Zone of Proximal Development</td>
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**INTRODUCTION**

“Storytelling is a biological imperative for human beings, the psychological mechanism by which they can capture the coherent perceptions of an unknowably complex world required for survival” (Baskin, 2005, p. 32). The author of this quote, Ken Baskin, states that storytelling is the one activity that distinguishes human beings from the rest of species and thus makes us special. He argues that the fascination stories hold for humans is related to the fact that stories make an increasingly complex world seem simple and understandable. It is precisely this characteristic that has convinced the authors of this article that storytelling is an excellent classroom technique for both children and adult learners in EFL, CLIL and EMI classrooms.

This article shall provide a brief overview of neuropsychological research into storytelling, which will be applied to the educational context; more specifically, to classroom methodologies. The framework presented shall then be complemented by examples from literature, from the authors’ teaching practice, and online resources available to the interested teacher.

**CONTEXT**

“Story” or “storytelling” strike the reader at first sight as simple and straightforward concepts that require little explanation. However, research into the different definitions available soon illustrates that simple though they might seem, providing a definition for them is not an easy task. The Cambridge Online Dictionary, for instance, defines “story” as “an ordered sequence of events from which meaning can be derived”. This broad definition fits several different fictional and non-fictional genres including legends such as Ulysses or El Cid, a news story about the launching of a new spaceship or even a repair manual for your car. A definition focussed more specifically on stories in a learning environment is provided by ABC Education (2012): “A story is a narration of a connected series of events involving the listener in four main ways: by instructing, educating, emoting and entertaining.” The element of interest here is the focus on the interaction between story, storyteller and listener. A definition adopting yet another angle is provided by McNett (2016): “a depiction of a real, fictional, or personified character experiencing an event or events that act as barriers to the character’s pursuit of his or her goal” (p. 185). The reference to an agent the listener can identify with has been used
by cognitive psychologists to explain the listener’s immediate emotional reaction to a given story and shall be further explored in the literature review. To sum up, “story”, as understood by the authors, shall encompass the following aspects (figure 1):

**Figure 1.** Defining characteristics of a story

There are two well-known models describing the structure of a story which can be useful when working with adult and/or advanced learners. On the one hand, Gustav Freytag’s story arc (also called “Freytag’s Pyramid”) and on the other hand, Joseph Campbell’s monomyth. Freytag’s model is based on a series of narrative events starting out with the exposition, during which the story’s background is set. An incident then creates a conflict that sets off the rising action, which culminates in the climax; in other words, the point of highest tension or danger to the hero. Once this is overcome, the action falls, the conflict is resolved and the story finishes with a dénouement that leaves the listener satisfied as all mysteries have been clarified.

**Figure 2.** Freytag’s story arc

Joseph Campbell’s monomyth or “Hero’s Journey” model is derived from his study of classical mythology and based on a slightly more sophisticated framework of 17 different steps that a hero takes when going through an adventure.¹

¹ More information can be obtained from the Joseph Campbell Foundation’s website at https://www.jcf.org/.
This model will be discussed in more depth in the Applications section. Having defined what a story is, to what purpose it can be used and what forms it frequently takes, the following section shall give an overview of the relevant literature available on the use of storytelling in education.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Storytelling as a recurrent tool in different fields**

According to Maggio (2014), storytelling can be defined as the ‘act of telling a story’. Despite this seemingly simple definition, storytelling has been present among us since memorial times. In recent decades storytelling has increasingly become a matter of interest in the fields of anthropology (Frazer, 1971; Campbell, 2003), literary studies (Propp, 1968; Levi-Strauss, 1958), business—in the fields of management (Boyce, 1995) and marketing (Hsiao et al. 2013; Fog et al., 2005)—, neuropsychology (Damasio, 1994; Immordino-Yang, M.H. & Damasio, A., 2007) and education (Rossiter, 2002; Heathfield, 2017), among others.
In this article, the authors shall focus mainly on the neuropsychological findings on storytelling and its effects on the listener, as well as their application to the educational context.

Neuropsychological research

When listening to a story, our brain is activated in an identical manner to when we have a real-life experience. In a study conducted by Rizzolatti et al. (1996a) with Macaque monkeys, it was observed how the brain area that was activated when the animals were reaching for their food was also lit up when they observed a researcher grasping for his own food. As stated by Rizzolatti and Craighero (2004), when we see someone performing an action, the so-called mirror neurons in the premotor cortex of our brain are activated in the same way as if we ourselves were performing an action. Other studies have shown that mirror neurons are also lit up when we use our imagination and observation and it is suggested that this brain system permits us to develop empathy (Hsiao et. al., 2013, as cited in Akgün et al., 2015).

As stated earlier, our element of interest taken from the definition of ‘story’ by ABC Education (2012) is the interaction between story, storyteller and listener. The result of this interaction is that empathy is created between the listener and the teller of the story. A study carried out at Princeton University by Stephens et al., (2010) showed that when a story is told, both speaker and listener’s same brain areas are illuminated, in a similar way to in the Macaque monkey’s study described above (see image 1).
Brain connectivity occurs, therefore, by synchronizing the brains of speaker and listener when listening to stories (Stephens et al., 2010). In other words, the reaction in the listener's brain is immediate and almost no time passes between the telling of the story and their reaction. This fact gives the speaker considerable power over the reactions of the listener, and fields such as marketing, advertising and political discourse have all discovered storytelling as a technique to influence and manipulate audiences (Zak, 2014). In conclusion, what happens in a story is reproduced in our brain as if it were actually happening to us.

Following this line of thought, listeners tend to empathize or identify with one or several of the characters in a given story, which creates emotional connection. Research has demonstrated the key role of emotion in language learning and speaking (Dewaele et al., 2018), which leads the authors to hypothesize that storytelling is a tool that can further learning in contexts such as EFL, EMI or CLIL.

**Constructivist approach to learning**

Human beings make meaning of experiences through stories, as pointed out by Fisher (1987), who labelled us as *homo narrans*. This idea relates well to the connection between experiential and narrative learning, as stated by Clark & Rossiter (2008). According to the latter authors, a narrative is not only a tool to promote learning, but also to conceptualize the learning process. We narrate our experiences to respond to and deal with them, but also to form our identity. This is not only an individual process; it is also social in nature. Learning through stories according to Clark and Rossiter (2008) involves stories being heard, told and recognized. This implies the *hearing* of stories, which must be received and interpreted and must engage the learner both cognitively and emotionally. When teaching a foreign language, EMI or CLIL, the listener will receive the story and transform it based on his/her previous
knowledge and experience of the world. Students will receive rich input, which will help them to make sense of meaning and apply it to their life experience. In the telling of stories the learner is the actor; the one who links the concept being learned from a collection of personal experiences, which ultimately leads to transformative learning taking place. At this stage of telling the story, the learner contributes personally to his/her own learning, which makes it more significant. Finally, recognizing stories implies that learners begin to understand the narrative character of stories and their cultural intricacies. For example, Spanish learners might become aware that they are positioned within a particular cultural narrative; one that prioritizes community over the individual, which in turn conditions the actions of community members accordingly.

In addition to personalising the learning experience, stories also fit the 4C framework for CLIL perfectly.

![The 4Cs framework](image)

**Figure 5.** The 4Cs framework. Adapted from *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (p. 41), by D. Coyle, P. Hood, and D. Marsh, 2010, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

As observed in Figure 5, the 4Cs framework by Coyle et al. works on the idea of the individual being influenced by society when constructing meanings and making sense of experience. If we analyse each of the aspects in the framework, firstly we should refer to content as relating storytelling to class content such as the *Brown Bear* story and a natural science class on bears and their habitats; stories are a magnificent tool to transmit knowledge and work on the content of interest. Secondly, communication is established between listener and teller. The third component is community, which refers to the immediate environment of the learner, not only within class but also outside school with family and other members of the community. For instance, storytelling sessions can be offered by the local library, thus allowing learning to transcend the confines of the classroom walls. Stories can be told at and about everyday scenarios, which makes learning real and significant. Finally, cognition is developed through stories when learners are asked to listen, summarise, analyse, interpret information or create their own stories, which parallels Bloom’s taxonomy of learning, as will be explained further on.
Therefore, storytelling is definitely a powerful tool to captivate our students’ imagination and make them actors in their own learning process.

APPLICATION TO EMI, CLIL AND EFL

Methodological aspects of storytelling

As mentioned above, stories provide a safe learning environment for foreign language, CLIL and EMI students, since they simulate events and emotions that allow learners to express themselves without losing “face” and without any negative real-life repercussions. According to Ellis and Brewster (2014), stories offer an important series of advantages (figure 6).

![Figure 6. Advantages of storytelling (adapted from Tell it Again! The New Storytelling Handbook for Primary Teachers, by Ellis, G., & Brewster, J., 2014)](image)

Firstly, stories require imagination, as learners relive, retell and adapt stories to their own life experience. As a result, stories encourage creativity, which is an important 21st century skill. Secondly, listening to stories in class is carried out in a group, and needs at least two participants: the storyteller, and the listener. Consequently, it is a shared social experience. The acquisition of social skills is especially important for young learners and is mentioned in the pre-primary curriculum; in addition, social interaction is also an important motivating factor in adult learning. Thirdly, stories provide an opportunity for repetition and retention, as learners can listen to them again and again, read and re-read or tell and re-tell them. This repetition helps drill certain language chunks and makes it easier for learners to move from the passive activity of listening to a more active one of participating in the story through activities such as repeating, retelling, chorusing, or clapping.

Another important opportunity offered by stories is their capacity for differentiation according to learner profiles, as students can join in at different moments and in different ways. For example, kinaesthetic learners can clap, mimic or act a story, while visual learners can
interact with the pictures in a storybook. Stories provide rich input — they often contain conceptual and cultural information that can be exploited in follow-up activities. For young learners, picture stories assist in acquiring verbal and visual literacy. Especially in pre-school education, visual literacy is a very important learning objective, as children might not have mastered the skill of reading text. Concerning learners of all ages, stories can prompt a variety of cognitive activities like listening for general meaning, predicting, guessing meaning or hypothesizing. Many of these are higher order thinking skills (HOTS), which makes them particularly valuable for CLIL environments. Finally, stories can create cross-curricular links. A story about animals like the *Brown Bear* in Ellis and Brewster (2014) can be exploited for natural science, geography, art, civic awareness and so on.

As described, stories are very versatile classroom tools and can cover a wide range of skills. In particular, they span the whole range of Bloom’s revised taxonomy for learning, teaching and assessing.

![Bloom’s revised taxonomy](image)

**Figure 7.** Bloom’s revised taxonomy (adapted from *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, by L. W. Anderson et al. Eds., 2001)

Figure 7 shows the taxonomy in the form a pyramid, depicting bottom – up the lower order thinking skills (LOTS) and the higher order thinking skills (HOTS). LOTS are related to remembering, understanding and applying, while HOTS include analysing, evaluating and creating. Teachers’ precious lesson time should be dedicated to making students exercise their HOTS rather than their LOTS, which will serve to keep the lesson challenging and motivating. LOTS can be dealt with during warm-up, revision or as autonomous work outside of class. Stories allow the teacher to tailor HOTS and LOTS time to the classroom needs. For instance, listening to a story and understanding it would be at the very bottom of Bloom’s
However, the teacher might decide to involve learners in a variety of additional, more active ways; for example, by instructing them to clap their hands or chorus a refrain at certain moments (which would correspond to the activity “apply” in Bloom’s taxonomy). Students might be asked to answer questions about what is going to happen next, or even to retell the story – this type of activity would be at the very top of the pyramid, since it is an activity that “re-creates” It is important for teachers to exploit these interactive opportunities stories offer and to make sure to include cognitive activities from the upper end of Bloom’s taxonomy.

To conclude, stories are valuable tools for learner differentiation, motivation and creativity, and as such have a place in any classroom. In the following section, ideas and resources for storytelling in different classroom contexts will be presented.

Choosing the right story

Teachers need to dedicate much thought and time to choosing the right story in order to make sure it is appropriate not only for the learning objectives to be achieved but also for the age group, language level and student interests. There are several aspects to be considered when making this choice.

Frequently you can choose between adaptations of popular fairy tales or legends and “real” storybooks on the general market. The latter offer the advantage of providing very rich and authentic input, with respect to both language and content. Even if learners do not know all the language used, visual, aural and kinesthetic clues help them grasp the general meaning. Using an authentic story can, as a result, be very motivating. However, two aspects need to be considered when making your choice: (1) linguistic and (2) cognitive complexity. How appropriate is the story for the age-group or language level you are teaching? How much above or below learners’ current language level can it be without violating Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD), which refers to whether or not the learner is able to understand the story either with the help of the teacher, the help of peers, on his/her own or not at all? If the story is too difficult, it will end up being frustrating. If it is too easy, it will be boring. In an ideal case, the story should be accessible in peer collaboration.

Aspects of delivery

Once the teacher has selected the story to be used, a series of practical considerations before delivery should be taken into account. Figure 7 represents decisions that need to be made by the teacher before the actual classroom session.
During delivery, aspects such as seating arrangements, visibility of pictures, props and visual support (e.g. puppets, flashcards, masks), use of sound effects (like knocking, tapping, imitating animal voices) need to be considered. Teachers should aim to create an inclusive learning environment in which children feel safe when collaborating because nobody laughs at other’s mistakes. Corrective feedback needs to be given in a sensitive way, demonstrating that the teacher values every student’s achievement and that the classroom is gender and culturally inclusive.

**Types of Stories**

**Stories with “withheld images”:** These are stories that engage learners’ imagination because there is one important element that students do not discover until the very last page. An example of this is the story called *Susan Laughs*.

*Susan Laughs (read by Jane Willis)*  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4UxHj6XoWM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4UxHj6XoWM)

The fact that the protagonist is in a wheelchair — which is only revealed at the very end — is a way to raise awareness that a disability does not make a child different in anything except that one disability, and that we should not limit our concept of a disabled person by only
focusing on what they cannot do rather than on what they actually can do. This is a story for young learners at the pre-literacy stage and can be used for vocabulary-building (antonyms), to practice the third person “s” in the present simple, or to drill pronunciation by means of the rhyme of the difficult “sp” and “sw” sounds. In CLIL classes, it can be used to relate to the cultural component (one of the 4 Cs) by raising awareness about disabilities. Last but not least, it offers great opportunities for kinesthetic learning due to the wealth of movement and gestures it provides.

**Picture stories:** These stories contain hardly any text and are excellent resources for low-level or very young learners who do not yet have the ability to either read or recognize large chunks of text. The Paul Stickland website, though commercial, offers a series of free resources, such as the full story with pictures of *Ten Terrible Dinosaurs*.

This story can be used to practice basic mathematical literacy skills like counting from 1 to 10, and allows kinesthetic learners to enact the sequence.

Another excellent example of this type of story is Byron Barton’s *I want to be an Astronaut*.

First of all, please notice the way sound and visuals are used to make understanding easy: Sentences are simple and repetitive. For example, they repeat structures like (“I want to…”). Images represent visual support of what is said, and sounds underline the message through the aural channel (the sound of eating when rations are shown; the sound of snoring when astronauts sleep). This multimodal approach is apt for the variety of learning styles you might find in diverse group of learners. It can also be used in CLIL contexts since content input regarding space is transmitted. The story mentions “zero gravity”, the name of the profession of “astronaut”, the name of the group of people in the spaceship (“crew”), as well as expressions like “shuttle”, “outer space”, “space suit”, “satellite”, and “orbit”. The language used in the story is elementary: Sentences are simple (generally subject – verb – object), they use the first person singular only, and verbs are in the present simple. The functional language to be practiced are the phrase “I want to be”, and the spatial adverbs “up” and “down”. The story gives rich input with regard to follow-up projects (professions, planets, vehicles, etc.) as well as an option to explore culture by gaining “knowledge and understanding of the world”; relating the concept of “space” to Earth and protecting our environment, for instance. A full lesson plan and a wealth of additional materials can be found here:
A type of picture story to be used with older age groups in EFL, CLIL and EMI contexts could be cartoons, where learners might be asked to order the sequence of the vignettes or to fill in empty speech bubbles.

**Lapbooks:** Stories can be made tangible in the form of lapbooks, which are file folders that contain a variety of “mini books”, foldables, and other material that cover detailed information about the lapbook’s central topic. Below you can find a brief video explanation.

Lapbooks are great resources for CLIL classrooms, since they allow students to divide up larger chunks of information into manageable units.

**Rhyming stories:** Rhyming stories are a great tool for practicing pronunciation, intonation and stress. Paul Stickland’s *Swamp Stomp* rhyming monster pop-up book can serve as an example here.

**Cumulative stories:** These are stories that repeat information several times over, varying small parts of the narrative. *Brown Bear Brown Bear* is a story in which the same question is repeated over and over again:

“Brown bear brown bear what do you see?  
I see a [colour] [animal] looking at me.”

Repetition helps retention and vocabulary acquisition. For multimodal approaches, the teacher might consider the two different versions of the story displayed in the YouTube videos below.
The *Brown Bear* story clearly presents concepts and language related to animals and colours, in a simple, repetitive and rhyming text. Both the reader and the rapper have added the sounds made by the different animals to their rendition of the story to give it more authenticity and enrich language and cultural content. The rhyme (“…what do you see? …looking at me.”) helps learners with stress, intonation and pronunciation, while the repetition of the question “What do you see?” drills question formation with “do”. Both strategies make it easier for children to join in the story.

In the British Council storytelling handbook authored by Gail Ellis and Jean Brewster, lesson plans are provided for this and several other stories. Within the lesson plans offered, there are a few that form part of a “Bears around the world” project and illustrate how a story can be used for project-based learning.

**Concept stories**: Concept stories are short stories that have been written to teach a specific scientific idea. Because the scientific concept is at the core of the story, the characters, settings and plots may not be fully developed. Below you can find an example of a concept story.

This story describes the growth of a seedling and the process of photosynthesis. It can help make content information more memorable and can lead to creative student writing if teachers assign tasks related to subject content in the form of a concept story to be written by the student.

An example of an audiovisual concept story is the TV series “Once Upon a Time...Life”, which many teachers might have watched as children.

In this video fragment, a child has cut his hand and the wound has become infected. The workings of the tetanus bacillus are being presented in the form of a story, with the bacilli represented as blue-spotted monsters. Concepts and expressions such as “toxins”,...
“bloodstream”, “nerves”, “brainstem”, “spinal cord” are introduced in the narrative of a boy’s body in which the white blood cells are personified as policemen fighting the attack from the blue monsters.

**Stories for adults:** This is a type of story to be used with older learners or even adults. With adult EFL and EMI learners, an awareness-raising activity based on research might be used as a warm-up. Ask learners to watch the Youtube video recreating a real experiment by German researchers Heider and Simmel (1944).

Teachers should tell learners they will be asked to describe what they saw. It will become apparent that the observers, rather than describing movements of geometrical shapes, tell a story about the shapes, attributing intentions, actions, relationships to the geometrical shapes involved. They will consider questions such as: Is the bigger shape threatening the smaller ones? Is the circle a prisoner, the rectangle a room or a prison cell? Are the triangles men fighting over the circle, which is a woman? Is the diagonal opening of the long line in the rectangle actually a door? The experiment demonstrates that we as human beings try to see meaning in happenings and use stories to interpret them; as a result, conducting this experiment can serve as a great awareness-raising opening activity.

Another storytelling activity for adult learners is based on the “monomyth” or “Hero’s Journey” model developed by American anthropologist Joseph Campbell, who analyzed many myths, legends, and folk stories and identified an underlying pattern that all of them seem to share, which he called “The hero’s journey”. A series of explanations and classroom applications of this model are available online and shall be demonstrated by means of two examples for the teenage classroom.

The first example applies Campbell’s model to the *Star Wars Saga*, which can serve as a model of how to interpret almost any movie, novel or series according to the monomyth model. The hero’s adventure begins with the hero in his normal surroundings, carrying out his routines. In the case of Luke Skywalker, this is him helping his uncle and aunt on their farm. Then the call to adventure arrives in the form of R2D2’s message from Princess Leia, who has been captured by the evil empire. However, Luke does not directly pass the threshold to adventure but rather refuses to help Ben (Obi Wan Kenobi). Only after the stormtroopers kill Luke’s family does he accept the adventure, start training with Ben as his mentor and Han Solo as his helper, and the monomyth develops.

Another application of this model to current adolescent literature can be seen in a TedEd video lesson using *The Hunger Games* as an example.
Learners can be asked to analyze movies and novels they have read according to this format, can write their own stories following the monomyth model, or can use historical events and rework them as a hero’s journey story. Storycubes can help provide prompts related to the class content.

Another option of using stories in adult teaching is changing the context of a story. This activity can raise awareness of how discourse structures vary according to context and audience. Students are given a choice of one of five well-known fairy tales (figure 8).

![Storycubes](https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-makes-a-hero-matthew-winkler)

**What makes a hero?**

Students first tell their classmates the original tales and are then instructed to choose one and adapt it to a 2-minute rendition in a new context. After initial online research to identify specific discourse markers for each context, they are then given time to prepare their speech and deliver it in small groups.

![Storycubes](https://ed.ted.com/lessons/what-makes-a-hero-matthew-winkler)

**Figure 9.** Story conversion exercise (based on an activity by Dolores Rodríguez Melchor, Universidad Pontificia Comillas, Spain)
Stories in English-Medium Instruction (EMI): EMI professors increasingly demand support in finding appropriate narratives that allow them to teach concepts in a meaningful context that students can relate to. This has become a field of interest, particularly in the Health Sciences, and a number of publications are available in this context.

Activities such as the one described in the article above, where students are being asked to turn case presentations into patient stories, are expressions of the belief that medicine needs to become more humane and doctors need to look at patients as unique human beings. For the EMI teacher, this type of story is a great resource, as it allows students to work with concepts from two different points of view while alternating between somewhat technical and non-technical use of language.

Wayne Cherry (2017) gives another example of using stories in EMI or CLIL, specifically in the field of history, by instructing his students to choose a conquistador and write a series of tweets representing both the historical facts and the protagonist’s feelings and perceptions. Cherry states that students submitted well-constructed narratives about, for example, the voyage of Magellan. The constraint to a maximum number of characters per tweet forced students to think, synthesize and produce concise language.

Culture through stories: It is not possible to publish an article on storytelling without making reference to one of the masters of this art: David Heathfield – storyteller, teacher, author.

On his website, David Heathfield generously shares texts and recordings of the many, many stories he has collected and (re) told, but in this context the authors would like to focus on one specific storytelling publication in which he outlines how stories can be told to bridge gaps between cultures and foster values such as empathy or solidarity. The publication indicated below includes the stories themselves with lesson plans and follow-up activities for the classroom.
CONCLUSION

To conclude, storytelling should be part of any communicative classroom methodology, so as to personalize learning through empathy. This article has presented some relevant research to this effect as well as some practical advice on how to incorporate stories into different teaching contexts by referring to a series of materials available to the teacher. To finish on a personal note, stories to the authors are a vivid reminder of the fact that in teaching and learning the process is just as important as the final product and that stories make us prioritise creating a positive classroom experience over cramming our students’ heads with a measurable number of grammar structures or lexical chunks. As Buddha says: “It is better to travel well than to arrive.”

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Motivating students to enhance speaking skills via videoconferencing

Ruby Vurdien

Speaking is one of the skills that EFL learners need to develop when learning the target language. Very often they feel reluctant to express their views in the classroom for several reasons. They may be hampered by poor literacy skills (Eales, Neale & Carroll, 1999), shyness or simply the fact that they do not feel sufficiently confident to speak in front of their peers for fear of making errors and being ridiculed. My primary concern, therefore, is to assist my students in developing their speaking skills so that they can perform...
successfully in the compulsory speaking test part of the Cambridge English examinations. With these assumptions in mind, I designed a study with a view to providing my students at C1 and C2 levels with the opportunity to engage in out-of-class online interactions via the videoconferencing application, Zoom. This additional practice might prove beneficial in terms of enhancing their communication skills.

**THE BENEFITS OF VIDEOCONFERENCING**

Videoconferencing, a synchronous communication mode, can be employed as an alternative to face-to-face interaction, thereby facilitating engagement among learners. Kern (2015) claimed that students’ production of sentences in a synchronous group discussion was two to four times greater than in face-to-face interactions. Videoconferencing can be defined as “synchronous audio and video communication through computer and telephone networks between two or more geographically dispersed sites” (Lawson et al., 2010, p. 295). It provides instantaneous interaction since students communicate with their peers in real time, as well as constituting a solution for EFL learners who have fewer opportunities to communicate in the target language (Ino, A. & Yabuta, Y. 2015). Furthermore, communication through videoconferencing includes eye contact, gestures and turn-taking, which can enhance students’ positive attitudes and motivation to learn the target language (Jauregi, Graff, Bergh & Khriz, 2012).

**THE PROJECT**

A learning platform was created by using the videoconferencing application, Zoom, to encourage the students to interact with each other online. The platform was accessible to the students via their smartphone, other mobile devices or their desk computer. They were also requested to download the application Google Drive on their device so that the activities could be shared. Bi-weekly tasks were designed with the aim of guiding the students towards developing proficiency in speaking. The tasks were three-tier:

1. Reading materials provided the context for the debates.
2. Vocabulary exercises were prepared to check for comprehension.
3. Questions were set to prompt interaction on videoconferencing.

Eighteen students at C1 and C2 levels volunteered to participate in the study, since they appreciated the additional practice deemed helpful for their Cambridge English examination, whilst at the same time experiencing a novel approach to learning.

**ACTIVITIES**

One of the goals was to afford the students the opportunity to be exposed to authentic texts, not only to those in their coursebooks. As a result, seven articles covering a range of topical themes, which, it was hoped, would arouse the students’ interest, were selected from
the BBC and The Guardian newspaper as reading resources; for example, ‘What is healthy eating?’ ‘Five ways students can boost their confidence at uni’, or ‘The world’s most polite country’, to name a few.

The seven vocabulary exercises comprised True/False or Multiple-Choice questions, and ten new lexical items were acquired in each exercise. Google forms, on which the vocabulary exercises were formulated, were shared with the participants. Below is an example of a vocabulary exercise:

**After reading the article do the following vocabulary exercise. Choose the right answer (a) or (b).**

**Description (optional):**

1. **The war in Syria PROMPTED a wave of people to flee the country.**
   - [ ] discouraged
   - [x] caused

2. **We MISSED OUT ON a chance to get a cheaper mortgage.**
   - [ ] failed to use an opportunity
   - [ ] disregarded

In order to prompt the participants to conduct their online debates, some questions were provided for an exchange of multiple views, thus developing their speaking skills. Here is an example of questions for eliciting information from each other:

- ‘What changes have occurred in our eating habits in the last twenty years? How do you foresee our diet in the future?’

- ‘Which of the five pieces of advice mentioned in the article do you consider to be the most/least important in boosting university students’ confidence?’ ‘Talk about your own experience at university.’

- ‘To what extent do you think the Spaniards are polite?’ ‘In your view, should students learn about good manners at home or at school?’

**STUDENTS’ INTERACTION ON ZOOM**

The participants were invited to book their meeting room on a bi-weekly basis. In other words, their meetings were scheduled at their convenience, which is an advantage of using
such technology. Once they had agreed on their preferred time and day, they would take part in their respective debates in groups of three, and each session lasted for about 10-15 minutes. To ensure that their progress in speaking could be monitored, each video was recorded by the students themselves and uploaded to the learning platform for the tutor to watch and analyse later. It is important for all the videos to be downloaded and saved since they are not permanently stored on Zoom.

**THE OUTCOMES**

The participants were fully engaged in their online interactions, reporting that they were motivated and comfortable when expressing their views due to their familiarity with the subject under discussion and lack of pressure. The video conference setting might also have fostered a more relaxing atmosphere conducive to enhanced interaction. They performed their online tasks without the anxiety of being observed or intimidated by their peers. They were able to consider their ideas and prepare their questions prior to their online debates. They made an effort to incorporate the newly acquired lexis in their discourse, as they knew that using a wide range of vocabulary would enhance their output. They felt more independent when managing their online interactions without my help and made their own decisions in terms of when and how to start their debates. Constant practice on videoconferencing led to confidence building and fluency development.

A fundamental aspect of videoconferencing is that students can see paralinguistic features, such as gestures or facial expressions, which facilitates communication. Hence, the students could learn the techniques of how to initiate, respond and take turns during their discussions, which they later applied in their face-to-face classes.

Some improvement was noticed in the students' speaking performance in the classroom, as they felt more confident and produced extended discourse with greater ease. The scaffolding provided by videoconferencing was influential in this regard.

**DRAWBACKS**

Despite the fact that the students generally expressed a positive attitude towards their novel learning experience, some problems were reported. Technical glitches, such as communication breakdown or blurred images, occasionally arose during interactions and disrupted task completion. Some of the students would rather have communicated in a face-to-face classroom context, since they can receive instantaneous peer support should they need it. Others claimed that although the atmosphere was unthreatening due to lack of peer pressure, the absence of personal contact created a somewhat cold environment. Once again, they would have appreciated a more natural setting like their classroom.
CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions that can be drawn from this novel learning experience are that videoconferencing can be perceived as a convenient tool to provide students with a learning context outside the traditional classroom setting. It can stimulate students to adopt a self-learning approach and collaborate through peer interaction, thereby developing communicative competence. It assists in increasing students’ confidence in speaking and provides practice prior to face-to-face class discussions.

In spite of the afore-mentioned limitations, I would certainly recommend teachers to implement videoconferencing in their teaching as a motivational tool to enhance students’ speaking skills.

REFERENCES


