etas english teachers association switzerland

A PEER-REVIEWED MAGAZINE FOR ENGLISH PROFESSIONALS VOLUME 35 NO. 1 WINTER 2017

etas Journal

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

RESEARCH LITERACY: SUPPORTING TEACHER RESEARCH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

ETAS J – linking the needs of English teachers and language professionals

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Editor's Notes

Teaching dreams

By Cecil W. Morris

Some nights
Students return to
like salmon to their spawning bed.
They shake my hand
and sit across from me
and tell me what they have done
what they will soon be doing.
I remember all their names
and just where each one sat
in my classroom.
Still, when they tell me
what they have learned,
it's not what I remember teaching.

From Hatcher, M. (Ed.). (2001). *Bearing witness: Poetry by teachers about teaching*. Tuczon, AR: Zephyr Press, p. 20. Retrieved from **https://www.weareteachers.com/poems-about-teaching/**

In this issue. One of the pleasant aims of a publication of our kind is to let readers immerse themselves in the collection of compelling articles that mirror the professional experience, intellectual rigour, and discerning critical perspectives of their authors. I am proud to say that in putting together this Winter edition of ETAS Journal, we have fulfilled just such an aim: to bring in one issue this extraordinary portfolio of writings from many places around the globe by some of the most eminent writer-educators and passionate advocates of research literacy as a key to our professional and personal growth.

Premised on the belief that research literacy is an essential and sustained part of what it means to be a teacher professional, this first of our two-part Special Supplement on Research Literacy – our modest contribution to fostering research literacy among English teachers – offers only a sampling of what is a vast and vibrant field of inquiry.

Writing about teacher action research, Pine (2009) had this to say: "A good research question leads to taking an action, to trying something out, to improving a teaching/learning situation, to implementing actions that can make a difference in the lives of students. 'No action without research—no research without action.' Even in those situations in which the goal of the research is to gain deeper knowledge and understanding of a student, such as in a case study or a descriptive review, it is assumed that the ultimate goal of such acquired knowledge and understanding is the improvement of one's teaching or the advancement of student learning and/or development" (p. 239). This view sums up the theme of this issue and provides the philosophical underpinning for this Special Supplement.

In varying ways, our authors advance the thinking that the critique and integration of appropriate research to inform and evolve effective teaching strategies and learning practices is an essential requirement in facilitating greater learning outcomes. Individually, they draw attention to a number of key considerations, such as the importance of locating research within teachers' everyday practice, supporting teachers' agency by nurturing research literacy, and ensuring the sustainability of research practices. Collectively, they underscore the value of teachers engaging in, and with, research in order to be able to use research discerningly to inform their own practice. Together, they highlight the notion that to be research literate one needs to develop the skills to draw on, critically scrutinize, and integrate different kinds of evidence. At the same time, they encourage the use of new approaches and different analytic perspectives, stressing the positive gains and new insights that push our own understanding of who we are and how we teach.

So it is with deep gratitude that I acknowledge the participation of this international group of colleagues for sharing their keen insights in such profoundly thought-provoking articles that demonstrate sound theoretical and methodological underpinnings. And because their articles evince not just depth of insight but also elegance of language, it had been pure joy editing this collection – illuminating and delighting me in equal measure. On behalf of colleagues in the Publications Team, I wish to extend our warmest welcome to all our authors, with hopes that they will continue to grace the pages of future ETAS Journal editions with their articles. A thousand thanks for this gift of the mind.

For bringing us this Research Literacy Special Supplement, I am profoundly indebted to Daniel Xerri. Since his first contribution to ETAS Journal in 2012, Daniel has not only consistently enriched this publication with his articles, but has also been a keen supporter of our efforts to promote ETAS in the wider ELT community as an enthusiastic member of our Editorial Board and the Board of Reviewers. Because of his enviable connection and influence in this community, I have had the privilege of being introduced to some of the brightest minds in the ELT constellation. Working with him on a number of creative projects shows how collaboration is the stuff of growth, deepening not just one's professional life but the personal too – a million thanks for the gift of time, friendship, and nurturing support.

It is my hope that this particular Supplement will advance research pedagogy and its application in the English classroom while inspiring English teachers, in particular ETAS members, to engage in research and become research literate. To paraphrase Simon Borg (2013), research engagement may not be the only strategy available to teachers, but it will provide them "with an additional powerful option".

My other source of pleasure in this issue is the participation of a number of ETAS members in this section, *Inspired/Inspiring practices: Voices from ETAS*. Because for so long it had been our dream to come up with an edition featuring articles entirely from ETAS members, this small but immensely insightful collection exemplifying good writing, research focus, and provocative inquiries represents an encouraging beginning. Together, the voices in this section provide a local colour beside the decidedly international provenance of our Special Supplement authors, enabling us to maintain some of the many different kinds of balance we always try to strike – between the varying academic backgrounds, individual expertise and interests of our authors and the professional needs of our readers; between cultivating an international outlook by active engagement in the global ELT community while being rooted in local contexts and realities.

For sharing their explorations into some of the pertinent issues affecting English language teaching and learning, and for the intellectual vigour and depth of insight that inform their writings – a thousand thanks to all our contributors for making this issue shine. We hope they will come back again and again to enrich not just the pages of this Journal but our professional lives as well.

This is what ETAS Journal is all about: a space that enhances critical attentiveness, collaboration, and experimentation while offering possibilities for imagining or re-thinking English language teaching differently. And as it has always been, ETAS Journal is here to provide a place to learn and a space to explore and expand. Looking back to six years' worth of work, I see how much we have grown with each issue and continue to grow. But one fundamental thing has not changed: ETAS Journal's commitment to publishing articles that expand rather than narrow our vision or our minds.

Cover Art. With much pleasure I now turn to my other duty of welcoming the Swedish artist Roger Akesson whose art work graces the cover of this issue. Looking through Roger's enviably captivating online gallery, I was reminded of this quote from the contemporary American poet Stephen Dunn, "To see the world beyond its appearances is to see it as it is". Although Dunn's world is poetry and he was describing why writers engage in the paradox of exploring the inner world to understand the outer, he might as well have been describing Roger's own artistic abstractions.

Editor's Notes

For, as he has done in this *Forest Exploration 8*, Roger's creative touch deftly transforms the familiar into something unfamiliar, providing his onlookers a fresh experience, a new way of looking at nature, in this case, the forest in late autumn and the myriad aesthetic and emotional nuances this season evokes. Roger draws his subjects from familiar everyday objects and nature and turns them into abstractions that are not just unique but exquisite. The way the loose brush strokes transform colours into the familiar shape of an apple, a pine cone, or a flower appears playful and almost whimsical. Yet it has the power to startle us into a new way of looking at, say, a clump of rowan berries, a patch of landscape, or a bird's nest. But of course there is nothing whimsical about Roger's varied 'explorations' and abstractions; on the other hand, they show the skill of the artist's hand and the beauty of his mind.

Amazingly, Roger's own artist's statement is far more modest: "I try to paint daily, and painting has become more than a hobby, it has become a passion. What drives me to paint is to create compositions, interpreting objects, and create something that is personal." Despite his massive body of work, Roger is as humble with his accomplishments as he is generous in sharing them. It took me just one email to get him to respond to my request for a cover art in his characteristic self-effacing fashion I have come to recognise: "For me the money or fame isn't the reason why I paint, and a request like this is worth more to me than money. I am touched and honored to be asked, and I am gladly accepting." True to character, he ends his artist's statement with this simple wish: "When people see my paintings, I hope that they recognize my style and know who painted them." They surely will, Roger, you can be sure of that! Check him out here: **http://www.rogerakesson.blogspot.ch/** and see what I mean.

Acknowledgments. This time around you'll find things a little bit different, much of which in the creative changes Ron has introduced into the layout of our pages. We hope that this touch of colour will not only further enhance the allure of ETAS Journal as a source of vibrant, assertive, and outstanding writings, but will also captivate and delight our readers.

As they have always done, Helena and the rest of our Publications Team colleagues continue to enrich ETAS Journal with their unique contributions. Together, they bring professional experience, intellectual rigour, and discerning editorial perspective to our work. Especially, they have been all amazing for pushing my thinking and keeping ETAS Journal and me in touch with what is happening in our field. As many of them inherently know, it is their commitment and enormous support and encouragement more than anything else that has carried me over many challenges these past six years. They, together with our Production Team – Ron, Brenda and Candice – are the constant in my editorial life. Heartfelt gratitude extending beyond these pages.

And to all our readers, fellow ETAS members, and colleagues in the ETAS National Committee, thank you for the support that has allowed our Publications team and me to keep our commitment to publishing only the highest-quality articles and making ETAS Journal an outstanding peer-reviewed publication. May your own reading journey in the pages that follow bring you enlightenment, refreshment, and enjoyment.

Now that the iconic *Dresdner Stollen* and the famous *Nürnberger Lebkuchen* have arrived on supermarket shelves, we know Christmas is not far. Ironically, those mountains of chocolates we have come to associate with Christmas only serve to remind us that somewhere in other parts of this world people are starving. Nevertheless, despite this turbulence, unrest, and intolerance in the world, we hope you and your friends and family find peace and have a safe, healthy, and happy holiday season.

But first, however you choose to celebrate, please find the time to read this excerpt from C.S. Lewis's *Xmas and Christmas: A Lost Chapter from Herodotus*. Written in 1954, this fable describes a certain winter tradition among some of the inhabitants of the island called Niatirb.*

> *In the middle of winter when fogs and rains most abound they have a great festival which they call Exmas, and for fifty days they prepare for it in the fashion I shall describe. First of all, every citizen is obliged to send to each of his friends and relations a square piece of hard paper stamped with a picture, which in their speech is called an Exmas-card... And because all men must send these cards the market-place is filled with the crowd of those buying them, so that there is great labour and weariness…*
>
> *They also send gifts to one another, suffering the same things about the gifts as about the cards, or even worse. For every citizen has to guess the value of the gift which every friend will send to him so that he may send one of equal value, whether he can afford it or not. And they buy as gifts for one another such things as no man ever bought for himself. For the sellers, understanding the custom, put forth all kinds of trumpery, and whatever, being useless and ridiculous, they have been unable to sell throughout the year they now sell as an Exmas gift...*
>
> *This fifty days of preparation is called in their barbarian speech the Exmas Rush… But when the day of the festival comes, then most of the citizens, being exhausted with the Rush, lie in bed till noon. But in the evening they eat five times as much supper as on other days and, crowning themselves with crowns of paper, they become intoxicated. And on the day after Exmas they are very grave, being internally disordered by the supper and the drinking and reckoning how much they have spent on gifts and on the wine...*
>
> *But the few among the Niatirbians have also a festival, separate and to themselves, called Crissmas, which is on the same day as Exmas. And those who keep Crissmas, doing the opposite to the majority of the Niatirbians, rise early on that day with shining faces and go before sunrise to certain temples where they partake of a sacred feast. And in most of the temples they set out images of a fair woman with a new-born Child on her knees and certain animals and shepherds adoring the Child…*
>
> *But what Hecataeus says, that Exmas and Crissmas are the same, is not credible… [I]t is not likely that men, even being barbarians, should suffer so many and great things in honour of a god they do not believe in…*

**Britain* spelled backwards.

From Lewis, C.S. (1970). *God in the dock: Essays on theology and ethics.* Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., pp. 301-303. Retrieved from **http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/Xmas_and_Christmas**

Ceres Pioquinto, PhD

"En ce moment même dans cet ouvrage me voici. In this very moment, in this work, here I am. Yes."
Derrida, 1980

And still I rise…
Maya Angelou, 1978

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President's Page

> *In seed-time learn,*
> *in harvest teach,*
> *in winter enjoy.*
> ~ **William Blake**

Taken in its simplest form, what a wonderful quotation for teachers and learners alike! Sadly, this summer is just a memory, but the winter lies ahead of us.

This year, my "seed-time" was definitely spent learning when I became a trainee on the Consultants-E course, Teaching Live Online. This was the Grand Prize of the Teacher-to-Teacher raffle at the ETAS Annual Conference and AGM in Zürich last January. The course provided a wonderful insight into the rewards and challenges of online teaching. I can highly recommend the course to anyone interested in developing this aspect of their teaching.

My "harvest" was also spent learning – most particularly at the Professional Development Day in Biel. Urs Kalberer put together a wide-ranging programme to cater for all interests. The day began with John de Jong's thought-provoking, if perhaps somewhat controversial, plenary and ended, after four inspiring workshop sessions, with a toast to all the presenters. It was also an opportunity to thank Urs for all his hard work as he comes to the end of his term on the Executive Committee. Finally, the first ever ETAS webinar took place at the beginning of October, with Susan Hillyard talking about Drama as a Bridge to Literacy.

The winter? Well, plans for the ETAS Annual Conference and AGM in Zofingen are well under way, and by the time you read this message the programme should be online. In addition, we will be launching our 20-20 Vision initiative. This is a project to focus our attention on ETAS in the 2020s and to give our members the opportunity to influence the future of the organisation. Thanks to JoAnn and her mobile phone, we have put together a short video to launch the debate.

And a time to enjoy? Certainly! For me, autumn and winter are a time to relax with friends and family. One of my priorities is watching rugby, yes even in Switzerland, although I must admit I prefer watching my home club of Bath, or even venturing to Rome for a Six Nations match. I'm also sure that somewhere along the way, I'll find time to do some teaching.

Then again, maybe I've totally missed the point of the quote. However, I think I prefer my interpretation – we are never too old to learn, to teach, or to enjoy!

Sue Wood
President

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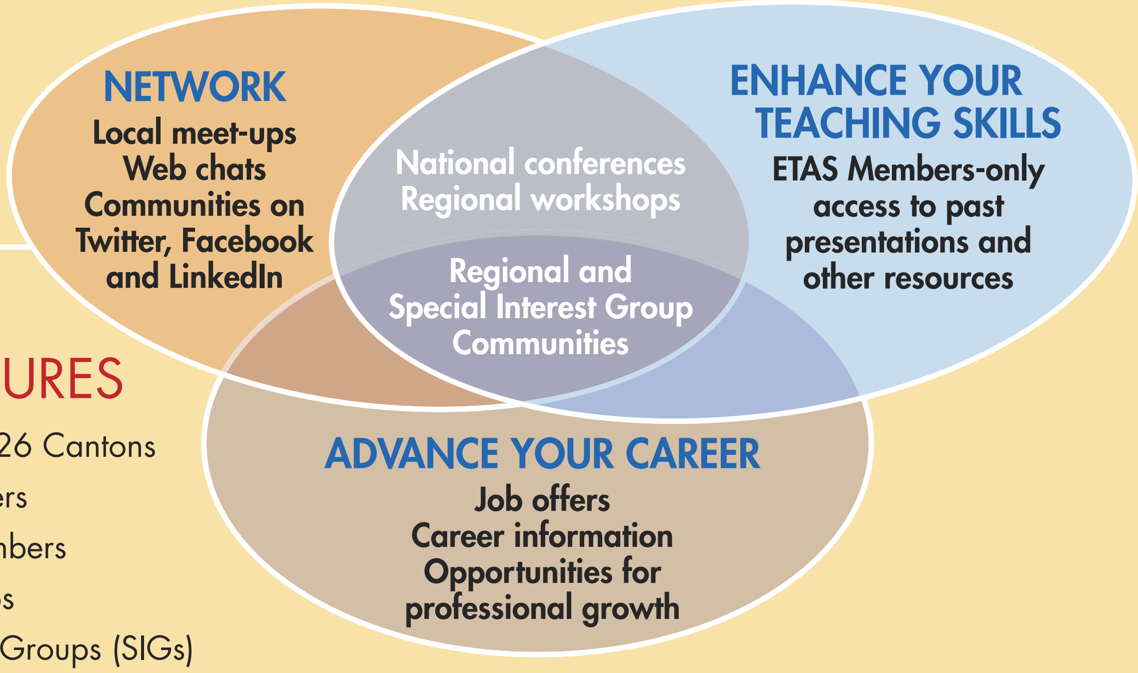

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ETAS Teacher-to-Teacher Myanmar Project: Update

After a slow start last year, things have picked up at the Myanmar Teacher-to-Teacher project this year. Phillip and Susie Oswald visited our two partner schools – **E4Y** (Education for Youths) and **CVT** Myanmar (Vocational Training Center) – in Yangon in early September. And over the summer we were able to welcome two new additions to our small team.

One of them is Ingrid Christen-van Luling, who teaches English in Muri and is an artist in her free time. Her paintings have already shown up on the cover of the ETAS Journal. She has agreed to take over the organisation of our stand at ETAS events. Moreover, she is looking to create her own fundraisers with her English classes.

Our other volunteer is Hannah McCulloch, who teaches English at the Kantonsschule Trogen. She will be responsible for the marketing of our project as well as of our website and all our social media activity. Be sure to view her work on Facebook and Instagram.

And we're still looking for more! We need two additional volunteers to take over Finances and Sponsoring/Fundraising. If you are interested in hosting your own fundraiser or similar initiatives for the ETAS T-2-T Project, we will be more than happy to help you with marketing material and fundraising tips. If you're thinking of volunteering or assisting us in any way, you'll find my contact details at the end of this article.

In early September the first ETAS delegation, Susanne Oswald and I, went to Myanmar. During our two-week stay, we visited both our partner schools. Each school provided us with an itinerary of proposed activities they felt would be most beneficial for their school. On top of our official schedule, we saw our trip as an opportunity to assess the needs of teachers in Myanmar and to discover first-hand how we and all ETAS members could best help our partners.

The first week we spent at the E4Y School for disadvantaged children. Here we helped English teachers Moe and K develop a curriculum that would allow all of the pupils, many of whom had little to no prior schooling, to get basic education. The teachers had so far struggled to find content that would speak to the different levels in each class. The historically grown curriculum encompassed an eclectic mix of donated teaching materials and government books. Together with Moe and K, we decided to refocus the curriculum around *English File Beginner and Elementary* as they were both familiar with the books and liked the content.

It should be noted that this transition had been made possible through the generous donations of ETAS members. With the funds raised at last year's ETAS events, we will be able to donate enough books to keep the 100 pupils going for a few more years.

However, it was clear that the contents of these books were not always appropriate for Myanmar context. For instance, the E4Y pupils found world problems treated in books made for the European market hard to grasp and far removed from their everyday lives. With the teachers, we discussed sprucing up the solid basis of the new curriculum with material adapted to the cultural context of Myanmar. Soe and K were happy to see how easily lessons could be adapted.

During our first week, we also visited courses taught by Moe and K, answered methodological questions, and gave feedback. We also conducted a two-day intensive English course for all teachers at E4Y. The teachers' English skills turned out to be better than expected but a lack of practice and confidence meant they seldom made use of them. Our class, therefore, revisited essential grammar and focused on the production of written and spoken language. Highlight of the course was a mock sales pitch where the teachers presented their proposed projects.

We spent our second week at CVT (Vocational Training Center), in the Red Cross Building facing the port of Yangon. The CVT curriculum follows the Swiss system of dual education, in which students learn 'on the job' in an apprenticeship as well as in the classroom. All students in the following courses – cabinet making, metal work, electrician, commercial assistant, hotel & gastronomy assistant – receive English training tailored to their specific job profiles. We visited a number of courses where we saw first-hand how the teachers implemented the various curricula. Especially rewarding, albeit exhausting, were the 10 hours we spent with the students of the Commercial and Hotel & Gastronomy assistant courses practising for their oral exams coming up in February.

We found the English programmes here well established and further teacher training from ETAS experts unnecessary, as the teachers already receive general methodology training regularly. However, from discussion with the staff at CVT, we discovered that their most prevalent need is intensive English workshops for all teachers. Especially, the vocational trainers are keen on using more English in their classroom but lack the confidence to do so. The teachers were further delighted at our idea of setting up a 'buddy system' that will link them with English teachers in Switzerland.

In conclusion, we found that E4Y is where ETAS members' skills may be most effectively employed. Likewise, the funds raised at our fundraisers will go further at E4Y. In the future, therefore, we will concentrate most of our efforts in supporting the E4Y programme. During our time on site, we will focus on English and methodology training for the teachers and speaking courses for the children. At CVT we will provide an intensive English course open to all teachers and set up a 'buddy-system' that will pair local teachers with their Swiss counterparts.

Finally, we thank all the generous members of ETAS for supporting our engagement in Myanmar. At the ETAS Professional Development Day in mid-September, we raised an outstanding CHF 1200. – our best result at a PD day so far. Special thanks go to all the helpers who sold raffle tickets at the event, the colleagues who spent their well-deserved free time baking goodies for our bake sale, and the sponsors without whom our raffle prizes wouldn't have been half as amazing. Thank you.

Phillip Oswald
Co-coordinator, Myanmar
Teacher-to-Teacher Project

If you would like to join the project or have any questions, you can reach us at:
www.t2tmyanmar.com
phillip.dominik.oswald@gmail.com
#myanmart2tproject

ETAS Journal

Call for Articles

The ETAS Journal invites the submission of articles on various aspects of language teaching and methodology, lesson ideas, surveys of teaching materials, and reports that address language issues in Switzerland or the surrounding countries. Book reviews and brief reports or summaries of work in progress which address similar issues are also welcome. Please adhere to the following guidelines when submitting your work.

Submission may be in any of these formats:

***Full-length articles*:** Articles in this category advance conceptual, research-based, or theoretical arguments that bridge theory and practice in ESL/EFL. Articles must be fully grounded in current literature and should not exceed **2,500 words**, including references and a very short abstract.

***Voices of Experience*:** Articles in this category feature descriptions of teaching techniques or activities, teaching methods, best practices, professional development, and other useful information. Articles should specify audience, materials, procedures, and teacher reflections on procedures. Submissions to this section should not exceed **2,000 words**, including references and a very short abstract.

All manuscripts for the above categories should be in Times New Roman, font size 12. The referencing system used should be **APA 6th Edition** (sample formats available online at **http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/apa-interactive.php** or check any recent ETAS Journal editions).

Deadline for the Spring 2018 edition: **5th December 2017**
Deadline for the Summer 2018 edition: **6th February 2018**
Deadline for the Winter 2018 edition: **4th August 2018**

The Editors reserve the right to make editing changes without prior consultation with the author(s). Authors will be contacted regarding any major editing or revisions. All contributors will receive **one complimentary copy** of the ETAS Journal.

Please send submissions, including a short biodata, a recent photo, and a mailing address, as a Word document by email attachment to the **Editor** at **journal@e-tas.ch**

THE IDEA BOX 1

Here are some ideas to keep fast finishers in the learning game once they've completed a class activity. Take your pick and remember to share your ideas at @etasfastfinishers on Twitter or our Facebook page.

- Write a tweet (140 characters) explaining today's lesson.
- Explain something you learnt today to a 10-year old child.
- Write five questions for your next English test.
- Write a slogan to sell today's lesson.
- Choose the name of an animal, then find a word starting with each letter that relates to today's lesson.

Ideas collated and shared by Rachael Harris from her photocopiable book
http://the-round.com/resource/100-activities-for-fast-finishers/

ETAS Journal Winter 2018
Call for Papers

Special Supplement: *A teacher's guide to excelling in teaching Business English*

Do you teach Business English in-company or in-school, as a freelancer, at a private language school, or in the public sector?
Are you a teacher trainer, materials writer, workshop presenter or researcher in the field?

ETAS Journal invites submissions for its Special Supplement on ***A teacher's guide to excelling in teaching Business English.***

In ***A teacher's guide to excelling in teaching Business English***, the **ETAS Journal Winter 2018 Special Supplement,** our Editors are looking for varied perspectives, experiences and best practices applicable to Business English classrooms and learning environments. **Business English teachers and researchers are invited to share examples of Business English 'best practices', classroom ideas, experiences, and stories with us and our readers by 15th May 2018!**

Topics should address one of the following issues that are relevant to the title, ***A teacher's guide to excelling in teaching Business English***.

- How to establish yourself as a Business English teacher
- How to address Business English clients' needs: (Managing expectations, meeting goals)
- How to teach Business Skills & Practices
- How to use authentic material in Business English classrooms
- How to teach critical thinking in Business English classrooms
- How to personalize learning tasks in with Business English clients
- How to write material for Business English classrooms
- Differences between General English and Business English learning
- What works/doesn't work in Business English classrooms?
- Corporate perspectives of English as a Lingua Franca: What English do companies need?
- What benefits does Business Coaching bring to teachers, students and companies that traditional teaching doesn't?
- What mistakes have you made teaching Business English and what can other teachers learn from them?

Submissions should be in one of these formats:

Full-length articles: Articles in this category advance conceptual, research-based, or theoretical arguments that bridge theory and practice in Business English. Articles must be fully grounded in current literature and should not exceed **2,500** words, including references.

Best practices and teacher reflections: Articles in this category feature descriptions of teaching techniques or activities, teaching methods, best practices, professional development, and other useful information. Articles should specify audience, materials, procedures, and teacher reflections on procedures. Submissions to this section should not exceed **2,000** words, including references.

Specific requirements on content: Articles must

- include a brief, 50-word abstract
- not include 'commercial' text selling, promoting, or endorsing products or services
- be written as a MS Word document and sent as email attachment, including short biographical information about the author and mailing address

Specific requirements on format: Articles must

- be printed across A4 pages upright and left justified, as Word document in a black, 12-point font such as Times New Roman or Arial
- not be in columns, indented, or framed
- have no hyphenated words at the line end
- include only tables and diagrams formatted in Word (other illustrative material should be sent separately by mail and be black on white)
- not contain headers or footers

Specific requirements on references

- For notes within the text, use the **APA 6th Edition Reference Style** in-text citations format (author-publication date-page number), **not** footnotes or endnotes
- Sources used as in-text citations should be included in the Reference List.
- For the references, use **APA 6th Edition Reference Style Guide**. Sample formats for both in-text citations and references are available online at **http://owll.massey.ac.nz/referencing/apa-interactive.php** or check any recent editions of ETAS Journal.
- Sources included in the **Reference List** must match those that have been cited in-text.

Please send your submission as a Word document by email attachment by 15th May 2018 to the Editors of the Special Supplement (see below). Please include a very brief abstract, a short biodata, a recent photo, and a mailing address. Contributors will receive one complimentary copy of the ETAS Journal.

For any queries, please contact the Special Supplement Editors. We'll be excited to hear from you!

Emilia Siravo pure@e-tas.ch
David Kaufher davidkaufher@gmail.com
Markus Dietz business@e-tas.ch

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Research literacy: Supporting teacher research in English Language Teaching • Part 1

Educational research: A reflection

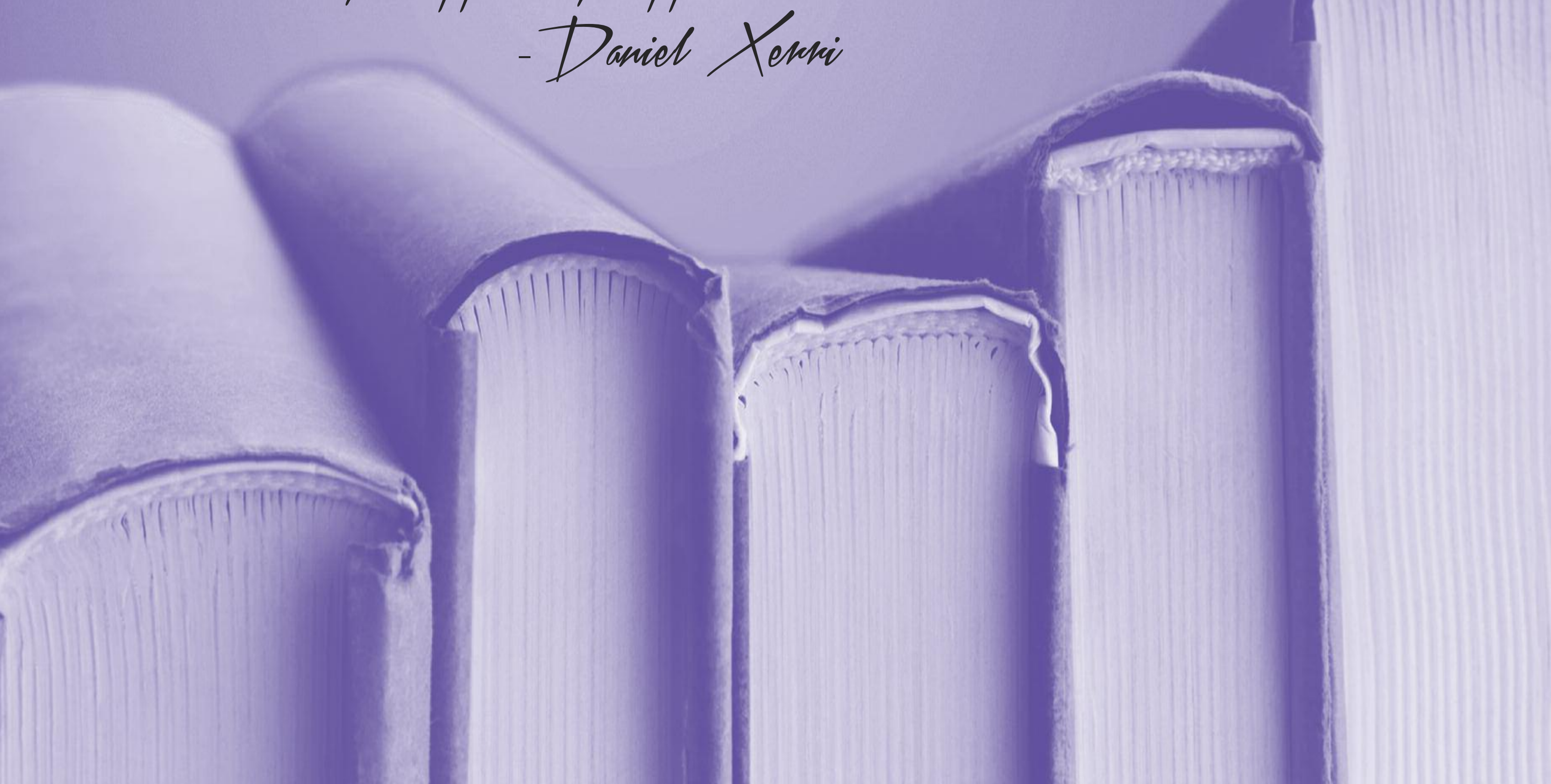
Adriano de Armado: *How hast thou purchased this experience?*
Moth: *By my penny of observation.*
(Shakespeare, Love's Labour's Lost, Act 3 Scene 1)

On my quest to learn more about learning,
to peer into the black box of the classroom
and piece together the why and how of education,
I fathomed that the momentum of knowledge
demands an inquisitive disposition,
a willingness to keep the eyes open,
a fixation with the prismatic nature of questions,
and a compulsion to reimagine all we do
in these shored up spaces
where the magic supposedly happens.

- Daniel Xerri

This poem is a succinct reflection on educational research. One of the first things I learnt on my research journey as a doctoral student was that in order to hone my understanding of the teaching and learning of poetry I had to position myself as a curious observer of the processes that teachers and students engage in as part of their negotiation of poetic texts, including ones by Shakespeare. In ***Love's Labour's Lost****, Moth tells Adriano that his knowledge about how to woo women with song was purchased by means of a small amount of observation. Like Moth, I discovered that knowledge about my area of interest was best acquired by means of those proclivities associated with the act of observing the world. My PhD was meant to build my expertise about a complex set of interactions in the poetry classroom, but unless I had developed the inclination to engage in observation and inquiry it was unlikely that I would have succeeded.*

Daniel Xerri



FOREWORD

DANIEL XERRI

This Special Supplement on supporting teacher research through the development of research literacy is the first of two parts; the second part appears in the Spring 2018.

One popular definition of teacher research conceives it as research that classroom practitioners conduct in a systematic fashion in their own context with the purpose of forming a better understanding of their practices (Borg, 2013). Teacher research is acknowledged as a significant avenue for professional development, and a means of enhancing language learning and teaching (Xerri, 2017). However, as indicated by Burns (2010), such research is sometimes considered suspect because teachers might not possess the necessary knowledge and skills to do good quality research.

As suggested by the contributors to these two Special Supplements, the solution is not to disregard teacher research and focus exclusively on the research produced by academics and professional researchers. The research literacy of English language teachers needs to be adequately developed so that they can capitalise on the knowledge, skills, and beliefs required to do research (Borg, 2003).

The contributors to these Special Supplements are among some of the foremost experts on teacher research worldwide. The participation of teacher educators, teacher association leaders, and academics working in a wide range of international contexts ensures that the two supplements act as a showcase of influential views about the kind of support that teachers need for them to develop the necessary research literacy to engage in research and share their findings in an effective manner.

It is hoped that by reading the various contributions to these two Special Supplements, readers can appreciate the value of supporting teacher-researchers through the development of research literacy. Classroom practitioners might want to seek ways of nurturing their capacity to do research in their own contexts, while teacher educators might want to evaluate what gaps they can bridge in order for teachers to position themselves as teacher-researchers. School leaders might want to evaluate whether their institutions' professional culture and the working conditions that teachers are subjected to encourage such positioning or otherwise. Teacher associations like ETAS might want to take stock of the crucial role they can play in enabling teachers to develop a satisfactory level of research literacy, engage in good quality research, and disseminate the findings of their research as broadly as possible.

Special Supplement 1

The first Supplement consists of seven articles and two interviews. Most of the contributors seem to concur that the notion of research applicable to classroom practitioners might need to be broader than that underpinning academic research. For instance, Thomas S. C. Farrell underscores this idea when he suggests that teachers would benefit far more from being trained to engage in evidence-based reflective practice. David Nunan engages with the question of how to define the research conducted by teachers and what forms it may take. He considers the different kinds of data that teachers may gather and some of the approaches they may adopt, including action research.

Going beyond the parameters that typically define academic research, Mark Wyatt assesses how teacher-researchers can be mentored to produce good quality research through reflection stimulated by three key questions. Achilleas Kostoulas argues why it might be better for teachers to hone their research literacy rather than dismiss 'research' as a purely academic endeavour that has no bearing on their professional lives and practices. He maintains that research literacy enables teachers to engage with the academic literature and prepares them for conducting classroom-based inquiry.

Despite advancing various forms of support for teacher research literacy in their respective articles, contributors to this supplement are nevertheless in agreement about the value of teacher research. For example, Gary Barkhuizen discusses the potential of narrative inquiry as a means of understanding teachers' and learners' experiences in the language classroom. Narrative inquiry enables teachers to reflect on and interpret their professional practices within a specific context, and this can lead to change. Hanna Brookie and Cynthia White illustrate how reflection encouraged a teacher to engage in enquiry through a systematic research process. This enquiry was beneficial not only for the teacher-researcher but also for the research participants and the wider professional community.

Teacher research literacy can be fostered in a variety of ways, including through the support provided by teacher educators, educational managers, and teacher associations. Darío Luis Banegas describes how pre-service teacher education programmes in Argentina has helped promote research literacy despite the top-down nature of its implementation. Some of the benefits of such implementation, for instance, include added emphasis on collaboration and reflection, which have broader implications beyond the programme's local context. Anne Burns discusses ten tips that are meant to guide educational managers in their efforts to support teacher research. Through these ten tips she highlights the important role that managers play in enabling teachers not just to embrace an approach like action research, but to engage in it.

Finally, Christine Coombe discusses some of the ways in which teacher associations can support teacher-researchers to develop the knowledge and skills required to do research and promote it amongst their peers.

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Daniel Xerri is a Lecturer in TESOL at the University of Malta, the Joint Coordinator of the IATEFL Research SIG, and the Chairperson of the ELT Council within the Ministry for Education and Employment in Malta. He holds postgraduate degrees in English and Applied Linguistics, as well as a PhD in Education from the University of York. He has been awarded a number of international grants in order to conduct research in the United Kingdom, Australia, and the USA. He is the author of many publications on different areas of education and TESOL, including articles published in *ELT Journal, English in Education, and International Journal of Research and Method in Education.*
His main research interests are creativity and teacher education. Further details about his talks and publications can be found at: **www.danielxerri.com**

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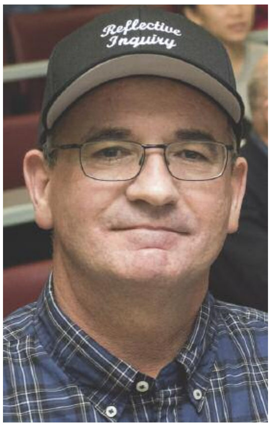
Insights

'A classroom is a centre of inquiry in all its forms': Thomas S. C. Farrell on teacher research

DANIEL XERRI

Despite being widely heralded as an effective form of professional development, teacher research has also been criticised as being too closely aligned with the priorities and expectations of academics rather than those of classroom practitioners. In this interview, Thomas S. C. Farrell indicates that current conceptions of research might need to be broadened so as to embrace reflective practice.



Conceptions of teacher research

Over the past few years, the topic of teacher research has been given increasing attention in the literature and at international ELT conferences. How do you explain this rise in popularity?

It's probably driven by academics. When you say it's become popular I worry about that because I would like to know whom it is popular with. I can guarantee that it's not popular with the teachers. So if we talk about teacher research we have to define what we mean. Is it research *on* teachers, research *with* teachers, or research *by* teachers? Have we asked the teachers what they would like to research? If you use the word 'research', you will turn off a teacher immediately. So I think we're using jargon that's comfortable for academics but not for the teachers.

If you had to ask a teacher further than their original teacher training programme, probably the word 'research' would frighten them anyway. This depends on their programme, of course. If it were a research-based programme with a thesis at the end of it, then they'd be more comfortable with a research approach using the large 'R' rather than the small 'r'. I'm on the same wavelength with people like Alan Maley regarding academics who co-opt research by teachers for their own benefits.

Alan Maley and to some extent Penny Ur have recently suggested that teachers don't have time for research, shouldn't be expected to do research, and that research isn't relevant for them. What are your thoughts on that?

I disagree, but I would frame it in a different way. A classroom is a centre of inquiry and you have to consider it a centre of inquiry in all its forms. If we were to say that teachers should not do and read research, we'd almost be saying that a medical doctor should not do or read research because they don't have time for it or have no use for it or it's not relevant to them. And yet you're going to visit that medical doctor and be prescribed medication. Based on? Research, of course. But I think we're tripping on words and semantics.

If you want to look at the hard research, then there's probably a place for it. For example, in my humble opinion, teacher cognition research is not relevant to teachers because it consists of academics researching teachers for academics. It generally focuses on beliefs only and not practices. A lot of the research that has been done has consisted of a survey or interviews of what teachers believe. I've done a lot of work on this but I don't call it teacher cognition research because I think it's an insult. It's just a beautiful way of saying 'What are you thinking?' But you can't say that apparently; it's not academic enough. If you ask a teacher what they believe, they have a very hard time explaining it. So it has to go through a kind of recursive type of existence.

First, ask teachers what their beliefs are, then examine their behaviours in the classroom, and then try to extract teachers' beliefs again. A teacher can say that they believe one thing this minute and they change their belief the next minute. Beliefs are very hard to pin down. When this research is published, it's a freeze frame of a particular time in which you talked to that teacher and it might no longer be relevant. This is especially the case when it's not connected to classroom work as well. So research should be an examination of beliefs and practices, and beliefs again.

You seem to imply that the academics who study teacher research are merely writing for an academic audience and their work doesn't really reach the teachers themselves. But is there any value in teachers engaging in research?

Yes, there is. But I would say in small bites and you don't even have to call it research. If they reflect on their practice, they're doing research. It only takes one particular item of your class that you're interested in to change the whole dynamic of that class. For example, wait time. Many teachers are not fully aware of what's going on in their classroom. If you want to call this kind of thing research then you could just say that the centre of inquiry entails becoming more aware of what's happening in your classroom to make you a better teacher. You don't even have to use the word 'research'. This kind of thing is relevant to every teacher.

But some academics would dispute your views. They would argue that you can't call that kind of thing research since research has to be conducted in a systematic manner. How would you reply to that?

I would say that if a teacher were to reflect on any aspect of their work, then that is very systematic as well. If as a teacher you're interested in looking at your instructions, then you can systematically collect evidence about that. You need retrievable data. So what do you do? You record your class. It could be video or audio. Then you transcribe it and analyse it. Then you interpret it.

Am I right in thinking that you're asking people to broaden their conceptions of research?

Yes! Look at who is gaining from the research. In what I've described, it's the teacher who is gaining from the research. The person working with the teacher, whether it's an academic, a facilitator or a mirror, can also benefit from the research. Both parties stand to gain. But if one is going to fight for what's acceptable for the academy, not necessarily the academics but the academy, then it's going to be irrelevant to the teachers.

Challenges of teacher research

Within your broad definition of research, which seems to go beyond how some people define it in academia, what are the challenges of teachers engaging in research?

The first challenge is the sense of helplessness a teacher probably has at the beginning. They might not know what to look at. So a facilitator could help a teacher focus on some aspect of his or her teaching, or even on the self, which is outside the teaching, so to speak. I think it's very important that if you're going to help a teacher, you help the teacher to focus on some aspect of their work that they might be interested in looking more into. What I've done in my own work and what I've encouraged other teachers to do is to start with the self. Write a journal and keep writing for a month or so about your teaching. After every class, write down something. I guarantee you, and it's never failed, a teacher will begin to see patterns develop in the writing. You can write anything you like. I myself started that way even though I doubted the whole process. That's how I started my reflective process and I continue to write like that too. You will find a pattern and you will find a focus on what you can begin looking at.

Aren't you assuming that writing reflectively is something easy for teachers to do?

I wouldn't say 'writing reflectively'. I would just say 'write'. Writing as a stream of consciousness. Just write about your class. There is no correct method. You don't even have to write full sentences. You can even draw pictures if you like. Anything that gets your thoughts out. The reason I've mentioned writing is that there is a built-in reflective mechanism in writing. That's why I don't want to say 'reflective writing'. You must stop to think. You must shape your thought process to think about what to write. Once it's written, you can see the written word and you can see your thoughts. They may or may not reflect exactly what's going on. But you can rewrite it if need be. A lot of teachers are afraid of writing and that's why I wouldn't use the term 'reflective writing'. I suggest that if you want to help a teacher reflect on their practices, writing is a good way to start the whole process.

In your experience, are there cultural issues involved in whether teachers engage in this kind of research or not?

Yes, especially if you want to ask them to reflect with other teachers in particular cultures. There's a whole new dynamic there. If one person is senior or junior to the other person, what they'll reveal and what they're allowed to reveal may not really reflect what they're thinking. But then again, individual teachers have to take responsibility on themselves.

What I worry about with the teacher research aspect is that the responsibility remains outside the teacher. It's with the academic or whoever is running the show, so to speak. The teacher never fully takes the responsibility on himself or herself. Some teachers are happy to ask, 'What should I do?' And academics are more than happy to tell them what to do. When teachers ask me, 'What should I do?' I tell them, 'I don't know. What would you like to do?' I never deviate from that. If you're supervising a teacher and you tell them what to do, you're generating a sense of learned helplessness. That's not going to help the teacher. If the teacher says, 'I don't know what to look at', then you leave it alone until the teacher finds out what they want to look at.

I think teachers are afraid of the whole process of looking at their teaching. In the first few months after they graduate from a teacher education programme they're quite happy to talk about their teaching. That is because they've just graduated from a programme in which they had to talk and write about their teaching, and be observed teaching. But after three, four or five years, they build these metaphorical walls around themselves. If you ask a teacher four years down the road to tell you about their teaching or to share their lesson plans, they're much more reluctant. I found that when some teachers talk about their practices it's totally unrelated to the reality of what they actually do.

Recently I discovered a new thing that I've called the third year slump. Novice teachers, who are so eager in their first year, enter the third year and are in the slump because they are beaten down by the system or they beat themselves down or the students beat them down. I used to think that once you've survived the first year, you're OK. But actually you're not. As teachers gain this so called experience, they begin to doubt themselves even more. The reason is that they haven't reflected on that experience. Experience means nothing unless you've reflected on it. I think reflective practice is the way to go for the teacher because it's not threatening. It doesn't use the word 'research'. I say 'evidence-based'. I'm even reluctant to say 'collect data'. I prefer to say 'collect information'.

Teacher development

We're doing this interview at an international conference at which there was an event on teachers' research literacy. What would you say is the role of such conferences in equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills to do research in their own contexts or to engage in reflective practice?

Conferences and workshops can be very dangerous. They can be dog and pony shows. On a Saturday you might be doing a workshop on how to teach writing or how to teach speaking or reading or whatever, and you tell the audience, 'Here's how you should do this and this and this.' On Monday, the teachers may try to implement what you've told them. But, generally speaking, what usually happens is that it doesn't work. By Wednesday they're back to doing what they usually do.

Part of the issue here is because they hear something at a conference but they're not aware of what they're doing at this particular moment to see whether it fits in or not. They think they know what they do but this might not be the same as what they actually do. A conference is good. It can be a giant reflection session. But if you ask me how best to equip teachers, I would suggest giving them a workshop on reflective practice. I would show them that the human aspect of teaching, who they are, and self-knowledge are as important as the skill of teaching reading or anything else for that matter.

Is reflective practice being given the attention it deserves at such conferences?

Not in TESOL. I think reflective practice is threatening, not only to teachers but also to academics. It's threatening to academics because they don't actually engage in reflective practice themselves. They only talk about it. It's very hard to find an MA programme leaflet or pamphlet that doesn't use the word 'reflection' somewhere. It's a term that is being constantly used and abused. It's touted by a lot of people. Yet certain sceptics within our profession call it a bandwagon. But it's not. It's not designed to replace anything else.

What it is is dangerous. It takes people out of their comfort zone and away from their routines to actually look at what is really happening in their world. The horror and beauty of reflective practice is that you don't know where it's going to lead. That said, in TESOL today there is a growing interest in research on the practices that encourage teachers to reflect. I have a new book on this, *Research on Reflective Practice in TESOL* (**https://goo.gl/Uixhwm**), coming out in early 2018.

Would you say that reflective practice is more important for teachers than developing the skills of, for example, writing a questionnaire, conducting an interview, or observing their students?

Yes! I would say it's a necessary prerequisite to that because if teachers know themselves they would automatically be brought towards that. If you bring in these research techniques outside themselves, it's too far outside the teachers. It's the 'other' for them. It's not part of them. If they reflect on who they are and who they want to be as teachers, they will automatically drift towards that and they will ask you, 'How can I look at my practice in this sense? What is a good way of doing that?' If we tell them what to do from the start, it's top down. It's as if they're going back into teacher training and they're being told what to do, rather than asking and becoming curious. We should develop curious teachers who would want to ask about what they're doing.

Will this lead to the development of the skills needed to satisfy that curiosity?

It may. But again, who's calling the shots on language teacher research? The teacher or the academic? What if the teacher doesn't want to do that? I would say that's OK.

You seem to be implying that the academics we spoke about earlier are imposing their agenda on teachers and straightjacketing them into a particular approach to research.

They're co-opting it. Let me give you an example. The action research cycle is very popular in the UK and other places. Action research is fine, but it's problem-based. Not all teaching is problem-based. The teacher as a human being is nowhere in the cycle. It's like everything is out there. You have a problem in your class that you want to fix. But it's like the academic and the teacher are looking at a problem somewhere over there. It's like watching TV. Where's the teacher? And who is deciding it's a problem in the first place? What evidence is there of the problem? They're going through the cycle of action research but the values are divorced from the methods. It's all methodological. It's outside the teacher. Who benefits really?

This interview is being published in a journal produced by a teacher association. What is the role of teacher associations in trying to foster the attitudes and skills needed to engage in this broadened conception of research?

I think a teacher association should develop curiosity within its members. It should devise talks, workshops, and events that develop this curiosity and encourage teachers to talk to each other about what they do. By means of reflective practice, teachers can be guided to develop a language to explain what they do. A lot of teachers can't explain what they do. A teacher association should develop a sense of curiosity in teachers that can lead either to a change of practices or an affirmation of current practices. But it cannot be research that is outside the teachers; that is, research outside the person who is doing the research.

Thomas S. C. Farrell is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. His professional interests include reflective practice and language teacher education and development. He has published widely in academic journals and has presented at major conferences worldwide on these topics. A selection of his work can be found on his webpage: **www.reflectiveinquiry.ca**

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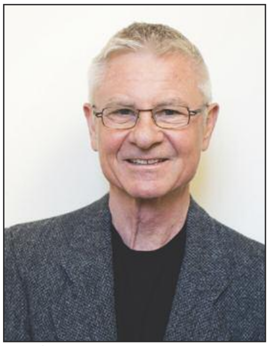
Supporting teacher research in English Language Teaching

Teacher research in second language education

DAVID NUNAN

In this short article, I want to explore some fundamental questions about teacher research, an aspect of professional practice that is undergoing something of a renaissance as exemplified, for instance, by The International Festival of Teacher-Research in ELT (**https://trfestival.wordpress.com/**). Questions dealt with in this article include:



What is teacher research? In what sense does it count as ‘research’ and how does it articulate with other types of research? What are the similarities and differences between teacher research, classroom research, and action research? How can teacher research be carried out?

Teacher research

The term teacher research is ambiguous. It can refer to research carried out *on* teachers by academic researchers, or to research carried out *by* teachers. Edited collections of studies involving teacher research often include both types of research (see, for example, Bailey & Nunan, 1996). The second sense is the more usual one, and is the one to which I will adhere in this article. Teacher research can be carried out by individual teachers investigating teaching and learning in their own context, or it can be collaborative with groups of teachers studying aspects of pedagogy across a number of contexts and classrooms. Although teacher research tends to focus on the classroom, teachers can also investigate issues that transcend the classroom. Language learning beyond the classroom (Benson & Reinders, 2011; Nunan & Richards, 2015), teacher identity (Barkhuizen, 2017) and parent-school partnerships (Linse, 2005) are all examples of issues that have been investigated by teachers (and academic researchers, of course) where the research is carried out beyond the classroom.

Conducting research

Before proceeding directly to teacher research, I need to define what I mean by ‘research’. In a (much) earlier publication, I suggested that research was a systematic process of inquiry involving formulating a question or questions, the collecting of data that have relevant bearing on the question(s), the analysis and interpretation of the data, and the publication of the outcome (Nunan, 1992). ‘Publishing’ means making the process public. There are many ways that this can be done. It could be relatively formal, such as publishing an account in a teachers’ journal, or relatively informal such as posting a blog account, or telling colleagues about the experience.

> *“Teacher research can be carried out by individual teachers investigating teaching and learning in their own context, or it can be collaborative with groups of teachers studying aspects of pedagogy across a number of contexts and classrooms. Although teacher research tends to focus on the classroom, teachers can also investigate issues that transcend the classroom.”*

Let me expand on the key issues of formulating questions and collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. In order to do so, I am going to distinguish between two traditions in research: the psychometric and the naturalistic. In psychometric research, questions come first: they’re the pivot on which the entire research enterprise revolves. When I was doing my doctorate – a classically conceived formal experiment – my supervisor would not allow me to even think about collecting data until I had formulated my questions to a degree of precision that satisfied him. This took me six frustrating months. In naturalistic research, the questions may remain a vague prospect, often emerging with any clarity towards the end of the project: and they may interact with the data, morphing out of all recognition in the course of the research process. (It is sometimes said that psychometric research involves questions in search of data, while naturalistic research involves data in search of a question.)

Gregory Bateson (1972), the anthropologist and linguist, described data as records of objects or events. He warns against confusing the record with the thing being recorded:

> “data” are not events or objects but always records or descriptions or memories of events or objects. Always there is a transformation or recoding of the raw event which intervenes between the scientist and the object (Bateson, 1972, p. 4).

Records of events only become data when they are used for the purpose of research, that is, when they are subjected to analysis and interpretation and linked in to the existing literature on the subject at hand. Recently, with a colleague, Julie Choi, I was observing classes in an elementary school in Vietnam as part of the evaluation of an innovated blended learning program in that country. During the lesson, the teacher scribbled notes on the board. Julie and I took little notice of the notes at the time. However, later, when viewing videotapes and still photos of the lesson, Julie pointed out the potential significance of the notes as records of the translanguaging practices (Garcia & Wei, 2014) that were a significant feature of classroom language use in the school. It was only at that point that the notes scribbled on the board became potential data in the research.

Different kinds of data

Data come in many different forms. In teacher research, they can include numerical data such as student test scores, frequency counts (an example of which is provided below), audio- and videotaped lessons or lesson fragments, transcripts of lessons, teacher-student and student-student interactions, teacher and student journals, interview and questionnaire responses, samples of student talk or written work, photographs, lesson plans, seating chart observation records – the list is almost endless. (For a detailed description of these and other types of data, see Nunan & Bailey, 2009, p. 16).

Earlier in this piece, I used the adjectives ‘psychometric and ‘naturalistic’ to distinguish between the two research traditions or paradigms about which much has been written. The more commonly used terms for the traditions are ‘quantitative’ and ‘qualitative’. However, strictly speaking, these terms refer to types of data, so it is better, when talking about traditions, to use the terms ‘psychometric/experimental’ and ‘naturalistic’ to avoid ambiguity. Quantitative data are numerical and convey meaning indirectly, while qualitative data convey meaning directly through texts and visuals such as photos, moving images, diagrams and so on.

I am not going to say much more about the psychometric tradition as I don’t believe that it is useful for teacher research. Setting up a formal experiment and guarding against threats to reliability and validity is a complex undertaking and all too often the results have little to say about the realities of the intact

classrooms in which teachers work. In the rest of this piece, I will therefore restrict my focus to naturalistic inquiry and the collection, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data.

Naturalistic inquiry

Naturalistic inquiry has a number of characteristics that contrast it with psychometric research. While the latter involves the selection and assignment of subjects to control and experimental groups which are subjected to different interventions, naturalistic teacher research is conducted with groups that come together for the purposes of instruction. The teacher-researcher strives to be non-interventionist, and relies primarily on observation rather than measurement. (An exception is action research, which I will discuss later in the article.) Methods include case studies, journal studies, ethnography, and conversation analysis, and the data are primarily qualitative.

In fact, most qualitative data can be quantified. The following table, for example, is taken from a piece of collaborative teacher research in which the four teachers involved in the research were exploring the effect of different classroom question types (in this case, display versus referential questions) on the quality of students' responses. Having audio recorded their lessons, they made a summary of the number of referential, display and pseudo-referential questions. (These terms are glossed in the following coding key.)

D = display questions: the teacher knows the answer to the question, and poses it, not to obtain information, but to get students to display their content knowledge or mastery of a linguistic form.

R = referential questions: the teacher does not know the answer to the question.

PR = pseudo-referential question: the question looks as though it's a request for information, but the teacher actually has a predetermined answer in mind.

Teacher	D	R	PD
1	12	5	10
2	20	0	0
3	18	0	8
4	15	2	5

Analysis and interpretation

Once the data are collected, the researcher has to make sense of them through analysis and interpretation: terms that are sometimes mentioned in the same breath as though they are more or less synonymous. In some kinds of research, they do tend to blend together, and in others, in the reporting of the research, they can be woven together.

Analysis is the process of identifying patterns and regularities in data. The common practice of identifying instances of a particular kind of behavior and recording these as frequency counts in tables such as the one above is a typical example of a piece of analysis. This data condensation has a number of advantages: it reduces the sheer volume of the material you have to work with, and it facilitates the process of identifying patterns in the data, in addition to suggesting possible relationships between the variables being coded – in the above case question types, and the quality of student responses. McCarthy and Walsh (2003) and Walsh (2006), for example, have suggested that increasing the number of referential questions prompts learners to give more complex responses, and engage in interactions that are more typical of authentic interactions outside the classroom.

In contrast with analysis, interpretation has to do with determining what the data mean. This necessarily involves going beyond the data and even entering the realms of the speculative, the imaginative, even the poetic. The researcher is probing for significance (in a non-statistical sense).

Why do teacher research?

Adding a research dimension to our teaching can be extremely hard work. So why should we bother? There are many subtle and not-so-subtle answers to this question, but most come down to two: "I really need to know what's going on here in order to satisfy my curiosity and deepen my understanding of my classroom", and "I really need to know what's going on here so that I can make the world a better place (or, less loftily) solve problems in my classroom, teach more effectively, and achieve better outcomes for my students." Wanting to understand and wanting to help are not mutually exclusive, and in most cases needing to understand is a necessary precursor to wanting to help.

Action research

In the rest of this article, I want to describe an approach that has been very popular (and also controversial) in teacher research. This is action research. (For an excellent introduction to collaborative action research for language teachers, see Burns, 1999.) Before describing and exemplifying the approach, let me clarify three terms that are often used interchangeably: classroom research, teacher research, and action research.

'Classroom research' identifies where the research takes place, and it can be carried out by teachers or others. 'Teacher research' identifies who does the research. As already mentioned, it can be carried out inside or outside the classroom. 'Action research' refers to a procedure or method of inquiry, and in educational contexts, it can be carried out by teachers or other professionals, such as school counselors or educational psychologists interested in investigating aspects of their own practice.

In order to exemplify the nature of action research and what's involved in doing it, here is a narrative adapted from my teaching diary of an action research study that I carried out in one of my classrooms shortly after I started teaching undergraduate students at a university in Hong Kong.

It was my second semester at my new school, and I realized that things weren't working out the way I wanted. It was a speaking skills class, but my students just wouldn't open their mouths. The first semester had been the same. At that time I had thought it was just a matter of my adjusting to a new teaching context. Now I knew it was something more serious. I decided to audiotape my classes over several days. The recording confirmed my initial impression. The tape was filled with the sound of my voice, punctuated by prolonged silences and the occasional monosyllabic student response. I consulted colleagues who said that it was a "cultural thing".

"So why have they enrolled in the class?" I asked.
"Well, they have no choice. Anyway, it isn't as if they don't want to be able to speak – it's a cultural thing. They want the magic language pill," said one colleague.
"Hmm – don't we all?" I thought.

So there was my challenge – and my dilemma: how to get my Cantonese-speaking Hong Kong students to speak English. After further thought and discussion, I decided to

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> *change the dynamics of the classroom, focusing more overtly on group work, and encouraging students to speak through split information tasks [information gap tasks] in which the students had to speak English if the task was to be completed successfully. [They were free to use their L1 when negotiating the task, clarifying vocabulary etc., but the task outcome had to be presented in English.]*
>
> *I also tried to encourage students to redefine their own concept of what a classroom was (heretofore a place where the students sat silently while the teacher talked) by encouraging them to "break the rules". On one desperate occasion, I asked a group of reluctant speakers to stand up and move about the classroom as they completed their task. Amazingly, once they had been liberated from their seats, they began to talk.*
>
> *I made audio and video recordings of my class which I reviewed from time to time and was gratified to find a dramatic increase in the amount of student speech. However, I also noticed that the distribution of turns was uneven. Not all students were taking advantage of the opportunity to talk.*
>
> *The new awareness led me into a second investigative cycle, focusing this time on the reluctant speakers in the class. I decided that these students were having difficulty redefining their roles and concluded that if I added a learning strategy dimension with a focus on learning roles and responsibilities, it might help sensitize them to this very different type of classroom* (Nunan, in Bailey, Curtis, & Nunan, 2001, p. 134).

This vignette illustrates several key characteristics of action research. The research begins with a question, problem, or puzzle. It is initiated by a teacher who is interested in improving an aspect of (in this instance) his own practice. The teacher, not an outside researcher, controls the process. While this example doesn't involve the collaboration of other teachers, it does involve collaboration with and involvement by the learners. It is relatively small scale, and 'doable' within a context in which teaching and learning are the primary foci. The procedure shares some characteristics of both psychometric and naturalistic research. As with psychometric research, the teacher pre-specifies the focus of the research (student reluctance to speak in the target language) and plans an intervention (changing the dynamics of the classroom).

Unlike psychometric research, but consistent with naturalistic research, the teacher is working with a group of students who have come together for instructional rather than research purposes. While partially successful, on reflection, the teacher decides on a second intervention (adding learner strategy training), and implements a second round of research.

> *"The research begins with a question, problem, or puzzle. It is initiated by a teacher who is interested in improving an aspect of (in this instance) his own practice. The teacher, not an outside researcher, controls the process."*

The steps in the action research process are as follows:

1. Identify a problem or puzzle.
2. Think of a possible solution.
3. Decide on an intervention.
4. Collect some data so you have a baseline for comparison.
5. Implement the intervention.
6. Collect post-intervention data and compare it with the baseline data.
7. Reflect on the process and decide on whether to implement a second round of research.
8. Share your experience with others. Publishing, i.e., 'going public', opens up your research to scrutiny and comment by others, and fulfills one of the defining criteria for research. It is this final step that differentiates action research from reflective teaching.

Concluding thoughts

Action research is not the only procedure for doing teacher research. However, space precludes me from providing detailed examples of other types. Action research provides a clearly articulated procedure for improving practice. This has the advantage of giving guidance to teachers new to the research process. However, this can also be constraining. A more open-ended and speculative approach would be to ask not "How can I improve learning outcomes in my classroom?" but "What's going on in my classroom?" or "What are my learners' experiences in my classroom?" These questions could be explored through teacher and student reflective journals kept over a semester or a term. Once you, the teacher, have decided that you would like to add a research dimension to your practice, it is up to you to decide how to proceed. (For a range of other examples and models, I recommend the excellent collection of articles edited by Crandall & Christison, 2016).

> *"Action research provides a clearly articulated procedure for improving practice. This has the advantage of giving guidance to teachers new to the research process."*

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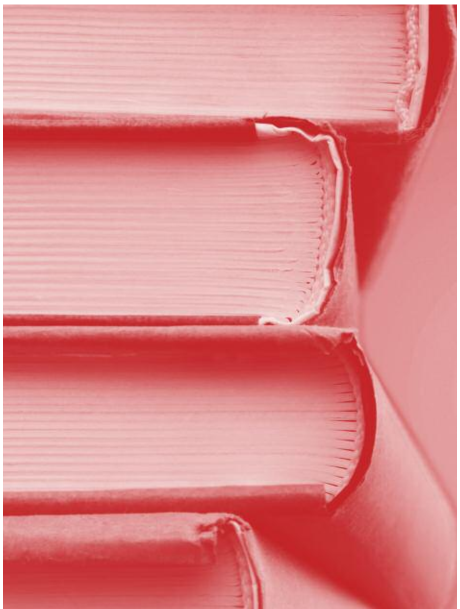

Helping language teachers to produce 'quality' research

MARK WYATT

It is widely accepted that teacher research does not need to be at all academic and indeed can be shared in non-academic ways. However, whether or not such research should nevertheless fulfil 'quality' criteria is a contentious issue. This article introduces the different arguments. It then takes three reflective questions that might be used constructively by teacher-research-mentors to stimulate quality research practices and explores with examples how they might be employed. The article concludes that sensitive mentoring encouraging quality research practices can lead to an empowering teacher research experience.

Introduction

In our field, 'quality' can be a loaded term in discussions of teacher research, which has been defined by Borg (2010a) as:

> systematic inquiry, qualitative and/or quantitative, conducted by teachers in their own professional contexts, individually or collaboratively (with other teachers and/or external collaborators), which aims to enhance teachers' understandings of some aspect of their work, is made public, has the potential to contribute to better quality teaching and learning in individual classrooms, and which may also inform institutional improvement and educational policy more broadly (p. 395).

Borg (2010b) has also argued that the quality of teacher research can be enhanced if teacher-researchers ask themselves the following questions:

- Is the purpose of the research clear?
- Have research methods been appropriately chosen and justified?
- Have data been collected and analyzed in a technically competent manner?
- Does the work make some kind of contribution to knowledge, with potential implications for practice?
- Is the research ethical?
- Does the researcher adopt a critical stance?
- Is the research reported in a manner that is coherent? (p. 12)

Borg (2013) presents his ideas about teacher research, collected from different articles in book form. In his review of this volume, Smith (2015) complains of Borg seeking to maintain "the status quo (the primacy of outside expertise) by making the promotion of [teacher research] seem dependent on academic standards of rigour, quality, publication, and contribution to the field" (p. 208). In Smith's (2015) view:

> few things [are] more likely to discourage the majority of teachers from engaging in [teacher research] in a sustained fashion than the spread of…a misconception—that teachers' existing views of research are 'wrong', that academic norms must apply to [teacher research], and that [teacher research] is only 'research' if judged to be so by outside, academic experts (p. 208).

This claim of misapplying academic standards is one Borg (2016) vigorously denies. Responding to Smith (2015), Borg (2016) emphasizes he agrees that for teacher research "to be a productive activity it needs to be localized, feasible, and meaningful… and that a model of teacher research that mirrors academic research is not appropriate" (pp. 119-120). However, he also defends his position that quality is important by arguing that if we are "to call an activity 'research' it must retain some basic characteristics associated with this activity" (Borg, 2016, p. 120). The challenge therefore, from his perspective, is to help would-be teacher-researchers to develop 'quality' research practices.

In this brief article, I consider how Borg's (2010b) 'quality' criteria can be drawn upon by mentors of teacher research working with teacher-researchers in different contexts so that the research these teacher-researchers then produce is more likely to be 'localized, feasible, and meaningful' and not necessarily 'academic' (Borg, 2016). The next sections of the article are organized around the first three of the questions designed to stimulate reflection (Borg, 2010b, p. 12) introduced above. In making points about supporting 'quality' teacher research, I refer to anonymized examples from my own experiences of mentoring teacher-researchers. I then offer a brief conclusion, which relates to the sharing of teacher research, an issue on which Smith (2015) and Borg (2016) are in some agreement.

Is the purpose of the research clear?

"I have a research question", the teacher planning teacher research told me with a smile: "What is the best way for children to learn English?"

Research starts with a question, ideally a "clear, specific, answerable" one, which is worth investigating (Borg, 2010b, p. 9). If the initial question is too large, teacher-researchers are likely to need help in narrowing it down. In response to the sample question above, for example, I (the mentor) may have asked:

> *Which children are we talking about?*
> *How old are they?*
> *What have you noticed about their learning?*
> *What kinds of activities do you think they benefit from?*
> *Why do you think they benefit from such activities?*

"… sensitive mentoring encouraging quality research practices can lead to an empowering teacher research experience."

I may thus have been inviting the teacher to reflect on prior classroom observation and puzzle about the learners' learning in their context. The teacher's responses, together with my own beliefs, knowledge and experience, would then have shaped what happened next.

Let us suppose, for example, the teacher replied by saying: *"I think they learn best when they are feeling relaxed"* (a viewpoint I happen to share). This could have led into some discussion of the affective filter, of ways of helping learners feel relaxed, of ways of observing them to see if they appear relaxed and of ways of exploring whether a relaxed mindset appears to influence their learning behaviour in the classroom.

Alternatively, though, the teacher might have replied by saying: *"I think they learn best by reading aloud around the classroom"* (a viewpoint with which I have much less sympathy). I might have asked the teacher what evidence from classroom experience they had of this or whether this view was based on their own learning experience or on something they had heard or read.

In both cases, I might have recommended targeted background reading, though not necessarily the development of a full literature review. I would also have urged reflection and mind-mapping to help narrow down the precise research question. These are several of the most basic strategies available to support teachers in developing purposeful research.

Have research methods been appropriately chosen and justified?

"I plan to distribute 50 surveys and then conduct semi-structured interviews with these 50 participants", a teacher planning research on an assessed course once told me, in all apparent seriousness.

"… common misconceptions about research include the notion that it needs to be based on statistics and should therefore be large-scale. One consequence of this misconception is that case studies of a few individuals are too often little-regarded."

Unfortunately, as Borg (2010b) highlights, common misconceptions about research include the notion that it needs to be based on statistics and should therefore be large-scale. One consequence of this misconception is that case studies of a few individuals are too often little-regarded. Accordingly, researchers who have conducted such studies are sometimes then encouraged to adopt an apologetic tone when discussing their qualitative case study research methodology.

But big is not always beautiful. Carefully constructed questionnaire studies may well of course achieve greater statistical reliability with a larger sample size; the quantification may be more robust. However, the value of using semi-structured interviews lies mostly in their potential to provide in-depth insights. It is the *quality* of the knowledge co-constructed through the semi-structured interview that counts (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), not necessarily the number of the interviews at all (although there can be advantages to interviewing the same respondent more than once). The selection of research methods needs to be based on clear research goals, therefore, and an understanding of how each proposed method may contribute or not to the study; they all have weaknesses as well as strengths.

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If the teacher above had wanted to elicit qualitative data from all participants who completed surveys, then an appropriate way in which to do this might have been to add an open-ended ‘why?’ question to the otherwise quantitative items. Answers to this open-ended question could then perhaps have been subjected to content analysis. To call all participants back for an interview, though, as this teacher proposed doing, seemed difficult, time-consuming and likely to provide an unrealistically vast amount of data to analyse. A point of data saturation would soon be reached and I warned that the whole endeavour might be so time-consuming that all his fellows would have long since graduated by the time he was ready to submit his study to be graded. Before making a decision, I asked him to read about research methods and reflect further.

Have data been collected and analysed in a technically competent manner?

The questionnaire I had been sent by email for ‘a professional opinion’ was from a doctoral candidate in another country, an action researcher who described himself as ‘a big fan’ of my work; the questionnaire contained a lengthy introduction including many low frequency words explaining concepts; this was followed by 50 items all in exactly the same Likert scale format (statement: strongly disagree – strongly agree); it was aimed at second language teachers.

Designing effective questionnaires requires technical competence, as Borg (2010b) reminds us. In the above case, the questionnaire seemed flawed by containing too much language too many of the intended respondents (teachers not university academics) might not have understood; it was also lengthy and apparently monotonous, which might have led to some respondents feeling fatigued while completing it and becoming careless. At least, though, it was just a draft. ‘Professional opinions’ were being sought, and these might have led to significant changes. And then, of course, before being used with the intended sample, it may have been piloted with a trusted few and then revised.

Teacher-researchers developing research instruments such as questionnaires can benefit greatly from guidance and peer support. There are many ways of eliciting quantitative data through questionnaires; for example, as Bell (2010) explains, ranking questions, Likert scale items, lists to select from, and grids that elicit answers to multiple questions are some of the devices that can be used. Care needs to be taken in how questions are framed, as Bell (2010) also explains. Unfortunately, questions that are ambiguous, lead the respondent towards a particular answer, are potentially offensive or hypothetical are all too common in first drafts. Explicit advice, piloting, and peer feedback (and this applies to the design of interview and observation protocols too) can all reduce the risk of the final product being technically incompetent (and therefore as likely to do harm as good).

Technical competence also relates to the process of data collection, not just the design of instruments. Quality criteria identified by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) for the interview, for example, include “the extent of spontaneous, rich, specific, and relevant answers from the interviewee” (p. 164). Such discourse is more likely not only if the interviewer has established rapport and is well-prepared but is also able to skilfully ask thoughtful follow-up questions inviting the interviewee to offer clarification where required or build on their responses.

Technical competence is also required in analysing the data, using whichever tools are most appropriate for this while continually questioning, probing, exploring relationships within the data. It is also required in writing up and in all the decisions that relate to making the research accessible, relevant and interesting to the intended audience. Accordingly, many teacher-researchers may require research skills development, through processes such as targeted workshops, mentoring and scaffolding.

Of course, much more than *technical* competence is required, though, for research to be considered competently produced, as Borg (2010b) also explains. Teacher research, like all research, needs to be deeply ethical, which implies an appropriate moral stance as well as competence in ensuring that safeguards designed to protect participants are in place. Also essential is a critical stance, which implies continual self-questioning, which is a process that can be supported by mentoring practices centred on modelling and the use of Socratic questioning techniques.

The sharing of teacher research

Another of Borg’s (2010b, p. 10) ‘quality’ criteria is that “the work make some kind of contribution to knowledge, with potential implications for practice”, a criterion implying sharing that he explains can be met in various ways. While the teacher research in question could possibly be making a theoretical or methodological contribution, it is most likely to be contributing to our understanding of an issue that has been previously researched but in another context. The hitherto under-researched context in which the teacher research is being conducted therefore needs to be described clearly, with the knowledge generated in such a case likely to be in the form of fresh insights regarding the issue or a confirmation of previous findings from elsewhere extended to the new context.

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It is this nuanced understanding of the teacher-researcher’s contribution to knowledge that tends to be most under-appreciated by critics of teacher research, as Borg (2013) highlights. In the view of some academics, teacher research that does not make a strong theoretical or methodological contribution or does not approach an issue in a highly innovative way has limited value. However, if local answers to local issues are being provided, then surely the research has value to the local educational community. And if engagement in the research is intrinsically empowering, then surely it has considerable value to the self, particularly given, as Smith (2015) highlights, that an important

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dimension to teacher research is that it can become an essential part of teaching and thus of a teacher’s identity. And if the research, once shared, is picked up by other researchers conducting meta-analyses for example (as argued in Wyatt, Burns, & Hanks, 2016), then it may have value to the academic world.

How teacher research is shared is also important. This does not mean through formal academic channels, as Borg (2016) emphasizes; indeed, he argues that “the kind of poster presentation events Smith has organized through IATEFL’s Research SIG are a good example of how the public sharing of teacher research can be achieved” (p. 120). Presenting research orally can be sufficient in itself. However, it can also be written up in non-academic and very accessible ways, as Bullock and Smith (2015), for example, highlight, in introducing an edited volume that provides a platform for teacher-researchers to report on poster presentations from an IATEFL Research SIG event. When teacher research is shared in print, it should not be imitating academic research, as Smith (2015) argues forcefully. One way in which this can be achieved is to request from teacher-researchers contributing to edited volumes such as Burns, Dikilita , Smith and Wyatt (2017) much more context description and much less literature review. As Smith (2015) suggests, this allows teachers’ expertise to come to the fore. It also provides the kind of rich description that facilitates understanding in other contexts.

Conclusions

For good ‘quality’ teacher research to be produced and shared, reflective self-questioning is crucial (Borg, 2010b). So is mentoring, as is highlighted above. Indeed, Smith (2015) argues that “it takes time, taster experience on a teacher’s part, and patient scaffolding from, ideally, a near-peer mentor for [teachers] to understand that [teacher research] can be a particularly empowering form of professional development” (p. 207). Fortunately, with increasingly wider accessibility to teacher research online and in print, the benefits of such effort are becoming more evident.

> *“…an important dimension to teacher research is that it can become an essential part of teaching and thus of a teacher’s identity.”*

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Professional Development Day 2017 Snapshots

Developing teacher research competence: Simpler than you think, more necessary than you realise

ACHILLEAS KOSTOULAS

In a recent article, entitled *The (ir)relevance of academic research for the language teacher*, Péter Medgyes (2017) decries the unwarranted eagerness of academics to provide assistance to teaching professionals, which he likens to a situation where an overzealous young man forcibly helps a senior gentleman across a street, despite the latter's protests that he does not want to cross it. My intention in this article is to problematize this line of thinking, and to explore what alternatives are available to teachers who wish to make sense of their professional experience, if the incursions of academic researchers are unhelpful or unwanted.

In defence of the empirical

The underlying premise of this article is that, while teachers are (only) "paid to get students to learn" rather than to engage in academic knowledge construction (Freeman, 1988, p. 14), effective teaching cannot dispense with empirically-based knowledge. To do so would amount to accepting (legitimising even!) the fossilisation of the profession in conservative practices, derived from our collective experience, reproduced through the 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lotrie, 1975), and never questioned.

It is, of course, hard to dismiss the frustration, of at least some teachers, over research findings that seem trivial or irrelevant to day-to-day teaching. It is even harder to argue against with the scepticism about research findings that have "frequently been touted as underlying truths, which would be reliable if only applied properly, or if only one could learn to iron out unfortunate human idiosyncrasies" (Edge, 2011, p. 80).

But rather than entirely dismiss the empirical as a source of professional knowledge, I think we need to consider whether these criticisms are directed towards the *wrong* kind of research. In the most straightforward sense, this relates to the quality of some published literature. The pressure on academics to publish, coupled with the increasing ease of publication, has meant that the scholarly record is saturated with lots of questionable studies, and these are of very little value to language teaching and learning. But the proliferation of mediocre research does not detract from the quality of the better studies.

In a different sense, there may be issues connected to the scope of research that is used to inform the profession. Academic research in linguistics, second language acquisition and educational psychology aims to make general claims about language and language learning, not to produce guidance for specific classrooms. For instance, a considerable corpus of studies has demonstrated that extensive reading is helpful in fostering language learning (Paran, 2017). However, for this insight to become useful to teachers, one needs to answer questions like, *"How much extensive reading is required, under what condition, and with what kind of scaffolding?"*, and more. Such questions are too situation-specific, and can best be answered with small-scale narrowly focused inquiry, which is rarely deemed publication worthy.

> *"Research literacy refers to the teachers' ability to use the scholarly record in sensible ways. It involves the ability to locate relevant information, the ability to subject this evidence to critical scrutiny, and the ability to synthesise it into a useful working theory."*

The answer to both problems, I argue, involves developing the teachers' research competence. I define this as consisting of two components, drawing on Borg (2009). The first is research literacy, which involves the ability to locate relevant research, appraise it in relation to one's specific teaching needs and to judiciously apply it to one's professional context. The second component is research experience, which I define as engagement with classroom-based inquiry. Together, they constitute an important aspect of teachers' overall competence (alongside subject knowledge and pedagogical competence), because they allow teachers to develop an understanding of best practice that is both empirically grounded and personally relevant.

Developing research literacy

Research literacy refers to the teachers' ability to use the scholarly record in sensible ways. It involves the ability to locate relevant information, the ability to subject this evidence to critical scrutiny, and the ability to synthesise it into a useful working theory. Put differently, it involves "a willingness to engage with research in order to assess its utility and ripeness for adaptation to context" (Waring & Evans, 2015, p. 18).

Locating information

Finding potentially useful research is a deceptively straightforward task, made easier by the functionality and power of internet search engines. However, a word of caution is necessary: not all sources of information are equal, and the most readily accessible information is not always the most authoritative. One particular source of concern is the prevalence of predatory journals, which contaminate the scholarly record by publishing poor research in exchange for publication fees. Distinguishing between legitimate and predatory publications is not always easy. One step might involve consulting lists such as the Directory of Open Access Journals (**www.doaj.org**), which lists journals known to pass certain quality criteria, or cached versions of the now-defunct Beall's list (**http://bealslist.weebly.com**), a directory of known predatory publishers. Research repository services, such as **academia.edu** and **ResearchGate** (**https://www.researchgate.net/**), can also be valuable sources of information, as long as one carefully distinguishes between copies of published research and 'grey literature', such as drafts, working papers, and research that did not make the cut.

Another potential problem, which teachers interested in research should be aware of, relates to the use of 'proxy' sources. The amount of information online has made it relatively easy to find multiple references to seminal work, which is useful if the original is physically or linguistically inaccessible. However, when using such secondary sources, one risks forming a distorted view of the original source. To name just one example, Carol Dweck has pointed out that the distinction she helped to establish between 'fixed' and 'growth' mindsets (Dweck, 2006) is often misinterpreted by researchers who conflate a growth mindset and effort, or perpetuate a misguided self-esteem perspective (Dweck, 2015). Consulting the original sources may not always be easy to justify in terms of efficiency; however, it is usually a sensible thing to do, especially when confronted with surprising recommendations that claim to be research based.

Thinking critically

The second aspect of research literacy is the ability to critically evaluate the claims put forward in research publications. This does not only mean being alert for factual inaccuracies or calculation errors (of which, some readers may be shocked to learn, there are a few in the literature), but also being cautious about how findings are interpreted.

A starting point for such a critical appraisal is to reflect on the transparency and trustworthiness of any study, bearing in mind the adage that *extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence*. In quantitative educational research, most studies make claims on the strength of findings that

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pass the five percent threshold of statistical significance, which roughly means that we can have 95% confidence in the findings. When reading such studies, it is important to remember that this is rather weak evidence (Wasserstein & Lazar, 2016), and in fact a disconcertingly high proportion of published research has tended to resist replication, suggesting that they may report on false positives. In qualitative research, one also needs to be alert for instances where researchers neglect to explain how they selected their case(s) or the quotations they report, which could potentially suggest selective presentation of data.

In practical terms, teachers looking for guidance in research need to consider questions like the following: Was the data collection process sensible? Has every step of the research process been explained clearly enough? Are there any inconsistencies between the questions that are being addressed and the process that was used to answer them? The limitations of the study, which are usually described at the end of research reports, should also be taken into account. Perhaps most importantly, any study should be treated with caution, unless the findings overlap with what other studies have already established, because *a single study proves nothing*, however spectacular its findings.

Connecting research evidence with practice

A final aspect of research literacy involves the ability to relate research findings to one's professional life. In the previous paragraph, I mentioned the need to critically examine whether any particular finding is plausible. What I am describing here is taking this process one step further by interrogating *what difference does it make to my teaching if this finding is true?*

To illustrate by means of an example: in a recent plenary at the IATEFL Conference, Sarah Mercer (2017) cited Hattie (2008), who claimed that relationships are more important than motivation in predicting learning effect. This is certainly useful to know, but if we want to be more than passive recipients of Hattie's findings, the claim should trigger questions like: *“if this is true, what kind of relationships might it mean?”, “How can such relationships be fostered?”, “To what extent is it our responsibility to build and sustain these relationships, and to what extent is it up to the students?”*, and so on.

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Not least, we need to be conscious of the political implications of the research findings, especially when they seem to shift the onus for success from the school system to individual teachers and learners. These are questions that academics do not generally concern themselves with, because research is about expanding the horizon of what is known, not dictating courses of action. But if, as educators, we are serious about retaining control of our professional lives, examining the implications of each possibility must remain the prerogative of the teacher.

Developing research experience

The second component of research competence is experience of doing research. By this, I primarily mean classroom-based inquiry, examples of which could include Action Research (Burns, 2005), Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2003), and Lesson Study (Lewis, Perry & Murata, 2006). Setting aside particularities associated with each approach, the characteristics of classroom-based inquiry are (a) systematic engagement with the realities of school life, which (b) aims to question established ways of doing things, (c) with a view to improving outcomes for teachers and learners.

Why bother with classroom-based inquiry?

Although developing the ability to research one's professional context seems to lie outside the sphere of responsibilities traditionally associated with teaching, there are at least two compelling arguments to do so, one practical and one political.

First of all, the types of insights that are reported in the professional and academic literatures are usually presented at a level of abstraction that makes them generalizable enough to appeal to a wide audience. However, this can only happen at the expense of specificity and practicality. In the preceding paragraphs, I mentioned two examples of insights derived from academic research, which could potentially be useful in informing teaching: the value of extensive reading, and the importance of relationships. In both cases, I noted that applying these insights to teaching practice presupposes answering a range of practical questions. I am now taking this line of thinking one step further: the answers to these questions can be derived empirically, by investigating what works best in specific classrooms.

A second argument for developing researcher competence connects to the limitations of teacher training. In many teacher education programmes, professional knowledge is usually disseminated by “knowledge-brokers”, who “choose, summarize, and convey research findings to teachers” (Anwaruddin, 2015, p. 6). This creates a risk of disempowering the teaching professionals, who are relegated to a role of passive consumers of information. Developing the teachers' ability to actively participate in knowledge construction therefore seems imperative in order to counteract this danger.

But can it be done?

For many academics, and perhaps a few teachers as well, research is an activity best left to experts, and this belief may discourage classroom-based inquiry. Because of this, it seems useful to dispel a number of misconceptions about the kind of research activity that I am describing. One such unhelpful assumption is that the kind of knowledge generated by classroom-based inquiry is too trivial to be of value. This is a false assumption for two reasons. Firstly, classroom-based research projects produce the kind of specific information that is particular to a teaching and learning situation, and is not always available in the literature (e.g., What type of activities does a specific student enjoy? How effective is a certain research method for a specific group of learners?). Secondly, classroom-based research produces findings with a high degree of pedagogical utility. Unlike academic research, which primarily aspires to improving understanding, classroom-based research mainly aims at improving practice.

> *“… if, as educators, we are serious about retaining control of our professional lives, examining the implications of each possibility must remain the prerogative of the teacher.”*

A second unhelpful assumption is that teachers do not have the knowledge or expertise that is necessary to produce quality research. It is true that some research reports can appear daunting if they are heavily annotated with references to unfamiliar literature. But what is important to remember is that teachers already have the kind of contextual knowledge that is invaluable to informing a classroom-based research project: familiarity with the students, awareness of formal rules and unspoken conventions of their class and school, insider perspectives on the micro-cultures in which they are embedded, and more. This kind of situated knowledge is more relevant to classroom-based inquiry in that it helps to produce findings that are firmly grounded in the reality of the context where they were produced.

> *“… rather than dismiss research entirely, it may be more beneficial for teachers to engage with it in purposeful ways, by developing their researcher competence.”*

The last unhelpful assumption about classroom-based research is that it places unrealistic demands on the teachers’ limited time and on the schools’ dwindling resources. This would certainly be true if research were conducted as an add-on to the teachers’ responsibilities. However, this need not be the case, since most of the activities associated with classroom-based research can be integrated with existing teaching routines. For instance, a teacher interested in finding out about their learners’ preferred learning strategies need not conduct a questionnaire-based survey: one might ask them to write a list of learning tips as part of classwork, and use their output as data. Similarly, the ‘data analysis’ overlaps with the kind of ‘reflection-on-action’ (Schön, 1987) with which teachers regularly engage, and while it may be a somewhat more structured process, it is not necessarily a more time-intensive one.

Concluding remarks

The starting point of this article was that the relevance of research to teaching practice is not always immediately obvious. However, rather than dismiss research entirely, it may be more beneficial for teachers to engage with it in purposeful ways, by developing their researcher competence. This, I argued, involves developing research literacy skills, which are helpful in locating, appraising and using insights from the academic literature, as well as developing research experience, which involves engaging in classroom-based inquiries. I also argued that developing such competence is much more feasible than is sometimes thought.

But ultimately, the question that needs to be answered is: “Will research competence make us better teachers?” I firmly believe that it can: firstly, because it can help to judiciously drive the profession forward, and secondly because it allows us to view the constant turnover of fashionable fads with principled scepticism. Even if this did not lead to improved practice, developing as researching teachers is still important as it unsettles the unhelpful perception of teachers as reluctant consumers of academic knowledge that is handed to them top-down. This kind of empowerment is requisite for a humanistic, democratic education.

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The centrality of story in teacher inquiry

GARY BARKHUIZEN

Since stories are such a central part of our professional lives and are always available and accessible, it makes sense to use them productively to better understand what it is we do as teachers and what our learners do as learners. Narrative inquiry is an approach to research that uses stories as a means to find out about these experiences. In this article, I briefly describe what story is. I then present four core dimensions of narrative inquiry, and conclude by summarising some of the claims made about the value of narrative inquiry approaches to investigating language teaching and learning. Suggestions for teacher research practice are included in the article.

Introduction

As teachers we tell stories all the time – *all the time*. We talk about what happened in class, we tell stories about difficult students or those who have done something amazing, we gossip about other teachers, and we complain about workload and the implementation of a new curriculum. We also *hear* stories, constantly, those told by our teacher colleagues, by administrators, and by our students. Stories surround us and our work. We live and work in the midst of these stories. These stories tell about our lived experiences, our ideas, our emotions, and about our imaginings of events and desires in other places and future times.

In this article, I argue that since these stories are such a central part of our professional lives and are always available and accessible, it makes sense to use them productively to better understand what it is we do as teachers and what our learners do as learners. Using stories to study a phenomenon is not something new in teacher inquiry for professional development. Advocates of exploratory practice (Allwright & Hanks, 2009), teacher research (Borg, 2013), action research (Burns, 2009), and teacher reflection (Farrell, 2015) have all recommended examining stories in one way or another to investigate matters relevant to language teaching and learning. The branch of qualitative research that has as its primary concern the stories people tell of their life experiences is called narrative inquiry. The aim of narrative inquiry in language teaching is to understand the meaning teachers make of their lived (as well as imagined) experiences. In other words, it is about using stories to explore our understandings of what we do. The events of our teaching lives (e.g., what happened in a particular class) are in the past, and exactly what happened cannot be captured (in any kind of research). The best we can do is to take a look at how we experience those events – how we make sense of them. One way to do this is to elicit stories about the events and then to analyse those stories to see what was said and what meaning was made about what happened. The word 'narrative' is often taken to mean the spoken, written, or multimodal articulation of those experiences; i.e., the stories' representation in oral, written, and/or visual form.

> *“Since stories are such a central part of our professional lives and are always available and accessible, it makes sense to use them productively to better understand what it is we do as teachers and what our learners do as learners. Narrative inquiry is an approach to research that uses stories as a means to find out about these experiences.”*

Exactly how narrative inquiry is done has no simple answer. There is no one right way and no formula. This, of course, can be confusing and disheartening to some, but I like to argue instead that it can be quite liberating for teacher inquirers. We can shed the fears of getting the inquiry process wrong. Many of the methods for collecting and analysing narrative data are similar to or the same as those associated with qualitative research generally. However, in narrative inquiry, story is central. Narrative inquiry is all about story. Next, I briefly describe what story is (and that question also has no easy answer). I then present four core dimensions of narrative inquiry which, for me, help to break through the complexity of narrative approaches to inquiry as a whole. I conclude by summarising some of the claims made about the value of narrative inquiry approaches to investigating language teaching and learning.

Scattered throughout the article are eight suggestions regarding the practice of narrative inquiry for and by language teachers. In a short article such as this one, it is impossible to provide a comprehensive overview of narrative methods appropriate for exploring one's language teaching. However, as I have said above, many of these methods can be found in discussions of action research and exploratory practice for teachers. A useful introductory text for those wishing to investigate narrative inquiry further is Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik (2014).

> *“The aim of narrative inquiry in language teaching is to understand the meaning teachers make of their lived (as well as imagined) experiences. In other words, it is about using stories to explore our understandings of what we do.”*

Suggestion #1: Read Barkhuizen, Benson and Chik (2014).

What is story?

Stories in narrative inquiry come in many different shapes and sizes. Researchers have varying ideas about what a story or a narrative is, and the way they work with narratives – how they are collected and how they are analysed and interpreted – reflects these differences. The differences also represent their disciplinary perspectives. For example, the famous sociolinguist, William Labov (1997), required certain elements to be present in the telling of a past event for it to count as a narrative: elements such as an orientation or background to the story, some complicating action, evaluative commentary by the narrator on that action, and some sort of resolution. His work, which was based on interviews during which narrators were asked to tell a story about a past experience, had sociolinguistic aims (e.g., the sound of New York speech, the structure of stories) rather than being concerned with what the stories were actually about.

Suggestion #2: Before starting your first narrative inquiry have a discussion with a teacher colleague about what a story is. You could also ask your learners, and this way might get different cultural perspectives on story.

Others too have focused on the form of narrative, but their stories don't necessarily have the familiar elements specified by Labov. In fact, they hardly 'look like' stories at all. *Small story* analysis (Georgakopoulou, 2015) examines how stories are (co-)constructed in interaction (mainly spoken conversations, and more recently stories in other mediums such as written Facebook posts). Stories here are merely snippets of talk that don't have any pre-defined narrative structure. *Big stories* are the larger or longer (auto)biographical accounts of our lives often recounted in multiple interviews, a series of journal entries, or a lengthy memoir. The research focus of big stories is really to find out what they are about – what happened in the lives of those who tell them. The focus is more on their *content*, in other words, than their *form* (see Barkhuizen, 2011).

In my view, stories have the following characteristics:

1. They narrate experiences from the past or the imagined future. They tell about something that happened or will happen in the life of the person telling the story.
2. They include reflective or evaluative commentary on those experiences – comments which portray emotions and beliefs associated with the experiences.
3. They typically have a temporal dimension. In other words, something happens over a period of time – very much like a plot.
4. They embody 'action'. Something happens in the story. There is action.
5. This action takes place in a social context. The context always includes micro levels (relating intimately to the immediate situation of the narrator; e.g., teachers' actions, emotions and cognitions in their classrooms), meso levels (moving outwards into institutions and communities), and macro levels (taking into account socio-political issues and debates; e.g., in teacher education, language-in-education policy, curriculum development, and often at the level of the region or state, such as ministries of education and governments).
6. Stories always make reference, implicitly or explicitly, to *who* was involved in the story (characters in the story world), *when* the action took place (time), and *where* it happened (place and space).

Suggestion #3: When analysing stories, always ask these questions (see Barkhuizen, 2016): *Who are the characters in the story, including the narrator, and how do they relate to each other? In what places and spaces (physical and social) does the action of the story take place? In what historical and future times are the narrator's experiences located?* Finally, *how do time, place and characters interconnect with each other?*

7. And, simply, stories look like stories. We are all familiar with stories, so we have a feel for what a story is (e.g., there's a beginning, a middle, and an end), and usually these feelings are right!

Suggestion #4: When you collect data, use the characteristics of story above to check whether you have collected any data which could be classified as a story.

Core dimensions of narrative inquiry

By 'core dimensions' I mean basic features of narrative inquiry that can be distinguished in terms of methodological practices. As such, their focus is more on the processes of data collection and analysis than on theoretical or epistemological underpinnings of narrative inquiry. These features lie along four continua, to which I regularly refer in order to (re)orientate my thinking about what it is I am doing as a narrative inquirer.

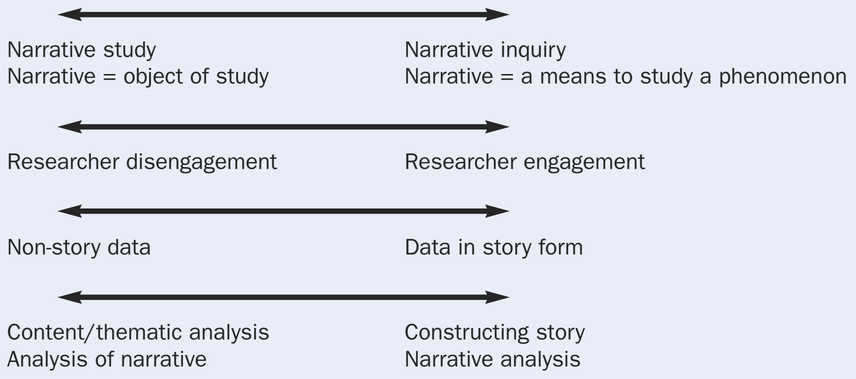
Suggestion #5: When planning a narrative inquiry project, try to figure out approximately where on each continuum the methodological processes of your project lie.

The first continuum (see **Figure 1**) makes a distinction between those methods of narrative analysis that focus more on the form of narrative and those that focus more on what the narratives are about. The former (towards the left side of the continuum) are concerned with studying narratives to find out what their linguistic and organisational structure is. In other words, narratives are the object of study, typically the work of (socio)linguists. The latter are concerned with the content of narratives; that is, using narrative as a means to explore what happened in the stories. Remember, this is a continuum, and so there will always be some elements of one approach within the other, the amount of overlap depending on where along the continuum the particular approach lies.

Suggestion #6: Do not attempt to remain distant from the data you collect and analyse. Include yourself as the inquirer as much as possible in the research process.

The third continuum refers to the type of data that narrative inquirers collect and analyse. Sometimes the data comes in the form of a story (see above); for example, a teacher writes a story in a journal or on an online blog, or tells a story in response to an interview question. At other times, narrative inquirers collect data which does not have the characteristics of a story, yet nevertheless includes content that tells of teaching experiences and may even include reflective comments on those experiences. One option with such data is for the inquirer to turn it into a story – so, constructing a story from the original non-story data. This process is shown on the right side of continuum four. Polkinghorne (1995) makes a distinction between two major kinds of narrative analysis. What he calls 'narrative analysis' is the process of constructing stories from a set of data, such as notes from classroom observations, teacher reflections, and responses from a student survey.

Figure 1: Core dimensions of narrative inquiry



Narrative study Narrative = object of study	Narrative inquiry Narrative = a means to study a phenomenon
Researcher disengagement	Researcher engagement
Non-story data	Data in story form
Content/thematic analysis Analysis of narrative	Constructing story Narrative analysis

On the extreme left side of the second continuum we have a situation where the researcher is neither engaged with the lived experiences of the participants nor the action of the research process (perhaps aiming for some sort of 'objectivity'). Quite simply, this is not narrative inquiry. Narrative inquirers are intimately involved in the lives of the research participants. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) say, they do their inquiry work in the midst of the ongoing action. It is from this vantage point where thorough insights into the participants' meaning making (understanding their experiences) are gained. Since this is the case, when a teacher is inquiring into his or her own practices, such as in action research or exploratory practice, it becomes clear that narrative inquiry is a favourable candidate for a research approach.

> *"... narrative inquiry is reflective inquiry. Through constructing, sharing, analysing and interpreting teaching stories, we reflect on our own practice and articulate our interpretations of this practice. Constructing and thinking about stories in this way, therefore, involves both introspection and interrogation. And the consequence of this is meaning making; in other words, making sense or gaining an understanding of our teaching knowledge and practice."*

Constructing a story is itself a process of analysis, but the story product could undergo further analysis. As with the original data, constructed stories could be analysed thematically (the left side of continuum four); that is, the inquirer codes the content of the stories for themes, which could then be divided into sub-themes and/or grouped together into meaningful categories. This latter process, Polkinghorne (1995) refers to 'analysis of narrative' (see also Barkhuizen, Benson, & Chik, 2014).

> *"When we articulate and interpret the stories of our practice we develop our personal practical knowledge to the extent that we act in the future with insight and foresight."*

Suggestion #7: If you are going to construct stories (written, spoken, multimodal) for your narrative project, use the characteristics of story above to guide your composition.

The value of narrative inquiry

To conclude, I highlight some claims about the value of narrative inquiry for teachers. I hope that these will convince you to search for or construct stories in your professional inquiry practice and to examine these in order to learn more about what it is that you do – in the classroom, with your learners and teaching colleagues, in your schools and beyond. The first claim is that narrative inquiry is reflective inquiry. Through constructing, sharing, analysing and interpreting teaching stories, we reflect on our own practice and articulate our interpretations of this practice. Constructing and thinking about stories in this way, therefore, involves both introspection and interrogation. And the consequence of this is meaning making; in other words, making sense or gaining an understanding of our teaching knowledge and practice.

The result of this deeper understanding is change; change within self and our practice. Johnson and Golombek (2002) make this point, saying, "inquiry into experience...can be educative if it enables us to reflect on our actions and then act with foresight" (p. 4). When we articulate and interpret the stories of our practice we develop our personal practical knowledge to the extent that we act in the future with insight and foresight.

Suggestion #8: In planning a narrative inquiry project, think ahead to what the implications of your project might be – for you, your students, and your school.

This is not always easy to do, of course. Any teaching situation is a complex, dynamic arrangement of many factors. In constructing and interpreting stories we bring many of these together, and in reflecting on and analysing the stories there exists the potential for us, therefore, to see the whole picture. So, as opposed to focusing on only one or two isolated variables in a particular context, stories reveal the interrelationships of many, and the process of making sense of the stories means unravelling this complexity.

A final reminder and an important final claim is that narrative inquiry is contextualized inquiry, which involves teachers exploring the numerous aspects of their particular, local contexts such as the needs of their students, the teaching resources and facilities available, the institutional and community culture, existing curricular, assessment and language policies, as well as the macro socio-political context in which the teaching and learning take place. We can only make sense of our teaching and our students' learning if we take into account the full picture, the whole story.

> *"... narrative inquiry is contextualized inquiry, which involves teachers exploring the numerous aspects of their particular, local contexts such as the needs of their students, the teaching resources and facilities available, the institutional and community culture, existing curricular, assessment and language policies, as well as the macro socio-political context in which the teaching and learning take place. We can only make sense of our teaching and our students' learning if we take into account the full picture, the whole story."*

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Engaging in enquiry: Tracing the trajectory of a research project

HANNA BROOKIE AND CYNTHIA WHITE

Interesting moments and dilemmas in the classroom can trigger questionings and reflections, which, if given time, can engage the teacher in a process of enquiry and research. This article reflects on one such enquiry and how it developed into a project that was beneficial for the researcher, participants and wider professional community.

Introduction

How do we learn about research? How do we identify research problems? How do we identify ways of enquiring into those problems? How do we deal with problems and contingencies that arise? Who is the audience for our research? How do we make our findings available to different audiences and communities? In this article we want to address some of these questions by tracing and reflecting on critical moments in the trajectory of a research project in which we were both involved: the first author as the teacher-researcher and the second as the supervisor-researcher. The specific contingencies that arose during this project make it an interesting site to examine engaging in enquiry.

Here we aim to offer a "behind the scenes" look at teacher research: we move between the more traditional description of the research process, and reflections on those stages, and on what guided the focus of the enquiry at particular points and ultimately the overall trajectory of the project. So we emphasise the dynamic, emergent nature of research showing how it shapes enquiry alongside the theories, frameworks, principles, and best practices that inform our field. The "I" voice here is that of the teacher-researcher, highlighting decisions and dilemmas which shaped the course of the research. The article concludes with some observations on the value of teacher research.

Identifying the research problem: Navigating cultural conflict and dissonance in the classroom

The focus of this research was on how English language teachers of immigrants and refugees in New Zealand navigate cultural conflict and dissonance in the classroom (Brookie, 2016). It was driven by one teacher's interest and need, and very much situated in the immediate teaching context. Below we see how the teacher-researcher brings together both a real-world issue and a significant gap in the published research literature to identify the research problem. Bringing the research problem into focus at this stage took place over several months and involved not only reading, discussion and reflection, but also on-going consideration of what was feasible in terms of time frames, access to participants and participant engagement. The research problem was framed after reflections on teachers' roles and accountabilities along with difficult classroom moments and choices, and after consulting relevant literature.

> *“I had found that the most valuable teaching opportunities often came as a result of cultural conflicts or dissonance in the classroom – incidents where differences were exposed, sometimes through painful experiences, and sometimes through low-key tensions between values and perceptions.”*

Reflections on role and accountabilities

In my practice as a teacher of English for migrants and refugees in an employment-focused class in New Zealand, I had found culture to be a crucial aspect. As a facilitator of work readiness, I felt it was paramount that I exposed my learners to the target culture and helped them make sense of this and of what cultural practices may be considered acceptable in their new context. Further, as a teacher and mentor of learners who often had a history of marginalisation and who highly valued their cultural identity, I also found it important to assist them in the deeply critical process of redefining themselves in light of new sets of values, while also impacting and evaluating the new cultural spaces they encountered in New Zealand.

> *“Interesting moments and dilemmas in the classroom can trigger questionings and reflections, which, if given time, can engage the teacher in a process of enquiry and research.”*

Reflections on classroom moments

I had found that the most valuable teaching opportunities often came as a result of cultural conflicts or dissonance in the classroom – incidents where differences were exposed, sometimes through painful experiences, and sometimes through low-key tensions between values and perceptions. In the multicultural migrant classroom, conflicts can often be very immediate, and potentially productive. However, not all instances of conflict or dissonance can be solved productively, and when incidents escalate into open conflict they can result not only in disruptions to classwork, but can also lead to a sense of disempowerment and failure for the teacher.

Reflections on choices teachers face

The multicultural migrant second language classroom by its very nature has the potential to force cultural issues to the forefront, a point also identified in the literature (see Dytynyshyn & Collins, 2012; Kramsch, 1993; Li & Girvan, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2009). Within their specific contexts, teachers have several choices when faced with cultural conflict, or an instance of perceptible cultural dissonance, depending on their knowledge, assumptions and beliefs (Woods, 1996) regarding culture and its place in second language teaching. They may choose to ignore it, capitalize on it, or incorporate the issues in later lessons. Their approaches may focus on acculturation, on understanding the learners' cultures or on intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997). The extent to which teachers perceive this conflict or dissonance and what choices they make in relation to it became the subject of this study.

Reviewing the literature

An initial review of the literature enabled me to identify the areas of research that most closely aligned with the identified research problem, namely the role of culture in language acquisition and the concept of teacher cognition. This initial review showed that there was little research dealing with how teacher cognition affects teachers' choices around intercultural competence teaching and responses to cultural incidents in the classroom.

Reviewing literature and selecting the best framework for the study is a complex and time-consuming activity, involving a process of wide reading and unravelling threads of research to explore them in-depth, and ultimately selecting some of these threads as relevant to your own particular perspective, while discarding others. In the present study, several alternative frameworks could have been used – such as teacher agency, conflict resolution, critical teaching – but ultimately I chose a fairly broad framework, drawing on three main areas of literature: the role of intercultural competence in language teaching and learning; the concept of teacher cognition; and how teacher cognition has been used to research approaches to culture teaching in the classroom. As a novice researcher investigating a fairly un-explored area, I was able to be more flexible and open in my interpretation, without too much restriction from theoretical frameworks, with the help of this broad framework.

The study addressed three main research questions:

1. How are cultural conflict and dissonance in the classroom interpreted and responded to by teachers as and when they occur?
2. How do teachers reflect on and evaluate cultural conflict and dissonance and how does this reflection impact on teacher identity?
3. How, and to what extent, do teachers structure teaching on cultural issues and to what extent do these approaches reflect earlier unplanned episodes?

Developing the research methodology

When developing the research methodology, it is important to not only consider how to elicit or create useful data, but also to take into account the possible effects and benefits for participants in the research. To enable participants to directly benefit from the research process, I developed a methodology that was narrative and reflective in nature, and could therefore, potentially, assist participants in reflecting on their own practice. Three avenues for reflection were included: written narratives in the form of narrative frames (Barkhuizen & Wette, 2008), spoken narratives during one-on-one interviews, and narratives presented as part of a focus group.

By choosing to begin with written narratives, I was able to address another primary concern relating to participant involvement: minimising negative effects, by allowing participants to select and manage potentially sensitive narratives and remain in charge of their disclosures (especially important given the potential sensitivities of the research mentioned below). The narrative frames used in this study were designed to elicit description and reflection on unplanned incidents and planned practice, in a way that was intended to reveal the underlying beliefs, assumptions and knowledge of the participants, along with the cognitive processes employed in dealing with cultural issues and conflicts. Each frame was designed to be written as a paragraph, with the help of sentence starters. The written narratives were followed up by interviews, based on the information selected for disclosure in the first phase, and analysed in conjunction with this to form the basis for individual case studies.

> *“When developing the research methodology, it is important to not only consider how to elicit or create useful data, but also to take into account the possible effects and benefits for participants in the research.”*

The focus group was designed as a one-off session involving three participants and two facilitators, and was primarily intended to create an interactional setting for the discussion of culture in the classroom and to illustrate reflective processes. The focus group included three scripted scenarios of cultural conflict and/or dissonance in the classroom, and a discussion of possible short and long term responses and solutions. This was expected to assist in discovering how formal or informal teacher conversations may assist in the reflective processes, and also in the formulation of beliefs, attitudes and practices. A focus question regarding training and professional development in relation to cultural conflict was also included.

A further stage, an assessment of the research process using an evaluation questionnaire, was also added, to inform me, as a novice researcher, about the usefulness of my methodology from the participants' point of view.

Ethical dilemmas

Despite the careful design of methodology, the data gathering process was significantly complicated by the fact that I was conducting my research at several local institutions, including my own workplace. I had chosen this local context not only for the sake of accessibility, but primarily for the sake of immediate relevance, as the enquiry was driven by a very personal interest and need – I wanted to explore the closest possible context.

Despite a full research proposal, complete with relevant literature and a carefully-developed methodology, the university's human ethics committee declined my application on grounds of potential conflicts of interest, especially as the area of research was deemed potentially sensitive. After much negotiation, the issues were resolved by employing a third party, an experienced researcher, in the data-gathering phases. This researcher conducted the interviews and the focus group and assisted with the distribution and collection of narrative frames. Data was transcribed and anonymised before being submitted and analysed to protect the identities of participants.

Paradoxically, this meant that selecting the most immediate context actually removed me further from the research process and participants, as I became a step removed from the creation and primary analysis of data, especially in the interviews and focus group. It also added several additional interpretative layers to the narrative data (Riessman, 1993) as data was co-created by participants and my co-researcher, and then reinterpreted as part of the transcription process, before I commenced my own interpretation of the (not-so) raw data. Thus, though I initially aimed for an active, participatory researcher identity, where I was part of the co-creation of data in a collegial setting, ethical constraints meant that my role became that of uninvolved observer and analyser, a researcher identity that I was much less comfortable with.

> *“Making research available whether in presentations or publications is a valuable process that involves challenges to both identity and practice. It is not only an important way of communicating findings to communities of scholars, colleagues, teachers and researchers, but also a way of extending further one's professional skills and engagement in other communities of enquiry.”*

Ethical considerations also affected the way I was able to finally present the data. I had initially intended to use a case-study approach where each participant was presented individually, but after initial case-study analysis, data was grouped thematically. This was done in order to further protect the identities of the participants especially as I wanted to present the research to local audiences.

Summarising the findings and making research available

Making research available whether in presentations or publications is a valuable process that involves challenges to both identity and practice. It is not only an important way of communicating findings to communities of scholars, colleagues, teachers and researchers, but also a way of extending further one's professional skills and engagement in other communities of enquiry.

Going further into the processes of making your research available – whether in poster presentations, talks, or published papers – is beyond the scope of this article but we can offer some key reflections. Self-doubt can strike at many stages of these processes and it is important to have colleagues or mentors to talk things through with, to see issues in perspective and to gain insights into the broader complexities of making your research available, and ways of negotiating those complexities. This applies too to getting feedback on your work – whether in the form of questions, comments or reviewers' comments. Learning about these processes has a strong affective dimension as well as developing specific expertise and competencies; such learning is crucial to developing a scholarly identity (see Ding & Bruce, 2017).

I chose to make my research available primarily through local and national conference presentations organised by TESOLANZ (the professional organisation for ESL teachers in New Zealand), with the local conference being easily accessible to the research participants. At both of these events, I presented the key findings that I felt were most relevant to the teacher audience, covering theoretical aspects but allowing

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sufficient room for presenting participant narratives and approaches. The approaches covered participants' inclusion of culture, cultural integration, and cross-cultural awareness into the classroom, as well as the purposeful creation of an accepting and respectful classroom atmosphere. Narratives focused on how low-level cultural dissonance was acknowledged and to some extent capitalized on to facilitate cultural integration and intercultural awareness in the classroom, and how cultural conflict – interpreted by participants as potentially threatening incidents – was managed contingently and reflected on after the event. Using a reflective, narrative focus in both the research methodology and in the presentations to the professional community appears to have made the study accessible and relatable to other teachers; attendees at both events related to the narratives and were keen to share their own stories, echoing the findings regarding the need for training and professional development.

Concluding perspectives: What the experience meant for the teacher participants

The final questionnaire was included in the research project specifically to ensure that the research process had benefited the participants, and results from this were encouraging. Participants stated that they appreciated the opportunity to reflect further on their teaching practices and to talk with other professionals. Two of the participants felt that an important aspect of the research process had been "the realisation that issues around cultural conflict are neglected in training" and "how professional developing and support from colleagues is vital in maintaining integrity and good professional practice in what is sometimes a very stressful work environment".

These participants both felt encouraged and prompted to seek further professional development around cultural issues. The benefits of the research process itself as a form of professional development was also highlighted: "this was a real opportunity to reflect on [cultural issues] explicitly and critically." One of the participants, who started the research process with a somewhat unresolved incident of conflict, felt that the research process had helped her find alternative ways to deal with similar situations in the future.

This project began as a very personal enquiry for the teacher-researcher's own benefit, but then changed to take on broader considerations, including the benefit to the participants and the wider professional community. The trajectory of the project also has a future focus in that it has been extended to refugee classrooms in Sweden drawing on the teacher-researcher's identity, with a similar concern to ensure that engaging in enquiry has the maximum possible benefit for all participants.

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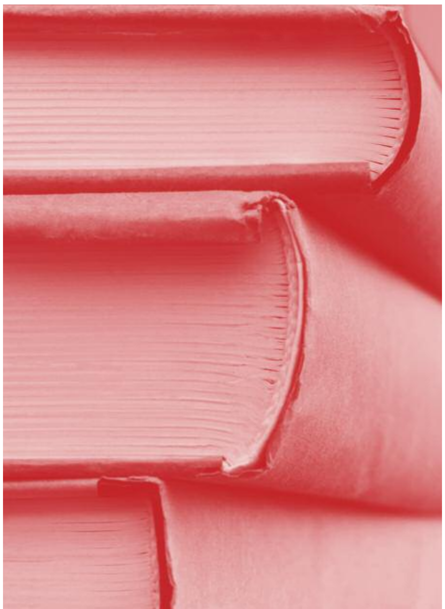

'We can also be researchers': Teacher research in initial English language teacher education

DARÍO LUIS BANEGAS

Teacher research literacy can be promoted through formal education as part of undergraduate or pre-service teacher education programmes. The aim of this article is to describe how research modules are included in a programme in southern Argentina and evaluate their impact through examination of student-teachers' and a tutor's perceptions.

Introduction

When the word *research* appears in educational discourse, it usually inspires at least two divergent views. One view promoted by academics and teacher educators is that teacher research is a way of empowering teachers to create knowledge through a critical and context-responsive attitude. The other view, common among teachers, is that research is for researchers and other educators based at universities. Aware of such differing perceptions, Borg (2013) has noted that teacher research engagement is still heterogeneous among practitioners. Often cited reasons for little teacher research engagement are lack of time and lack of knowledge and support to carry out research. Despite these apparent drawbacks, and marginal role of teacher research among teachers' activities, there have been recent publications which discuss teacher-researcher identity (Xerri, 2017), together with concerted efforts to promote and support teacher research through international undertakings (Borg & Sanchez, 2015; Burns, Dikilita , Smith, & Wyatt, 2017; Burns, Westmacott, & Hidalgo Ferrer, 2016).

Teacher research in IELTE

Argentina, the wider context of this article, has a long tradition of research in ELT as discussed in Porto, Montemayor-Borsinger and López-Barrios (2016). A number of publications (Coelho Liberali, 2016; Villacañas de Castro, 2015; Yan, 2016) offer accounts of student-teachers' engagement in research by becoming part of collaborative action research projects. Such engagement needs to be supported through student-teachers' education in research if they are to be empowered as professionals. ELT research starts in university undergraduate programmes and continues into the postgraduate programmes such as MA and PhD studies. However, universities are not the only institutions that are engaged in research. Tertiary institutions in Argentina are also officially recognised to offer initial/pre-service teacher education programmes. Not only do they work to educate future teachers in one specific subject (e.g., English, Geography, History, or Spanish), but they are also required to promote teachers' continuing professional development as well as teacher research. In some cases, initial teacher education and teacher research are merged in order to maximise resources and increase synergy among educational actors and institutions. In the context of this landscape, this article examines the inclusion of teacher research initiatives in an initial English Language Teacher Educational (IELTE) programme in southern Argentina and reflects on their impact on teachers' professional development.

With reference to Argentina, all pre-service teacher education programmes must be four years long and each province in the country has the autonomy to develop their curricula based on nationally agreed guidelines. In the province of Chubut, a new initial English Language Teacher Education (IELTE) curriculum was designed in 2014 (Banegas, 2014; 2016) and implemented as from 2015. In addition to the modules designed and with the aim of promoting teacher research literacy, ministerial authorities and teacher educators agreed to develop two mandatory modules: (1) Educational Research, and (2) Research in ELT. What follows is a brief description of both modules.

Educational Research is a module delivered in Spanish, the L1 in the context of this experience, by two tutors: a teacher educator with knowledge and experience in research, and a teacher educator with experience in academic writing. The module seeks to introduce student-teachers to basic epistemological concepts and to provide them with theoretical and practical tools to design a research project and carry it out within the scope of one academic year. Together with introductory concepts to research, student-teachers also develop their L1 academic reading and writing skills. The module has the format of an extended workshop rather than lectures because the student-teachers learn about, for example, quantitative research or action research, as they draft their projects. In other words, they learn to do research by doing research.

The topics and fieldwork are carried out in the student-teachers' practicum experiences or in their own experiences as students in higher education. Student-teachers' projects are usually framed as descriptive-exploratory based on participants' perceptions or content analysis of materials, for example, coursebooks, and may examine areas such as materials development, lesson planning, adult student motivation, peer teaching, and inclusive education, among others. At the end of the academic year, the institution organises a one-day conference where the student-teachers from the different pre-service teacher education programmes present their findings.

On the other hand, Research in ELT is an English-medium module delivered by a teacher of English with experience in research and writing for publication. The aim of the module is to help student-teachers refine their knowledge of research acquired in Educational Research and concentrate on research issues which emerge from the processes of teaching and learning English in primary and secondary education, as well as in their own learning in the IELTE programme. Although the module is supposed to be delivered through weekly two-hour lessons for a whole academic year, face-to-face lessons are reduced during the second term so that the focus is on student-teachers' projects and their own dynamics for meeting and drafting their reports.

Student-teachers are encouraged to work in small groups and embark on a follow-up study based on the project they do in the previous module. However, in this module they receive further training on classroom research, action research, case studies, and qualitative research with a particular focus on interviews, observations, and thematic analysis. See list illustrating some of the key readings in the module at the end of this article. It includes international books as well as conference proceedings from ELT conferences in Argentina. The reading list also includes articles from professional journals (e.g., *AJAL*, *ELT Journal*, *LACLIL Journal*, *Profile Journal*) selected according to the student-teachers' research projects.*

This module proves to be more challenging as the reports the student-teachers are expected to produce have to be written in English with an international audience in mind.

Opportunities and challenges

I teach the Research in ELT module and module evaluation is part of my responsibilities not only as a tutor but also as the programme coordinator. In the paragraphs that follow I condense the student-teachers' voices, collected through group discussions and written questionnaires throughout the academic year, as well as my own, mainly based on my professional diary.

Without intending to be a rigorous thematic analysis, **Table 1** condenses the student-teachers' perceptions on the impact of the module in terms of opportunities and challenges.

Table 1: Student-teachers' perceptions

	Category	Extracts
Opportunities	Content and language learning	*I learn a lot of vocabulary and examples of reported speech together with research.* *Through research it's like we're integrating what we've learnt in other modules like Didactics or Grammar.*
	Expanding teacher identity	*I don't know if I'll be able to do research once I get my first teaching post, but this module has shown me that we can also be researchers.* *Teaching is whatever happens in the classroom, and out too. I feel like we are developing other areas of the teaching profession and we can choose where we want to go.*
	Collaborative work	*We've learnt a lot together – working with other peers, with experienced teachers, and with students in the practicum. This is learning with others for real.*
	Reflection	*Because we have data, and because there are others working with us, the research helped me reflect on what I was doing and be able to swallow my pride and accept criticism or feedback. I am more critical and more reflective now. It's not easy but it pays off.*
Challenges	Academic writing	*Everything goes relatively OK until you need to write. That's when we panic because we need to think, organise our ideas, use structures and words we're not used to using, and write in English.* *You feel you haven't learnt anything. It's like learning a new type of English. Even in Spanish it's difficult for me.*
	Time constraints	*We could have done something better if we had had more time. But then there's always something that slows us down. And we have the constant pressure of submitting the report.*

The student-teachers' perceptions and assessment of the research module bears resemblances with those perceptions reflected in my own journal as the module tutor. **Table 2** summarises the constant concerns and topics contained in my journal entries.

Table 2: Tutor's perceptions

	Category	Extracts
Opportunities	Learning through English	*We're doing CLIL [Content and Language Integrated Learning] or EMI [English-medium Instruction] here! They [student-teachers] are learning new content while developing their academic English.*
	Sharing local	*Today I made sure that every group has a publication by somebody from Argentina to work on.* *I also have to stress that we need to be aware of the works of ELT professionals in our own country.*
	Collaborative work	*After today's students' presentations, I realised that we've been working a lot with fellow tutors and teachers based in schools. It's fantastic.*
	Situated learning	*Today we discussed the benefits of doing context-responsive research. This allows us to situate our endeavours in the here and now and be more aware of our students and our own reality.*
Challenges	Academic writing	*How can we scaffold academic writing? We've done a lot of reading and focusing on this and that, and in other modules they're working on academic writing, but they just feel intimidated by the idea of writing formally.*
	Critical thinking skills development	*What a day! It's hard to help them develop their criticality. They're used to summarising and parroting without stopping to understand or critique what they're saying.*

Both tables show that benefits appear to be more prominent than challenges in teacher research literacy through an ELT research module. Among the benefits, it is worth stressing the relevance given to learning content and language in tandem, an approach that appears to be a motivating factor not only with the student-teachers but also with the tutor. Such integration is also translated to the focus on collaboration, an asset detected by both student-teachers and tutor. Both content and language integration and collaboration signal the importance of synergistic opportunities as they help expand our experiences and knowledge. Collaboration may also be associated with reflection, either individual or collegial. Conversely, the main challenge encountered is that of academic writing. It is possible that the student-teachers' issues with critical thinking skills development is linked to their ability to write critically in English. In other words, the issue may be that the student-teachers have not developed their academic English to a proficiency level that enables them to express their critical views in writing.

Conclusion

In this article I have shared a modest account of how teacher research literacy can be promoted through initial teacher education programmes. The implementation of the modules described above is possible because they are part of a programme that has been inter-institutionally developed and is the result of higher educational policies of the Ministry of Education. In the context of this experience, teacher research literacy is a top-down decision whose implementation has been endorsed and participated in by teacher educators. Future research may concentrate on following the professional trajectories of student-teachers after graduation and examine the extent to which they engage with research.

*Module Reading List

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Supporting teachers' action research: Ten tips for educational managers

ANNE BURNS

While more is now known about supporting teacher research, there has been less emphasis on what support is needed by teachers institutionally. Essentially, institutional support relates to educational managers' roles, responsibilities, and awareness of how to encourage research by teachers. This paper aims to promote discussion of this neglected area and to alert English language managers to the important role they play in the development of quality teacher action research. To stimulate debate, this article provides ten tips that educational managers, interested in introducing action research as professional development for their teachers, can consider.

Moving towards action research

Around the world, ministries of education, educational sectors, and teacher educators are challenged, preoccupied, and puzzled by the question of how to support quality teaching and learning in English language classes. There is little doubt that while learners, their knowledge, characteristics, and motivation are at the centre of learning, the teacher is the one at the heart of opportunities for learning in the classroom (Hattie, 2003). It is therefore of vital importance that teachers receive the kind of professional development that will help them continue to strengthen their learning about their teaching and their students throughout their careers.

“While more is now known about supporting teacher research, there has been less emphasis on what support is needed by teachers institutionally. Essentially, institutional support relates to educational managers' roles, responsibilities, and awareness of how to encourage research by teachers. This paper aims to promote discussion of this neglected area and to alert English language managers to the important role they play in the development of quality teacher action research. To stimulate debate, this article provides ten tips that educational managers, interested in introducing action research as professional development for their teachers, can consider.”

Unfortunately, it is still the case that many language teachers find the professional development they are offered to be less than useful. For example, a teacher at a conference I went to in Turkey a few years ago had this to say:

> I don't think one-shot seminars are beneficial. Educational programs should be conducted in our own context. Sometimes we join one-day seminars for [an expert] or raffle only. I took a lot of notes until now. However, only very little is relevant to me… A teacher development program should be long term, interactive, and suitable for our needs.

Over many years, I have been involved in one type of professional development – action research (Burns, 2010) – that is more likely to be of the sort this teacher is referring to. This is research carried out by teachers in their own workplaces on topics or issues they have been interested in or curious about for some time. It involves cycles of planning (by preparing some kind of new approach in the classroom), acting (by putting the plan into action), observing (by collecting information/data on what happens as a result), and reflecting (by considering what has been learned along the way).

Often the first cycle of action research leads to much deeper knowledge about teaching various skills, strategies, or activities, or using new materials, and helps teachers to understand more about their students and how they learn. Teachers are then in a position to develop their research further, building on what they have discovered. Teachers I have worked with in Australia, the UK, Chile, and elsewhere usually attend a series of workshops or meetings across a school year, where they can learn about doing action research, discuss their ideas, and update each other on what they are finding out.

In my experience, these teachers have hardly ever found action research unhelpful. Most have said things like: “this was the best professional development I've ever done” and have commented on how much their skills as teachers have improved. One of the things I have noticed over the years, however, is that they don't always receive adequate support from their schools or colleges. This has led me to think about what role educational managers, principals, department heads, and others who supervise teachers (here, I refer to these institutional personnel as educational managers) need to play if they want to encourage good ‘contextualised’ professional development of this type. In my view, action research by teachers is much more likely to lead to quality teaching and learning than ‘one-shot’ seminars. In the rest of the article, I offer some tips about how educational managers can support teacher action research.

1. Create a 'research-friendly climate'

By this, I don't necessarily mean that all teachers must be forced to become researchers, but that the concept of a professional teacher as one who is interested in researching and investigating what they do should be celebrated within the institution. It may be very challenging for managers and principals to think of research as part of what teachers can do, but many teachers are natural researchers and encouraging, rather than limiting, their classroom experimentation and creativity is likely to pay off in terms of improved teaching practices and student outcomes. Moreover, if educational managers prefer to consider their teachers as professionals rather than technicians or operatives, the expectation that they will be curious and active learners of teaching needs to be part of their mindset. Managers can spread a strong message that they welcome action research by teachers.

2. Spot opportunities to research the curriculum

Encouraging a research climate is all very well, but managers can make this more concrete by actively identifying areas for action research that would help to improve the curriculum. For example, a teaching centre could be introducing new course books, or developing new forms of assessment or testing, or be concerned about students who are failing in one particular skill area. Principals can ask teachers or groups of teachers to volunteer to research an aspect of the curriculum they are interested in to discover what could support effective changes in practice. Teachers' research can provide outcomes that can more confidently be incorporated into the curriculum (Snyman, 2016).

3. Become a learner about practitioner research

Educational managers may or may not have had much exposure to language teaching research themselves, or see the relevance of research to teaching. Many managers and teachers operate with the assumption that research is "conducted by white-coated scientists plying their arcane trade in laboratories filled with mysterious equipment" (Nunan, 1992, p. 1). They may also consider that once a teacher is beyond the training stage and out in the 'real world' of teaching they should 'forget all that theory' and concentrate on what is practical and achievable in the classroom. This view of research is, however, to misunderstand the nature of action research, where outcomes related to practice, that enable teachers to develop their own "theories for practice" (Burns, 1996), are more relevant.

Educational managers can support language teacher-researchers by familiarising themselves with some of the recent literature on action research which provides overviews of what action research is or illustrates the significant understanding about teaching that action research brings about (Burns, 2010; Dikilita , 2014; Etherington & Daubney, 2017; Smith, Connelly, & Rebolledo, 2014).

4. Identify a research leader or champion

Several studies (Borg, 2013; Burns, 2000; Burton, 1992; Dikilita , 2014) have shown that teachers need knowledge and input about how to conduct action research if they are to make the transition from teacher to teacher-researcher. It is important for teachers to have access to a mentor who can provide guidance. One idea is for managers to approach local universities or teacher education institutes to encourage partnerships (see for example, Yuan & Lee, 2015). This form of collaboration can be beneficial for both teachers, who can receive expert advice from researchers, and researchers, whose research can become more grounded in teachers' concerns and realities. When research has become more established at the school, another approach is to have keen teacher-researchers mentor others by introducing them to the concepts and processes of action research (e.g., Haines, 2016).

5. Create a structured process

Action research involves a continuing, evolving process of conducting research cycles as mentioned above. So, it cannot be completed in one or two sessions but needs a longer time scale. Managers can plan for a continued series of workshops or other types of interaction where teachers can be supported by mentors and each other over the period of the research. In my experience, a framework of approximately three workshops spaced at logical and convenient intervals across the year assists teachers to maintain the momentum of the research, but also gives them time to prepare to share it through presentations, publications, or other ways.

> *"As much as possible, educational managers should ensure that teachers have the resources they need to conduct their research."*

6. Include dedicated time for research

Conducting action research requires teachers to devote additional time to their teaching. Educational managers should consider how paid time can be built into the process. One way is to use hours that would normally be allocated to teachers anyway for professional development. Another is to provide a small amount of additional time to cover teachers' attendance at workshops or preparation for research presentations. A third way is to excuse them from (parts of) administrative meetings, if information can be accessed online or in other ways, so that they can use this time to discuss and workshop their research.

> *"… if educational managers prefer to consider their teachers as professionals rather than technicians or operatives, the expectation that they will be curious and active learners of teaching needs to be part of their mindset. Managers can spread a strong message that they welcome action research by teachers."*

7. Recognise the research teachers do

Recognition by educational managers is extremely important to teacher-researchers, but it is not always routinely provided (see Edwards & Burns, 2016). Teachers gain a sense of their own agency in the classroom and empowerment in their workplaces when their research is publicly recognised by their managers. Recognition can take the form of integrative or instrumental recognition. Integrative recognition could mean actively using the research to improve programs or curricula, or encouraging other teachers to take up materials, resources or tools developed during the teacher's research. Instrumental recognition could involve acknowledging research participation in promotion procedures or providing some small additional payment on completion of the research that teachers could use to purchase personal professional resources or attend conferences.

8. Facilitate resources for research

As much as possible, educational managers should ensure that teachers have the resources they need to conduct their research. If the institution has a library or self-study centre, it may be that some of the allocated funding can be used for teacher professional development books that link theory and practice, journals that include more practical articles, or newsletters and magazines from professional associations that outline interesting areas of English language teaching that are attracting wide interest. Teachers may also need access to equipment to support their research, such as audio or video recorders, or licenses for certain technology software for student learning. Small and regular contributions from managers for these kinds of resources not only support a research culture; they also provide further recognition that action research is worthwhile.

9. Encourage the dissemination of action research

Conducting action research requires energy and commitment on the part of teachers. It is very important that once the research is completed teachers are given opportunities to share it with their colleagues and others in the institution who might be interested in the outcomes. Educational managers can identify ways for teachers to present their research at an institutional level and even beyond. At the institutional level teachers can be given time to talk about their research at staff meetings or professional development events, either informally or by making structured presentations. Alternatively, the institution could encourage teachers to produce posters (preferably professional-looking ones) that could be displayed in staff rooms, corridors or on noticeboards to provide a research 'presence'.

Some teachers might prefer to make videos that are then made available on the institution's website for colleagues to view. If the institution has an in-house newsletter or journal, teachers can be encouraged to publish written accounts of their research and managers can draw the attention of these publications to their staff. Beyond the institution, managers can provide support and encouragement for teachers to attend local or regional conferences. Some managers I've worked with have even provided their teacher-researchers resources to attend international conferences, such as IATEFL.

"It is very important that once the research is completed teachers are given opportunities to share it with their colleagues and others in the institution who might be interested in the outcomes."

10. Monitor the outcomes and benefits for the institution

One very reasonable question that educational managers might pose is: *Is action research by teachers at my institution worth the effort?* Managers can evaluate the impact of the action research on teachers by surveying them or interviewing them to get their reactions and suggestions for improvement, and to see whether they feel conducting action research is helping them to develop professionally. Another way to consider this question is to identify whether the students who have been involved in the teachers' research show improved learning outcomes, whether these be scores on tests or assessments, greater motivation and engagement, improved behaviour, or more autonomy for learning. All of these indicators should be able to tell the educational manager something about whether the teachers' research is paying off and adding to the school's success and teaching quality. One manager, whose teaching centre introduced a program of action research two years ago, recently had this to say on the question of whether action research is worth the effort:

> Our expectations have been surpassed for both teachers' professional development and the students' experience. Participants in the program say it encourages teachers to collaborate and share ideas, and connect with TESOL research and theory. Many teachers have developed their project into conference presentations, journal publications, and in-house workshops. These flow-on effects create momentum in the staff room; the effort required may be considerable, but the benefits cannot be underestimated.

Final thoughts

There has been little research in the field of English language teaching on educational managers' support for action research (see Borg, 2013 for a review of managers' responses to teacher research engagement). Recent work by Edwards (2017) has begun to shed more light on this area. This is unfortunate as it is becoming clearer that the extent to which educational managers promote, recognise, and support action research has a direct impact on teachers' sense of themselves as competent researchers and empowered teachers. Manager support is likely to become much more central to discussions of teacher action research, because, despite the spread of the 'teacher as researcher' movement in English language teaching, teachers are unlikely to take up and sustain research on their practices in conditions which discourage this kind of professional development.

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PERSPECTIVES

'Breaking boulders into pebbles': Christine Coombe on teacher research

DANIEL XERRI

Teacher research is deemed to be an important way for practitioners to develop professionally and learn more about their classroom and students. However, there exist a number of challenges that hinder teachers from engaging in research. In this interview, Christine Coombe, Past President of TESOL Arabia and TESOL International Association, discusses what role teacher associations can play in supporting teachers to do and disseminate research.

Popularity of teacher research

Over the past few years, the topic of teacher research has been given considerable attention in the literature and at international ELT conferences. How do you explain this rise in popularity?

At tertiary level institutions in my own context, which is in the Gulf region, research – or more specifically applied research – is on all the mission statements. So, because teachers are evaluated based on the mission statement and the goals pertaining to that statement, I think research is gaining importance here amongst teachers. Now, this is not actually the way I'd like to see teachers becoming interested in research. I'd rather it come just from the value of doing research, but at the end of the day I'll take what I can get. I truly feel that once they have engaged in a certain number of research projects and benefited from the many advantages that often come with that, teachers will buy more into doing research in order to inform their classes.

Definitions of research

One of the criticisms levelled at academics interested in teacher research is that they are imposing their definition of research on teachers and expecting them to do the kind of research that they want them to do.

That's true. For me, research is basically finding out something that I either have an interest in and I didn't know about before or just learning something new about my students. So, I start from that kind of capacity. I feel that if you try to impose whatever research paradigm on teachers, they will be turned off. In my own classes, where I teach undergraduate students about research, we obviously talk about the three methodological frameworks – qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods – but one of the things I feel strongly about is that you can't impose a research topic on a student. Topics have to evolve from their own interests and their own curiosity.

My policy in my research classes is that students can choose whichever methodology they want to use and they can choose whichever topic they want to research. The same holds true for teachers. It is very important that the topics evolve from their own interests with regard to teaching and learning, and from their own classes if they're going down the road of action research.

There are some people who complain that we are restricting the definition of what research is all about or what research teachers should be doing. They suggest that we should democratise and broaden the conception of research. What do you think about that?

I'm all for that because I think you don't want to pigeonhole people into one very narrow definition. There are lots of statistics showing that the typical research produced by academics is not read by many people. The latest journal article I read basically says that the average paper in an academic journal is read between seven to 15 times in its entirety. When you think about the amount of time an author spends getting their article up to the standard of top tier journals, that's not a lot of bang for your buck. I would much prefer to see a definition of research evolve through the teachers that do it and through more frequently accessed publication avenues, like teacher magazines, newsletters, and conference proceedings. I'm very proud of the number of publications that TESOL Arabia has produced, most of them of very high quality. People are citing our publications much more readily these days. Many more people read the average TESOL Arabia book than an article in a top tier journal.

Value and challenges of doing research

In your experience of working with teachers, what would you say is the value of teachers engaging in research?

Everything I do in the classroom is based on research. I think that's the value of having a doctorate or a degree from a programme that places an emphasis on research. You have an overall grounding in lots of things within your field. I feel that knowing the reason why we do something in the classroom and why it's beneficial should always be informed by research. I think teachers would much better understand their students and the various teaching methodologies that they might utilise if they were familiar with the research grounding of that particular methodology or particular approach to instruction.

At the same time though there are a number of challenges that inhibit teachers from doing research. What would you say are the most significant ones?

In my context, it's always time. It's like when we give our students a big project. Most of the time they psych themselves out. They think, "Oh I can't get started. I can't do this project because it's just so big." When teachers think about research, they don't think about the analogy of breaking boulders into pebbles. You don't have to do the whole thing in one day or one weekend. You can take 15 or 20 minutes or one hour a day and do a little bit of it. Some teachers think of research as if it's this huge project and it might very well turn out to be a huge project, but it doesn't have to be.

So, I think time is a big issue. Increasing workload demands also inhibits teachers from doing research because so much more is laid on the teacher. We're big in technology here in the UAE and although it has made our lives much easier, it has also increased the workload demand. Whereas in the past if you received a message on your phone or in your mailbox you had a day or so to respond, now if my supervisor sends me an email in the morning and I haven't answered it within the hour, he's on the phone asking whether I've received it. So, technology has helped us a lot but it has also increased our workload tenfold.

Supporting teacher-researchers

We're doing this interview at the TESOL Arabia Conference, at which you coordinated a research literacy pre-conference event. What kind of support do teachers require in order for them to develop the necessary skills to engage in research?

I think they need a step-by-step process. They need to know about some things beforehand to get them started, but they need a step-by-step process. For example, before I started working on my doctoral dissertation, I attended a two-month intensive course during the summer in which we went through all the steps, step-by-step, of how to come up with the first three chapters of a dissertation. By the end of that course, I had produced a final report consisting of three chapters of a dissertation. Making the process clear in order for teachers to know what they have to do when they do research is the first step.

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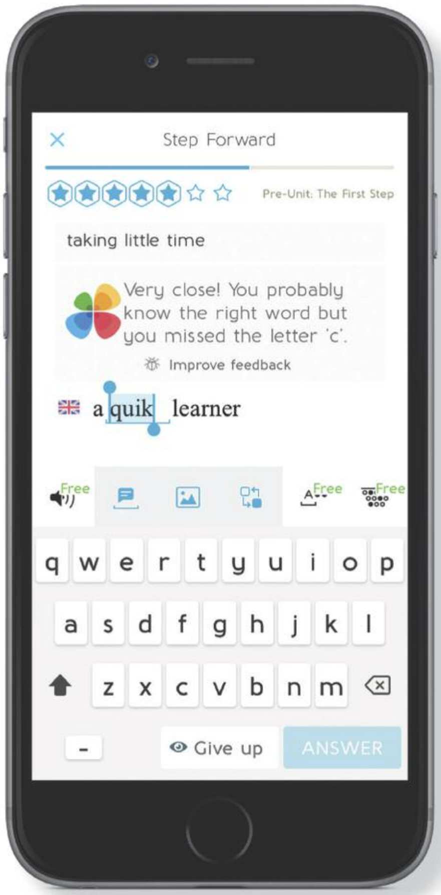
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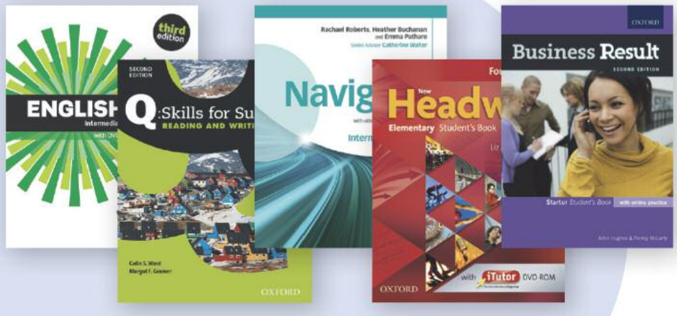
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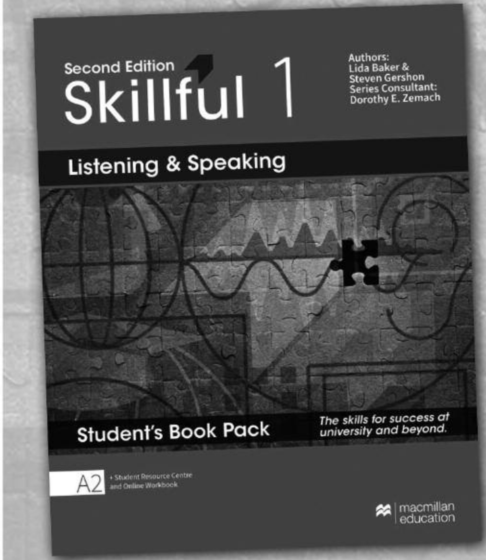

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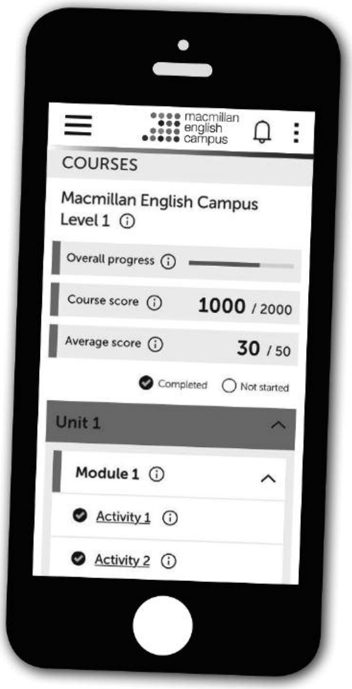

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As an association, does TESOL Arabia provide that kind of support?

We're trying to. In fact, one of the things that I'm looking into doing with a colleague is to produce a TESOL Arabia publication that will focus on how to do research. I think that's very much needed so that's currently our plan. I would have liked to see more uptake with the research literacy event, but I think part of the problem with that was that it was pre-conference. Nowadays some teachers aren't getting an extra day off to attend a pre-conference event. It's simply a question of not being able to be released from work.

Disseminating teacher research

Does the TESOL Arabia Conference act as a platform for the dissemination of teacher research?

I think it does. If you look at the 500-plus presentations that are in the programme, many of them are research-based or they are at least couched in some kind of empirical rationale. That's not a pre-requisite for having one's proposal accepted, but many people submit a research-based proposal. So, yes I do think we help to disseminate research.

When you say 'research-based', are you referring to the research conducted by academics or by classroom teachers?

For me, they're both teachers. For example, at a positivity and mindfulness event that I organised some time ago, I spoke about happiness. After my talk, an Iranian teacher came up to me and asked me some questions about how she could judge the happiness of her students, who were young learners. I told her that we could work together over the course of a few months and put together a questionnaire and a series of tools that she could use to do research with her students, and then we'd deliver a joint presentation at the TESOL Arabia Conference.

And that's what we've just done. The presentation went well and there were a few things that we could have done better, but it was her first presentation and her first foray into research of any kind. She's now keen to go forward with more research because I took the time to help her along the way. I think lots of teachers just need a group or a mentor-type situation to get them going and to let them know that they're on the right track.

Earlier we were talking about dissemination of teacher research. In what other ways can teachers share their research?

TESOL Arabia has a lot of publications that focus on the dissemination of research. We have *Perspectives*, which is TESOL Arabia's official magazine, and we're going to have another journal soon. That's a new project that we're currently working on. I'm personally the editor of the 'Brief Reports' section of *The Journal of AsiaTEFL*. When I took over, I made it clear that I didn't want to just accept the native speakers who send in papers. I wanted to give non-native English-speaking teachers an avenue for dissemination of their research. So far, I've been able to do that. At TESOL Arabia, we also have a very good email list, which includes calls for papers and information about other publication opportunities in the UAE and other parts of the Gulf. You have to look for them, but they're there.

Promoting teacher research

What can teacher associations around the world do to promote teacher research even more broadly?

A more traditional approach might be at the annual conference, which is usually the main event for most teacher associations. Just as there are TeachMeet events where people share their teaching ideas and materials, I'd like to see ResearchMeet events where teachers disseminate their research. They could do so by maybe bringing one-page descriptions of what they've done. Teachers could sit and share research that they've already conducted, or are presently working on, or maybe research that they want to do and which they'd like to get an idea about. Even though for the second year running we've had a research forum as part of our conference, I'm thinking of suggesting to next year's Conference Chair to have a ResearchMeet where teachers can disseminate, in a very informal way, their research results or plans.

I'm a co-author of TESOL International Association's *Research Agenda* [**http://www.tesol.org/docs/default-source/pdf/2014_tesol-research-agenda.pdf**]. That whole process was such an eye-opener and I think lots of people need to think about their own agenda. When teachers start doing research, they have all these different interests and it's often difficult for them to marry these interests. I personally feel that research is easier and more useful if teachers decide on one area and they exploit different aspects of that area. A couple of projects down the road, they would have developed some expertise and that's a springboard to other areas.

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Inspired/Inspiring Practices: Voices from ETAS

The mental lexicon and its implications for EFL teaching: Some insights

STEFAN KNEUBÜHLER

On the first day of school after the summer holidays I was excited to finally welcome my new class. The books had arrived on time, my lesson plans were ready and I had even had time to practise my students' names using the photo list their previous teacher had provided. There was really nothing to worry about when I greeted each student by shaking hands. *"Good morning, Seraina. Morning, Jasmine. Good morning, Luca." "I'm Lars." "That happens to everybody"*, actual Luca, waiting a little bit further in line for his handshake, commented with a smile. And it kept happening to me for the rest of the first week. This experience seems to be a good starting point to approach the question of how not only names but words in general are stored in the human brain.

The mental lexicon and word association

Mental lexicon is the psycholinguistic term for "a person's mental store of words, their meaning and associations" (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 327). In his attempt to understand and explain the mental lexicon, Carter (1998) points out that words do not exist in isolation. Their meanings are defined through sense relations they have with other words. McCarthy (1990) states that a total model of the mental lexicon "will have to be three-dimensional, with phonological nets crossing orthographic ones and criss-crossing semantic and encyclopaedic nets. This word-store is constantly being updated, new words are added, unused words may be forgotten, and new connections are being made" (p. 41). This is equally true for native speakers (NS) and L2 learners (McCarthy, 1990, p. 42).

In her extensive work on the mental lexicon, Aitchison (2003) mentions word-association as one tool for the exploration of the human word store. There are different variations of word-association tests of which the underlying principle however remains the same: After a stimulus word is presented to the candidates they are asked to respond with the first word or words that come to mind. Depending on the form of the test, presentation and response can either be verbally or in written form.

Through careful classification of the candidates' responses, association patterns are thought to emerge. Traditionally, researchers have been concerned with three types of responses: *paradigmatic*, *syntagmatic,* and *clang responses*.

Paradigmatic (also *choice* or *vertical*) *responses* are words that could perform the same grammatical function as the prompt word in a given sentence. Therefore paradigmatic responses are usually from the same word class as the prompt word. This study considers three subcategories of paradigmatic answers: *coordination*, *hyponomy,* and *hypernymy* as well as *synonymy*.

Words which are "on the same level of detail" (Aitchison, 2003, p. 86) are referred to as *coordinates*. The concept of coordination includes *antonym* as well as *co-hyponomy* and is often exemplified by words such as "cat" and "dog". *Hyponymy* describes hierarchical relationships including more specific terms describing asymmetrical relationships of two or more words. This concept can be illustrated by the words such as "animal" and "cat", where the hypernym is superordinate to the hyponym. In *synonymy* a distinction can be made between *strict synonymy* and *loose synonymy.* While *strict synonymy* refers to two words which can be used interchangeably in all contexts, *loose synonymy* describes relationships between words of similar meaning across many, but not necessarily all, contexts (Coulthard et al., 2000, p. 24). However, since stylistic differences limit substitutability there can be no such thing as, nor any need for, totally substitutable synonyms in an absolute sense. This is why the term *synonym* is here used to refer to both *strict* and *loose synonyms.* For example,

> *In the basket she discovered a* ***cat.***
> (Synonym: ***kitty, moggy, feline***)

As shown above, synonyms are illustrative examples of how paradigmatic answers could perform the same grammatical function as the prompt word and as such are also referred to as *vertical* responses.

Let us now turn to *horizontal* ways of word-association. *Syntagmatic* (also *chain* or *horizontal*) responses bear a sequential or collocational relationship to the prompt word and are usually, but not necessarily, from a different word class than the prompt word. Collocation refers to the phenomenon that some words tend to co-occur regularly and predictably with other particular words (Richards & Schmidt, 2002, p. 95). The term *collocates* here refers to the other words which typically co-occur. A useful example of a (lexical) collocation of the word 'cat' might be the word 'hairball'. The term *multi-word item* refers to phrases or groups of words which function as single lexical items and which native speakers usually decode as "chunks" (Coulthard et al., 2000, p. 62). To L2 learners multi-word units are often semantically opaque, that is, their meanings cannot be deduced from their constituent parts. However, as Carter (1998) points out, "the different degrees of possible fixity or 'frozenness', both syntactic and semantic should be noted" (p. 66).

Word-associations solely evoked by phonological or orthographical similarities are labelled *clang responses.* Often they bear no overt semantic connection to the prompt word. Aitchison (2003) refers to the phenomenon that similar-sounding or similar-looking words are often confused with one another as *the bathtub effect* since it seems to be easier to remember the "head" and the "feet" of a word than the middle. Illustrated below are malapropisms, cases in which a similar sounding word has been erroneously selected and which can be understood as evidence that words are, to some extent, phonetically and orthographically organised in the mental lexicon. Below is a selection of malapropisms produced by Mrs. Malaprop in Richard Sheridan's play *The Rivals* (1775).

> *"Nay, no* ***delusions*** *to the past*
> *- Lydia is convinced."* (= ***allusions***)
>
> *"You could have knocked me over*
> *with a* ***fender****."* (= ***feather***)
>
> *"Your being Sir Anthony's son,*
> *captain, would itself be a*
> *sufficient* ***accommodation;****"*
> (= ***recommendation***)

Finally, some responses are related to a candidate's personal world knowledge, cultural background, interests, age or other personal factors to a greater degree than they are to semantic, collocational or formal features (McCarthy, 1990, p. 41). In this article they are referred to as *encyclopaedic responses*. McCarthy (1990) notes that especially bias words such as *war* evoke encyclopaedic responses.

Research and research method

In order to gain a better understanding of the mental lexicon and the lexical development of L2 learners, word-associations of lower and higher level L2 learners were compared with the responses given by native speakers (NS). The experimental procedure followed task 123 in McCarthy's *Vocabulary* (1990, p. 152).

The word-association activity consisted of two online surveys which were both administered in written form to all of the subjects. The first survey comprised eight pages. The introduction page explained the task and setting of the activity. The seven stimulus words *book*, *become*, *it*, *microwave*, *strange*, *behind* and *get* were presented on the following seven pages individually in order to avoid interference. There was no time limit for completing the survey, but since candidates were instructed to respond with the very first word associated, it took them no longer than five minutes to complete. In order to investigate the hypotheses mentioned in the previous section, stimulus words of both low and high frequency were chosen. For the exploration of a possible interrelation of learners L1 and L2 mental lexicon the false friend *become* was included in the list of prompt words.

Categorising the responses of the initial pilot study raised questions about the reliability and validity of the word-association activity. In order to minimise the danger of subjective judgement during categorisation of the candidates' responses a follow-up activity was added. Candidates had to explain why they had chosen a certain response in a post-test survey. The two steps of responding to the prompt words and explaining the response where separated deliberately in order to maintain the impulsive nature of word-association.

A total of 56 subjects participated in the study: 32 Swiss L2 learners and 24 NS. As shown in **Table 1** below, the participants were divided into three groups:

***Table 1**: Name, level (according to the Common European Framework of Languages) and number of subjects of the three different groups.*

Name	Level	Number of subjects
Lower	CEFR A2-A1	12
Higher	CEFR B2-B1	20
NS	NS	24

Fitzpatrick (2006) points out the "observed differences in the association behaviour of children and adults" (p. 321). Therefore it was appropriate to conduct the study with a group of NS comparable to the L2 learners in terms of age and stage of cognitive development. Thus, the results of the Swiss L2 learners were compared with the responses of a group of 24 Californian middle school students.

The results and evaluation

The seven stimulus words elicited a total of 392 responses of which 20 could not be categorised. In a first step, all responses were classified into *paradigmatic*, *syntagmatic, clang* and *encyclopaedic responses* (**Fig. 1**).

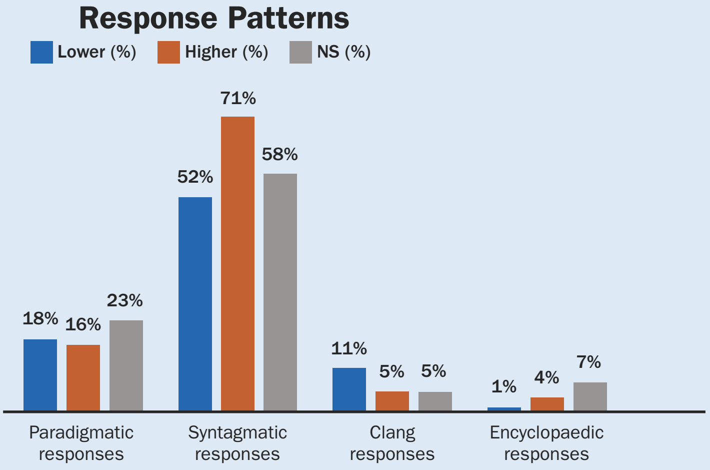

***Fig. 1**: Overall response pattern of the word-association activity.*

The current study did not replicate the assumption that coordination is the most common word-association response for NS as reported by Aitchison (2003). All three groups show a preference for the syntagmatic response type of *collocation* as **Figure 2** below shows.

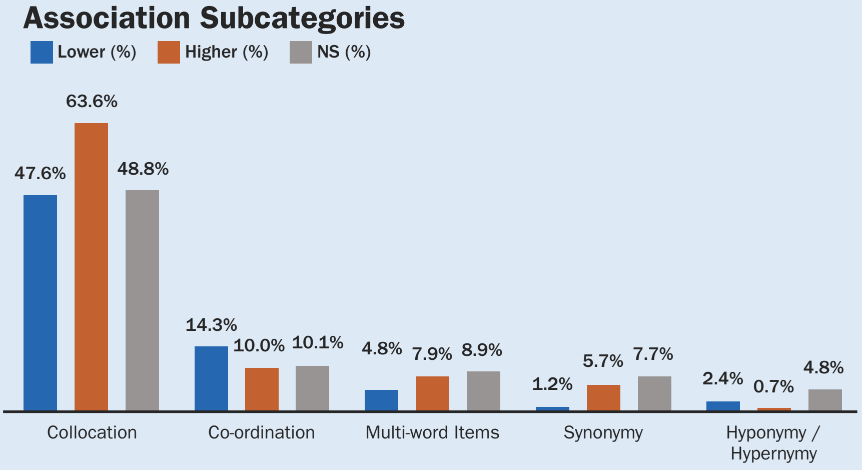

***Fig. 2**: Distribution association subcategories throughout the whole word-association activity.*

Phonologically and orthographically based responses were rather uncommon throughout the study, even with the candidates categorised as lower level learners (**Fig. 3 & 4**).

While one half of *clang* answers was produced by lower level language learners it must be noted that the other half of the total number of *clang* responses is equally shared by higher level L2 learners and NS.

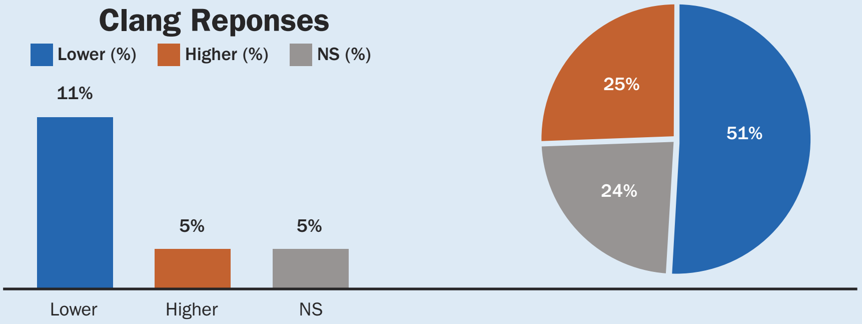

***Fig. 3 & 4**: Percentage of clang responses overall and distribution of clang responses.*

This might imply that associations based on phonological or orthographical similarities play an important role at an initial stage of the language learning process but as learners become more proficient their importance shrinks and stagnates.

As previously stated, the verb *become* was included in the study since it was expected to produce responses that would allow us to draw conclusions about the connection of L1 and L2 mental lexicons. This assumption however, was solely based on my own experience as a native speaker of German and language learner as well as a language teacher. Due to orthographical and phonological similarities the English verb *become* and the German verb *bekommen* for L2 learners often seem to be related. However, they differ semantically. Kœssler and Derocquigny (1928, cited in Gutknecht, 2003, p. 698) introduced the term *faux amis*, *false friends* in English, to refer to this phenomenon. Due to formal similarities, L2 learners appear to transfer their L1 knowledge about *bekommen* to the L2 verb *become.* As illustrated in **Table 2**, a considerable number of responses to the prompt word *become* indicate L1 interference since they would be rather expected to be elicited by the verb *get* than the verb *become.*

***Table 2**: Responses elicited by the stimulus word "become" that indicate L1 interference.*

Response	lower	higher	NS	word class	response type	subcategory
apple		*1*		*noun*	*Synt**	*CLL**
birthday		*2*		*noun*	*Synt**	*CLL**
christmas	*1*			*noun*	*Synt**	*CLL**
gift		*3*		*noun*	*Synt**	*CLL**
mark		*1*		*noun, verb*	*Synt**	*CLL**
nothing		*1*		*pronoun*	*Synt**	*CLL**
present		*4*		*noun*	*Synt**	*CLL**
give	*1*	*1*		*verb*	*Para**	*CO**

The findings of the current study suggest that there is a connection between language learners' L1 and L2 mental lexicon. However, it is interesting to note that mainly higher level learners appear to transfer L1 knowledge when associating L2 words spontaneously, as **Figure 5** below illustrates.

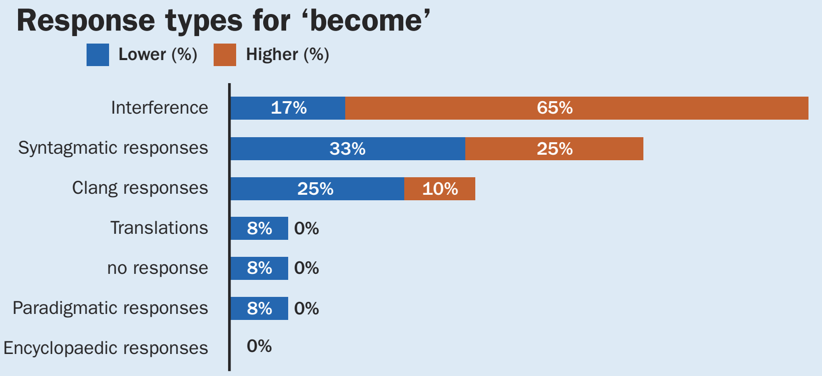

***Fig. 5**: Percentage of different response types produced by lower and higher level L2 learners for the stimulus 'become'.*

All in all, it can be said that the responses of NS were much more similar to the L2 learners' than would be expected based on past research. There are different explanations for this. One reason might be the choice of prompt words. As mentioned earlier, the word-association results of Aitchison (2003) are based on high frequency nouns and adjectives only, whereas the stimulus word in the present study are less homogenous and include pronouns, verbs, and prepositions as well as nouns and adjectives.

Conclusion: Implications for teaching

It is unarguably tempting to believe that word-association can reveal information about the development and organisation of the mental lexicon. However, as indicated earlier, previous studies have failed to produce consistent findings. What the vast amount of sometimes contradicting results nevertheless certainly shows is how complex and at the same time highly organised the mental lexicon seems to be. The mere quantity of individual responses to one and the same stimulus word demonstrates that word-association and therewith the organisation of the mental lexicon is a highly individual issue and should be therefore treated accordingly.

Simply clarifying the meaning of a new vocabulary item by using the student's L1 most certainly is not enough to fully incorporate them into the mental lexicon in a way that they can be retrieved later on. Translation might be one link but in order to meet the requirements of McCarthy's (1990) dynamic, three-dimensional model with phonologic, orthographic, semantic, and encyclopaedic nets criss-crossing each other, students need to establish respective associations.

The following vocabulary task (**Fig. 6**) was presented to the students as a while reading exercise for the book *The Beach* by Alex Garland.

Different examples of L2 learners' solution for the task (**Fig. 7**) illustrate how individually the task was tackled.

By designing clusters for new vocabulary items students are encouraged to delve into their individual features and must address paradigmatic, syntagmatic, encyclopaedic, and clang associations for the new words. Whether activities like this promote the integration of new vocabulary items into a language learner's mental lexicon is still to be investigated.

In this article I began by describing how I kept mixing up two students as the point of departure for further exploration of the human word store. For the past six months I have now worked with my class and I have got to know each student. Since that first week of school I have not confused Lars and Luca again. Maybe words are a bit like people: very similar at first sight, very individual once you get to know them better. Words certainly seem to be much more than just their orthographical or phonological form, their translation, their meaning or use. The sum of all of these things and the connections between them appear to be what they are. But we have to spend time with them, get to know them, to be able to work with them.

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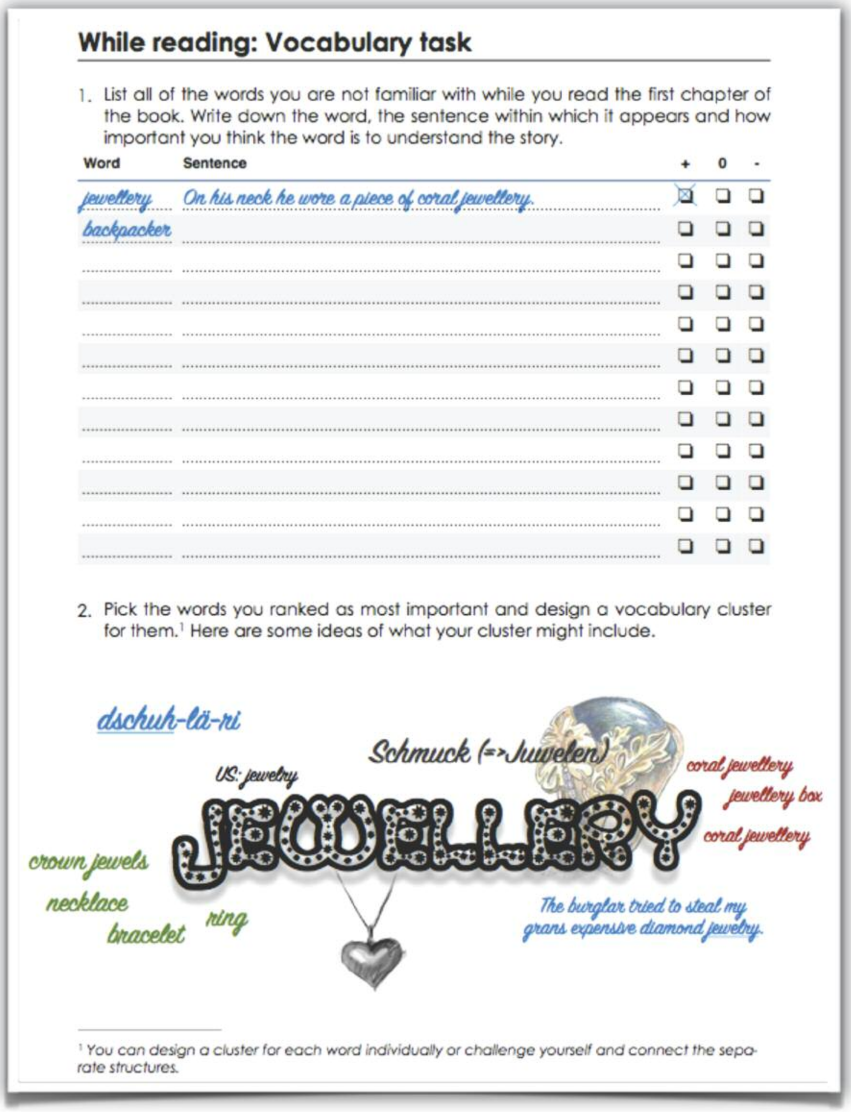

While reading: Vocabulary task

1. List all of the words you are not familiar with while you read the first chapter of the book. Write down the word, the sentence within which it appears and how important you think the word is to understand the story.

Word	Sentence	+	0	-
jewellery	On his neck he wore a piece of coral jewellery.	☒	☐	☐
backpacker		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐
		☐	☐	☐

2. Pick the words you ranked as most important and design a vocabulary cluster for them.[1] Here are some ideas of what your cluster might include.

dschuh-lä-ri
Schmuck (=>Juwelen)
US: jewelry
JEWELLERY
coral jewellery
jewellery box
coral jewellery
crown jewels
necklace
bracelet
ring
The burglar tried to steal my grans expensive diamond jewelry.

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[1] You can design a cluster for each word individually or challenge yourself and connect the separate structures.

Fig. 6: *Vocabulary clustering as while reading activity for L2 learners*

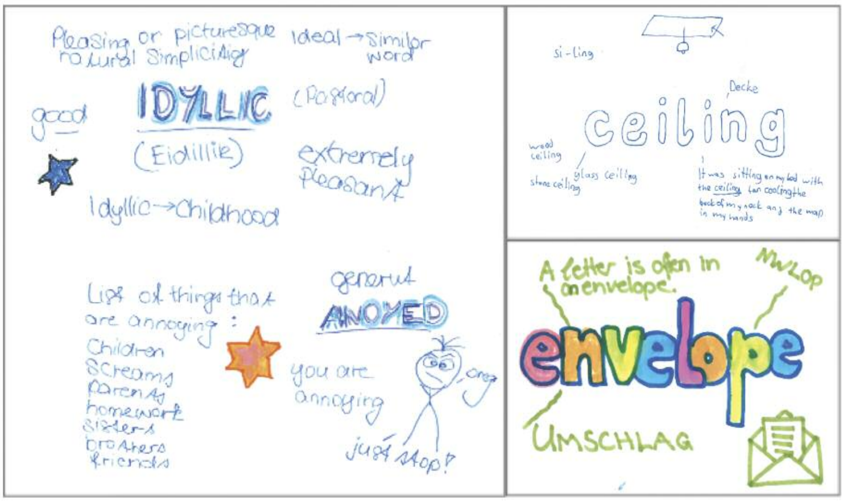
Pleasing or picturesque natural simplicity
Ideal → similar word
good
IDYLLIC
(Pastoral)
(Eidillik)
extremely pleasant
Idyllic → Childhood
List of things that are annoying:
Children
Screams
Parents
homework
sisters
brothers
friends
generut
ANOYED
you are annoying
grr
just stop!
si-ling
Decke
ceiling
wood ceiling
glass ceiling
stone ceiling
It was sitting on my bed with the ceiling fan cooling the back of my neck and the map in my hands
A letter is often in an envelope.
envelope
UMSCHLAG

Fig. 7: *Vocabulary clusters designed by L2 learners*

About the Author
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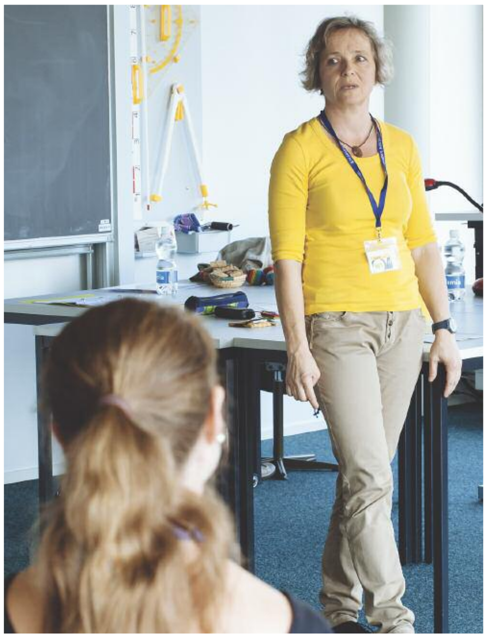
Professional Development Day 2017 Snapshots

Rainbow Library
Logic Riddles in English
schubi



Enhance your teaching with corpus linguistics

ALISON WIEBALCK

In the course of my Master of Applied Linguistics degree at the University of Birmingham, a favourite subject of mine has been corpus linguistics, an area for which the university is renowned.

This article is based on a short presentation held at the 2017 ETAS Conference and AGM on how corpus linguistics can be applied in the EFL classroom.

A corpus is an electronic collection of hundreds and thousands of written and spoken texts consisting of extracts from books, newspapers, journals, lectures, interviews and more, all of which have been collected and collated to use for language analysis.

In essence, access to this huge amount of collatable data has moved the study of language from the intuitive to the data driven – from the *"Well, I think that's what we'd say"* to the more evidenced-based *"This is what most people say"*. Of course it is still an inexact science – even the best and biggest corpus cannot contain anywhere near all that has ever been said or written. What it can do though is to facilitate measurable, evidence-based insights. In other words, it is now data rather than prescriptive grammar rules that helps determine language usage.

To give you an idea of how we Birmingham Masters students have been taught to use a corpus as a teaching resource, let's look at a common source of error in the EFL classroom, namely when to use ***by*** and when to use ***until***.

As teachers, the mistake we make, I think, is to see ***by*** and ***until*** as two separate self-contained words. They are not and this can be explored and proven.

In order to discover by means of corpus linguistics how *by* and *until* actually work, I used the British National Corpus (**http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/**). There are a number of other corpora which could be used instead, but the BNC is especially user-friendly. **Table 1** shows a screen shot of the BNC search page.

As you can see, the BNC search page presents us with a number of choices so we can narrow our search according to a number of categories. For example, you might want to restrict your search to academic prose only.

In this case, I chose to restrict my investigation into the use of ***by*** and ***until*** to written texts. Apart from that, because I wanted my search to be as wide as possible, I did not specify any particular genre or age group or gender of the texts' authors (although this would have been possible had I wanted to produce more nuanced results).

To start the process, I typed the keyword *by* into the Query term box, preceded by a verb that is most likely to occur with *by* in my business students' working environment, namely *finished,* as in "this report must be ***finished by*** Monday". Linking *by* with a verb like *finished* also meant I was able to narrow my search by excluding all the other many meanings of *by* such as "by the way" or "by the time we got there".

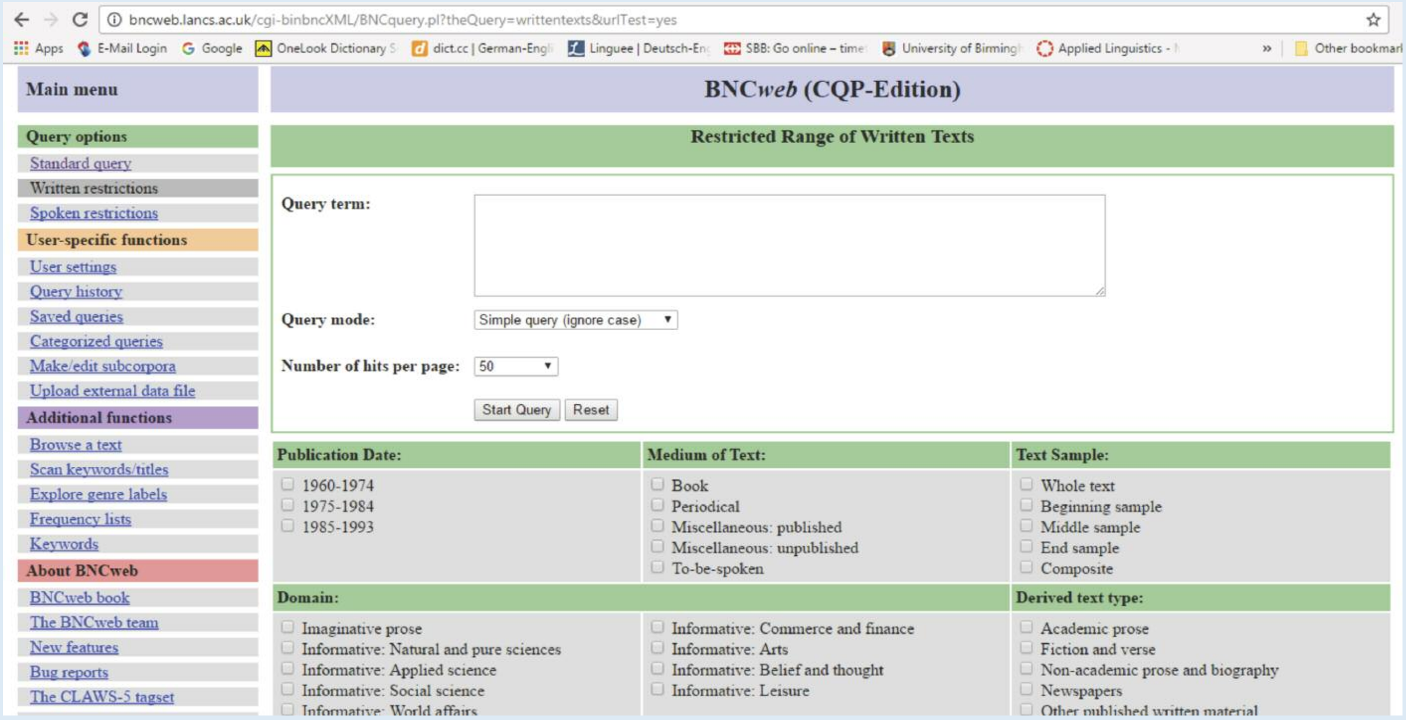
Table 2 gives us the results of our search for *finished by*.

The first thing we can see is how often the phrase *finished by* occurs in the BNC. If you look at the very top line you will see that, of the nearly 1 million words stored in the BNC, *finished by* occurs 71 times of which we can see the first 22.

Those familiar with corpus searches will notice that I skipped a step or two to reach the view in **Table 2** as I have already randomised the order of the returns to avoid viewing the phrase as it is used by any one author or in one type of text. In addition, **Table 2** shows the target phrase in the KWIC (Key Word In Context) format which makes it easier to focus on the target language. Both the random and the KWIC steps simply require clicking the relevant boxes.

As you can see in **Table 2**, the resulting sentence fragments come from a wide variety 'of sources. These can be identified by clicking on the reference codes on the left under the heading **Filename**. If you also want to see the individual extracts in their textual context, simply click on the highlighted phrase *finished by*. The corpus will then present you with two or three paragraphs of the original text wrapped around the target word or phrase. A word of warning at this point: absorbing as these passages are, they can lead to a monumental consumption of time!

Table 1*. BNC search page*


Apps
E-Mail Login
Google
OneLook Dictionary S
dict.cc | German-Engl
Linguee | Deutsch-En
SBB: Go online – time
University of Birming
Applied Linguistics -
Other bookmar
Main menu
Query options
Standard query
Written restrictions
Spoken restrictions
User-specific functions
User settings
Query history
Saved queries
Categorized queries
Make/edit subcorpora
Upload external data file
Additional functions
Browse a text
Scan keywords/titles
Explore genre labels
Frequency lists
Keywords
About BNCweb
BNCweb book
The BNCweb team
New features
Bug reports
The CLAWS-5 tagset
Start Query
Reset

bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/cgi-binbncXML/BNCquery.pl?theQuery=writtentexts&urlTest=yes

BNC*web* (CQP-Edition)

Restricted Range of Written Texts

Query term:

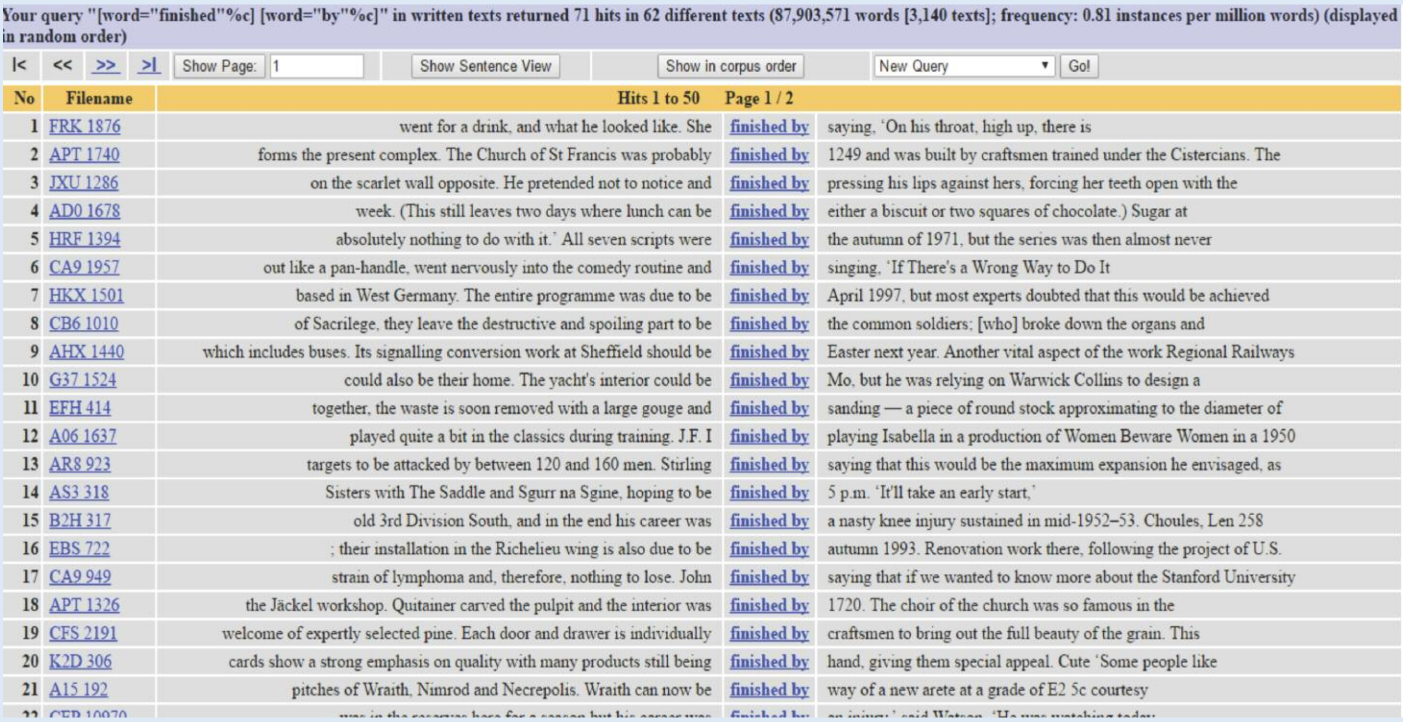
Query mode: Simple query (ignore case)

Number of hits per page: 50

Publication Date:	Medium of Text:	Text Sample:
☐ 1960-1974 ☐ 1975-1984 ☐ 1985-1993	☐ Book ☐ Periodical ☐ Miscellaneous: published ☐ Miscellaneous: unpublished ☐ To-be-spoken	☐ Whole text ☐ Beginning sample ☐ Middle sample ☐ End sample ☐ Composite

Domain:		Derived text type:
☐ Imaginative prose ☐ Informative: Natural and pure sciences ☐ Informative: Applied science ☐ Informative: Social science ☐ Informative: World affairs	☐ Informative: Commerce and finance ☐ Informative: Arts ☐ Informative: Belief and thought ☐ Informative: Leisure	☐ Academic prose ☐ Fiction and verse ☐ Non-academic prose and biography ☐ Newspapers ☐ Other published written material

Table 2. *BNC hits for "finished by" in KWIC mode*



Your query "[word="finished"%c] [word="by"%c]" in written texts returned 71 hits in 62 different texts (87,903,571 words [3,140 texts]; frequency: 0.81 instances per million words) (displayed in random order)

No	Filename	Hits 1 to 50	Page 1 / 2	
1	FRK 1876	went for a drink, and what he looked like. She	finished by	saying, 'On his throat, high up, there is
2	APT 1740	forms the present complex. The Church of St Francis was probably	finished by	1249 and was built by craftsmen trained under the Cistercians. The
3	JXU 1286	on the scarlet wall opposite. He pretended not to notice and	finished by	pressing his lips against hers, forcing her teeth open with the
4	AD0 1678	week. (This still leaves two days where lunch can be	finished by	either a biscuit or two squares of chocolate.) Sugar at
5	HRF 1394	absolutely nothing to do with it.' All seven scripts were	finished by	the autumn of 1971, but the series was then almost never
6	CA9 1957	out like a pan-handle, went nervously into the comedy routine and	finished by	singing, 'If There's a Wrong Way to Do It
7	HKX 1501	based in West Germany. The entire programme was due to be	finished by	April 1997, but most experts doubted that this would be achieved
8	CB6 1010	of Sacrilege, they leave the destructive and spoiling part to be	finished by	the common soldiers; [who] broke down the organs and
9	AHX 1440	which includes buses. Its signalling conversion work at Sheffield should be	finished by	Easter next year. Another vital aspect of the work Regional Railways
10	G37 1524	could also be their home. The yacht's interior could be	finished by	Mo, but he was relying on Warwick Collins to design a
11	EFH 414	together, the waste is soon removed with a large gouge and	finished by	sanding — a piece of round stock approximating to the diameter of
12	A06 1637	played quite a bit in the classics during training. J.F. I	finished by	playing Isabella in a production of Women Beware Women in a 1950
13	AR8 923	targets to be attacked by between 120 and 160 men. Stirling	finished by	saying that this would be the maximum expansion he envisaged, as
14	AS3 318	Sisters with The Saddle and Sgurr na Sgine, hoping to be	finished by	5 p.m. 'It'll take an early start,'
15	B2H 317	old 3rd Division South, and in the end his career was	finished by	a nasty knee injury sustained in mid-1952–53. Choules, Len 258
16	EBS 722	; their installation in the Richelieu wing is also due to be	finished by	autumn 1993. Renovation work there, following the project of U.S.
17	CA9 949	strain of lymphoma and, therefore, nothing to lose. John	finished by	saying that if we wanted to know more about the Stanford University
18	APT 1326	the Jäckel workshop. Quitainer carved the pulpit and the interior was	finished by	1720. The choir of the church was so famous in the
19	CFS 2191	welcome of expertly selected pine. Each door and drawer is individually	finished by	craftsmen to bring out the full beauty of the grain. This
20	K2D 306	cards show a strong emphasis on quality with many products still being	finished by	hand, giving them special appeal. Cute 'Some people like
21	A15 192	pitches of Wraith, Nimrod and Necrepolis. Wraith can now be	finished by	way of a new arete at a grade of E2 5c courtesy

Be that as it may, at this stage our data is still on the internet. The next step is therefore to reproduce the BNC findings in a form that can be tidied up and printed out for classroom use. And this is where Excel comes in handy, as you can see in **Table 3** below. If you are not sure how to convert the BNC findings into Excel, see the excellent demonstration at **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAk0kvXasEU**

Table 3 shows a sample of the original 71 BNC hits copy-pasted into Excel. In Excel you can now remove any lines that may confuse the students or which occur in a different pattern. For example, I deleted the line "they finished by singing the National Anthem" because it did not feature *by* in the temporal sense that I was looking for.

From here we can copy-paste our Excel document into Word, so it is ready to be examined more closely and prepared for classroom use. **Table 4** shows you a sample of our BNC hits for *finished by* now copy-pasted into Word.

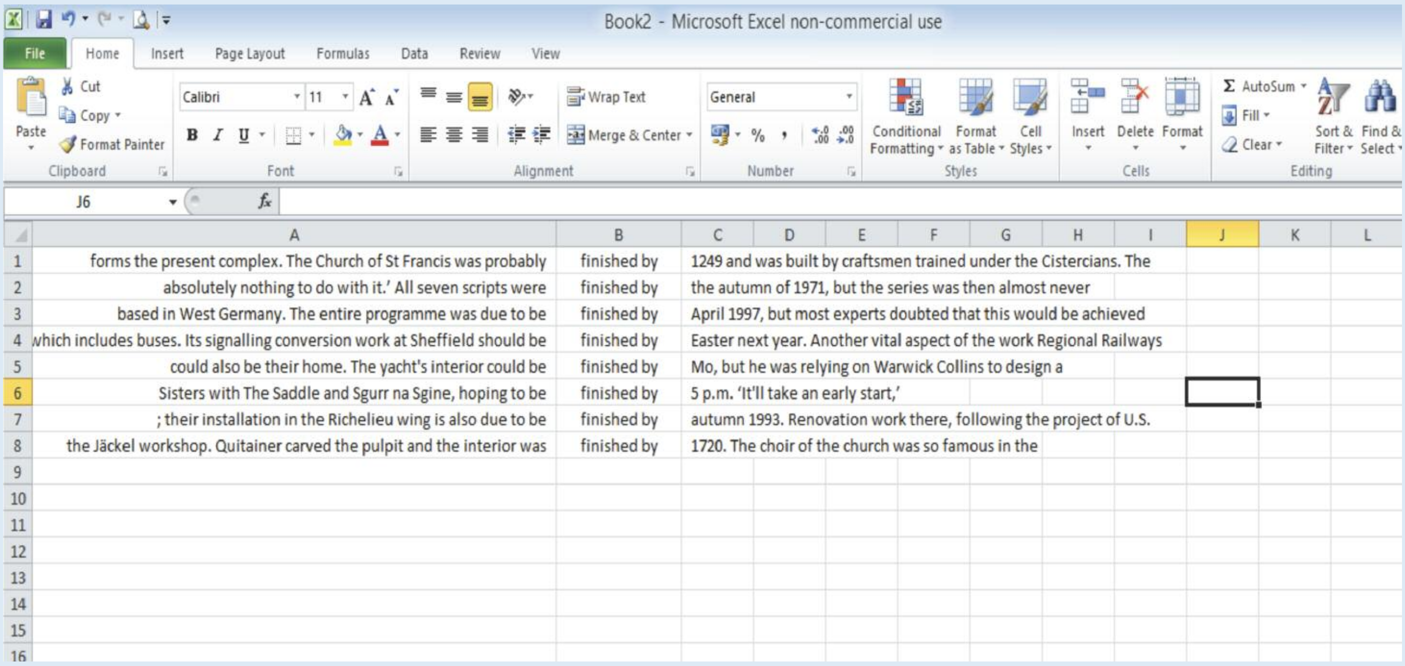
Now we can really start to focus on the task at hand, namely to discover and to distinguish between the use of *by* and *until*. Starting with *by*, this entails examining the text fragments reproduced in the Word document to try and discern what patterns of usage might be revealed.

Then I have a choice. I can either walk into the classroom and say, "Hi guys, I can now show you what's important to look out for when you want to use 'by' correctly". Or, I can give them the task of examining the sentence fragments for themselves to see if they can work independently to discern any pattern in the way *finished by* is used.

The latter could work as follows: Look at the words to the left and right of *finished by* in **Table 5** and see if you can spot anything of potential significance? On the left, for example, you might like to note the high percentage of modals such as *should* followed by *be*; on the right, a time, date or event following which the clause or sentence usually comes to an end, for example "[t]he centre should be finished by August 31."

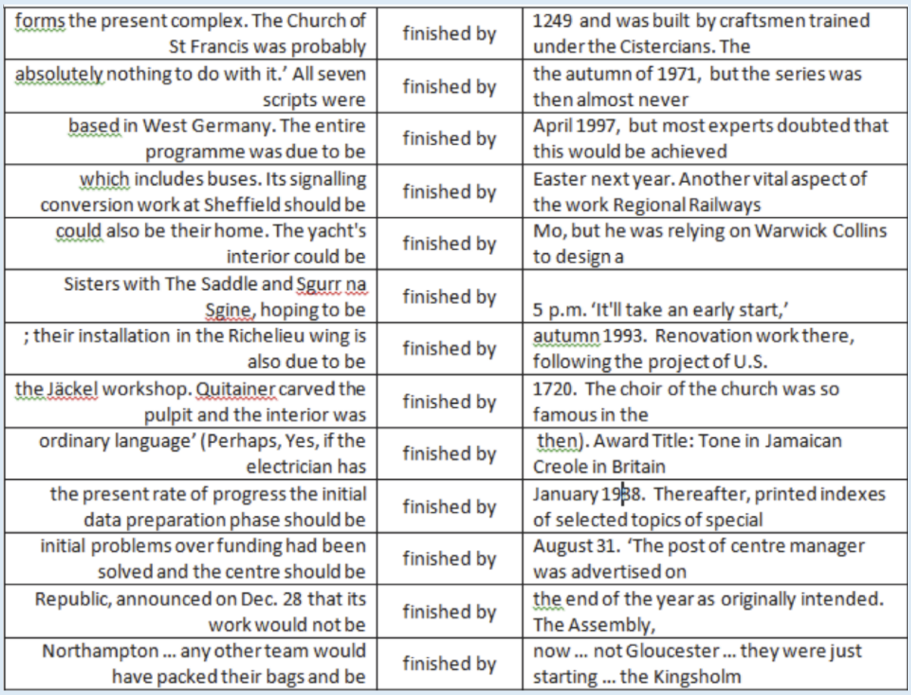
In short, even a cursory corpus study of *finished by* reveals the following pattern: Subject + modal + be + finished by + time / day.

Table 3. *BNC hits for "finished by" in KWIC mode reproduced in Excel*



	A	B	C
1	forms the present complex. The Church of St Francis was probably	finished by	1249 and was built by craftsmen trained under the Cistercians. The
2	absolutely nothing to do with it.' All seven scripts were	finished by	the autumn of 1971, but the series was then almost never
3	based in West Germany. The entire programme was due to be	finished by	April 1997, but most experts doubted that this would be achieved
4	which includes buses. Its signalling conversion work at Sheffield should be	finished by	Easter next year. Another vital aspect of the work Regional Railways
5	could also be their home. The yacht's interior could be	finished by	Mo, but he was relying on Warwick Collins to design a
6	Sisters with The Saddle and Sgurr na Sgine, hoping to be	finished by	5 p.m. 'It'll take an early start,'
7	; their installation in the Richelieu wing is also due to be	finished by	autumn 1993. Renovation work there, following the project of U.S.
8	the Jäckel workshop. Quitainer carved the pulpit and the interior was	finished by	1720. The choir of the church was so famous in the

***Table 4**. BNC hits for “finished by” in KWIC mode in Word*



forms the present complex. The Church of St Francis was probably	finished by	1249 and was built by craftsmen trained under the Cistercians. The
absolutely nothing to do with it.’ All seven scripts were	finished by	the autumn of 1971, but the series was then almost never
based in West Germany. The entire programme was due to be	finished by	April 1997, but most experts doubted that this would be achieved
which includes buses. Its signalling conversion work at Sheffield should be	finished by	Easter next year. Another vital aspect of the work Regional Railways
could also be their home. The yacht's interior could be	finished by	Mo, but he was relying on Warwick Collins to design a
Sisters with The Saddle and Sgurr na Sgine, hoping to be	finished by	5 p.m. ‘It'll take an early start,’
; their installation in the Richelieu wing is also due to be	finished by	autumn 1993. Renovation work there, following the project of U.S.
the Jäckel workshop. Quitainer carved the pulpit and the interior was	finished by	1720. The choir of the church was so famous in the
ordinary language’ (Perhaps, Yes, if the electrician has	finished by	then). Award Title: Tone in Jamaican Creole in Britain
the present rate of progress the initial data preparation phase should be	finished by	January 1988. Thereafter, printed indexes of selected topics of special
initial problems over funding had been solved and the centre should be	finished by	August 31. ‘The post of centre manager was advertised on
Republic, announced on Dec. 28 that its work would not be	finished by	the end of the year as originally intended. The Assembly,
Northampton ... any other team would have packed their bags and be	finished by	now ... not Gloucester ... they were just starting ... the Kingsholm

This report + must + be + *finished by* + Monday.

We can then repeat the same BNC → Excel → Word procedure with *have / has / had until* has shown in **Table 5.**

What pattern can you discern this time? Is it the same as for *by* or different?

If you look to the left of *have/has/had until* you will notice that the sentence fragment is dominated by the personal noun or a pronoun that immediately precedes *have/has/had until***:** “Airtours has until”, “he has until”. And on the right the sentence fragment is dominated by a verb in the infinitive: “He has until Tuesday evening *to find*”, “the companies had until next week *to reveal*”.

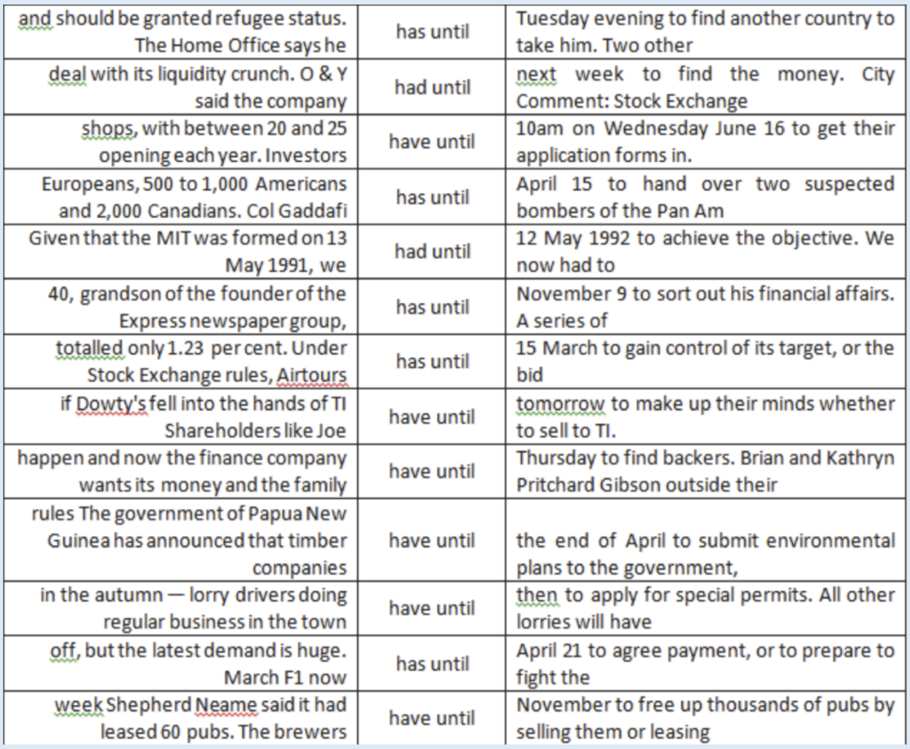
In short, our quick corpus study of *have/ has / had until* reveals the following pattern: Personal noun or pronoun + *have/ has / had until* + time / day + verb in the infinitive
He *has until* Tuesday evening *to find* ...

As mentioned at the outset, that *by* and *until* are not just two separate independent words. Instead, we discover that they have distinct grammatical characteristics; sentences containing *by* or *until* may carry the same basic message, but they demand certain patterns of usage which may subtly affect the tone or emphasis of that message.
So now, having reached the stage when the students have discovered for themselves the patterns of usage associated with *by* and *until*, you can give them a task such as the following extract from a gap-fill exercise, in the knowledge that they should now be able to launch into it with much more confidence:

1. The documents must be signed ___ Friday.

2. You have ___ Friday to sign the documents.

***Table 5**. BNC hits for “have / has / had” in KWIC mode in Word*



and should be granted refugee status. The Home Office says he	has until	Tuesday evening to find another country to take him. Two other
deal with its liquidity crunch. O & Y said the company	had until	next week to find the money. City Comment: Stock Exchange
shops, with between 20 and 25 opening each year. Investors	have until	10am on Wednesday June 16 to get their application forms in.
Europeans, 500 to 1,000 Americans and 2,000 Canadians. Col Gaddafi	has until	April 15 to hand over two suspected bombers of the Pan Am
Given that the MIT was formed on 13 May 1991, we	had until	12 May 1992 to achieve the objective. We now had to
40, grandson of the founder of the Express newspaper group,	has until	November 9 to sort out his financial affairs. A series of
totalled only 1.23 per cent. Under Stock Exchange rules, Airtours	has until	15 March to gain control of its target, or the bid
if Dowty's fell into the hands of TI Shareholders like Joe	have until	tomorrow to make up their minds whether to sell to TI.
happen and now the finance company wants its money and the family	have until	Thursday to find backers. Brian and Kathryn Pritchard Gibson outside their
rules The government of Papua New Guinea has announced that timber companies	have until	the end of April to submit environmental plans to the government,
in the autumn — lorry drivers doing regular business in the town	have until	then to apply for special permits. All other lorries will have
off, but the latest demand is huge. March F1 now	has until	April 21 to agree payment, or to prepare to fight the
week Shepherd Neame said it had leased 60 pubs. The brewers	have until	November to free up thousands of pubs by selling them or leasing

Voila! Mission accomplished.

The real test, of course, is when your students are writing or speaking freely. But do not be dismayed if they initially still make mistakes. At least they should by now be able to self-correct, and to understand the rhyme (if not the reason) behind the correct usage. Then of course you can always refer them back to the patterns they themselves established. As you can imagine, there is a great deal more you can do within the realms of corpus linguistics from deep discourse analysis to tagging lexical usage over time. This article simply aims to offer a taster, a taster to inspire you to delve deeper into the mysteries of language and to share your findings with your students.

Any questions?
I would be happy to hear from you at
alison.wiebalck@legalenglishskills.com

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References

http://bncweb.lancs.ac.uk/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAk0kvXasEU

About the Author

Alison Wiebalck originally trained as a lawyer in Sydney, Australia but now teaches Legal English in Switzerland. An active member of EULETA (European Legal English Teachers Association) and ETAS, over the years Alison has delivered workshops at EULETA Conferences, ETAS AGMs and many other venues. Alongside her teaching commitments, Alison is also currently undertaking a Masters in Applied Linguistics at the University of Birmingham, UK.

High school project: Increasing students' intercultural awareness through language biographies

ORBAL JONES

This is a shortened version of coursework submitted at the PH Luzern in January 2017. In this article, I present a potential outline for a long-term language biography project for the EFL classroom, accompanied by thoughts on possible benefits and challenges.

Outline

First year:

1. Introduction (6 lessons): First, have students read extracts from autobiographies and then from language biographies in class. Ask students to compare the two types of literature in order to identify similarities in style and to recognise the major focus on languages and cultures in the latter.

2. Analysis of language biographies (4 lessons): In-depth analysis of various language biographies, written by English-speakers from various areas. Also, involve monolingual speakers and multilingual speakers for different students to be able to identify with one or the other language biography. Use language biographies by people who are close in age to the students. Be sure to focus on narration and informal style. Let students attempt to interpret the impact of various experiences, learning environments and other external factors. In groups, ask students to compare their interpretations in order to identify differences in perspectives. These biographies are meant to inspire the students who will later write their own language biographies, but they also allow students to explore the experiences of people coming from different cultures and backgrounds and to notice how people choose to emphasise different aspects of their own journey.

3. Writing a language biography (Both draft and final version as homework): After having explored various language biographies, students are now asked to write their own language biographies, respecting the narrative style they have identified and the required number of pages (approximately five). It is important not to restrict students from developing the content of their language biographies. Students are encouraged to write a first draft without the teacher's help and not to ask for help from their friends or parents. Students can also be advised to focus first on the content, then later on the style of their text. Once they have produced their text, teachers can correct the language and, where necessary, provide feedback on the structure or organisation of the text, examples, or specific details. A final draft is then sent to the teacher by email so that it can be saved for the following year.

4. Presenting the language biography (Depending on number of students, approximately two to three lessons): Whereas students do not need to read the text to their peers, this task enables them to present those parts of it which they wish to share with the class. In a short presentation of three to five minutes, students can either summarise their text, or pick a few aspects to highlight which they find especially interesting. In addition, the presentation would involve the students' explanations of what they have learned from writing the language biography. This activity allows students to share their experiences and to discover their peers' work. It also pushes them to reflect on the entire experience of writing a language biography.

5. Preparing to visualise the language biography (one lesson for group work, outline to be prepared at home): In groups, students are asked to discuss possible ways of transforming their language biographies into a visual and artistic product (drawing or creating; e.g. a landscape or model, for example.). They produce an outline with a description of the end product and their reasons for choosing this product as well as the material and time they will need to work on it. Each student also adds some characteristics which will individualise his or her product and thus distinguish it from others. This activity allows students to discuss their ideas and plans, to agree on the most popular idea, and to develop a detailed outline of how to create the product. Once approved by the teacher, the outlines are passed on to the Art teacher who will allow students to work on their projects for the period of time agreed in the outline.

6. Visualising the language biography (Depending on nature of project, up to one month; approximately eight lessons): Students individually work on their language biographies during the specified period of time. The English teacher takes a photo of the final product and attaches it to the student's language biography.

7. Optional conclusion: Exhibition (one evening for two hours): If convenient for teachers and students, the entire project can end with an evening buffet where students from all the classes that participated in the project bring various dishes from the cultures encountered in the language biographies (students may choose to bring a dish from another culture than their own or from any English-speaking culture). During this evening, students have the possibility to explore their fellow students' products and to discuss their experiences. This optional activity allows students to see what students from other classes did, and also to have their work shown to, and valued by, their peers.

Second and third year:

In the second and third year, teachers would once again follow a shortened version of the outline suggested above:

1. Introduction (one lesson and homework): An introduction to language biographies is not necessary and may be replaced with students' analyses of their own language biographies from the previous years. Ideally, the students' progress in the English language should allow them to improve the linguistic quality of their texts.

2. Completing the language biography (one lesson and homework): Students can be asked to create a mind-map of any new experiences they have gained with regard to languages and cultures, or of how their previous experiences have evolved. Having connected their new experiences, their new language competences and new perspectives with their old ones, the students then suggest either a modification of their first language biography (though the old one will not be lost and will remain in their dossier) or the addition of a new chapter to it. Again, students will write their language biography at home.

3. Discussing the language biography (one lesson): Students can discuss their results in groups. Teachers will provide detailed guidelines for these discussions, which will include a summary of their new texts but also a comparison with the older versions as well as encouraging them to engage with their feelings and opinions on the differences between the two language biographies.

Fourth year:

Comparative analysis, summary and conclusion (double lesson): In the final year, students will have a total of three language biographies, either three versions of the same text or three different chapters. Rather than writing a new biography each time, students can reflect on the last three language biographies, their progress and growth, as well as their plans for the future. It will be interesting for students to see how understanding their own language journey may assist them in shaping their future plans and career. Individual work followed by discussions in pairs and groups may help them fulfil this task.

Inspired/Inspiring Practices: Voices from ETAS

Comments

How can students identify and benefit from their own experiences related to cultures and languages?

Students can learn to self-evaluate their language skills. Further, they are encouraged to identify previous major experiences, encounters and learning environments. It can also be beneficial for the student to realise what has been achieved after many years of learning English in the classroom. Students also reflect on the different cultures with which they have been confronted, even during their holidays, which they may have forgotten or believed to be irrelevant. These reflections enable students to gain an increased intercultural awareness and to track their journey, together with their language progress, over the years.

Certain negative or positive experiences with languages and cultures may be exposed and may thus allow them to re-evaluate certain beliefs, struggles or interests they have. Students learn to look for the "whole picture", that is, how their background, family, friends, hobbies, country, languages, and more have an impact on their world view. They might also learn that they know more about languages and cultures than they first thought. Finally, tracking their progress and growth may be encouraging and valuable for the students, as sometimes things may appear unchanged when, in fact, they have evolved without them noticing. Realising their growth may help them to face new challenges with more security and awareness.

To what extent should the teacher guide students through the analysis of their language biographies?

Whereas students should receive clear guidelines regarding the language (appropriate style, grammar, syntax, structure, etc.), they should not be pressured in terms of content. This is why they read other language biographies to begin with. Reading about other people's experiences may allow students to recall their own memories and to realise how certain memories which may have seemed minor at the time can actually be more relevant and interesting than they thought.

On the other hand, this activity also provides students with examples they can draw on but also the flexibility to focus on whatever they want. In other words, I believe that while there should be a requirement for students to write a certain number of pages about their experiences with languages and cultures, they should be free to determine the content. It would be pointless to ask a student to analyse an area, event, or experience in a certain way when he or she is not ready to do so. Students should be encouraged to analyse their life experiences from their own perspective and also to analyse their experiences from another perspective the following year. What perspective the students take, however, is solely up to them and should by no means be imposed by the teacher. This is the only way, I believe, that students can benefit from their language biography.

Conclusion

Although feasible, it is clear that this project requires a lot of effort and proper time management from the English teachers involved. Since the entire project (minus the optional conclusion) requires at least 13 lessons, it may be difficult to realise without feeling restricted by the pressure of preparing students for the Matura exam, hence getting through coursebook units or working on specific grammar topics. However, I believe that the project addresses a number of topics and skills, such as reading, writing, speaking/debating, and presenting in English.

In further lessons, teachers may pick up recurring grammar mistakes, pronunciation difficulties, narration and analysis skills, and accurate use of vocabulary and presentation manners. The students, furthermore, obtain an insight into different English-speaking cultures as well as people's different life experiences and encounters with languages and cultures. Students are therefore involved in using the English language to think beyond the language itself, by reflecting upon their own journey with other languages and cultures. I also believe that it can be beneficial for students to get a glimpse into their peers' journeys.

The interdisciplinary work required might prove to be a more challenging task. The project necessitates an agreement between the Art teacher, to adapt any course plan, and the English teacher, to monitor the artistic products. A further issue could be the teamwork involving several English teachers. Since classes do not always have the same teacher throughout their time in high school, this project presupposes the interest and willing parrticipation of the entire team of English teachers in order to design, conduct, and accompany a project through various classes and various years. In schools where teachers from several areas are interested in collaborating, the project could easily be extended to the subjects of German or French as a first language, Geography, History, Philosophy, Psychology, and many more.

Despite these challenges, teachers' efforts to implement this long-term project enable students to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their experiences and progress, which may be valuable not only in the classroom, but also for their future endeavours.

Suggested Reading

Memoirs / autobiographies:

Crutcher, C. (2004). *King of the mild frontier: An ill-advised autobiography*. New York, NY: Greenwillow (HarperCollins Children's Books).

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Further reading

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About the Author

Orbal Jones studied English Language and Literature and French as a Foreign Language (FLE) at the University of Fribourg. She is currently writing her MA thesis in *Second Language Acquisition (SLA)* and is in the process of acquiring a high school teaching diploma from the Pädagogische Hochschule Luzern. Her teaching experience includes teaching French classes to adults and exchange students. She has also taught English as a trainee teacher at high schools in the Netherlands and in Schwyz. She speaks English, French, and German.

Behaviour management in the teens classroom

RACHAEL HARRIS

Behaviour management is one of the most important aspects of teaching teens, without which there can be no learning. It is essential to get the behaviour right before worrying about what to teach, even if this can take time early on in the course. For example, when it comes to getting students to line up correctly, or work on how to hand out work quickly in class, it is worth practicing these things again and again until students get it right. It may seem like a waste of time, but it is worth sweating the small stuff at the start. This not only sets the tone but also saves time in the long term.

Behaviour Management is one of the areas where teachers are most reticent to talk about any problems they may be facing. Although we are more willing to share resources and methods, admitting to having behaviour problems in class is seen as a weakness. Facing a difficult class is definitely an area where many teachers find themselves on their own. Colleagues may say you either have a natural authority or not, or that it comes with many years' experience. But as we all know, neither attitude helps the novice teacher or teacher who is dealing with a particularly challenging class.

This article is a write-up of an ETAS regional workshop that took place in Lausanne and was organised by ETAS Geneva and Lausanne. The objective of this workshop was firstly to look at some 'Golden Rules' that would help less experienced teachers but, more importantly, to share questions and problems and try and find solutions together.

The Golden Rules

1) Plan your attack

It is important to be informed of a school's behaviour policy before going into a classroom. Can you give detentions? Ask students to leave the room? Give extra work or punishments? Can you call the parents? etc. Ask the administration but also colleagues – sometimes there is a difference between official policy and real life!

Once you find out, decide what your expectations are and what will happen if they are not met. Some teachers work with the class to decide together on the class rules. However, asking the students their opinion may be seen as a weakness, after all this is YOUR classroom, where we follow YOUR rules. Don't have too many rules, and try and make them simple, encompassing, and positive. For example, the reminder, *"Listen to the person who is talking!"* means students have to be silent when the teacher, or fellow students have something to say. *"Come to class ready to work"* includes doing homework, bringing books, and getting things out of bags at the start of the lesson.

2) Inform students on expectations and consequences

Once you have chosen your rules, tell the students – briefly at the start of the year – and inform them of what will happen if they don't comply. Some leeway may be necessary and here I find a joker system useful. Basically, students get two jokers at the start of each term. This means that at the start of the class when I ask if everyone has done the homework and brought their books, students simply raise their hand and call out "joker" if they haven't, which I note down, so there is no need to get angry or tell them off. Then when they have used their two jokers, the school sanctions kick in – in the form of detentions. This means I don't have to waste my time listening to excuses and deciding which are valid. All students are given the benefit of the doubt. Unfortunately, when they have no jokers left, they have a sanction.

3) Be consistent

One of the hardest things is to be fair to all the students, all the time. It is natural to be more forgiving to the well-behaved student who forgets their homework once a year, compared to the student who never does it. This is where a joker system is useful, as the students who only forget once or twice won't be punished.

4) Be persistent

Along with being consistent, it can be tempting to turn a blind eye on a Friday afternoon, but as we know, students want to know where the barriers are, and that means you can't move them.

5) Don't lose your cool

Another difficult rule to apply all the time! However do remember that you don't have to sort out every problem on the spot, which can often lead to escalating arguments with students. Tell them that their behaviour is not acceptable and that you will deal with it later. Remind students who misbehave that your duty is to teach those who want to learn (the good students will appreciate this too) and that you will speak to them later. This gives everyone time to calm down. However, you must always follow through, even if you have calmed down and the offense seems pretty minor later on. Remember – be persistent and consistent.

6) Fake it 'til you make it

Or in the words of the wonderful Amy Cuddy (check out her TED talk, *Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are,* **https://www.ted.com/speakers/amy_cuddy**) fake it until you become it. Being prepared, being familiar with the materials, having a plan B, and being able to integrate interesting activities are all things that will help you feel more confident, and students will pick up on that. If you are still nervous at the idea of facing a class of teens then look up some body language tips to help you.

Over to You

The second part of the workshop involved talking through the specific questions that participants had handed in at the start of the workshop. Below is a summary of some of the suggestions.

What if a student doesn't do homework or forgets his or her books?

It was generally agreed that some sort of simple joker or points system could help in this situation. So, after a pre-decided number of chances students would receive a suitable sanction (detention or phone call home, etc.) Alternatively, students can collect points for good behaviour that can 'buy' treats such as watching a film, playing a game, etc. This idea also implies that individuals are responsible for class treats and so peer pressure may play a useful part in getting students to work. While collective punishments are a definite no, collective treats can work well.

One participant pointed out that in some circumstances it might be worthwhile to check that the student has a suitable environment to complete homework at home and if this is not the case, then discreetly provide them with the opportunity to complete work before or after class.

What can we do about low-level noise and multiple students chatting?

Many participants felt this was a tough one, the equivalent of putting out small fires starting left, right, and centre the minute your back is turned. This is a frequent problem in language classes where we don't expect silence as other school subjects might do. Participants shared the idea of using an app that measures decibels.

What should be done when students speak L1 during pairwork?

This question provoked a split in opinion. Some participants felt this was inevitable. The teacher can provide learning opportunities, but if students don't take these opportunities then that is their problem. Others felt that such students should be sanctioned, perhaps by removing them from this fun activity and giving them something that might be seen as more boring – such as written grammar exercises.

What if a student does not want to work in the group the teacher has chosen?

Not everyone enjoys working with other people. Some students, including those with learning difficulties, can find it difficult to work with others. So why not give students a choice? We decided that it didn't really matter and that it was a good idea to let students choose to work alone or in pairs – as long as the work gets done.

What if a student constantly calls out without putting his hand up?

This can be irritating but at least the student is participating. One participant mentioned a student who often asked questions that had little relation to the task at hand, perhaps in an attempt to disrupt the class. Someone suggested asking this student to write down their queries and offer to answer them after the bell had gone – only the truly curious would use up precious break time in this way!

What if a student mutters something under his breath?

The general consensus was definitely NOT to ask them to repeat what they had said – who can blame a student who says something rude out loud when you asked them to do just that? It was generally felt that as long as the student was doing what had been asked, it was better to let them be. We can't force people to be happy with everything and it is natural to display our moods within accepted behavioural norms.

What if a student is rude to you or others in the class?

If a student is blatantly rude to the teacher or a classmate, they must be called out on this and the school sanction implemented. This is where the 'planning your attack' technique we saw earlier comes in useful.

To conclude, the participants really appreciated the participative problem-solving nature of this collaborative workshop. ETAS Geneva and other regions are more than willing to set up similar sessions on other issues that interest our members. Contact your local region for more details.

Suggested Reading

Bennett, T. (2010). *The behaviour guru: Behaviour management solutions for teachers*. London, UK: Continuum International Publishing Group.

Cuddy, A. (2012). Your body language may shape who you are: Retrieved from **https://www.ted.com/talks/amy_cuddy_your_body_language_shapes_who_you_are**

Cowley, S. (2014). *Getting the buggers to behave*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Education.

Beadle, P. & Murphy, J. (2013). *Why are you shouting at us?: The dos and don'ts of behaviour management*. London, UK: Continuum International Publishing.

Dix, P. (2010). *The essential guide to taking care of behaviour: Practical skills for teachers*. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

About the Author

Rachael Harris has been teaching English as a Foreign Language for over 20 years. After starting with Business English and ESP classes, she now teaches young learners and teens in a French speaking secondary and primary school where she has produced the SEN policy statement as well as being external examinations and Advanced English coordinator. Rachael also publishes articles for various EFL publication and gives workshops at EFL conferences. She is the ETAS Regional co-Coordinator for the Geneva area.

The practical benefits of doing a Master's degree

BEN HOYT

While my colleagues have written about research projects they conducted during their studies, I wanted to share a little bit more specifically about how getting a Master's degree has affected my day-to-day working life. I, too, enjoy talking about my research area (out-of-class activities and learning outcomes) but the question I have been asked most often is if I thought getting a Master's degree would be a good idea for someone. I hope that this article will help more people to understand the process and decide whether or not it would be worthwhile.

For context, I received my Master's degree in Teaching English as a Second or Foreign Language from the University of Birmingham in the summer of 2015. I had been working in private language schools for six years with a Bachelor's degree and CELTA and my motivation for this postgraduate degree was to get a position in the tertiary sector for improved job security, pay, and benefits as well as a more predictable schedule. I did the degree part-time, by distance, and taught between 12 and 15 contact hours per week alongside my studies. In the autumn of 2016, I started teaching in the Bachelor programme at the School of Management in Fribourg.

In addition to the theoretical knowledge I gained during the process, I finished the degree with improved abilities in several areas which I would like to discuss. All of these skills can be learned independently, of course, and none of them require doing a Master's degree to learn, but I feel they were definitely a side-effect of the programme. Generally, they fall into the categories of soft skills of personal and interpersonal development, and hard skills that I can advertise on my CV. Furthermore, the certification together with these new skills have added up to a very tangible financial difference which will be discussed in the third section: hard cash.

Soft Skills

Time management and project management are hugely important when managing work, school, and personal life. Increasing my workload forced me to take charge of my time in order to be a valuable employee, do good work, and avoid burnout. This involved becoming more disciplined about answering emails, multi-tasking, working hours, and saying no. Basically, this meant only checking and replying to emails at certain times, focusing on one task at a time, setting firm times that I would not work past, and limiting the number of jobs and projects I would accept. On the project management side, with only one assessment per module (every four months), I had to learn how to break big projects down, split them up, and distribute the work in a realistic schedule that would allow me to know when I could take a break. Moreover, my system had to be strong enough that I could actually enjoy this time off when I had it.

Communication and empathy are two other areas where I grew during this process. Clear and successful communication is vital to maintaining sanity during a distance learning programme, and because of the nature of communication with my tutor, I trained myself to look more closely at the emails I was sending to be sure all of my questions would be noticed and answered. Regular practice of putting myself in the reader's shoes helped me improve the quality of my written communication. Furthermore, the experience of waiting for a response and needing to scour websites and course materials for information (as well as enduring long reading tasks and written assignments) means that I really know what my students are going through when I publish my course materials or give assignments.

Another area where I improved considerably was in my ability to accept criticism. It is still not something that I enjoy, but I learned how to take feedback from tutors and colleagues and hold my own feelings back so that I could acknowledge the criticism and respond to it. Learning how other people see my work has helped me to be more objective in self-assessments and then make it even better.

Hard skills

In addition to having (hopefully) become a nicer, more level-headed, and better organised person during the degree, I also gained a few more concrete skills.

Microsoft Office is tremendously important for self-publishing, and for more than two years I used it extensively. I not only increased my speed at touch typing and transcription in Word, I also learned a lot about the page and document design possibilities within it. I also gained a great deal of experience with Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint during the degree and after it. I still use these programs daily to make class materials, worksheets, and presentations for my students and colleagues.

Writing articles and making presentations are two other things that I had not done before completing my Master's. Again, it is in no way necessary to have a postgraduate degree to write for ETAS Journal or present at an ETAS event, but doing the degree gave me the confidence and the material to give my first presentation. And the organisational skills I developed during the degree helped me add more work to my schedule, including co-founding a local monthly teacher discussion group, without putting myself under too much pressure.

User feedback and data visualisation are two very prominent trends today and my dissertation provided me with a good introduction to projects of this nature. Each step in the data-visualisation process involves a number of specific considerations: from writing survey questions, organising the distribution of the survey, collecting the data, cleaning the data, and analysing the data to finally presenting it. Today I use this knowledge to design surveys and interpret the data for a range of professional activities and it all started with my experience doing the dissertation.

Finally, online course components are becoming more and more common in Swiss schools and having done a degree by distance, I have a student's insight into the factors that contribute to the quality of these materials. When I started my current job, using Moodle for class materials was a must. While I had never used the platform before, I understood the principles that needed to be followed so that the students would get the most benefit from what I had prepared.

Hard cash

The last area to be discussed, and possibly the most interesting for those who are considering a degree programme, is how it affected my wallet. Please keep in mind as you read that these data have been taken from a sample size of one. More research into the wage system and the value of qualifications in Switzerland is needed to make generalisations; I can only describe my own situation.

The first and most important thing that changed was my access to better positions. I had been working for private language schools for several years and applying to jobs in the secondary school sector and tertiary state institutions. It was only after I had received my diploma that I began to get interviews for these jobs. With limited experience outside of private language schools, I found online applications to be generally unfruitful. For this reason, I am deeply grateful to the people who recommended me for these positions and it was thanks to years of networking that finally got my CV on the right desks at the right times. But one of the Deans told me directly that I would not have been considered without a Master's degree.

The degree did more than just allow me to work in places like the School of Management Fribourg. Within the state education sector, salaries are determined using a matrix that connects the qualifications obtained with the years of experience rather than a negotiation process. Someone with a Bachelor's degree and a teaching certificate is at salary level 22 in the Canton of Fribourg, while a Master's degree moves an employee up to level 24. This means that for someone with six years of recognised teaching experience, one year on a 100% contract would gross CHF110,804.- instead of CHF102,660.-, a difference of more than CHF 8,000.- per year or almost 8% more than a teacher with only a Bachelor's degree. This amount increases each year as well: in ten years, the difference between the two levels would be more than CHF 9,400.-. Considering that the total cost to do a Master's degree at the University of Birmingham at the time of writing is approximately CHF12,000.- (£9,360.-), it seems to be an investment which is likely to pay off very quickly.

Conclusions

A Master's degree is an investment in yourself and you will most certainly come away from the process with a vastly improved theoretical background and a much deeper understanding of the history of the ideas on which we base our practise. However, you will learn much more than just the content of the lectures. I believe that not only did I become a better teacher, but I also gained a number of skills that have made me a better worker. While a great deal of networking was required to open the doors, the degree finally allowed me to get the job I wanted. I hope reading about my experience has helped you to more clearly imagine what it would be like and to make a more confident decision about whether to pursue a higher degree.

About the Author

Ben Hoyt teaches in the Bachelor's programme at the School of Management in Fribourg and tries to embody the principles of lifelong learning in all aspects of his life. He and other teachers meet monthly in Bern for discussions of professional topics. The schedule and topics can be found at **https://eltspringboard.wordpress.com/**

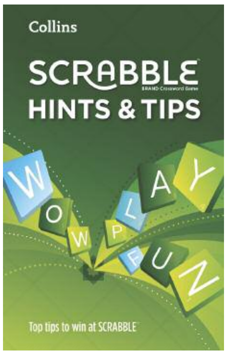
REVIEWS

A LOOK AT BOOKS

AT A GLANCE

Helena Lustenberger
Book Reviews Editor
bookreview@e-tas.ch

Christmas scores 13 Scrabble points



Scrabble Hints and Tips

Contributors: Barry Grossman, Allan Simmons
Collins (2016)
ISBN 978-0-00-758911-1
429 pages
£6.99

I've played Scrabble all my life but have always been a rather mediocre player so I was keen to read how to improve my game. First, I had to swot up on the latest rules played by The World English-Language Scrabble Players Association, which are quite terrifying in their thoroughness and complexity (you don't want to know!).

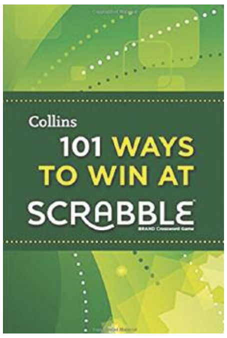
What interested me, a few pages into this book, was which were the permitted words? Answer: you may play any words listed in a standard English dictionary except those only spelt with an initial capital letter; abbreviations; prefixes and suffixes, and words requiring apostrophes and hyphens. Foreign words in a standard English dictionary are considered to have been absorbed into the English language and are allowed. Prior to starting the game, all players must agree on a dictionary to be used. I was surprised to find how many foreign words and what I had thought were abbreviations were actually acceptable. The game of Scrabble, by the way, originally called Lexico, was invented by an American, Alfred Butts, in the 1930s and evolved into its current form in the 1960s.

This fascinating little book does indeed contain lots of hints and tricks, including 'hooking' (adding to words to make longer words), 'blockers' (putting down words that cannot be added to in order to block your opponent), and 'parallel play' (adding a word parallel to another on the board forming secondary words, especially those of two letters). Many hints are repeated often enough for those with poor memories to memorise. I think I've got the hook of 'hanging' now. Hang on, I think it's the other way round.

There is an entry for each letter of the alphabet in the book and I soon realised that in order to become a good player, I would need to learn long lists of two- and three-letter words, not to mention 'unusual words from Overseas English', which turned out to be spoils from our colonial past or trophies from the Commonwealth, depending on your standpoint. There are words from Canadian, Australian, New Zealand, and South African varieties of English, but also from Hindi and Urdu. There are also lots of words to use *q* without *u*, so don't despair, and many words beginning with *y*, and *x* are very versatile. So, it's a good way to increase your vocabulary and amaze your guests at dinner parties.

One of my favourite handy hints is to be found on page 364: there are many ways of spelling *zho* (a Tibetan breed of cattle which is a cross between a yak and a cow): *dso*, *dzo*, *dzho,* and zo.

Now, this book is worth buying just for the original chat-up lines and conversation-stoppers that the information contained therein could generate, but it is also of considerable value to the language teacher. I have been playing Scrabble with my classes for years, usually at the end of a semester as a treat (we used to have to watch Henry IV Part 1 when I was at school), having the students play in teams, and allowing use of the dictionary (this is not cheating, by the way, it is 'gamesmanship'). This is a wonderful way to teach them about prefixes and suffixes or typical verb inflections such as *-ed* or *-ing* in an entertaining manner. The teacher can help and guide impartially. If he/she is keeping score, make sure to get the maths right. Or learn it while the students scrabble for words.



101 Ways to Win at Scrabble

Barry Grossman
Collins (2013)
ISBN 978-0-00-751456-4
Approx. 116 pages (unnumbered)
£6.99

Scrabble Hints and Tips was aimed at the more casual player, but this little book also promises 'cunning tricks' for the more ambitious and those seeking not only enjoyment but success. The author is not only a Scrabble and Countdown champion but also a comedy writer, so you will find not only dazzlingly useful words such as *'gju'* (a type of violin found in Shetland) amusing, but the writing itself.

The first tip is 'Think positive', which works until you find out that there are no three-letter words with *q* in the middle, and if you want to be a really good player, there is no way round learning lists of two- and three-letter words, not to mention seven- and eight-letter words. I am tempted to make up words in the hope that they exist in some obscure variety of English, but you need to know the definitions in case you are challenged.

Grossman recommends the use of mnemonics, for example: to remember the useful word *euoi* (an expression of Bacchic frenzy) if you want to get rid of vowels, think Excessive Units of Intoxication. Even better is *euouae* (a musical term) to which you can add -*s* to make a seven-letter word, thus gaining an extra 50 points.

What I learned: *e* and *s* are the best letters to have; there are lots of words with *q* without *u*, for example, *qi* (life force); use American spellings and forget hyphens; all nouns have a plural unless the dictionary specifically says otherwise, so 'musics' and 'magics' are acceptable (challenge?). From the teaching point of view, comparatives can be encouraged, but I baulked at the suggestion that unique + *-er, -est* was acceptable semantically. To make me antsier (yes, acceptable), one should learn all eleven anagrams for 'retains' or 'teasing' but a further tip is: 'remember to enjoy the look on your opponent's face as you count up the points' (tip 65).

Apart from more helpful lists of two- and three-letter words, there is information on further resources, such as apps, clubs, and tournaments. Unfortunately, there is no advice on what to do when you put down a seven-letter word such as 'holiday' on your first move when on holiday with your opponent (aka lovelife). My tip: don't!

ETAS Journal Book Review Guidelines

A full book review should be about **500 – 800** words and should be a constructive appraisal of one book or monograph, or several works. This review is **not** primarily a summary; rather, it is an analytic or critical discussion of a book or article, hence it **comments on** and **evaluates** the author's purpose, thesis, contentions, and methods of analysis in an engaging and informative way.

A good review may include many or all of these themes:

- the intended audience for the book and who would find it useful
- a brief background of the author(s), including the circumstances, context, or impetus of the book's creation and publication
- the main ideas and major objectives of the work and how effectively these are accomplished
- the theoretical issues, debates, and trends raised by the work
- the soundness of methods and information sources used
- the work's merit in comparison with others on this subject
- relevance of the work and its contributions to the field
- constructive appraisal of the work's strengths and weaknesses
- for edited books: dominant themes with reference to specific chapters
- coherence and clarity of the author's/authors' presentation, including effectiveness of writing style, organization, and tone.

The header of the review should include:

- the author's/authors' or editor's/editors' first and last name(s) (**please indicate if it is an edited book**)
- the title of the book
- the year of publication
- the place of publication
- the publisher
- the number of pages
- the price if available (and please indicate if paperback or hardcover)
- the ISBN.

At the end of the review, please include:

- the reviewer's first and last name
- institutional affiliation.

Style and submission guidelines:

The review must be written as MS Word, in Times New Roman, font size 12.

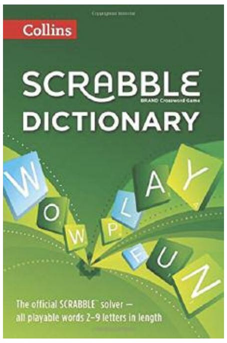
Language must be direct and void of unnecessary jargon and technical terms. Use the active voice as much as possible.

All references should be made **in-text**, rather than as footnotes or endnotes. When citing references, use the **APA 6th Edition** referencing style.

The review must include a statement that the submission has not been previously published and is not being considered for publication elsewhere.

Reviews should be written **within three months** of receiving the materials. Reviewers are welcome to contact the Book Reviews Editor for help or to send drafts.

ETAS Journal reserves the right to edit reviews for style, conciseness, and consistency. The completed review should be sent as an email attachment to the **Book Reviews Editor: bookreview@e-tas.ch**


Collins
SCRABBLE
DICTIONARY
WOWPLAYFUN
The official SCRABBLE solver – all playable words 2–9 letters in length

Scrabble Dictionary
Edited by Ian Brookes, Andrew Holmes, Mary O'Neill, Elspeth Summers
Collins (2016)
ISBN 978-0-00-758912-8
784 pages
£7.99

This dictionary doesn't contain all the eligible Scrabble words, but it does list the most commonly used, as it is designed for family and social play and so there are no offensive words. Educators will be quick to spot indications of word endings, so we have unique, *–R, -S, –EST adj. being the only one of a particular type > n. person or thing that is unique and uniquely*.

As a Scrabble dictionary, this one is not unique but it does feature special panel entries which draw attention to more than 200 words of particular interest or utility, and which are not too obscure, depending on your definition of obscure. Not only is *euoi* included but its variants *evoe, evhoe,* and *evohe*. However, the lack of phonetics to indicate pronunciation means that this cry expressing Bacchic frenzy can be interpreted freely, the more frenzied the better.

So, that's your Christmas presents sorted for all your friends and family, and don't forget Brian in Accounts and your Great-Aunt Mavis.

Epitaph for a Working Man
Erhard von Büren

What I'm reading:
Epitaph for a Working Man
by Erhard von Büren, translated by Helen Wallimann.
Matador (2015)
ISBN 978-1-78462-299-2
pp. 145
£8.99

This stark account of the last year in the life of an old, contemporary, provincial Swiss working man as seen through the eyes of his son is moving, and gives a non-native Swiss reader a good idea of what it's like to live an ordinary life in Switzerland, far from the jokey 'How to be Swiss' lifestyle books. Its language is even more stark and unadorned in the German original, with its typical Swiss words such as 'Kittel' for jacket. If you can, read the original: *Abdankung* by Erhard von Büren, Zytglogge (1989) ISBN 3-7296-0328-0, or better: read both and improve your German.

A LOOK AT BOOKS

English EMPOWER B1 Student's Book

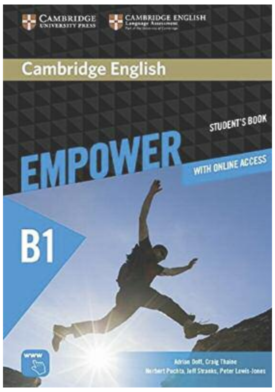
Adrian Doff, Craig Thaine, Herbert Puchta, Jeff Stranks, and Peter Lewis-Jones
Cambridge University Press (2015)
ISBN 978-1-107-46651-7
176 pages, paperback

English EMPOWER B1 Workbook with Answers

Peter Anderson
Cambridge University Press (2015)
ISBN 978-1-107-46680-7
96 pages; paperback

English EMPOWER B1 Pre-intermediate Teacher's Book

Lynda Edwards, Ruth Gairns, Stuart Redman, and Wayne Rimmer
Cambridge University Press (2015)
ISBN 978-1-107-46671-5
288 pages, paperback



The *English Empower B1* course can be described as one that can be comfortably placed in the middle ground between a General English course and a Business English Certificate course. In this way, Cambridge is able to provide adults with learning material that will arm them with English they can use in, and outside, the workplace. This is of particular importance to those who need everyday English and may, at a later stage, join a workforce that uses English as a corporate language. The material used caters to a wide range of ages: for example, young adults can relate to it in terms of the topics used to teach various points, such as Instagram and Facebook. In addition, older adults will find it interesting as they are exposed to the modern world and have a chance to learn more about today's technology.

The course uses various topics that are essential and relevant to today's world. Examples include how to write a travel blog and reading material using the movie *The Fast and The Furious*. The wide range of interesting topics used to present Grammar and Lexis also exposes students to an enormous range of vocabulary, both formal and informal. Every teacher knows that it is important for students to be presented with real-world authentic material. The authors of the book have accessed a wide range of sources including newspapers, such as *The Guardian* and *The New Zealand Herald;* books from publishing houses such as Oxford University Press; interviews from organisations such as The Nelson Mandela Foundation; websites, such as **www.biography.com**; as well as movies, such as *Harry Potter*. I particularly enjoyed the depth of colour and photography stills used in the student book. This really helps to keep the students interested.

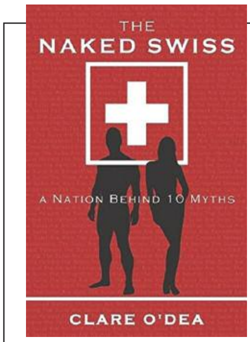
The material in the *English Empower* books is very engaging and allows the students to personalise speaking sessions. Furthermore, the Student Book and Workbook both have free online CDs which means students don't have to worry about scratching or losing a CD! An additional advantage of the online CD is that students can easily access it outside the classroom and thereby maximise their learning time. One negative point, however, is that the length and depth of the student book is such that it works well for teachers and students of classes running over a long period of time. For those working with students over a shorter period, the teacher will have to spend time choosing topics and exercises very carefully from the large range available.

I was very impressed with the way the workbook has been set up. Unlike other workbooks I have used, the *English Empower* Workbook focuses on providing students with practice for every sub unit as opposed to the whole unit. The extension section is set up to provide overall unit practice and this gives the teacher the flexibility to come back at a later stage to set up more revision. Quite often, the teacher has to look for additional material in order for students to revise material again at different stages of the course.

For new teachers, the Teacher's Book provides great detail and helps lighten the load in lesson planning. Lessons are described in such a way that you don't have to spend hours and days planning a course and corresponding lessons. Online progress tests are included to help you track how well your students are doing and assess whether or not they need extra help with any section. These tests are designed and incorporated into the course to facilitate the theory of Learning Orientated Assessment (LOA). For new teachers, the book provides a wide range of tips on how to incorporate LOA into teaching practice. The only negative side I found to the Teacher's Book is that so much material has been included that one sometimes must plough through sections until one finds the required content. However, this is a small inconvenience compared to the positives that have been incorporated to help the teacher deliver an exceptional learning experience.

For those looking for an engaging course for today's B1 student, this is definitely the one to pick. It will keep them keen using topics that cover countries other than Britain and encompass many different cultures.

Grace Hutter
The Language Factory St. Gallen


THE
NAKED SWISS
A NATION BEHIND 10 MYTHS
CLARE O'DEA

The Naked Swiss: A Nation Behind 10 Myths

Clare O'Dea

Bergli Books(2016)
ISBN: 978-3-905252-90-3
231 pages

If you are Swiss, know someone who is Swiss, or are simply interested in the Swiss and Switzerland, then this book is for you!

Delving into the truth behind ten prevalent myths about the Swiss, Irish-Swiss author and journalist Clare O'Dea tells it like it is. Although the details are not always flattering, the history and stories presented in this book helped shape modern Switzerland and are in themselves fascinating. Anecdotes range from 1291 to 2016, with a strong focus on recent national policies, referendums, and recent banking scandals. This book has something for everyone, whether you want to include a chapter as a reading for an English lesson, use a passage for an in-class activity, or just want to know more about what makes the Swiss tick (pardon the pun).

The book is divided into ten chapters, each debunking a common Swiss stereotype. *What makes the Swiss "Swiss"? Why are the Swiss so rich? Are the Swiss xenophobic? Are they brilliant, sexist, neutral, or boring? Did they help the Nazis? Are they crooked bankers? Do they really have the world's best democracy?* In answering the above, the author has clearly done her homework: these hot topics are explored in a matter of fact (dare I say "Swiss") way, with the right mix of humour and realism. Clare O'Dea, a naturalised Swiss citizen, shows that she understands the culture of her adopted country and is able to talk about its darker sides without judgment. Some chapters make for uncomfortable reading, and have left me with questions about Switzerland's stance towards *Secondos* (the children of Swiss immigrants, born in Switzerland), Swiss banking ethics, and the place of women in Swiss society. Tidbits about the author's own experience working as a journalist and raising three children in Switzerland enliven the narrative. This book is an informative and interesting read for Swiss and non-Swiss alike.

What particularly impressed me was how succinctly past historical events are meaningfully linked to the present Swiss reality. The question of women's rights, suffrage, and childcare – and whether to avail oneself of it– are more closely linked than I had realised: reading this book has made me rethink some of my own preconceptions. O'Dea also neatly refers back to previous chapters and underlines the impact of past policies on today's (Swiss) mentality.

O'Dea's writing style is inviting; the book contains a good mix of humour, anecdotes, and facts. The text is well organised and the ideas are clearly presented, with longer anecdotes, such as the cat-meat fiasco, presented in a separate "in focus" section at the end of the chapter. (Yes, apparently the unsubstantiated rumour about the "cat-and-dog-eating Swiss" lives on. For more details, see Chapter 2). The author's journalistic background is used to good advantage: interviews with key political and historical players, such as Pascal Couchepin (former Swiss President) and Marthe Gosteli (Swiss suffragette), afford the reader a glimpse into various "insider" perspectives.

I am also a fan of O'Dea's use of images: sometimes a picture really is worth a thousand words. Various media, such as newspaper headlines, paintings, and archival photographs, add detail to the text and help tell the Swiss story. Not to mention that pictures are a great teaching tool.

So to sum up, *The Naked Swiss* is worth reading and can readily supply material for the English language classroom. The fly in the ointment is the book's thick, stiff paper, which makes it uncomfortable to hold and the pages hard to turn. That aside, I give this book a double thumbs up!

Eva Göksel
Pädagogische Hochschule Zug (PH Zug)

etas english teachers association switzerland
Journal
A PEER-REVIEWED MAGAZINE FOR ENGLISH PROFESSIONALS | VOLUME 33 | NO. 3 | SUMMER 2016
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Cambridge English	
Key (KET)	CHF 169.–
Preliminary (PET)	CHF 169.–
First (FCE)	CHF 249.–
Advanced (CAE)	CHF 269.–
Business Preliminary (BEC Preliminary)	CHF 169.–
Business Vantage (BEC Vantage)	CHF 249.–
Business Higher (BEC Higher)	CHF 289.–
Key for Schools (KETfs)	CHF 169.–
Preliminary for Schools (PETfs)	CHF 169.–
First for Schools (FCEfs)	CHF 249.–

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