The APPI eJournal

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DE PROFESSORES DE INGLÊS

Contents

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Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of the on-line version of the APPI Journal.

We asked a number of presenters at the 2018 APPI Conference to write about their presentations and we are delighted that they have been able to contribute. Those who attended the sessions can be reminded of important lessons and those who were unable to attend can see what they missed.

We are also pleased that this edition contains a number of practical, hands-on lessons for teachers to use and adapt for their own purposes. One of the driving forces of the APPI e-Journal is to provide tried and tested lessons and if you have some great ideas that you really want to share then, please, contact us.

Furthermore, we are pleased to reintroduce an old favourite from the days of the print magazine – a book review. Again, if you wish to contribute by writing a brief review of an ELT related book that you think should be promoted, then just get in touch.

You will also find in this edition a review of the 2018 Desmond Rome Scholarship as well as a fine example of a teacher/student shared project.

All in all, there is a lot to get your teeth into in this edition. Bom apetite!

Anna Pires
Judite Fiúza
Fitch O'Connell

Editors

Do You Practise What You Preach?

Diana England

What are our principles regarding teaching and learning? Where do our beliefs come from? How can we find out what they are? And do we actually 'walk the walk'? This session explored the benefits of making our beliefs about teaching and learning more transparent: both to ourselves and our students.

Defining 'teacher beliefs'

A 'belief' in a teaching context may be objective and factual, for example: we use the past simple to talk about finished past events, or in the early stages of learning, it's easier to understand than to produce a specific piece of language. It may also be a strong feeling or an idea that something is true or real. Most frequently, I would argue, our beliefs tend to be the latter: subjective 'hunches' that are perhaps difficult to categorically prove and also susceptible to change over time and experience.

Where teachers' beliefs come from

As teachers our beliefs are derived from a multitude of experiences: our own experience as language learners, previous early learning experiences, initial teacher training, experience of what works best, principles derived from educationally-researched or research-based approaches or methods, personality factors, our values, biases and prejudices gleaned from our home environment, our students' reactions and behaviours, especially when they are unexpected. These experiences all influence our attitudes and decisions we take regarding such things as planning a course, lesson content, how we behave, our teaching styles, expectations of our students' development, as well as the materials and resources we use (or don't use).

Why we should explore our beliefs as teachers

Some beliefs may be conscious and explicit to us, but they may also be unconscious or implicit. If we're not aware of them, how can we be expected to change our behaviour? Being aware of what we do and don't do, and what we are like in the classroom, what our attitudes are towards our students and the materials we use and content we teach means we can become better judges of what may be considered appropriate, effective, and enjoyable.

Exploring beliefs can also be a shared process of reflecting critically, learning from our colleagues' points of views. Equally with our students: we can encourage our students to think about learning / teaching processes. So, as well as looking inward to ourselves, exploring beliefs, I believe, should also involve looking outward.

How we can explore and develop our beliefs

We can develop our personal beliefs and understanding either by theorising from practice, or vice versa, by applying theory into our current practices.

The experience of one teacher provides a good example of the first point: she believed her students were quiet and slow learners because of their lack of participation in creative speaking tasks. She was surprised that a colleague she had invited to team-teach with her was able to get these same students straight on to an information gap activity much more efficiently and effectively in English. What she saw contradicted her former beliefs about her students, forcing her to examine the way she engaged with her students, set up the activity and checked her instructions.

We also make connections from concepts, information and theories from courses we undertake, books, articles, blogs that we read, seminars and conferences we attend, as well as preparing to give seminars and experiment with them in our teaching. This may include working from a 'big picture' of an approach or method, or a 'small picture' of a technique or activity. For example, we may read an article about 'the flipped classroom' – a concept which is new to us. If it resonates to some extent with our existing beliefs and outlooks on teaching and is practicable in our teaching context, we may experiment with it with our students. Assuming the experiment was to some degree successful, we may adopt this new approach wholesale or adapt it according to our context and students' needs.

A useful tool to help us explore our beliefs

What follows is a task to help you explore a few of your beliefs about teaching.

 a)   *Consider each of the following statements and mark with a cross where you stand on each line.*

1. It's important to correct students' mistakes in English immediately.
   strongly agree ☐☐☐☐☐☐ *strongly disagree*

2. In order for children to understand, an English teacher needs to speak to them in Portuguese.
   strongly agree ☐☐☐☐☐☐ *strongly disagree*

3. Children need to 'experience' language in order to learn it.
   strongly agree ☐☐☐☐☐☐ *strongly disagree*

4. Children learn best by working with other children.
   strongly agree ☐☐☐☐☐☐ *strongly disagree*

5. They learn English best if the language is explained to them.

   strongly agree ☐☐☐☐☐☐ *strongly disagree*

b) *Now copy these statements and change the wording as you feel is appropriate so that each statement is true and meaningful for you.*

Consider what you changed, if anything. Where did your beliefs come from? Have your beliefs changed since you started teaching? What caused those changes in beliefs?

Why there might be a difference between the 'talk' and the 'walk'

Williams and Burden (1997) refer to the discrepancy between the 'talk', i.e. what teachers say they believe in and do, and the 'walk', i.e. what they actually do and think. Examples here might include managing behaviour and dealing with indiscipline. In my experience, it's not uncommon for teachers to say they are 'fair but firm'. We may have a satisfactory 'theoretical knowledge': we understand different ways children may misbehave, we understand what we need to do to deal with misbehaviour, but we may be inconsistent in our actual ability to manage the class. In this respect, we can 'talk the talk', but we can't necessarily 'walk the walk'.

If we are to be more autonomous, i.e. 'walk the walk', it is arguably useful for us to examine our professed beliefs to help us bridge the gap so there is no discrepancy between what we say we believe and do and what we actually do in the classroom. As we noted earlier, our beliefs include our values, biases and prejudices. As such, a theoretical belief may be obvious and make absolute sense but if it is in direct opposition to our innate values or prejudices, the teacher will need to work hard to counter her instinctive feelings. An example of this where a teacher clearly wants her students to succeed yet uses a language assessment criteria where students are penalised for discrete-item mistakes rather than given credit for risk-taking and managing a communicative task effectively. Also, the younger we are when a value or belief becomes part of our inherent belief structure, the more difficult it is to alter, because early-acquired beliefs subsequently affect our perceptions and strongly influence the processing of new information.

There are other reasons why we may find it difficult to 'walk the walk', including a lack of confidence to put into practice what we know to be common sense or efficacious, and a fear of losing control. A teacher may readily ascribe to the belief that children learn best when working with other children, but this can imply an activity getting out of hand, with at the minimum children not using English, but reverting quickly to Portuguese, and worse, children playing up and misbehaving. Much easier, therefore, for this teacher to remain centre-stage, with all interaction being controlled by her and any student-to-student interaction going through her, much like a police officer directing traffic at a crossroads.

How we can bridge the discrepancy between the talk and the walk

Teacher beliefs are a work in progress, and we should be wary of assuming that we have settled on a belief and we can tidy it away and move on to the next one. Head and Taylor (1997) suggest one means of initiating change is to use a problem-solving cycle:

This type of task can be set up in Teacher Development seminars and courses as a means of getting teachers to consider and voice their beliefs and through individual reflection as well as collaborative experience-sharing, consider whether they are open,

unseen, hidden or unknown beliefs, and how fixed or mutable these beliefs might be. A goal in terms of our beliefs might therefore be to encourage us to constantly question what we are doing, why we are doing these things, where our beliefs have come from and how helpful, or inhibiting they are, and how we may seek to become more aware and adjust our beliefs and the impact this may have on our day-to-day teaching, and our consequent job satisfaction.

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Diana has been a teacher and teacher developer since 1981 and is co-owner and Director of Studies of the two teaching and training centres in International House Torres Vedras and Lisbon. As well as still loving teaching, she enjoys writing and delivering various YL methodology courses, both for International House World Organisation and primary and secondary school teachers and giving seminars and plenary sessions at various ELT conferences.

Teaching and Dancing: are they similar?
Paula de Nagy

Introduction

Over the years, I've heard teaching being compared with many things such as cooking (different flavours, different recipes), with driving (following strict rules), and many more. But recently, in my own reflections on what teaching means to me, I have enjoyed exploring the similarities between teaching and dancing. This article is a brief overview of a session I ran at the APPI Conference held in April 2018 in Aveiro.

Who are your teaching stars?

Those of us who enjoy the dance world look up to many 'stars'. These are the people who you look forward to watching, who dance in a memorable way, who makes us feel emotion and who delight the audience as they impress everyone with their skill.

In the same way, each teacher is likely to have their own star, someone who they have worked with or been trained by, who they have read or heard speaking at a conference and who has in some way been an inspiration or a model. If you're lucky, you've had many of these. They may be your stars because you watched them teaching a superb lesson where learners came into their own, or perhaps you had a conversation with them that really made an impact or even because you read something they wrote which you have never forgotten.

What I really like about my own 'teaching stars' is that while some are 'big names' whose brilliance everyone recognises, many are just 'stars' because of the impact they've had on my teaching career. They may not be well-known to others but to me, they really shine in my firmament.

What about you? You may want to take a minute to consider the following question: have you touched some other teacher's life in the same way? Are you someone else's star?
Who do you dance with?

Many dancers dance with others. There are dance companies where each individual dancer is an outstanding performer but as they dance as part of an ensemble, their excellence is designed not to shine and stand out but to make the whole performance please and delight.
In the same way, teachers need to remember that we are part of an institution – our personal excellence is a reward in itself but it is just as important to help everyone else in the organisation shine. We have all heard of and, sometimes worked in schools with a bad reputation in the outside world. In a case like this, no matter how well one individual teaches, learners may opt to stay away from a school if the whole is not attractive. For me, this means

that individual teachers should all strive to work closely with their peers and auxiliary staff. We all need to remember that when everyone works together, our combined expertise will have a better impact on our ability to attract and keep learners.

Teaching 'cheek-to-cheek'

For those of us who are old enough to remember Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, watching them dance cheek-to-cheek was an absolute pleasure. Any dancing that involves intricate steps, moving to music and in the woman's case, dancing backwards and in high- heels, is quite a feat.

Teaching can feel the same. We have to move in tune with our students, we have to adapt to the moment, we have to both follow well-known steps and to improvise on occasion as our partners (the learners) go off in unexpected directions. It does often feel like going backwards and in heels but isn't it great when it works? A successful lesson can indeed feel like a beautiful dance.

Do you ever dance alone?

Many famous dancers perform alone. How brave, to go on stage and without any support, to dance in front of many people. But in this case, I'm thinking more of those people who might be dancing on their own either in public at a club or perhaps in a dance studio, while rehearsing a dance, or even at home, just for the sake of fun.

Teachers, too, work alone. The most obvious similarity is with those who rehearse dance steps on their own. When planning, teachers work alone. We 'rehearse' and plan what we're going to say and do. We hope the 'audience' will follow along and be pleased with our 'performance' but we also have to anticipate what might go wrong and be ready for the unexpected. For some of us, this is the most interesting aspect of our work: the planning. For others, this is the least interesting one as they prefer to be in the classroom and to respond to the moment.

Another moment in which the teacher 'dances' alone is when reflecting on lessons and what went well or not. If we're very lucky, we may have colleagues who are happy to listen to us and who will help us reflect. But often, because of time pressure, we end up very much alone, thinking about our work and hoping the 'critics' won't tear us up in the reviews 😊.

I hope this short article gave you a chance to briefly consider your own experience of teaching. There may be a better metaphor for you and that in itself is an interesting exercise, if you have never done it. If teaching to you is not really like dancing, what is it like? Let me know at the next conference.

I've been working in English Language Teaching since 1983. Over the years, I have worked as a teacher of most levels and ages, as a Director of Studies and as a teacher trainer. I have worked for International House Portugal since 1990.

I had four thousand students this year. Here's what they taught me.
Dave Tucker

Practical lessons learned from teaching large groups of 5th- and 6th-year students in 2º Ciclo schools last year.

Between November 2017 and May 2018, I visited 42 2º Ciclo schools and did 108 sessions with groups of kids from the 5th or 6th year. Average numbers were about 40 per session – in a few sessions I had as few as 12-15 students; in several others I had 90 or more students in the same room! A total of around 4000 kids. The sessions were either lessons based on 5th-year topics (parts of the body & descriptions, food & preferences) or a storytelling session based on Roald Dahl's *James and the Giant Peach*.

The experience was often exhilarating – the energy generated by 90 kids fully participating with lots of physical involvement is thrilling! It was sometimes frustrating – circumstances occasionally came together – or apart! – in such a way that I was barely able to deliver the lesson or tell the story. That horrible sinking feeling when you can sense attention slipping and the lesson starts to go off the rails…! It was, however, mostly huge fun and there was immense enthusiasm and willingness to join in, take a leap, experiment and be creative.

It was a steep learning curve but as the year went on, it became easier. I learned how to fine-tune the lesson content or how I told the story, but there were other lessons I learned or had confirmed about kids of this age and how to grab and keep their attention, how to gain and make the most of their goodwill. I'll lay these out below. They're all based on real interaction with students aged 10-12 years old (though sometimes mixed in with 14/15-year-olds in the same 5th or 6th year class).

•   First and most shocking revelation for me: a lot of kids don't like Cristiano Ronaldo! I'd always taken it for granted that the way to kids' (especially boys') hearts was to include CR7 somehow on your worksheet or in your presentation… Yet when he came on screen in a game, a lot of the kids booed! It turns out many prefer Messi or Neymar. Unpatriotic!!!

•   Physical activities make everyone smile! We played games where the students mimed body parts, pointed to two or three food pictures round the walls (at the same time – some footwork needed…!) or acted out a section of the story. These were the most successful and involving stages. Physical involvement in something that was fully engaging and entirely within their grasp produced a sea of smiles around the room. That surge of feelgood dopamine really enhances learning!

• Memory challenges are always a winner. Most lessons involved teaching/revising a lexical set and the challenge to later recall, unaided or with physical prompts, that vocabulary was very motivating for the students. You could see the reaction on nearly all their faces: I can do this – I've seen it, I've heard it, it's right there…! Intense concentration and satisfaction as they recall the words. 'Remembering' is low down on Bloom's taxonomy, but the challenge of reaching for, finding and producing language is an activity that takes microseconds to set up and provides the desirable difficulty that is needed to help start implanting language successfully.

• The difference was notable between two situations; situation A: when I had a chance to mingle with the kids before we started (as they were coming into the room or waiting for others to arrive). We swapped high fives, I asked them their names and some asked me mine or how old I was. I tried to remember as many of their names as I could and used those names as much as possible in the lesson; situation B: when I was still desperately trying to get my computer to connect to the projector when they arrived or the groups arrived so late there was no time for mingling (this was often!); I had no names to use and there was no personal connection. In situation A things went much more smoothly; in situation B it was much more difficult to gain and keep the students' attention. Schmoozing pays off! That personal connection is worth gold – not just in a one-off situation, but in my opinion increasingly so throughout the year. 'Lose' a few minutes on a regular basis to connect with the students and you'll gain hours throughout the year in time not wasted striving to keep students focused.

• The teacher who told me she never smiles before Christmas had possibly the worst behaved class of the year. The teacher in the same school who turned up 10 minutes late with her kids, but with children hanging off her arm and laughing had lovely students who were bright and focused. Just saying… (There is obviously not enough of a sample here to draw statistically supported conclusions about cause and effect, but I have strong suspicions.)

• I absolutely needed a good signal to get everyone's attention in groups of 80 or 90 (but also in smaller ones)! I used my personal favourite (suitable for large groups as it's quiet), the sign language equivalent of clapping – two hands raised at shoulder height and shaken in a quick rotating motion (see this video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6qlmgUv8fAl). I introduced this at the beginning and we practised a few times – students liked it and (mostly!) responded well. I think that, when you do it for the first time to actually get quiet and they respond well, it's important to back that up by acknowledging their cooperation and praising and thanking them. They like that – they all smile! They'll be more willing to keep doing it later. This year my classroom research aim is to experiment with different attention techniques for large groups.

• Double processing (e.g. Now let's do it again, but faster!) gives more students the confidence and the opportunity to join in. First time round, a certain proportion of them are confirming or correcting beliefs (or just trying to keep up!); second time, they're able to show understanding or produce better along with the whole class and everyone has fun.
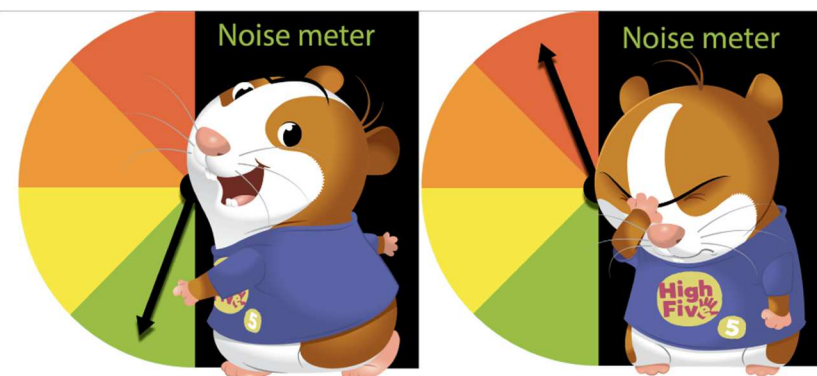
• Multisensory activities played a large part: I was impressed by how 5th year classes in the middle of the year managed to follow (and enjoy) an extended story using language which was for most of them well beyond their level at that stage of the year. The combination of images, audio (me!), text and the reinforcement of my mimes and their own made it clear and accessible to them. We followed Richard Mayer's rules of multimedia learning (Mayer, 1990), the images, text, audio and other stimuli were coherent (nothing unnecessary or irrelevant to distract from the message), contiguous (text close to images, audio at the same time as text) and segmented (the story was broken down into manageable chunks – never more than a sentence or two per slide and always with visual support). I wouldn't expect any of them to be able to tell the story back to me in English, but I bet most of them could tell the story to someone in their own language in quite a lot of detail.

The peach starts to grow⁹ bigger and bigger and bigger. As big as the house! It is now a perfect giant peach.

✔ Word Check
⁹ grow = crescer

• Sir Ken Robinson said it in his famous TED Talk: Kids will take a chance. If they don't know, they'll have a go. (If you haven't already, you MUST watch this https://www.ted.com/talks/ken_robinson_says_schools_kill_creativity) I saw this happen time after time when playing a sentence forming game in the lessons. There were kids who didn't have the vaguest idea of the correct order of the words, but wanted to join in, so their hand was up in the air and they confidently gave their answer: He got eyes blue has! Having a go is essential in the learning process, as is the Oops! feeling when they find it's wrong, and so is the feeling when they're given the support by the teacher or their colleagues to self-correct and get it right and so earn their point in the game and a round of applause from their peers!

• Kids of this age can absolutely self-regulate their own noise. Expectations must be clear, and they need reminding, but they can do it. I made my expectations clear – You're going to be working in groups and talking together, so there's bound to be some noise… but if you see this on the screen (the picture on the right) then you need to bring the noise down. Your responsibility. And they did, bless them.

Dave Tucker has been involved in ELT for 30 years as a teacher, trainer, Director of Studies, and author. He has written ten books for Young Learners and Teachers for and has delivered workshops worldwide. He is Linguistic/Pedagogical Consultant for the 6th Year English Course High Five (Edições ASA).

Catfish? Catfish!
Carlos Lindade

The 2010 documentary 'Catfish' (unintentionally) promoted a broad discussion on digital identity. But what exactly is catfishing? And more importantly, how are teenagers (re)presenting themselves online? This talk aims to break down terms like catfishing and provide tips and activities on how to discuss issues regarding digital identity with digital natives.

"Our social tools are not an improvement to modern society, they are a challenge to it."
— Clay Shirky, Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organizing Without Organizations.

1. Digital Literacies & 21st Century Skills

Teachers on a global scale are currently preparing a generation of students for a rather murky future. In fact, and in the words of Ken Robinson (check his *RSA ANIMATE: Changing Education Paradigms*), people are trying to work out how we educate our children to take their place in the economies of the 21st century, given that we can't anticipate what the economy will look like at the end of next week.

For instance, in January 2014 *LinkedIn* (the business-orientated social network) released an info-graph regarding the top 5 job titles that barely existed in 2008. To do so the social network examined the data of over 259 million members' profiles to determine that job titles such as:

1. The IOS Developer
2. The Android Developer
3. The Zumba Instructor
4. The Social Media Intern
5. The Data Scientist

were the most popular jobs. But why? Well, technology and fitness have become driving forces in Western societies.

As we begin to outline the competencies required to participate in digitally networked societies, 21st century skills such as creativity and innovation, critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration and team-work, autonomy and flexibility, and life-long learning are essential to embrace new ways and new tools of working and learning, new ways of living and even new ways of thinking as a result of the influence of technology among our everyday life. According Dudeney, Hockly and Pegrum's book *'Digital Literacies'* (2013): in a digital networked era, communicating meaning and managing information are intimately bound with nurturing connections (p. 26). This is where *'Catfish'* (a 2010 Documentary) comes in. It's never too soon for our students to develop strategies to represent themselves appropriately and learn how to protect their digital and non-digital selves from cyberbullies, predators and online thieves (p. 27). In other words, the way our students establish their digital identities

online matters and may, in fact, influence their future lives when it comes to a scholarship application, a job offer, among many others.

How many parents go over safety and privacy settings with their children? How many discuss digital reputation? As teachers, have we found room to bring these issues to the English classroom? Discussing safety guidelines with our students empowers them to develop strategies to protect themselves from predators and cyberbullies. Privacy guidelines can help students limit the amount of personal information they share online making them a less likely target. *'Catfish'*, among other things, provides us with teachable moments about online safety and appropriate online behaviour.

2. About the film

Teenagers are an ideal age group to work with in developing digital literacy skills. With '*Catfish*' the aim is to develop a personal literacy by raising awareness through a film that focusses on deception.

To a point, *'Catfish'* features how a real-life virtual relationship evolved unexpectedly over a common social network like Facebook. Apps like Google Earth and Maps, YouTube, and Mac computers are used to introduce the storyline, and to highlight how important these communication tools were among the characters. The fact that our students easily use all these apps on a daily/weekly basis makes the documentary itself more powerful.

Although there is not enough time to explore the film into detail, by the end of the documentary, a man tells the protagonist a story. He explains that when live cod were shipped to Asia from North America, the fish's inactivity in their tanks resulted in only mushy flesh reaching the destination, but fishermen found that putting catfish in the tanks with the cod kept them active, and thus ensured the quality of the fish. He explains that there are people in everyone's lives who keep us active, always on our toes and always thinking. Hence the title of the film, which led online dictionaries to update their definition of the term catfish:

cat·fish *noun \- ˌfish*
1: any of an order (Siluriformes) of chiefly freshwater stout-bodied scaleless bony fishes having long tactile barbels
2: a person who sets up a false personal profile on a social networking site for fraudulent or deceptive purposes.
http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/catfish

3. Using 'Catfish' in the classroom

Tomlinson (2013) comments that learning materials should be realistic in the sense that they reflect the reality of language use which learners will encounter in real life. This means exposing learners to authentic materials (i.e. materials written not to teach language but to inform, amuse, provoke, excite, stimulate, entertain, etc) *(p. 476)* and *'Catfish'* allows us to address a generation who has grown up surrounded by the internet, but are not always aware

and/or cautious about who they speak to online, what they post and how they download contents.

The following items are merely suggestions for pre-view, viewing and follow-up questions, based on Scrivener's (2011) input. They can (and should) be adapted to fit the needs of your class and used to design a worksheet or to lead students into a dynamic spoken interaction. Follow-up questions can provide significant bridges for class or school projects. For instance, Rost & Wilson's work on *Active Listening* (2013) presents film reviews *(p. 229)* as a way to provide supplemental and autonomous learning opportunities, which empowers a connection to our students' social contexts, an integration of new technologies and the development of new learning strategies, which is a key for language learners who wish to make substantial and sustained progress. Through '*Catfish*' we can promote and ultimately establish a monthly film review activity.

Other activities could lead to exercises designed to raise awareness of how multiple information and communication platforms can affect our daily lives and explore ways of filtering out digital distractions; or to raise awareness of social networking profiles, online identity and identity management.

Pre-viewing
You are going to watch a documentary called '*Catfish*', but before you do answer the following questions:
1. How many social networks do you know?
2. How many networks do you use?
3. How often do you post on your favourite network?
4. What are your posts usually about?
5. How much and what kind of information are you truly comfortable sharing online?
6. Do you think a stranger could find a lot of information about you online?
7. Have you connected, through social networks, with people you wouldn't have before? If you have, have you ever spoken outside the network?
8. What do you think the title of the movie actually means?

While-viewing
1. Angela tells Nev, over the phone, that one of Abby's paintings was sold for $7,000. Do you think Angela should be encouraged to sell her 8-year-old daughter's paintings? Could this be a form of child exploitation? (*7'38''*)
2. Do you believe relationships can start off in the virtual world and prosper in the real world? What do you think will happen with Nev and Megan? *(16'32'')*
3. Nev, Henry and Rel realize that the songs that have been posted on Facebook and sent via e-mail were not sung, nor recorded, by Megan and/or Angela. Do you think they consciously plagiarised someone else's music? What's your view on plagiarism? *(23'11'')*
4. What do you think they'll find when they show up in Megan's house? *(36'27'')*

After-viewing

1. How would you have reacted if you were in Yaniv's position?
2. Would you have remained on Facebook?
3. In what ways is '*Catfish*' similar to or different from other films about social networks?
4. Do you think the film intentionally blurs the line between documentary and drama? Why/Why not?
5. Do you believe you need to change how and what you post on your online profile?
6. Have you met someone with a similar story? What happened?

4. Finishing notes:

While films like 'The social network' try to provide some biographical insight on the people behind Facebook, '*Catfish*' shows us from the point of view of an average user how promiscuous relationships can become. As teachers in the 21st century we have a (re)new(ed) responsibility in bringing these topics to the classroom in order to prepare our students for a digital citizenship that is gaining new outlines every day. By the end of the day, it's up to us to decide how challenging we want digital tools to be.

Author's note:

Special thanks to my Canadian compatriot Kathy Rocha for sharing this documentary and inspiring me in the process. Sharing is caring!

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Ask me questions

A simple speaking activity for all levels

Pedro Dias

A simple speaking activity for all levels, used to practise the structure of the interrogative sentence, as well as to mobilise varied vocabulary. It is simple to set up and really gets students involved.

This is an easy to set up yet quite productive activity. I use it to practise the structure of the interrogative sentence – something that is always difficult for our students.

The objective is to take advantage of teens' natural curiosity to get them talking, correcting the structure along the way. This is how I do it:

I take a photograph, stand before the class and say "I have a photograph in my hand. Ask me questions." Students ask questions, trying to find out what it is. I am deliberately vague in my answers, so as to make room for further questioning. I won't show the photograph (or painting, or drawing) until students have collected a fair amount of detail. I hope to get from the students both yes/no and wh- questions, thus:

Is it a person or an animal? Where are they? Why are they there? What are they wearing? Is it raining? What is the relationship between those people? etc.

Sometimes, I will also choose a "reporter", who will be required to write down all the information they have collected and repeat it whenever necessary.

While students are asking questions, I can correct the use of interrogative pronouns ("You used Where, but if it is a question about time it should be When") or auxiliary verbs ("Don't forget that yes/no questions always start with a verb") and demand self-correction in further questions that follow a similar pattern ("You missed a verb there, what was the verb that João used in his question?").

When it comes to choosing an image, almost anything will work, as long as it is not too abstract. I will often start by using a photo of my dog, which is simple, uses vocabulary that students are familiar with and keeps them talking even after they have seen the image ("Oh, it is just like my dog, but mine is white", "What's its name?", "Do you have a cat too?"). Photos of people doing things, like a family cooking dinner or a group of friends playing volleyball on the beach, will also work fine. And familiar settings – school, home, sports facilities – are also

good for guessing. A drawing of a vortex or a microscopic photo of a water molecule will NOT make good props.

When I am working with a group that really strains to get the structure right, I will do this activity at least once a week, for a couple of months. I ask the "reporter" to write down the questions and together we make a poster with the photograph I used plus the questions they asked. Students can then see the posters on the classroom wall and check previous questions to find inspiration for what to ask and to self-correct their sentences. When their overall performance is satisfactory, I will consolidate the rule for interrogative sentences by using a Powerpoint presentation and then a structure worksheet and a small project, like preparing an interview with a famous artist, before finally testing.

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Pedro Dias was born in Lisbon but works and lives in the Alentejo. He teaches English as a Foreign Language to teenagers in the Escola Básica e Secundária José Gomes Ferreira, in Ferreira do Alentejo. He also teaches in the Beja Polytechnic Institute and has many years' experience as a translator, both freelance and working for the European Union.

I remember the song you did...
Miguel Dias

Attending APPI conferences can be quite disturbing. Personally, I have been haunted by a question posed by Lottie Baker at the opening speech of the 2016 conference: what would you like to be remembered for by your students twenty years from now? To begin with, who wouldn't like to be remembered by his or her students? But what would it be for? For sure, not a class on the Reported Speech or the Present Continuous. For my part, I would like to be remembered for my personal qualities but most of all for my teaching practice. So, what could do the trick? Well, I think songs have done it for me.

Songs are probably one of the most memorable teaching materials at our disposal. They are both affective and effective. Affective because they transmit and arouse feelings, convey values, are open to interpretation, can make you feel empathy. Effective because they are motivating, provide authentic language and context, enable the teacher to work different language skills and most importantly, go far beyond the classroom: the student can literally take the song home.

A song which has all these ingredients is Nirvana's "Something in the way" from their classic album *Nevermind*. "Something in the way" is an autobiographical song in which Cobain describes his near-homeless life. After being expelled from home, Cobain stayed at friends' and occasionally slept under a bridge in Aberdeen, his hometown. The lyrics seem fragmented and impenetrable, but they are not!

Here is my lesson plan:
Target audience: I have done the song with my 7th graders (topic: housing) as well as in the 10th grade (topic: young people)
Time: 90 minutes
Aims: practise listening, speaking, reading and writing skills
      enlarge students' vocabulary
      create empathy for homeless people

Pre-Listening:
Elicit some information from your students about the band Nirvana. Talking about an iconic band is always a nice topic in class.

Pre-teach part of the songs' vocabulary. I normally have students match words with pictures.
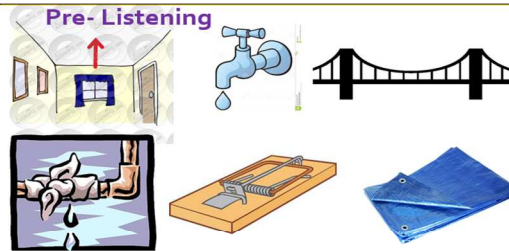
1. bridge

2. trap

3. leak

4. tarp

5. ceiling

6. drippings

Listening Stage 1: Ask students to listen to the song and have them guess what the song might be about. Provide three possible options:

A.   Being homeless

B.   Cruelty against animals

C.   Veganism

To answer, students need to justify their choice with expressions taken from the song (note them down on the board). Have a small class debate and provide the correct answer (A). Tell your students Kurt Cobain was expelled from home and spent some time living at friends' and underneath a bridge in his hometown Aberdeen.

Listening Stage 2: The teacher provides the lyrics as a neatly cut jumbled text (I laminate my jumbled texts to save time preparing the same class again). Students listen to the song and order the lines according to the sequence in the song. This can be done in pairs.

Reading Stage: As said before, the lyrics seem fragmented and opaque. Great! The perfect situation for a memorable teacher-centred class in which the poem (yes, I said poem) will be analysed and worked on line by line, word by word.

Here are my notes and guiding questions:

Line 1: *Underneath the bridge* What did we say Cobain was doing there? Where else do homeless people normally find shelter? How do you think it is like to sleep under a bridge? Remember: note down all the vocabulary you get from your students. It might be useful for the follow up.

Line 2: *The tarp has sprung a leak*
What is wrong with the tarp? Why is it a problem? The tarp is his blanket.

Line 3: *And the animals I've trapped*
What animals are they? (A teaching tip: favour expected answers (cats, dogs as homeless often have dogs) to make it interesting, discard the smart answers (rats, frogs, spiders, bats). Then ask:

Do we trap dogs/cats? So what animals do you think he trapped there? (rats, snakes, bats, etc.)
Put the emphasis on the rat – a big, dirty, fat, ugly rat (it might be useful)

Line 4: *Have all become my pets*
What is a pet? What feelings do we have for pets? Key question: Why would Kurt Cobain become friends with a big, dirty, fat, ugly rat? (Expected answer: he feels like one; homeless are seen as rats by our society)

Line 5: *And I'm living off of grass*
Well, you could tell them he is growing his own vegetables but they won't believe you. Yes, he smoked pot.

Line 6: *and the droppings from the ceilings*
Why are there droppings from the ceiling? It is quite obvious, isn´t it?.

Line 7: *But it's okay to eat fish 'cause they don't have any feelings*
How do you interpret these lines? Is he fishing? How do you think Cobain feels? Again note down as much vocabulary as you can on the board.
Note: there are a number of sites that mention that "fish" stands for "Pisces". Cobain knew that in French fish could also mean Pisces. It might be a word play.

Line 8: *Something in the way*
When there is something in the way there is an … ? What obstacle do you think it could be?

After finishing the poem I ask my students to scan the text again and discover what word category is missing in the poem. As a matter of fact, there is not a single … adjective. Is it a mere coincidence or could there be a reason? And the reason (in my opinion) is that there is nothing to beautify in his present world. The students just learned that form can convey content.

Follow-up activities
One would obviously be to rewrite the song using adjectives. A second follow-up activity, could be a group work: imagining Cobain's diary under the bridge. One of the main aims here would be to apply as much vocabulary as possible from the notes given in class (describing the bridge, his relationship with the animals he has trapped, his feelings etc.)

I first taught this song in 1994. I still get feedback from former students about it. It feels good to be remembered for a song.

Miguel Dias, 47, has been teaching English for the last 25 years in Portuguese state schools. He also has worked as a teacher trainer both for APPI and other institutions. His fields of interest lay in materials development, particularly the use of rock songs and films in the classroom. He is currently working at Escola Secundária Infanta Dona Maria, Coimbra.

Flash Fiction Winners

The results of the Flash Fiction Competition (micro-stories between 50 and 100 words long, based on the theme of 'Effective Affectiveness') were announced at the General Assembly of Associates, held at the 32nd Annual Congress - Aveiro, 27-29/4/2018, on the 28th.

1st place: Associate number B-515, Paula Isabel da Silva Piscarreta. Prize:

€ 50.00, Pearson books and International House materials;

2nd place ex-aequo: Associate number B-7512, Ermelinda Maria Fernandes dos Reis and Associate number B-6127, Sara Raquel Rodrigues Vieira. Prize: € 25.00, Pearson books and International House materials for each.

It

'Goodness! What's this, Daniel?'

I stared at it unable to reply, feeling trapped.

'Well…' she said.

I stood still awaiting her verdict.

'You can go very far if you want.'

I listened wondering what it might mean.

'Please, don't forget to remove this from the table before you go.'

Half relieved, half confused, my brain was quick to respond to her instruction, and my hand didn't stop until every line of it had been carefully rubbed out.

Before I left, she said smiling 'Cheer up! You haven't lost it.'

No one had ever told me I had it.

Paula Piscarreta

"Effective Affectiveness"

School was about to begin. The boy was flabbergasted with those colourful school items. He chose a red pencil and a green sharpener. When the pencil and the sharpener met, it was love at first sight. As time went by, the sharpener felt sharp, but the pencil shrunk and both were sad. Thus, they planned to be apart. The pencil could survive and so could the ties that bound them together. Consequently, the pencil vanished underneath the boy's bed. They didn't live happily ever after, but they still lived on: the sharpener rusty and the pencil dull.

Ermelinda Maria Fernandes dos Reis

Grandma's effective affection

She loved books and spending time at grandma's, where the food was seasoned with tenderness and the words were softer.

She felt powerless against her father's fears. Leaving the village to go on with her studies? An unguarded girl exposed to all kinds of dangers? What about the money needed to provide her siblings the same opportunity? No, too risky, utterly impossible, no matter what others said.

Then, one day, the father was summoned to school and invited to read a composition written by the girl. The title? "A minha avó". The teachers' recommendation? "Send her off to school." He did.

Sara Raquel Rodrigues Vieira

On the Bookshelf

Judite Fiúza

A review of
UNDERSTANDING TEENAGERS IN THE ELT CLASSROOM
Chris Roland
Teaching English
Published by Pavilion Publishing and Media Ltd
www.pavpub.com
2018, 303 pages
ISBN: 9781912755004

Understanding Teenagers in the ELT Classroom – Practical ideas and advice for teaching teenage students in the English language classroom is of utmost importance as teenagers constitute a world which, at times, can be challenging to reach and who need to be made interested in interacting so as to learn.

Chris Roland manages to write a book that is appealing to both teachers who are in charge of teaching teenagers and trainers who are of assistance to teachers. This book consists of the author's brief biography, an introduction, 24 Chapters and a list of downloadable resources.

In the Introduction, Chris highlights his first lesson as an English Language teacher and the hardships he had to deal with. As a result, he wanted to help teachers overcome those difficulties not by presenting a list of bullet point principles but ideas to discuss 'and to explore the underlying principles and factors which might make or break an activity or lesson'. 'Who the book is for', 'How the book is organized', 'Acknowledgements' and 'Dedication' follow.

The 24 Chapters reflect the same structure, 'Discussion', 'Practical Applications', and in the end three charts under the titles 'Questions for reflection', 'Things to try' and 'Things to share' followed by references. There are a myriad of issues focussed from disciplinary to didactic and pedagogical issues, based on the writer's personal experience. The contents feature different kinds of approaches, which always have in mind helping students, from those who are stuck to the more advanced ones in a mixed ability classroom, to achieve the required skills in order that they may feel more at ease to free themselves to start talking and writing.

Even though at first sight this book may seem a typical one addressed to ELT for teenagers since there is a structured rhythm, the reader quickly comes to the conclusion that "Understanding Teenagers in the Classroom" is as thought provoking as teenagers are, delving into various types of topics.

To stimulate language and learning enables students to open up their imagination; therefore, a wide range of activities are outlined, covering the four skills, either "Getting the most out of questions" and "extending conversations" or "Another way of saying it …" to elicit students' viewpoints. Not only are speaking and writing communicative skills of great importance but so are listening and reading. Hence, a sundry, practical applications already tested are presented so as to help teachers deal with the best way to reach students through the use of the four macro skills. Yet the softs skills, such as self-awareness, commitment, motivation and attendance, to name just a few, will always provide students with the right tools to get involved in the learning process, to be successful in achieving an academic degree as well as in the world of work.

Why teach teens?: to see them improving; to see the results of one's work in future years are among every teacher's main goals.

All in all, *Understanding Teenagers In The Elt Classroom* and always trying to see what works best for youngsters represents Chris Roland's highest ambition - as well as that of any teacher.

Judite Fiúza, APPI member A-1327, has taken a degree in Filologia Germânica and Línguas e Literaturas Modernas (Portuguese/English) at Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa and the curricular part of a Masters in Anglo-Portuguese Studies at Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa; taught Portuguese for foreigners at Universidade de Lisboa and later at Universidade Nova de Lisboa and has been teaching English for about 38 years in Secondary Schools. She is currently a member of the APPI executive board.

When MEAT is the odd one out
Using short stories in class
Celeste Simões

Having students read a short story in class is not always an easy task, especially when it is written in English. I usually prefer my students to read the story as a whole and then discuss it in class, but when you have younger students, sometimes it works better if you chunk the story into its main parts and work each part separately. The work I present here is an example of what I have done with my 3rd cycle students. I found the story "They're made out of meat" online http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/TheyMade.shtml and I thought it had the potential to interest my students, so I immediately started to create some teaching materials to use in class (a bit of a compulsive habit, I'm afraid!! :-)). The ideas and activities that follow are but some of the materials I created. Of course, I had to elicit vocabulary and had some group and pair work going on in class, but I believe what follows will motivate you to use this text in class and create further activities. I selected some pre-reading, while reading and post-reading activities. There are also some interesting videos based on this short story by Terry Bisson on Youtube that you will certainly care to use.

Do give me your feedback when using this material and/or your ideas for other interesting activities: celestesimoes67@yahoo.com

Pre-reading
This term you are going to read, study and analyse a short story.
In pairs answer the following questions carefully.

1. The title of the short story you are about to read is 'They're made out of meat'. Try to predict what it is about.
2. (Show the students the cover of the book) Now that you have seen the cover, reread your prediction and make any changes you feel necessary to fully clarify what you think the theme is.
3. (After reading the 1st part of the story) By now you have already read the first part of the story. Were your predictions right? In your opinion what is the book really about?

While Reading
1. Read the first part of the short story 'They're made out of meat'.

- *They're made out of meat.*
- *Meat?*
- *Meat. They're made out of meat.*
- *Meat?*

- There's no doubt about it. We picked up several from different parts of the planet, took them aboard our recon vessels, and probed them all the way through. They're completely meat.

- That's impossible. What about the radio signals? The messages to the stars?

- They use the radio waves to talk, but the signals don't come from them. The signals come from machines.

- So who made the machines? That's who we want to contact.

- They made the machines. That's what I'm trying to tell you. Meat made the machines.

- That's ridiculous. How can meat make a machine? You're asking me to believe in sentient meat.

- I'm not asking you, I'm telling you. These creatures are the only sentient race in that sector and they're made out of meat.

- Maybe they're like the orfolei. You know, a carbon-based intelligence that goes through a meat stage.

- Nope. They're born meat and they die meat. We studied them for several of their life spans, which didn't take long. Do you have any idea what's the life span of meat?

- Spare me. Okay, maybe they're only part meat. You know, like the weddilei. A meat head with an electron plasma brain inside.

- Nope. We thought of that, since they do have meat heads, like the weddilei. But I told you, we probed them. They're meat all the way through.

- No brain?

- Oh, there's a brain all right. It's just that the brain is made out of meat! That's what I've been trying to tell you.

- So ... what does the thinking?

- You do not understand, do you? You're refusing to deal with what I'm telling you. The brain does the thinking. The meat.

- Thinking meat! You're asking me to believe in thinking meat!

- Yes, thinking meat! Conscious meat! Loving meat. Dreaming meat. The meat is the whole deal! Are you beginning to get the picture or do I have to start all over?

- Omigod. You're serious then. They're made out of meat.

- Thank you. Finally. Yes. They are indeed made out of meat. And they've been trying to get in touch with us for almost a hundred of their years.

- Omigod. So what does this meat have in mind?

2. What or who do these words refer to?

     a. They (l.1)

     b. We (l. 5)

     c. them (l. 5)

     d. our (l. 6)

     e. I (l. 11)

     f. you (l. 11)

     g. These (l. 13)

     h. that (l. 13)

     i. their (l. 17)

     j. this (l. 35)

3. Answer the following questions about the text.

3.1. How many characters are there in this text? Who are they?

3.2. Where do you think they are?

3.3. When do you think the action is taking place? Why?

3.4. After all, who are they referring to when they mention the word "Meat"?

3.5. Why are they surprised?

3.6. In your opinion, what is the characters' aim?

3.7. Answer the last question on the text – "So what does this meat have in mind?" What may the interest be?

4. Read the second excerpt from the short story.

- First it wants to talk to us. Then I imagine it wants to explore the Universe, contact other sentences, swap ideas and information. The usual.
- We're supposed to talk to meat.
- That's the idea. That's the message they're sending out by radio. 'Hello. Anyone out there. Anybody home.' That sort of thing.
- They actually do talk, then. They use words, ideas, concepts?
- Oh, yes. Except they do it with meat.
- I thought you just told me they used radio.
- They do, but what do you think is on the radio? Meat sounds. You know how when you slap or flap meat, it makes a noise? They talk by flapping their meat at each other. They can even sing by squirting air through their meat.
- Omigod. Singing meat. This is altogether too much. So what do you advise we should do?

5. Answer these questions about this part of the story.

5.1. So, what is "meat's" purpose in sending messages throughout the Universe?

5.2. Do you think the characters are interested in meeting "meat"? Justify your opinion.

5.3. What do you think will happen next? What will they do?

6. Rewrite these sentences in the Passive Voice.

a. They explore the Universe.

b. They send messages using radio signals.

c. They use words, ideas, concepts.

d. Scientists studied a lot about the Universe.

7. Read the third and last part of the story and the author's biography.

- Officially or unofficially?

- Both.

- Officially, we are required to contact, welcome and log in any and all sentient races or multibeings in this quadrant of the Universe, without prejudice, fear or favour. Unofficially, I advise that we erase the records and forget the whole thing.

- I was hoping you would say that.

- It seems harsh, but there is a limit. Do we really want to make contact with meat?

- I agree one hundred percent. What's there to say? 'Hello, meat. How's it going?' But will this work? How many planets are we dealing with here?

- Just one. They can travel to other planets in special meat containers, but they can't live on them. And being meat, they can only travel through C space. Which limits them to the speed of light and makes the possibility of their ever making contact pretty slim. Infinitesimal, in fact.

- So we just pretend there's no one home in the Universe.

- That's it.

- Cruel. But you said it yourself, who wants to meet meat? And the ones who have been aboard our vessels, the ones you probed? You're sure they won't remember?

- They'll be considered crackpots if they do. We went into their heads and smoothed out their meat so that we're just a dream to them.

- A dream to meat! How strangely appropriate, that we should be meat's dream.

- And we marked the entire sector unoccupied.

- Good. Agreed, officially and unofficially. Case closed. Any others? Anyone interesting on that side of the galaxy?

- Yes, a rather shy but sweet hydrogen core cluster intelligence in a class nine star in G445 zone. Was in contact two galactic rotations ago, wants to be friendly again.

- They always come around.

- And why not? Imagine how unbearably, how unutterably cold the Universe would be if one were all alone…

Source: http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/TheyMade.shtml

Terry Bisson is from Owensboro, Kentucky and he was born in 1942. He attended Grinnell College and the University of Louisville (1964). He is a member of the Authors Guild and the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America. He lives in Oakland, California and is represented by Frances Goldin Literary Agency (NY).

"They're Made out of Meat" was taken from the collection 'Bears Discover Fire', and it was nominated for the Nebula Award. The Nebula Awards are given annually by the Science Fiction Writers of America, to acknowledge excellence in science fiction writing. In 2006 Stephen O'Regan's film of "They're Made out of Meat" won the Grand Prize at the SF Short Film Festival in Seattle.

Source: http://www.terrybisson.com/page1/page1.html   (adapted and abridged)

8. Match the words on the left with their meanings on the right.

Words/Expressions	Definitions
a. required (l. 3)	1. eccentric
b. harsh (l. 7)	2. cruel
c. slim (l. 12)	3. intolerably
d. crackpots (l. 17)	4. demanded
e. unbearably (l. 26)	5. narrow

9. Answer these questions about the last part of the story.
9.1. When they find life forms in the Universe what must they do?
9.2. But what do they decide to do instead?
9.3. Do you agree with this decision? Why?
9.4. What life forms are they interested in after all?

Post Reading

Write a text in which you answer the following questions.
Do you think this short story represents what will happen in the future? How do you imagine it - in what way will it be similar to or different from the present moment?

Celeste Simões has a degree in English and German (FLUC) and a PhD in Translation Studies (FLUC). She is an EFL materials writer and teacher trainer with more than 25 years' teaching experience. She teaches at Agrupamento de Escolas de Carregal do Sal.

Desmond Rome Scholarship
Pilgrims Course 22nd July to 4th August 2018
Fernanda Soares

I had been daydreaming about a Pilgrims course all throughout the year. Therefore, when I got the call telling me I had won the Desmond Rome Scholarship, I was ecstatic, since this scholarship entitled me to take a 2 week-course at Pilgrims, Canterbury!

This would be my first time at Pilgrims and I didn't really know what I was going to find. I guess I had high expectations, because of all the extremely positive reviews I had read. I was eager to see if Pilgrims' ethos - Pilgrims does not teach a method, but teaches people – was palpable and could be felt. Pilgrims claims to inspire thousands of children and teenagers, business professionals and teachers through its Humanistic Approach – a pedagogic philosophy which, among other aspects, puts the learner at the centre of the act of learning, believes that creativity, involvement and enjoyment are vital elements for lifelong learning and that effective teaching and learning must engage the person as a whole, including their mind, body and heart. Bearing this in mind, I had been given the amazing opportunity to prove these claims (or not) and build my own opinion as I would be experiencing it in loco as a learner.

As I am currently working with students in Years 3 and 4, I selected the course "Methodology and English Language for Primary Teachers". After the first couple of days, I came to realise that it was the perfect choice! I had an awe-inspiring Trainer – Magda Zamorska –, who had an unbelievable working rhythm at the age of 55 (I really hope I'll have the same energy when I reach this age)! There was never a dull moment with Magda. In just a few days, she managed to get us into her working rhythm and enhance our creativity, imagination and reasoning, always focusing our needs to motivate the students to learn. It was incredible how many contents and tasks we managed to cover in just 10 days. We would usually spend 4.5 hours together (from 9 am to 12:30 pm – with a 30' minute break in between; and from 2 pm to 3:30 pm) every day and we definitely got the most out of them! Our first activities were planned with specific purposes: getting to know each other better, creating a positive learning environment and bonding. We were 13 Teachers, from 6 very different European countries: Slovakia, Portugal, Turkey, Bulgaria, The Netherlands and Italy. Some of us were English Teachers and others were Primary Teachers. We were frequently encouraged to praise each other's qualities and highlight something good about each other. I felt that our Trainer achieved her goals brilliantly and by the end of the first few days we all saw her as our leader. Afterwards, our Trainer directed us to activities aimed at developing the four skills: reading, listening, writing and speaking. We approached teaching through movement, art and music (jazz chants and nursery rhymes) and drama techniques which make our life easier inside the classroom. We focused on pronunciation and grammar. We practised storytelling, designed our own materials, worked with puppets and found out how to use our creativity around the

course book. We also dedicated our time to CLIL, to understanding how students learn and their multiple intelligences and spoke about effective classroom management skills.

At the end, I felt that the harmony and the close ties established between the elements of our small group were the reflection of our leader – Magda. I was struck by her non-judgemental nature (she never criticised or overcorrected anyone – even when she had tons of reasons to do that – in fact, she was always able to figure out what people were trying to express and to find something valuable in their opinion), her generosity in sharing all her wisdom and knowledge, her ability to see only the bright side of every situation and bring out the best in each one of us. Moreover, Magda wasn't afraid of showing her emotions and that made us feel comfortable and confident, but also on the edge of our seats! I feel that this experience was crucial for me because it was very emotional. After only one week, we were all tearful as Mieke - the Dutch Teacher – had to leave to enjoy her holidays with her family. As suggested by our Trainer, we created a mini-book involving our recently built monster and Mieke. "Mieke's Adventures in Canterbury" (this was the title we came up with) was the perfect goodbye gift for our friend!

Our course's daily programme finished at 3:30 pm, but Pilgrims had also prepared other events specially for us: a walking tour through Canterbury with a local guide, a boat tour along the River Stour and several workshops on various themes, ranging from listening and speaking, verb tenses, teaching vocabulary/lexis, using short films, music, creative use of images, technology, improvisation, group dynamics, photography, joke telling, art, to meditation, yoga, the meaning of tea, coffee beans, Bollywood dancing, Scotland, etc. I was able to get more insight into mindfulness (and its use with busy Teachers and students), the online tool Padlet and other web tools and augmented reality apps. Unbelievably, I also had the chance to attend a workshop on creative writing with a living legend: Mario Rinvolucri! I had read some of his books, trying to find writing activities for my students, and I had never imagined I would meet him at Pilgrims. I later found out he was one of the founders of Pilgrims back in 1974. It was such a privilege to be in the same room as Mario, to listen to him sharing his wisdom and experience, to interact and to perform different tasks suggested by him.

I can clearly state that I came back with a wide range of activities and ideas to do with my children and I strongly believe that I will be capable of putting them into action. I am also optimistic that I will be able to share them with other Teachers and develop other activities and projects in close cooperation with my colleagues, because I have witnessed what efficient team work can bring about. Besides everything that I have learnt, I know that from now onwards I can count on Magda for support whenever I have doubts or questions about what to do with my students. I feel I can count on all the Pilgrims' staff, because they make you feel at ease. Moreover, I now have the chance to exchange ideas, projects and activities with this fantastic group of Teachers, not only my 12 fellow colleagues, but also others outside our group. I made important connections and met like-minded Teachers from all over the world. As everyone on the Pilgrims' staff clearly states it: Pilgrims is not just a school, it's a family!
I had the opportunity to improve my English, speaking it twenty-four seven, not only with my colleagues and my Trainer at the course (although there were other Portuguese Teachers,

English was the only permitted language), but also at the campus and at "home", in Parkwood – a purpose-built student village of houses and flats –, where I had my room in a house together with 5 other Teachers, coming from different countries: Slovakia, Serbia, Hungary and France. Living at the University of Kent's campus is like living in a village inside the city of Canterbury. There are shops, supermarkets, several places to eat or just to have a drink, a sports centre, a library, a theatre, a cinema and a concert hall. Everything you need is right there close at hand.

Pilgrims' claims were proved: I can clearly say that as a learner I really felt that I was at the centre of the learning process. I felt I was being heard and that my contribution made a difference as our Trainer continuously asked for our feedback and took it into account when planning her lessons. This was definitely a valuable experience and one that I hope I will be able to repeat. This course at Pilgrims empowered me and gave me more confidence and motivation. Learning is an everlasting process and our students deserve passionate and determined Teachers who will do anything at their reach to improve their (teaching-) learning process!

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English language teaching and 21st century skills
The four Cs: not a soft option
Nicolas Hurst, Carla Diogo, Catarina Abelha & Carolina Teixeira

As English teachers we sometimes simplify what we teach in class; for example, shall I do some 'grammar' today or some 'skills work'? However, we also need to take into account what we do in the classroom should also help to develop 21st century skills: a different kind of 'skills-based approach'.

Introduction

Today's foreign language teaching aspires to assist in the preparation of learners to undertake any career path of their choosing by giving them the necessary tools and develop the main skills required in our 21st century society, a society characterised as being subject to rapid transformations fuelled by digital technologies. In this context, 21st century skills are envisioned as being transversal and cross-curricular but further effort and improvements are required to embed this perspective/knowledge in educational systems (Cachia et al, 2010). The identity and nature of these skills has been brought to the attention of teachers in many subject areas including English language teaching (ELT), for example at the APPI conference in Lisbon in 2015. However, it remains true that "changes in theoretical understandings and in teacher training often do not filter down to the classroom and that change is context dependent to a very high degree" (Paran, 2012: 450). We should re-visit and re-focus important issues in ELT frequently in order to provide further opportunities for change to be embraced and especially so in the light of there being no single, recognised, legitimate 'methodology' available to ELT professionals: the 21st century for us is also the 'post-method' era (Akbari, 2008).

Since the advent of the 'Communicative Approach' in ELT in the late 1970s and 1980s, the focus of foreign language learning curricula, classroom procedures and teaching materials in Portugal has gradually shifted away from the previous more structural focus (Hurst, 2014). While this initial statement may be, in theory, true, a sizeable number of English language learners arrive at the Faculty of Letters in Porto (FLUP) with little experience of participating in authentic, communicative, outcome-focussed, language learning activities. For example, with respect to 'speaking', learners have to express their own meanings and manage their own conversations (communication) rather than working through tasks that require certain discourse markers or structural elements or language functions to be employed (Paran, 2012).

Communication

In relation to 21st century skills, the conception of 'communication' implies that learners must produce as much spoken and written English as possible. Learners should also be encouraged to recognise that differences exist between written and spoken forms of the target language (Hughes, 2010). In order to have more time for what are traditionally known as the 'productive skills' there needs to be a substantial shift away from spending most of class time dealing with stale reading texts and inconsequential reading comprehension questions or passively (not) absorbing lengthy grammar explanations. We also need to move away from the artificial distinction between 'receptive' and 'productive' skills and provide learning opportunities that contextualise and integrate multiple language skills (Hinkel, 2006). The emphasis in the literature nowadays is much more on 'noticing' and 'increasing awareness', for example when attending to distinctions between formal oral production (in FLUP lectures, for example!) and casual, conversational production.

When target language speaking occurs in the ELT classroom it can very often be characterised by the I-R-F paradigm (Initiation-Response-Feedback) where, in fact, very little real communication takes place and the whole exchange is under the control of the teacher. While it is understandable that the teacher wants to encourage her learners to participate, there are many other types of divergent exchanges that can be promoted or techniques that can be used, for example, a follow-up question instead of 'feedback' to which the teacher genuinely does not know the answer; teachers can also encourage 'off-book' casual interaction in the target language, highlighting the primal function of language as a social instrument. This approach may also be extended to additional casual interaction outside the context of the classroom itself, in the corridor or the cafeteria, for example.

Writing tasks in the 21st century ELT classroom need to break away from the focus on 'product' which somehow mirrors the model that the textbook inevitably provides and provide a varied range of opportunities for the learners to produce different texts for different purposes across a range of different genres. Here we also find the natural context for implementing a focus on grammar and vocabulary: "grammar and lexis are inextricable from meaning in written discourse and because L2 writers are ultimately evaluated based on their control of language and text construction in their written discourse" (Hinkel, 2006: 124). An explicit pedagogical approach to writing must include an understanding of 'communication' in an expansive sense rather than as the reproduction of a limited linguistic repertoire: writing tasks designed to practise specific grammar or lexical items. Tasks may initially be non-complex but should develop into opportunities for personal or emotive expression, for example, in narrative texts. Clearly there is strong connection with exposure to different reading texts but as a 'spark' for production rather than an object of analysis or a model to imitate. As mentioned above, in relation to 'noticing' and 'increasing awareness', reading texts may provide information about different registers, discourse features, genres and so on which can then be activated in productive, written tasks.

Collaboration

Teamwork is one of the important skills students are supposed to have nowadays to be successful in the world of work. To be successful, one is supposed to be able to get along with others, be agreeable, helpful and consequently collaborative. So, why do teachers avoid working collaboratively? Most of the time it is just because learners tend to get pretty noisy, they get easily off track and, most importantly of all, it is very difficult to assess this type of work.

To overcome these difficulties teachers should ensure that they form mixed ability groups where students have determined roles which will be really played by them but also frequently changed. Sapon-Shevin et al (2009) assert that one must work with diversity and not negotiate it. The groups should not comprise more than four students (for face to face interaction) and the objectives and procedures must be clearly established at the beginning. Even though group skills are relevant in this field we must not forget individual accountability, thus allowing students to maximize their potentialities but always in favour of the group.

Teachers must ensure that students work together, share responsibility fairly and make substantive decisions together. If this happens, what they produce is interdependent and they are working collaboratively and developing their social skills. They will not get off track if we challenge them, if we push them further than an easily 'googleable' question. Positive interdependence is the golden rule in collaboration: "Collaborative learning compared with competitive and individualistic efforts, has numerous benefits and typically results in higher achievement and greater productivity, more caring, supportive, and committed relationships; and greater psychological health, social competence, and self-esteem" (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012: 399).

Concerning assessment, the effective feedback should occur during the process while there is time to make changes. The main purpose is to increase quality and not judge quality which requires a shift away from the current emphasis on 'results' towards focussing more on the 'route'. Rubrics, self-assessment and peer reviews are all tools that can be used to provide the necessary feedback and allow teachers to feel confident with this mode of assessment. Learners should be made aware at the beginning of the task/project that the assessment will operate in function of them working collaboratively.

All this implies accepting a change in the role of the teacher since we will have learner-centred classes which require new approaches to assessment to classroom behaviours, including dispensing with traditional tests: teachers will be the monitors of learners' work. Much can be done within our subject area but it would gain much more importance if done in interdisciplinary projects where the content of two or three subjects can be worked in a collaborative way.

Critical thinking

Critical thinking, despite some arguments, is embodied in the entire foreign language teaching curriculum and should not be considered a separate and independent skill (Shirkhani and Fahim, 2011). The objective is to prepare learners to work cooperatively, to analyse and understand different perspectives, through activities, for example, based on problem-solving.

This goes far beyond the learning of linguistic structures acquired through repetitive exercises or the reproduction of a set of sentences provided in a textbook.

The inclusion of this particular skill in the curriculum has already been proven to be a means to improve learners' language learning by urging them to reflect upon links between languages (Bagheri, 2015). The global role of the English language, specifically as a tool to understand, analyse and question different issues and views, has been through many changes due to the ongoing political, economic, and social adjustments 21st century societies have recently endured. This perspective needs to be included within the implementation of different, more learner-centred methods and approaches which aim to make learners a living part of the language curriculum. As Mahyuddin et al argued (as cited in Shirkhani and Fahim, 2011: 112), learners who work on their critical thinking skills:

"(…) are capable of thinking critically and creatively in order to achieve the goals of the curriculum; capable of making decisions and solving problems; capable of using their thinking skills, and of understanding language or its contents; capable of treating thinking skills as lifelong skills; and finally intellectually, physically, emotionally and   spiritually well-balanced."

Active participation in class and critical thinking can be related, encouraging learners to openly express their ideas and opinions during class is highly significant in terms of classroom procedures. An ongoing, more 'continual' approach to assessment, rather than final exams or tests, is again a pre-requisite providing more than one opportunity or moment, helps teachers to assess learners more fairly: "to test a larger range of knowledge and skills" (Shirkhani and Fahim, 2011: 113). In addition, promoting more interactive activities with a strong focus on critical thinking, such as debates or group projects, as opposed to gap-filling and rule memorisation tasks, could help learners' work on their self-confidence in order to participate at other times in class.

Furthermore, defining assessment tasks that enhance the role of critical thinking as well as promoting its development throughout varied language learning experiences will improve learners' 'acceptance' of the target language; they are less likely to view it as something 'foreign' or even 'alien'.

Creativity

Creativity is the skill that allows learners to think outside of the box and also to put a little part of themselves into the something they are working on. Promoting creativity can assist in attaining the affective and cognitive engagement that is essential for language acquisition along with helping learners to understand language used for natural communication and to use language for effective communication themselves (Tomlinson, 2015). It is, thus, important

for teachers to try and create opportunities for leaners to be creative. Both teachers and learners have to be open to variety and having a playful attitude.

Nevertheless, learners do not get creative in the classroom on their own as creativity also applies to teachers. Teachers are responsible for promoting a setting for learners to develop their language skills in a creative manner, which may occur through more varied, learner-centred classroom activities and adapted tasks from textbooks or even learner produced materials. It should be noted that, in general, textbooks are lacking when it comes to fostering creativity. It then becomes the teacher's role to be innovative and adapt learning materials when it comes to encouraging learners to engage with the target language. The teacher should also act as a role model. It is important for teachers to demonstrate their creative ability in order to pave the way for learners to follow their lead and encourage them to explore their unlimited imagination.

Learners seem to be most creative when working collectively. As they are working together, learners are more likely to be more imaginative as everyone thinks about different things: the sharing of ideas invariably leads to the production of yet more ideas. Teachers may also get their learners to aid them in making the classroom an interactive place by asking them to create game-like activities and showcasing them to the class. Therefore, both teachers and learners are working towards a more creative language learning environment.

However, creativity is not always a synonym for something brand new. More often than not, it is about doing things differently. Therefore, creative acts should be recognized and accepted within the domain in which they occur (Maley & Peachey, 2015). Creativity is also not a synonym for 'chaos'; teachers should also be responsible for providing the limits within which creativity actually blossoms more easily. Learners work better when they have a clear understanding of what the task requires: "assignments that are too open-ended will become overwhelming and ineffective. Teachers should set helpful boundaries within which to innovate, according to the learning outcome they hope to accomplish" (Bialik & Fadel, 2015: 7).

Conclusion

This 21st century perspective on the way we work as teachers will not be the panacea for all the problems schools are facing, but it certainly provides a good framework to reshape classroom procedures and a focus for the renewal of national curricula. The development of the four Cs – communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity – has the power to transform ELT and change the way teachers to unlock our learners' true potential in today's global society: to assist our learners to develop as 'whole persons' who have life-long needs/capabilities. A new focus in the ELT classroom might also become the catalyst for new insights in the teaching what has traditionally been denominated 'a skills-based approach, namely reading, writing, speaking and listening (Paran, 2012). So, despite our heavy timetables, overloaded curricula and over-crowded classrooms, ELT professionals in Portugal should embrace a teaching-learning culture that allows them to take risks and innovate with the knowledge that many successful 'experiments' have been conducted around the world (see for example, the ATCS project in Australia or the P21 project in the USA) and there is a wealth of support in the academic literature.

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