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In Memory of Alberto Gaspar

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Alberto Gaspar, a visionary leader and the former president of the APPI. Alberto was not only a pioneer in his field but also a mentor and friend to many within our community. His passion for innovation and dedication to excellence left an indelible mark on all of us. We are forever grateful for his contributions and his enduring legacy will continue to inspire future generations.

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Embracing the Journey:

The Inaugural Book of Proceedings for APPI's Annual Conference

As we turn the page to a new chapter in the fascinating history of APPI Conferences, it is with great pride and a profound sense of purpose that we present the first-ever Book of Proceedings. This milestone not only commemorates the 36th Annual Conference but also pays homage to the indelible legacy of APPI's late President, Alberto Gaspar, whose vision and dedication was for many, many years a guiding light for our community. In the spirit of Alberto's belief in teaching EFL with both art and heart, we embrace the opportunity to bring together the voices of our esteemed contributors in a compendium that transcends an ordinary book of proceedings, given the variety and length of APPI Conference sessions.

Since the very 1st APPI Conference in Viana do Castelo in 1986, and based on the available records, there has been an approximate total of 100 plenaries, 1274 talks, 1347 workshops (give or take a cancellation or two) and 326 commercial workshops, not to mention all the lectures, theatre showcases, panels and forums. And while it all began in the North of Portugal, it was in heart of Lisbon, in the familiar and welcoming venue of ISCTE-IUL, where our collective gathered under the banner of "The (He)Art of Teaching EFL," a theme that echoes our collaborative labour to blend scientific rigour with creative expression in our teaching practices. This conference, although marked by the poignant absence of Alberto, has nevertheless been a testament to the resilience and vibrancy of our APPI family. It is a celebration of our shared commitment to the professional development of EFL teachers, infused with empathy, positivity, and the desire to inspire.

Our contributors, from diverse backgrounds and specialisations, have enriched this Book of Proceedings with meaningful insights and advances in the field of ELT.

Agnieszka Dzięcioł-Pędich and **Agnieszka Dudzik** open our eyes to the intricate reading challenges faced by SEN learners, offering strategies that marry compassion with pedagogical effectiveness. **Annie Altamirano** explores the transformative power of the classroom, advocating for a nuanced approach to instruction, assessment, and differentiation that honours each student's journey.

Margarita Kosior reminds us of the boundless potential of storytelling in teaching, urging us to unlock our students' creativity for advocacy and change. Meanwhile, **Hannah Bernier** and **Mark Daubney** share their inspiring work in environmental communication, showcasing how digital narratives can enhance environmental awareness among students, thus blending environmental education with language learning in a powerful narrative of change.

Sibel Aybek and **Cem Can**'s meticulous study provides a window into the common pitfalls in English language proficiency exams for Portuguese EFL learners, offering valuable insights for educators aiming to refine their teaching strategies based on empirical evidence. **Armanda Stroia**'s session on multimodal storytelling stands as a clarion call to embrace digital literacies, empowering students to become proactive creators in a digitally connected world.

João Rodrigues explores the intersection of language education and social media, spotlighting the emerging role of 'language learning influencers' by offering insights into how educators can leverage these trendsetters to foster more engaging and effective language learning. **Susana Oliveira** advocates for digital teaching development with passion, encouraging educators to teach from the heart with innovative tools and resources such as Quizalize, Edpuzzle and Canva.

Carlos Lindade's exploration of ChatGPT's role in ELT opens a new frontier for discussion, reflecting on the tool's potential to revolutionise lesson planning, material development, and more, while also sharing firsthand teacher experiences from the conference.

This book of proceedings is more than a collection of articles; it is a celebration of our collective endeavour to push the boundaries of ELT. Each contribution, whether focused on innovative teaching strategies, digital literacies, or the nuanced challenges of language learning, bestows a richer, more diverse understanding of our field.

As we share this volume with the ELT community, we extend our heartfelt thanks to every speaker, attendee, and supporter of the APPI conference. We want to especially thank all the speakers that found the time to submit their work for this volume. Your contributions have not only enriched this Book of Proceedings but have also reinforced our commitment to fostering a community of educators who teach with both art and heart.

The Editors

Carlos Lindade, João Rodrigues and Judite Fiúza

Developing reading skills for learners with special educational needs

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Abstract

This article provides an overview of the reading difficulties faced by special educational needs (SEN) learners and offers a number of effective reading strategies to address them. Reading difficulties among SEN learners include decoding challenges, limited sight vocabulary, slow reading pace, and comprehension issues. All of them can result in stress and anxiety when learners face even seemingly simple reading tasks. Significantly, these difficulties can be reduced with tailored strategies, which include segmenting texts to decrease cognitive load, ongoing vocabulary development, pre-teaching unfamiliar words, previewing texts, teaching reading strategies, and comprehension monitoring skills. By implementing these strategies, teachers can empower SEN learners to improve their reading skills, thus promoting successful learning outcomes and enhancing their overall educational experience.

Keywords: reading skills, SEN learners, reading strategies

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1. What are special educational needs?

Learners are considered to have special educational needs (SEN) when they have learning difficulties and/or disabilities that make them acquire knowledge and develop skills at a slower pace and with substantially more effort than their peers. Therefore, SEN learners often require additional support in educational contexts. They might also need assistance when it comes to interacting with others, expressing and understanding their own emotions as well as those of other people, behaving adequately in various social settings and developing their organisational skills.

It is, among others, autistic, dyslexic, and ADHD students who are likely to have special educational needs which will affect different aspects of foreign language learning, including the development of reading skills. What teachers should bear in mind is that autism, dyslexia and ADHD are all life-long conditions. While their symptoms may change with age (i.e. they usually become less acute especially when children receive appropriate support), they persist into adulthood. Consequently, even older (adolescents or young adults) and more linguistically advanced learners will encounter difficulties in various aspects of language learning, including reading skills development.

2. Reading difficulties experienced by SEN learners

There are a number of difficulties that prevent SEN learners from making significant progress with their reading skills development. While reading a text, they might:

- find it difficult to decode, i.e. to apply knowledge of letter-sound relationships to correctly pronounce written words. Significantly, these relationships allow learners to recognise familiar words in a text quickly and to deduce the pronunciation and meaning of unknown words;
- have limited sight vocabulary and/or struggle with reading sight words;
- omit words, lines or fragments;
- transpose letters or words;
- read at a reduced pace;
- have trouble understanding the passages they have read;
- have limited knowledge of vocabulary (which might be one of the factors affecting the understanding of a passage);
- struggle with sequencing;
- find it difficult to concentrate for a longer period of time;
- lose their place when reading;

- not be able to store more than one or two pieces of information at one time in their memory.

Additionally, struggling readers may fear being judged. They may, therefore, approach a reading activity with anxiety, which will make it stressful. In extreme cases, students can become anxious just by thinking about reading, whether it be at home or in the classroom (Rawe, 2023). However, all of these difficulties and anxiety can be addressed with appropriate strategies. Additionally, reading resources that reflect the learner's interests can make the process more enjoyable.

3. Reading strategies for SEN learners

Appropriately tailored and selected reading strategies will help SEN learners to become more successful readers. The strategies, which ought to be adapted to individual needs include:

Dividing the text into manageable segments

Longer texts might be challenging and demotivating even for more linguistically advanced SEN learners (Kormos & Smith, 2012). Hence, dividing the reading passage into manageable segments and working with one segment at a time is a more effective technique. Ideally, comprehension questions should be designed for each manageable chunk rather than for the whole text.

Significantly, short reading segments reduce the cognitive load to be processed, aiding learners in maintaining concentration and improving their ability to remain engaged. They gradually build learners' comprehension and confidence, as students successfully tackle one segment at a time, which leads to a sense of accomplishment and motivation.

Finally, SEN learners may require additional time to process and respond to the reading material. Dividing the text into fragments allows for pacing that accommodates learners' individual working rates.

Developing vocabulary

A strong vocabulary is a key component of reading comprehension (Lee, 2023). As SEN learners frequently have a restricted vocabulary and thus understand less of what they read, significant attention should be devoted to vocabulary development, even when learners reach more advanced language levels and read longer texts. It is frequent and consistent practice on word recognition, i.e. a process by which students learn to identify

words and word parts that promotes the development of word decoding skills, which is essential for successful reading (Murray, 2016).

Pre-teaching vocabulary

Language teachers should pre-teach unfamiliar vocabulary items in addition to teaching them. This, according to Kormos and Smith (2012), 'can help learners focus on the information content of the text and aid global text comprehension' (p. 136). Furthermore, pre-teaching new words might reduce the anxiety learners are likely to experience when encountering an unknown term.

Importantly, since SEN learners may not be able to resort to their inference skills in order to deduce meaning from contextual cues, new vocabulary ought to be taught explicitly, i.e. learners should be provided with concise definitions and/or translations of target words together with their pronunciation and contextual usage. Moreover, Kormos and Smith (2012) recommend accompanying a reading passage with a glossary.

Pre-viewing the text

SEN learners frequently devote more effort to decoding rather than comprehension. Consequently, they may not be actively focusing on the message of what they are reading. Teachers can help them to overcome this difficulty by outlining the main concepts of the reading passage, i.e. they can help learners preview the text.

When previewing, the teacher summarises the main ideas of the material in the same sequence as they are presented in the reading selection. Furthermore, teachers could provide any relevant background information which helps learners put the text within a broader context and understand its purpose. Additionally, teachers may highlight key concepts, themes, or vocabulary that will be encountered in the text. This prepares students to focus on these components while reading.

Teaching reading strategies

While previewing can also be done by students themselves, teachers first ought to demonstrate how to do it by drawing learners' attention to, and by explaining the function of, the main title and the titles of paragraphs, images, as well as bold or italicised words. Additionally, Kelly (2019) recommends that learners skim the introduction and scan the summary or final paragraphs while previewing.

Kormos and Smith (2012) argue that SEN learners benefit from the explicit teaching of reading strategies. Learners are better able to extract meaning from what they read, leading to improved overall comprehension. Moreover, reading strategies encourage learners to think critically about the text.

Finally, when students are proficient in reading strategies, they are more likely to engage actively with the text which can lead to greater interest in reading, making it a more rewarding activity.

Teaching comprehension monitoring skills

Reid and Gavin (2016) observe that when skilled readers realise that they do not fully understand what they have read, they will likely pause to re-read with greater care, reduce reading speed to allow for more in-depth processing, or tap into prior knowledge.

Since comprehension monitoring does not come naturally or easily to SEN learners, they must be taught to do the following: track their thinking, notice when they lose focus, stop and go back, reread, identify what is confusing, and select the best strategy.

4. Final remarks

Reading challenges experienced by SEN learners manifest in various ways, e.g. difficulties with decoding, limited general and sight vocabulary, slow reading pace, or impaired comprehension. These challenges often lead to increased anxiety and stress associated with reading tasks.

However, with appropriate support and strategies, these difficulties can be addressed. Tailored reading strategies that are essential for SEN learners include segmenting texts for easier comprehension and reduced cognitive load, consistent vocabulary development and pre-teaching, previewing texts, as well as explicit instruction in reading strategies and comprehension monitoring. These strategies aim to enhance comprehension, reduce anxiety, and foster a positive reading experience, ultimately promoting successful learning outcomes among SEN learners.

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Embedding formative assessment in the differentiated language classroom

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Abstract

The classroom environment significantly impacts student learning. By aligning instruction, assessment, and differentiation, educators can create a supportive, inclusive classroom culture. Formative assessment acts as a compass for daily planning in a differentiated classroom, helping teachers understand each student's unique starting point and progress towards learning goals.

The article delves into various strategies for pre-assessment, including KUDs (knowledge, understanding, be able to do), readiness assessments, and interest surveys. Additionally, it highlights the importance of ongoing, formative assessments and their role in promoting student growth and reflection. Grading and reporting practices are discussed within the context of differentiation, emphasising the need for clear, criterion-based grading that supports student growth and a growth mindset.

Ultimately, this article emphasises the importance of creating a learning environment that respects individual differences while maintaining common content standards, fostering trust, and empowering all students to achieve their full potential.

Keywords: differentiated instruction, formative assessment, classroom environment, student readiness, grading practices.

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1. Introduction

Differentiated instruction is an effective pedagogical approach comprising interdependent elements that strive to address the diverse learning needs of students in an inclusive classroom. In this context, differentiation is designed to adapt teaching methods and assessments to cater for the individual readiness, interests, and learning profiles of students (Tomlinson, 2014). This article aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of the essential interplay between differentiation, assessment, and grading.

The learning environment is a foundational concept within the framework of differentiated instruction. It encompasses both the physical and affective dimensions of the classroom setting. The way students experience the learning environment significantly influences their overall learning experience (Fraser, 2014). Instruction that does not adapt to students' readiness, interests, and preferred learning approaches can make students feel undervalued and unsafe within the learning environment.

Assessment, as an integral component of the teaching process, serves as a diagnostic tool in understanding where each student begins their learning journey and their progress towards achieving the lesson or unit's learning objectives (Black & Wiliam, 1998). Essentially, assessment functions as a compass for daily planning in a differentiated classroom. It guides teachers to adapt their instructional strategies, ensuring they align with students' diverse needs and abilities. To optimise differentiated instruction, it is essential to consider the timing, content, and purpose of assessments. The differentiation approach requires assessments in all three areas – readiness, interest, and learning profile – to inform effective planning and instruction.

Ongoing or formative assessments have dual goals: gathering data to improve instruction and supporting teacher reflection. These assessments should occur with students, not just to them, promoting autonomy, monitoring progress, and facilitating peer interactions to enhance learning outcomes. The critical juncture where assessment meets grading will be explored, addressing the challenges and misconceptions associated with grading in a differentiated classroom. In a differentiated classroom, grading should not reflect different goals for different students but should provide feedback and grades based on each student's progress relative to the same learning intentions.

By addressing these issues and principles, this article aims to provide valuable insights and practical strategies for implementing differentiation, assessment, and grading effectively.

1.1 Assessment and differentiation

Assessment naturally emerges as a fundamental diagnostic process within the educational context. For differentiation to achieve its purpose, educators must possess a comprehensive understanding of each student's initial point of departure and their individual path towards meeting the criteria established for a particular lesson or instructional unit.

At the heart of differentiation lies the pivotal role of instruction, underscoring its ultimate objective – to provide each student with optimal learning experiences that maximise their growth potential. The successful realisation of this goal depends on effective instructional practices, an effective curriculum, effective assessment, classroom leadership and management.

In the context of differentiation, readiness should not be equalled with the mere capacity to learn; rather, it refers to a student's proximity to predefined learning objectives. Furthermore, nurturing student interest emerges as a potent catalyst for motivating learning.

Within differentiation, the notion of learning profile differentiation comes to the fore. It seeks to provide learners with a repertoire of learning approaches that make the learning process more efficient and effective.

1.2 The when, the what, and the why

A cogent perspective on assessment hinges on the considerations of when, what, and why assessments are administered. Effective differentiation requires a comprehensive approach that encompasses assessment at various points: prior to the initiation of a unit of study (pre-assessment), during the progression of the unit (ongoing or formative assessment), and upon reaching crucial endpoints (summative assessment). Pre-assessment, or diagnostic assessment, plays a key role in gauging students' initial position concerning predefined learning targets, including knowledge, understanding, the capacity to apply these skills (KUDs) and an awareness of students' particular interests and learning preferences. Formative assessment, ongoing in nature, is instrumental in continuously monitoring the evolution of students' knowledge, understanding, and skills.

Summative assessment, on the other hand, serves to evaluate to what extent the student has met learning objectives or intentions. In the context of differentiation, it is vital to consider the assessment of three distinct dimensions of learning: readiness, interest, and learning profile. Comprehensive assessments across these three facets

foster a more nuanced understanding of student differences, thereby enhancing the planning and delivery of instruction.

2. Pre-assessment

2.1 KUDs

In the process of designing pre-assessment instruments, it is imperative to maintain a well-defined comprehension of the knowledge, understanding, and competencies (referred to as KUDs) that students should acquire consequent to their engagement with a particular unit of study. This entails a precise delineation of three fundamental components, namely, the critical lexical components integral to the unit ("K"), the foundational conceptual insights pertaining to the unit's importance ("U"), and the essential skill sets that underpin the practical accomplishments that students are expected to acquire within the unit ("D").

In most instances, it is judicious to encompass an evaluation of all three components, as each plays an indispensable role in the comprehensive understanding of students' diverse starting points with respect to the unit's subject matter. Consequently, the initial query that should be posed when crafting a pre-assessment is: "What specific aspects of the Ks, Us, and Ds am I trying to measure here?"

2.2 Pre-assessment formats

Pre-assessment methods can be either formal or informal. Informal strategies are characterised by their lack of structure and the absence of a systematic data collection process. These methods include student self-reporting, where students assess their own position in relation to their knowledge, understanding, or skills. This method encourages self-reflection and the development of self-assessment skills. The use of KWL charts and organisers such as concept maps and Venn diagrams help to gauge students' prior knowledge, what they want to know, and what they have learned. They offer a visual representation of students' understanding and interests. Hand signals and response cards allow for a rapid assessment of the proportion of correct answers and provide immediate feedback.

On the other hand, formal pre-assessment strategies are structured activities during which instructional time is dedicated to collecting individual-level data from students. Many strategies suitable for pre-assessment are also applicable to formative

or ongoing assessment, with the key distinction being the impact on instructional time and the level at which data is gathered (classwide vs. individual). These formal methods include systematic observations of students while they work or present their assignments, journal entries and writing prompts teachers can provide and request a written response. Teachers can also prompt students to illustrate and verbally explain their knowledge or skills related to a particular subject. This method is particularly beneficial for students who struggle with writing but possess knowledge of the topic.

3. Ongoing or formative assessment

Although a predominant goal of ongoing assessment is gathering data to improve instruction, another important and related goal is the use of assessment results for teacher reflection. In fact, Hattie (2012) proposes that "feedback is more powerful when it is sought by the teacher about his or her teaching than by the student about his or her learning" (p. 137).

3.1 Direct or Formal Strategies for Ongoing Assessment

Various formats suitable for assessing students' readiness and interests before instruction can also serve as effective tools for ongoing assessment. However, it is advisable to develop personalised strategies adaptable to the specific educational context. It is crucial to emphasise that virtually all student work, encompassing in-class exercises and homework, can function as formative assessment. This underscores the idea that the format of the assessment is less critical than its underlying purpose and the utility of students' produced work.

For example, graphic organisers can be employed with students individually completing these tools based on topics or questions presented by the instructor. The teacher subsequently evaluates each student's work against predefined criteria to ascertain their proficiency with the given subject matter or question. Additionally, exit cards or tickets are valuable resources wherein the teacher formulates one or more questions directly linked to the day's lesson, and students provide succinct responses on index cards, slips of paper, or sticky notes. These responses are submitted as students exit the classroom or transition to other subjects.

Another useful tool is the "3-2-1" card, which functions as an exit card, prompting students to respond to specific questions or prompts, often requiring three responses, then two, and finally one. The card's arrangement can also be adapted to the "1-2-3"

order, accommodating a wide range of prompts. Furthermore, entry cards are utilised with students responding to a posted question as they enter the classroom, subsequently submitting their responses as class commences. Typically, these questions are linked to homework assignments or essential elements from the preceding day's class.

Additionally, Predict-Observe-Explain (POE) exercises are instrumental. In these exercises, the teacher initiates a demonstration, reads a passage, or outlines a scenario, prompting students to record their predictions (P) regarding the subsequent events. The teacher then proceeds with the demonstration, passage, or scenario, instructing students to observe (O) what indeed transpires. Subsequently, students are tasked with explaining (E) the accuracy or inaccuracy of their initial predictions.

To ensure the effective use of ongoing assessment, it is imperative to establish clear and well-defined learning goals or intentions, alongside associated success criteria, communicated to students before instruction begins. The presence of unambiguous goals forms the cornerstone upon which subsequent actions are built, including the selection of appropriate content, the design of learning activities that facilitate content accessibility, and the development and interpretation of assessments deployed throughout the instructional cycle.

It is worth noting that, akin to pre-assessments, ongoing formative assessments can be tailored in terms of the mode of expression, working conditions, and their alignment with students' specific interests. However, the core objectives that assessments are designed to measure should remain consistent.

4. Assessment, grading, and differentiation

4.1 Core Considerations

Several critical issues central to the differentiation philosophy are significantly influenced by assessment and grading practices. Firstly, differentiation advocates that classroom practices, including assessment and grading, should foster a growth mindset in both students and teachers (Dweck, 2006). Secondly, differentiation aims to maintain an equilibrium in students' success-to-effort ratios, ensuring that hard work consistently translates into visible achievement (Hattie, 2012). Lastly, differentiation emphasises the importance of fostering a sense of teamwork, community, and collaboration as integral to student success, where students and teachers collectively strive for maximal growth (Vygotsky, 1978).

Unfortunately, numerous conventional grading practices run counter to these differentiation objectives. For some students, excessive praise and an unceasing pursuit of success have created a dependency, where they constantly seek more validation (Mueller & Dweck, 1998). Conversely, other students, perennially feeling inadequate, have suffered an erosion of their intellectual self-confidence, leading to a state of disengagement (Covington, 2000). Furthermore, grading practices often convey a discouraging message to students in the midranges of achievement, reinforcing the notion that they are merely "average" and unlikely to improve (Tomlinson, 2014).

In essence, the way we instruct, assess, and grade frequently perpetuates a dichotomy of winners and losers in the classroom, detracting from the idea that collective learning and teaching can enhance the overall educational experience (Hargreaves & O'Connor, 2018).

Thus, the key question is whether there exist practices that harmonise best-practice assessment and grading with the fundamental tenets of differentiation. Notably, best practices in assessment and grading can seamlessly complement the aspirations of quality differentiation, offering robust support for a diverse classroom (Wormeli, 2006). Assessment and grading should be perceived as specific junctures within a more extensive instructional cycle, encompassing planning, teaching, learning, feedback, and measurement (Brookhart, 2004). The primary focus within the classroom should remain on teaching and learning, where pre- and ongoing assessments drive the teaching-learning process. At crucial intervals during a unit of study, summative assessments gauge students' progress, assessing their growth toward and beyond Knowledge, Understanding, and Skills (KUDs). Upon the end of a designated marking period, teachers should transition these scores into grades, communicating them through report cards. Grading and reporting should be aligned with sound classroom practices, acting as supportive mechanisms rather than prescriptive mandates (O'Connor, 2002).

4.2 Guiding principles for effective grading practices

Academic consensus among measurement and assessment experts delineates several fundamental principles conducive to the establishment of grades that are characterised by consistency, accuracy, significance, and their role in supporting the learning process (Black & Wiliam, 1998). These principles inherently encompass both formative and summative evaluation practices, along with the pivotal "grading moment," as integral components of the comprehensive assessment cycle (Hattie, 2012).

4.2.1. Base grades in clearly defined learning objectives

Clarity regarding educational objectives is essential for both educators and learners alike. Consequently, assessments become transparent instruments that enable students to gauge their proximity to these well-defined targets and their ongoing progress toward, or even beyond, these objectives, while grades effectively convey a student's status concerning these clearly established learning goals (Tomlinson, 2014).

4.2.2. Do not overgrade student work

In the pursuit of learning, students are bound to experience missteps, mistakes, and redirection. It is of paramount importance to engender a clear connection in students' minds between the tasks assigned for practice, both in school and at home, and their academic growth, thereby emphasising the quality of practice in relation to the development of competence. An established adage posits that "students won't engage in tasks unless they are graded," which underscores a prevalent disconnect between practice and outcome. Regrettably, an indiscriminate approach to grading, wherein every task is assessed, inadvertently perpetuates this disconnect, potentially leading students to perceive the grade as the culmination of their learning journey (Hattie, 2012).

4.2.3. Use criterion-based grades

Utilising comparative or norm-based grading systems, where students are evaluated in relation to their peers, inadvertently fosters a competitive atmosphere. Such an approach frequently leads struggling students to internalise a belief that they lack the inherent capacity for success, while high-achieving students may develop a sense of entitlement rather than attributing their accomplishments to dedication and diligence. The goal should focus on ensuring that all students attain predefined objectives or criteria denoting success, rather than segregating and ordering them based on relative performance (Hattie, 2012).

4.2.4. Employ only high-quality assessments

There exists a positive correlation between quality assessments and enhanced student achievement. Quality assessments, which are inherently aligned with clearly specified learning objectives known to students, serve to inspire students' increased engagement in the learning process, potentially due to the implicit endorsement of instructors who employ them. To achieve optimal effectiveness, assessments must accurately measure

students' proficiency against these explicitly designated educational goals. Furthermore, assessments should refrain from employing misleading questions and avoid 'gotcha' items that serve as traps or pitfalls. It is imperative that the method of assessment aligns with the specific nature of the intended learning, effectively gauging the targeted knowledge, understanding, or skills (Fraser, 2014).

4.2.5. Minimise ambiguity in grading

An ideal grading system should communicate, as clearly as possible, a student's level of knowledge, understanding, and skills at a particular juncture. 'Grade fog' materialises when grading practices introduce obscurity or equivocation into the grading process. This obscurity can manifest when points are deducted from assessments for reasons unrelated to academic content, such as issues of neatness, tardiness, or omissions of the student's name. Likewise, introducing extra-credit mechanisms may lead to further grade obfuscation. When a single grade attempts to encapsulate a multitude of student characteristics, it ultimately fails to represent any of them accurately, thus compromising its validity as a reflection of a student's proficiency (Hattie, 2012).

4.2.6. Prioritise later grading in a grading period

A grading approach that attributes greater weight to assessments conducted later in a grading cycle carries significant implications for student motivation and achievement. This practice tends to signal the importance of sustained effort and subsequent growth, serving as prime indicators of potential success. Moreover, an emphasis on later assessments mitigates the adverse impact of earlier deficiencies in the same content area, thus preserving the student's ongoing growth trajectory and bolstering their persistence in the learning process (Tomlinson, 2014).

4.2.7. Implement 3-P grading for report cards

The 3-P grading framework offers a constructive solution for the challenge of encapsulating diverse student characteristics within a single, comprehensive grade. This approach advocates reporting distinct grades for three distinct elements: a student's performance or product, their process and the habits of mind and work that signify success and can be developed, and their progress in specified educational objectives. These three 'Ps' should be independently reported with explicit indicators elucidating the essence of each component.

5. Conclusion

The complex interplay of differentiation, assessment, and grading is integral to the creation of inclusive and supportive learning environments. Students, despite their individual differences, are expected to meet common content standards, making it essential for educators to tailor their teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learning needs. Effective differentiation, as an inclusive pedagogical approach, involves adjusting instruction and assessment methods to suit students' readiness, interests, and learning profiles. This multifaceted process aids in optimising the learning experience and promoting student success.

The alignment of assessment with differentiation is crucial in understanding each student's starting point and progress toward specific learning objectives. Pre-assessments, formative assessments, and summative assessments serve different functions, helping educators adapt their teaching strategies to meet students' varying needs. Ongoing assessment, particularly, plays a dual role in improving instruction and supporting teacher reflection.

However, assessment alone is not sufficient. The critical juncture where assessment meets grading must also be carefully navigated. Grading practices have a significant impact on students' mindsets and motivation. Traditional grading systems that focus on competition and comparison among students can hinder the goals of differentiation. Effective grading practices must align with differentiation principles and emphasise clarity, equity, quality, and consistency.

In summary, the integration of differentiation, assessment, and grading is essential for creating an educational environment that respects student differences while promoting a shared commitment to growth, learning, and success. Embracing these principles can lead to benefiting more inclusive and supportive classrooms, ultimately all students, especially in the context of English as a Second Language instruction.

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Teaching for a cause through creative expression

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Tales of Strays

Abstract

The aim of my session at the 36th Annual APPI Conference was to demonstrate how – through English language teaching, materials writing and storytelling – teachers can awaken their students' creativity and motivate them to use their artistic expression to fight for an important cause.

Keywords: storytelling, awareness raising, picture books, materials writing, creativity

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1. Introduction

I am based in Greece, where unfortunately, like in many other places around the world, neglect, abuse, and abandonment of companion animals is very common. The truth is, however, there are probably no places on earth where companion animals' rights are fully respected. For this reason, a few years ago, I launched the Tales of Strays Campaign – an initiative that blends English Language Teaching with the goal of increasing awareness about companion animal welfare issues. Detailed information about the campaign is available in the article "The Tales of Strays Campaign or how ELT Embraced Companion Animals" in the *APPInep e-Newsletter* (Kosior, 2022b).

2. Tales of Strays in the ELT classroom

Addressing global issues is a fundamental aspect of many 21st-century classrooms. Many of us have taught about war and peace, disabilities, racism, bullying, or global warming. All these extremely important topics give the true meaning to the concept of educating. However, our relationship with companion animals and the things we do incorrectly, resulting in the neglect, abuse and abandonment of dogs and cats, have not received as much attention. All these hold far-reaching implications, not only for the animals themselves but also for people. Through education and through nurturing creativity in our students, we have an opportunity to advocate for the rights and well-being of companion animals, a cause that deserves our attention and support.

3. Creative response to creative content

"A creative lesson" can mean different things to different teachers. "Many teachers already teach creatively. They use imaginative and innovative approaches to deliver curriculum and make learning interesting and memorable. However, teaching for creativity is slightly different. It enables children to develop their own learning capacities" ("Why Teaching for Creativity Should Be Central to the Curriculum," n.d.). This expands the teacher's role beyond merely delivering a lesson and adds a different dimension to teaching: "In practice, [nurturing and cultivating creativity] usually means two things: serving as a role model for students and finding ways to stimulate their creative thinking processes" ("Why Teaching for Creativity Should Be Central to the Curriculum," n.d.). This extended role aligns with the emphasis on creative teaching and learning within the Tales of Strays Campaign. At the 36th Annual APPI Conference, I focused on the creative expression of students after storytelling sessions based on *Toby to the Rescue* and on

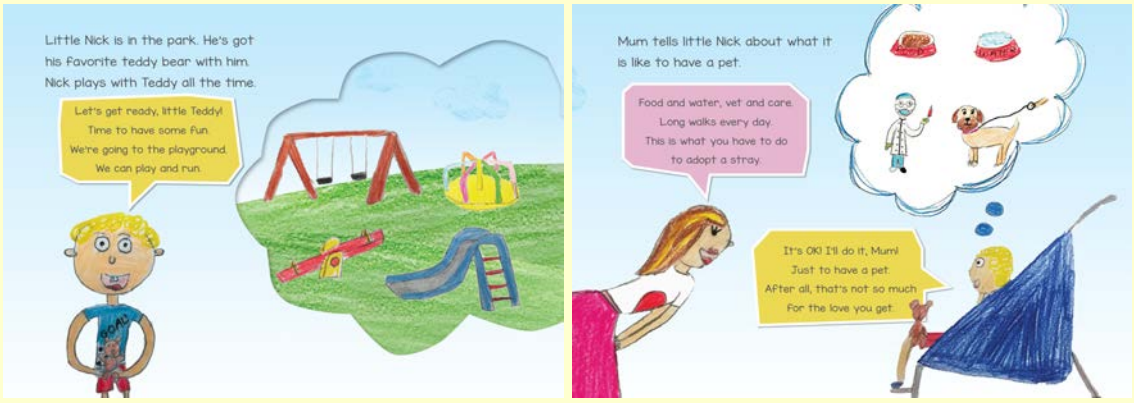
When a Cat Purrs. All this, illustrated through examples of the work created not only by my students, but also the work that colleagues supporting the Tales of Strays Campaign have shared with me.

4. Working with a picture book

4.1 Rhyme and rhythm

It has been observed that children are naturally drawn to stories with rhyming text. Rhyme and rhythm aid in the development of language skills and literacy by fostering an understanding of sounds and syllables in words. This, in turn, enhances children's language acquisition and reading abilities (Dugger, 2020). Therefore, it is crucial, particularly at the pre-primary and primary stages of education, to prioritise the cultivation of rhyme awareness, not only in terms of children's ability to recognise but also to produce rhymes (Grofčíková & Máčajová, 2020).

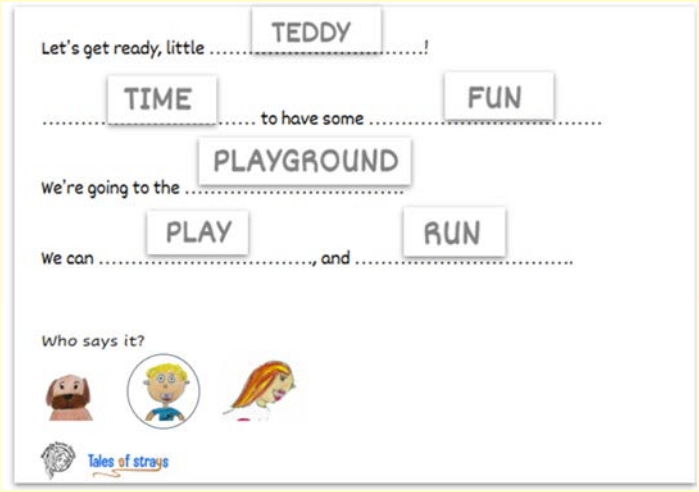
Rhyme and rhythm are crucial in *Toby to the Rescue*, enhancing language acquisition in learners. The rhythmic approach aids them in understanding the plot, encouraging active engagement with the unfolding events.



Figures 1 & **2:** Rhyming chants in *Toby to the rescue*

Before learners are provided with the opportunity to play with the language in a similar manner, it is essential to let them practice how rhyme and rhythm function. A fill-in-the-gaps activity, like the one presented in Figures 3 and 4, serves this purpose.





Figures 3 & **4:** Rhyme practice

Inspired by the rhyme and rhythm of the story itself, the students can be encouraged to respond by crafting their own poems, whether rhyming or not.

One example is the creation of an acrostic poem, a poetic form where specific letters, usually the initial letters of each line, spell out a word, name, or phrase when read vertically. An example of an acrostic poem, created by 11-year-old Nefeli from Efi Tzouri's class, which I presented during my session, revolves around the word "happy".

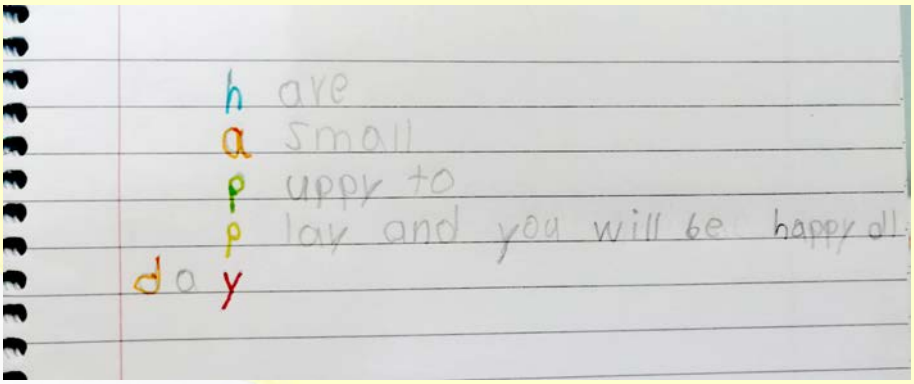


Figure 5: Acrostic poem, Nefeli (11)

Yet another enchanting poem created by G.P., one of Tanya Livarda's students, exhibits an impressive flow and conveys a poignant message about the enduring bond between a child and a dog.

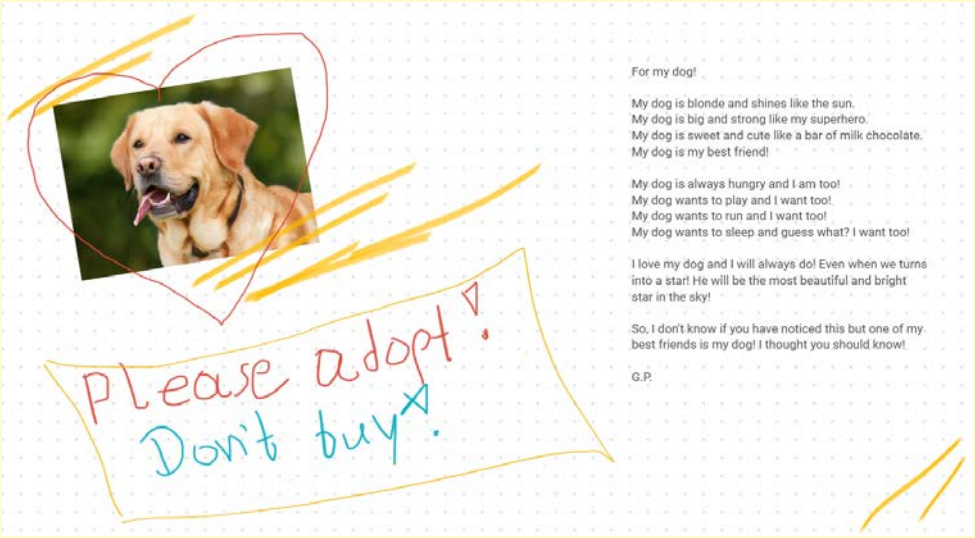


Figure 6: Poem, G.P.

4.2 Puppetry and dramatisation

One of the lesson plans developed for the campaign, inspired by *Toby to the rescue*, was crafted by Chara Chalatzouka, an educator who firmly believes in the influential role of creative expression in English language learning. Ms Chalatzouka engaged her students in a plethora of creative activities, and generously shared with us the outcome of their students' work ranging from captivating puppet theatre performances to engaging dramatisations.



Figures 7 & **8:** Puppet theatre



Figures 9 & **10:** Dramatisation

4.3 Posters and murals

Creating posters is yet another way of engaging learners in a fun and interactive manner. This approach enables students to creatively express their ideas and beliefs while reinforcing language skills, as well as fostering communication and collaboration competences. Around the time of Stray Animals Day (4 April), a group of primary school students, under the guidance of their teacher Efi Tzouri, crafted a vibrant and impactful poster titled “Together We Can Save These Precious Animals”. The poster, bursting with colors and messages of hope, stands as a testament to the students' creative expression and commitment to raising awareness.



Figure 11: Poster

In a similar vein, a group of 4-year-olds crafted a stunning mural titled “A Wish for Strays”. Notably, in the pink picture below, one can easily discern a mother holding the hand of her child with one hand and their dog with the other. The child holds a kite, and the three of them seem to be returning home from a leisurely walk – a delightful scene that stands out as one of the mural's highlights, filling one's heart with joy and hope. To complement their creation, the little learners, with the guidance of their teachers, incorporated essential slogans, including the campaign's motto: “Adopt a stray, save a life!”





Figures 12 & **13:** Mural

4.4 Creative writing

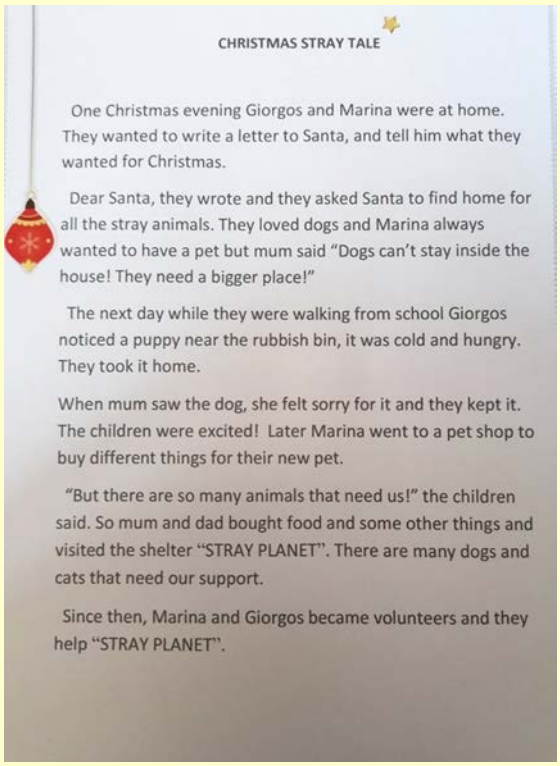
Creativity can be also expressed using digital tools. Inspired by Toby and his story, one of my students, then 11-year-old Georgina, used a tool called StoryJumper to create an e-book featuring herself and a stray called Max. Remarkably, Georgina not only wrote the entire story all by herself, but also meticulously created each page from scratch: she selected characters and graphics, added text boxes and speech bubbles, and even recorded herself reading the story and added the audio to her e-book.



Figure 14: E-book

English language teachers value the delightful tradition of a classic postcard exchange. Drawing inspiration from *Toby to the Rescue*, Lia Bezanidou and Despina Sarantidou acquired cards from a Christmas bazaar organised by a local dog shelter, and facilitated an exchange of wishes and narratives between their respective groups. Apart from supporting a noble cause, they involved their students in a creative activity that yielded remarkable results.





CHRISTMAS STRAY TALE

One Christmas evening Giorgos and Marina were at home. They wanted to write a letter to Santa, and tell him what they wanted for Christmas.

Dear Santa, they wrote and they asked Santa to find home for all the stray animals. They loved dogs and Marina always wanted to have a pet but mum said "Dogs can't stay inside the house! They need a bigger place!"

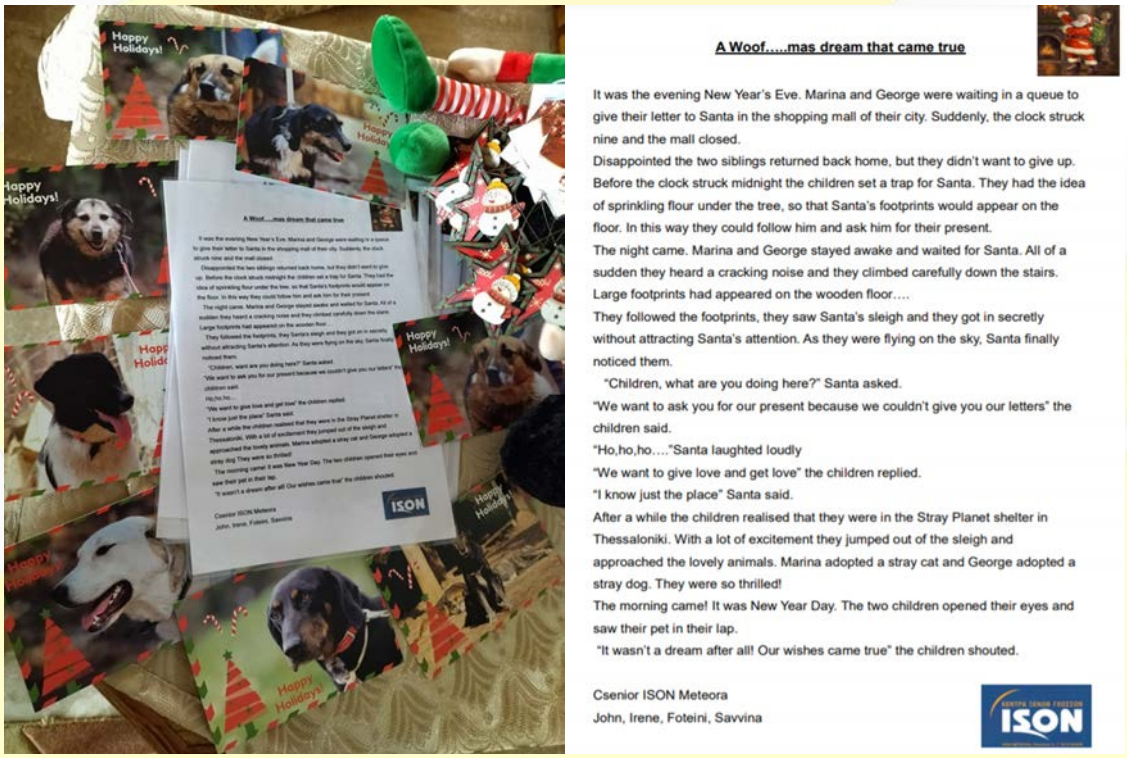
The next day while they were walking from school Giorgos noticed a puppy near the rubbish bin, it was cold and hungry. They took it home.

When mum saw the dog, she felt sorry for it and they kept it. The children were excited! Later Marina went to a pet shop to buy different things for their new pet.

"But there are so many animals that need us!" the children said. So mum and dad bought food and some other things and visited the shelter "STRAY PLANET". There are many dogs and cats that need our support.

Since then, Marina and Giorgos became volunteers and they help "STRAY PLANET".

Figures 15 & **16:** Wishes and stories written by Lia Bezanidou's students.



A Woof.....mas dream that came true

It was the evening New Year's Eve. Marina and George were waiting in a queue to give their letter to Santa in the shopping mall of their city. Suddenly, the clock struck nine and the mall closed.

Disappointed the two siblings returned back home, but they didn't want to give up. Before the clock struck midnight the children set a trap for Santa. They had the idea of sprinkling flour under the tree, so that Santa's footprints would appear on the floor. In this way they could follow him and ask him for their present.

The night came. Marina and George stayed awake and waited for Santa. All of a sudden they heard a cracking noise and they climbed carefully down the stairs. Large footprints had appeared on the wooden floor....

They followed the footprints, they saw Santa's sleigh and they got in secretly without attracting Santa's attention. As they were flying on the sky, Santa finally noticed them.

"Children, what are you doing here?" Santa asked.

"We want to ask you for our present because we couldn't give you our letters" the children said.

"Ho,ho,ho...."Santa laughted loudly

"We want to give love and get love" the children replied.

"I know just the place" Santa said.

After a while the children realised that they were in the Stray Planet shelter in Thessaloniki. With a lot of excitement they jumped out of the sleigh and approached the lovely animals. Marina adopted a stray cat and George adopted a stray dog. They were so thrilled!

The morning came! It was New Year Day. The two children opened their eyes and saw their pet in their lap.

"It wasn't a dream after all! Our wishes came true" the children shouted.

Csenior ISON Meteora

John, Irene, Foteini, Savvina

Figures 17 & **18:** Wishes and stories written by Despina Sarantiodou's students.

The stories crafted by the students brim with kindness and empathy – universal sentiments that resonate across all seasons.

5. Working with a short story

The story *When a Cat Purrs* narrates the tale of a couple who, after a long time of attempting to conceive, find themselves on the brink of giving up hope. One day, their lives take an unexpected turn when they encounter a little kitten which desperately needs their help. The kitten purrs, and the wounds start healing.

5.1 Empathy and perspective-taking

This story facilitates activities focused on empathy and perspective-taking, encouraging students to step into others' shoes (or animals' paws). One of the activities frequently used for the purpose is Frozen Image and Voices in the Head. In this activity, the teacher divides students into groups and asks each group to prepare a frozen image of a part of the text, and to present it to the rest of the class. When students are "frozen", the teacher places a hand on the shoulder of one of the students within the image, prompting them to share their character's thoughts.



Figures 19 & **20:** Frozen Image and Voices in the Head

In one-on-one lessons where such dramatic activities may not be feasible, students can create a drawing depicting a scene of their choice and include thought clouds or speech bubbles, similar to what Georgina (11) illustrated in the pictures below.



Figure 21 & **22:** Drawings by Georgina, 11

Another engaging activity that immerses students into the characters' perspectives is Role on the Wall. For this activity, the teacher prepares a body outline for each main character in the story. Students choose a character to focus on and, around the body outline, jot down key facts about their chosen character (e.g. age, appearance) and share their personal thoughts on the character, such as motivations and dreams. Inside the outline, they delve into the character's thoughts, feelings, and emotions. An example in Figure 23 illustrates how Georgina worked on the character of Irene.

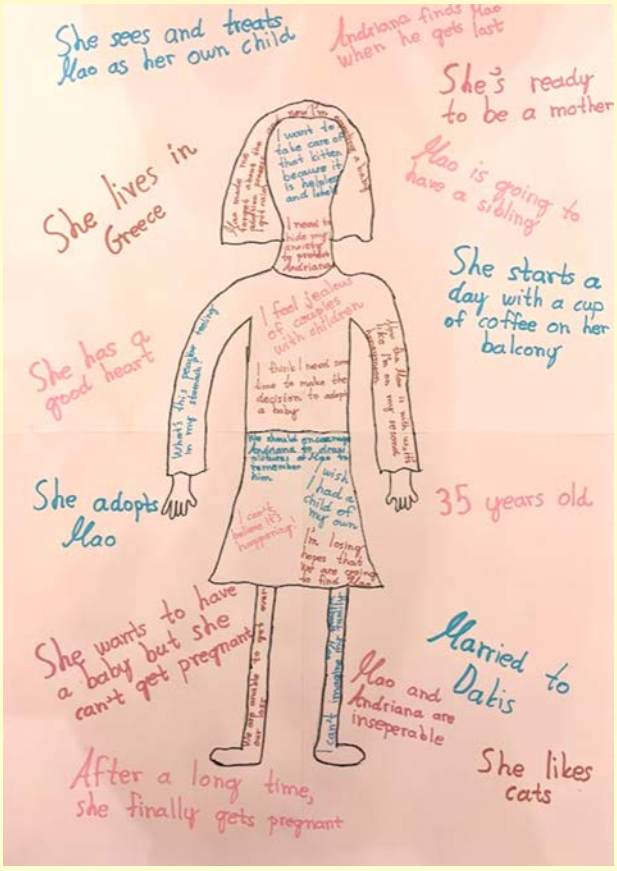


Figure 23: Role on the wall, by Georgina, 11

At the same time, students build a vocabulary bank comprising words and phrases related to emotions.

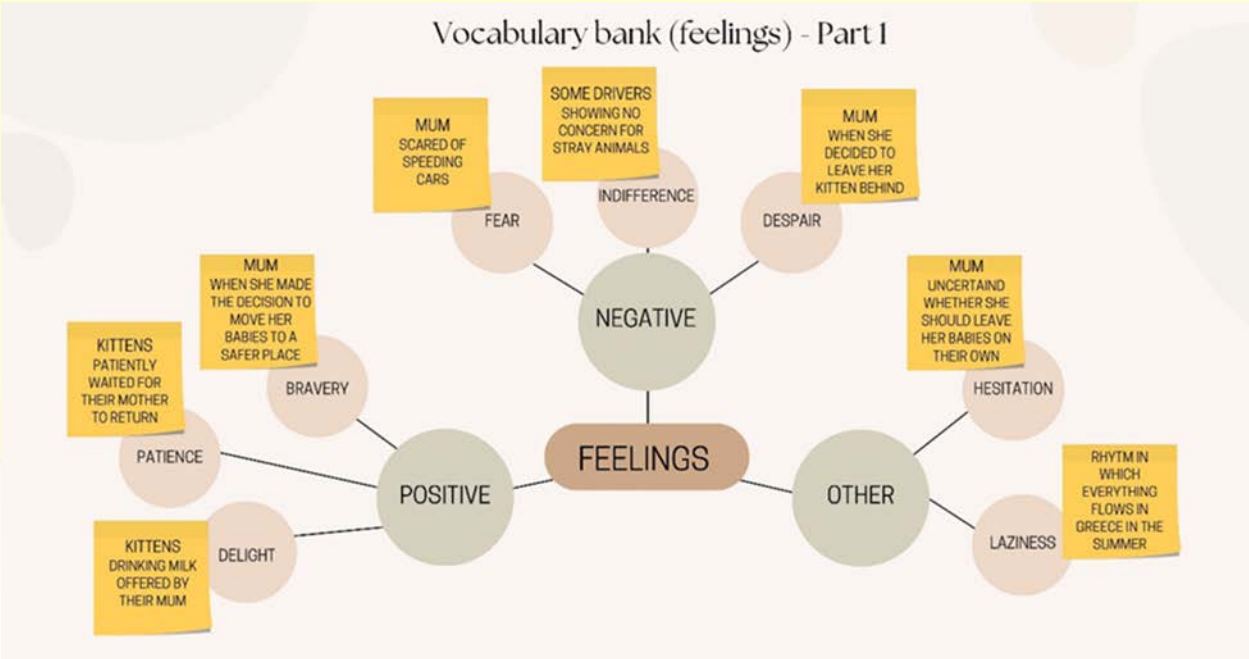


Figure 24: Vocabulary bank

The concepts and the vocabulary developed at this stage will assist them in transitioning to the subsequent stage, where students are asked to rewrite the story from their chosen character's perspective.

5.2 Pantomime

After analysing the narrative, students engage in kinaesthetic activities inspired by the story. Recognising the positive impact of companion animals in various life situations (e.g. an elderly person finding solace in adopting a cat, or an only child adopting a dog), students are assigned the task of individually or collaboratively devising such scenarios and presenting them to others using pantomime. The rest of the class attempts to guess the scenario. Alternatively, if students find it difficult to create their own scenarios, the teacher can provide them with scenario cards, allowing students to channel all their creativity into embodying the roles.

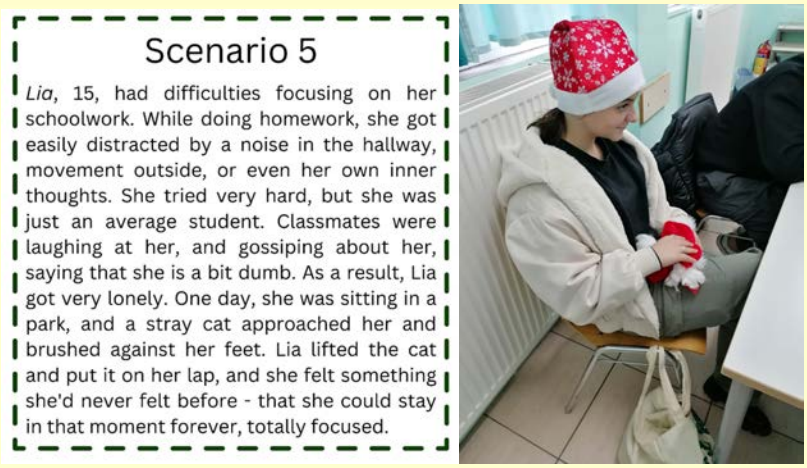


Figure 25: Pantomime

5.3 Poetry writing

Last but not least, just like after reading *Toby to the Rescue*, students can also write poems inspired by *When a Cat Purrs*. Except for acrostic poems mentioned earlier, for older students, a more comprehensive approach can be taken. The teacher can prompt students to take note of the sights, sounds, and smells associated with companion animals. Subsequently, students jot down the emotions elicited by a companion animal and the activities linked to them. Following such thorough preparation, and using the ideas they have collected, students then proceed to compose their poems. Advanced students may even explore sound devices such as alliteration, assonance,

onomatopoeia, and repetition. Georgina (11) skillfully incorporated some of these techniques in her poem about a puppy.

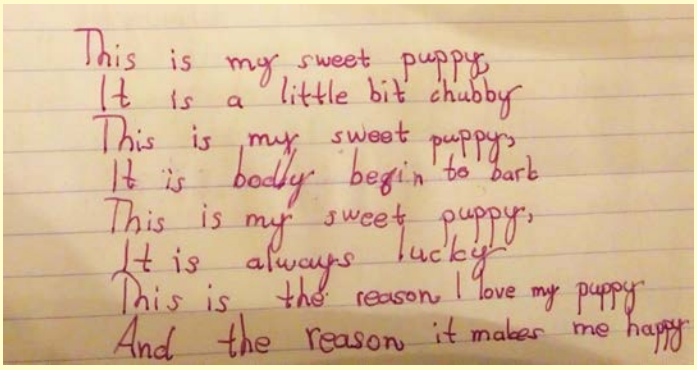


Figure 26: Poem by Georgina, 11

5.4 Lesson plan contributions

Among the supporters of the Tales of Strays Campaign, several dedicated colleagues have generously devoted their time and effort to create valuable materials. Polychrou (2021), for instance, crafted a comprehensive lesson plan exploring the use of paintings to discuss how the relationship between humans and companion animals has evolved over the ages. This insightful lesson plan can be found in the volume published in 2021, titled *ELT for companion animals: A compilation of lesson plans* (Kosior, 2021).

In the 2022 volume (Kosior, 2022a), Lia Bezanidou (2022) contributed a lesson plan on grief. Her plan encourages students to express their emotions after the loss of a companion animal through drawings.

6. Final remarks

All the examples discussed in this paper prove that tapping into students' creativity yields noteworthy results. This method not only instills intrinsic motivation but also engages the entire learner, fostering their emotional development at the same time. It is no longer surprising therefore that "expanding their creative capacity can make students more adept at forming original ideas, as well as exercising their critical thinking skills. Creativity is also a life skill, which can help students unlock new avenues in their personal self-expression" ("How to Inspire Creativity in the Classroom," n.d.).

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(Re)Animating Environmental Communication in the TESOL Classroom

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Abstract

At the Politécnico de Leiria, School of Education and Social Sciences (ESECS-IPL), we conducted an environmental communication project with a group of advanced English students frequenting the first year of the Communication and Media *licenciatura* degree programme. The course began with an initial survey gauging students' awareness of and interest in environmental issues. We then exposed the students to environmental narratives that considered environmental change on several levels: local, national and international. The main deliverable of the project was the production and presentation of a digital environmental narrative of each student's own creation. With students' feedback gleaned from opportunities they had to reflect on the project both in class discussions and in written assessments, we can say with a reasonable degree of confidence that the project increased students' environmental awareness of both local and global environmental challenges and issues, whilst providing opportunities to develop skills needed for their future.

Keywords: environmental communication, project-based learning, TESOL, environmental awareness, exploratory practice.

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1. Introduction

Covering climate change and the environment in the classroom can evoke feelings of dread and despair in students. Constant news of irreversible harm to the planet's atmosphere can make it difficult to discuss these topics in a classroom in a way that inspires action and hope rather than fomenting worry and fatalism.

Further, there may be a 'deficit' in a willingness to (re)engage with these issues in higher education given students are already familiar with these topics from previous cycles of schooling in Portugal. How, then, can EFL educators "reanimate" environmental topics in the classroom? How can we inspire environmental hope and engagement in students, as opposed to fighting weariness and feelings of climate despair?

These questions underpinned the goal of our project, one based on environmental hope and storytelling with a group of eighteen first-year Communication and Media students in a C1 level English class. We wanted to understand the extent to which these students engaged with environmental topics in their personal and academic lives. We then challenged students to engage with topics proximate to their own lives through a three-month long project focused on studying existing environmental narratives, and then to create a narrative of their own.

In an overarching sense, we wanted to know the extent to which TESOL classrooms can foster greater self-awareness through a project which meant deploying a range of skills to better understand environmental issues at both local and global levels, and which would relate to their career goals.

2. Literature review

Our plan was to deliver a practical and relevant task for our students. We also wanted to share this with fellow EFL practitioners, hoping that our experience would resonate with them, and they, in turn, could adapt the project to their own teaching contexts. Our primary concerns, then, are implementing and then sharing our classroom practice. Underpinning these is a two-fold rationale.

Firstly, we identify with an approach to teacher-led inquiry known as 'exploratory practice' (EP) (Allwright & Hanks, 2009). Unlike other teacher-led research traditions, such as 'action research', which often aim to identify and 'solve problems', EP focuses on better 'understanding' and exploring the 'quality of life' in the classroom (Allwright, 2003). Further, such understanding will more likely be reached if both teachers and learners work together. This is one reason why we asked students to complete an

introductory survey (see Section 4.1). EP also emphasises the importance of teachers working in their own classrooms, with their own students to enhance knowledge and understanding of their own context(s).

Secondly, project work is closely aligned with content-based instruction (CBI), an approach that has been widely applied in language learning contexts, including classrooms. Project work focuses on 'meaningful student engagement with language and content learning' (Stoller, 2002, p. 107). Bringing these two approaches together aligns with our vision of combining innovative instruction with teacher-led inquiry and is one that places a greater emphasis on student responsibility and autonomy.

3. Project overview: aims and motivations

The aims of the project regarding student outcomes were twofold: to increase environmental awareness in students' academic and personal lives, and to encourage student autonomy and creativity through project-based learning.

A further aim – and motivation – is related to an international exchange programme. The reason the first author was lecturing classes at ESECS-IPL for a period of nine months was due to her selection as an English Teaching Assistant (ETA) for the Fulbright program. Mark Daubney presently serves as the exchange mentor for the Fulbright program at IPL and Hannah Bernier served as the ETA for the 2022–23 academic year. The design and implementation of this project, therefore, also arises from IPL's commitment to internationalisation through a range of projects. This was also, and no less importantly, an opportunity for reciprocal learning.

4. Project preparation and gathering baseline data

In the first few classes (students had three hours of English per week and each class was three hours in length) of the second semester of the 2022–23 academic year, the eighteen first-year students on the Communication and Media degree responded to a survey and engaged in group discussions designed to raise their awareness of and engagement with environmental issues such as climate change, ocean pollution, and forest fires. These activities were not only helpful for us to gauge interest and collect baseline data, but also allowed the students to develop and build up specific vocabulary. After a solid foundation was established, the project-based learning element began in the second month of classes. The students expressed a desire to participate in project-based learning that would allow them to develop their media production skills.

4.1 Introductory survey: Insights into students' thoughts and feelings on environmental issues

In the first class, students were asked to complete a survey designed by the course instructors about their awareness of and opinions regarding climate change and environmental issues. The survey consisted of closed questions in which their responses were registered on a seven-point Likert scale (see Figure 1 below) and two open questions, to which students could write their own answers.

The objective of the closed questions was to gauge strength of student opinion on and engagement with environmental issues, whilst the open questions yielded student input on how to better learn about environmental issues and how teachers can deliver more captivating lessons on these issues – in other words, what content could be used and how this content might be delivered.

In the interest of space, we will present a brief overview of some of the key closed questions and some of the answers to the two open questions.

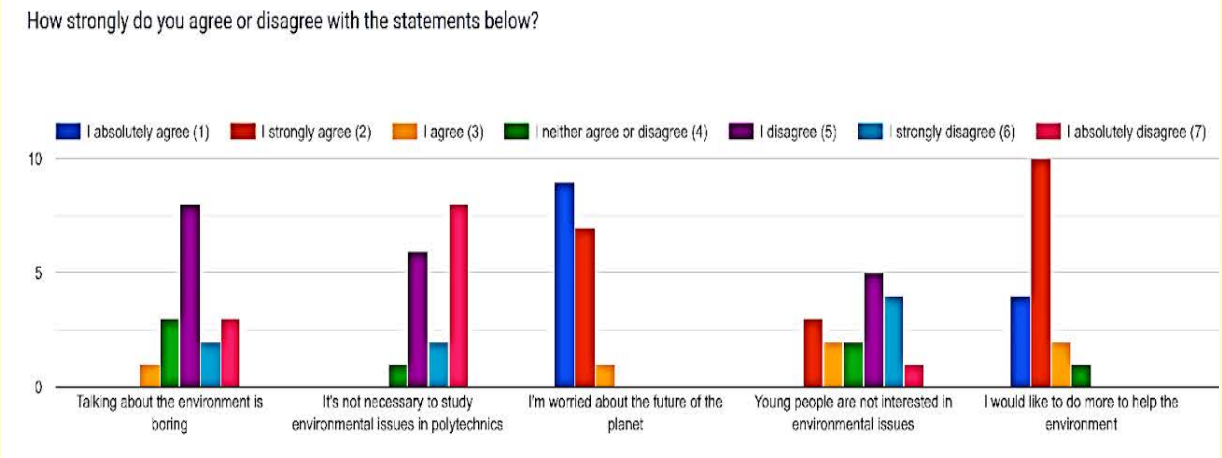


Figure 1: Student responses to closed questions

The responses in Figure 1 dispel notions that students – in higher education, at least – are indifferent to or weary of discussing environmental issues. In fact, few responses are neutral. The two standout responses are those to the statements 'I'm not worried about the future of the planet' and 'I would like to do more to help the environment'. Indeed, these responses indicate significant levels of worry about the planet and a willingness to take helpful action. Interestingly, the responses that indicate a greater distribution across the seven-point scale are to the statement 'Young people are not interested in environmental issues', which might indicate some degree of doubt concerning the interest of young people (for this project, defined as between the ages of

18–25) in these questions. This might also indicate that students are willing to indicate stronger levels of agreement/disagreement if the statement begins by directly appealing to them ('I'm' or 'I') or they feel 'young people' is a more abstract notion that they may distance themselves from.

In response to the open questions 1 and 2, we have selected a range of responses that are both encouraging and instructive for teachers, and representative of the answers in general. In both Table 1 and Table 2 below, we have included students' own words, which have remained uncorrected.

Open question 1: What are the best ways to learn more about environmental issues? Give one or two examples.
- Show in an interesting way the problems we're facing and how impactful they are. - I learned from TV shows and social media, especially TikTok. - Do voluntary work (cleaning beaches) and learn about them in elementary school because we should be aware of these issues at a young age. - Through documentaries due to the visual component. - Talking more about them and doing activities that help the planet, like cleaning the streets.

Table 1: Student responses to open question 1

Open question 2: What can teachers do to make classes about environmental issues more interesting? Give one or two examples.
- Do practical activities. - Make classes more visual, using videos, documentaries, and photographs. - Discuss topics with students and then do something outside of class, like a field trip. - Talk about modern problems and specific real problems. - Try to innovate the way they approach this situation.

Table 2: Student responses to open question 2

Key themes that emerge are: wanting to help through activism and/or voluntary work; the use of online resources, especially social media and visual materials; the importance of learning about the environment at an early age; and for teachers to use innovative practices.

What is instructive for teachers is that these themes are evident in the response to both questions, that is, students' preferences for learning are repeated in their suggestions on how to make classes on these topics more interesting. In fact, the suggestion for organising a study trip was particularly welcome as, unbeknown to the

students, the first author had already initiated contact and scheduled a guided visit to an environmental organisation based in Leiria. The visit was the last part of the project and was more enriching given students were far better prepared to participate in the visit given the previous activities they had completed.

This baseline data was not conditioned by previous classes and gave us a clearer idea of their feelings and thoughts, and how we might also adapt our classes and activities to their suggestions and perceived preferences. Indeed, their answers – as indicated above – already prefigured an activity that had already been planned for the project work (the study trip).

4.2 Review of existing environmental narratives

The first weeks of English classes were devoted to reviewing the power and science behind storytelling (Storr, 2019), and existing environmental narratives from a variety of communicative mediums. Each class was devoted to reviewing and discussing a specific type of storytelling medium: oral storytelling in the form of podcasts (Laketa, 2012), written storytelling in the forms of articles and poetry (StoryCenter, https://www.storycenter.org/; The all we can save project, https://www.allwecansave.earth/), digital storytelling in the form of social media posts, and visual storytelling in the form of videos and artistic installations.

Of particular note was the video series *Change Drivers* (2022), produced by the Discovery Channel. Each episode features an environmental activist discussing their work and its local and global importance. The class spent significant time discussing and analysing the *Change Drivers* video narrated by Andri Magnason, focusing on the disappearing glaciers in his homeland of Iceland. The students were asked to consider which storytelling elements—visual and oral—contributed to the effectiveness of this video in telling a compelling story.

Students' reactions and comments were not only emotionally resonant and touching, but also illustrated an embryonic but growing understanding of the techniques used in videos to 'pull' the viewer into and identify with the video narrative. A memorable moment that illustrated this burgeoning insight was when students were asked what part of the video *Change Drivers* most resonated with them – and many said the moment when the camera zoomed in on the concerned face of the narrator's teenage daughter, who asked 'Is it too late for our generation?'

4.3 In-class writing forum

The students were also challenged to think about stories from their own lives that featured elements of nature and the environment. A forum was made available on the school E-learning platform, Moodle, for the students to complete in class.

Students were given prompts to write about and were subsequently asked to read through their classmates' responses and choose their favourite, explaining to the class why they had chosen that particular narrative. The forum allowed students to deploy creative writing skills to environmental topics, making these more tangible and immediate. It also constituted a springboard for further reflection and learning.

5. The project: digital environmental narrative

After conducting a review and analysis of various environmental narratives, the students were introduced to the criteria for their speaking assessment.

5.1 Criteria, guidance, and additional support

The criteria for the project were to create a three to five-minute video with both an oral narration and visual elements. The two options presented to the students were to create a video with photos and/or video clips, or to create a PowerPoint presentation with a voice-over. In creating their video, the students were asked to tell a story about their own lives that included elements of larger social and/or environmental change. Many of the students chose to expand upon their responses to the previous in-class writing forum.

The week before the assignment was due, we conducted individual meetings with each student to discuss their project and address any questions or concerns. It was in this space that students could talk through their ideas and receive feedback before the final project was due.

5.2 Presenting the digital narrative

On the day when the project was due, we conducted a "screening" of the narratives produced by the students. Each student showed their video or PowerPoint to the class and concluded their presentation with a short Q&A about their creative process and choices. At this point, we can only vouch for the excellence of the narratives that were created and produced by the students, each unique, drawing on relationships with family

and friends, and locations that were meaningful for them. One, for example, centered on the recent forest fires in Leiria, where in her childhood her family used to spend regular holidays. Fortunately, at the 36th Annual APPI Conference, we were able to show two of the digital narratives, including the one just mentioned.

5.3 Students' written reflections

After the environmental narratives were presented to the class, the teachers asked for feedback about the project, which was then done in a whole-class discussion. Comments were generally positive, but students were given a further opportunity to reflect upon their experience. Two weeks after the narrative screening, students took their assessed written assignment. One of their choices was to write a reflection about the process of creating their project, how they chose the contents and structured it and to what extent it was connected to their degree programme.

Eight out of the eighteen students in the class chose to answer this prompt, which provided the teachers with noteworthy feedback regarding the significance and the value of the project. These comments can be seen in Table 3 below.

Excerpts from students' written reflections on Prompt 3
- This assignment really connects with my degree because it helps improve our skills for the future. Presentation, storytelling, filming and taking pictures, editing the video, and all the creative process behind it. This project made me think a lot more about nature and changing my habits. - Everyone got a chance to present to the class something personal... it makes the learning process more creative and without limits. - I like how it made me communicate, not only with words, but through images... storytelling is a tool that gives us insights into other people's experiences and personalities. - The digital environmental narrative is a practical assignment that really suits our degree and should be something permanent on the course.

Table 3: Excerpts from students' written reflections

6. Discussion

The data highlights, from the students' perspectives, the relationship between the practical nature of the activities and their degree, the relevance of the resources, the opportunity to be creative ('without limits'), and the importance not just of words, but also of visual resources, the latter pointing to the pressing need for young people to acquire and hone digital literacy as a key competence to deploy in today's fast-changing world.

Finally, for some, the project also provided insights into other people's experiences and personalities, a factor likely to facilitate understanding and empathy for both their classmates and those beyond the classroom.

The project helps us to see that grappling with environmental issues in TESOL classes will not necessarily induce a dispiriting combination of panic, depression, and a weary familiarity in students. In fact, our experience allows us to conclude that the overall reaction to undertaking this task was a positive one – and we have to reiterate that the quality of the digital narratives was revelatory and inspiring.

Our modest study, we believe, shows that young people in a Portuguese higher education institution are, in fact, interested in key environmental issues – and especially so should the tasks be engaging and useful for their future (Mercer & Dörnyei, 2020).

7. Final remarks

As educators, we need to keep classrooms fighting fit and healthy. No easy task in today's world. The sight of bored and disengaged students is likely the Room 101 for many EFL teachers. But to keep the (He)Art of teaching EFL in a robust condition, teachers should remain open to new ideas and innovation to better provide today's students with vibrant and nutritious content, allowing them to take on greater responsibility, with methodological range and opportunities for creativity being indispensable ingredients in this diet.

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A Bird's-eye View of Corpus-Driven Interlanguage Error Analysis of Portuguese EFL Learners and Data-Driven Teaching Suggestions for EFL Teachers

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Abstract

The study aims to reveal the errors of Portuguese EFL learners who took PET, PETfS, KET, KETfS, FCE, FCEfS, CAE exams using corpus-based error analysis tools available on SketchEngine platform and classifying them according to the A2-C2 language proficiency levels of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001). These Cambridge ESOL Exams extracted from the Cambridge Learner Corpus (CLC) contain 42-million-words of more than 200,000 students from 173 countries. When the distribution of errors is examined according to the A2–C2 language proficiency levels, while the variety of error taxonomies increases, the frequency of errors decreases, and persistency of error taxonomies is observed. The study also compares the errors of L1 Portuguese students with the errors made by learners from other mother tongue backgrounds available in the corpus to reveal whether there is an EFL interlanguage pattern in learner errors.

Keywords: Cambridge Learner Corpus, ESOL exams, Portuguese learners, computer-aided error analysis, data-driven learning.

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1. Introduction

With the availability of learner corpora, it has been possible to investigate interlanguage learner errors by conducting computer-aided error analysis (CEA) on texts learners produce. Researchers are now able to find out authentic learner errors with their frequencies in terms of types and tokens with the data available and accessible in learner corpora. Many researchers have emphasized the importance of these authentic learner errors to gain insights about the learner profiles as well as design custom-made language teaching curricula and materials (Mitton, 1996; Cowan, Choi, & Kim, 2003; Allerton et al., 2004). This focuses on the data obtained from the University of Cambridge English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Exams extracted from the CLC, the largest annotated test performance corpora enabling the investigation of the linguistic and rhetorical features of the learner performances across A2-C2 proficiency bands. The corpus used comprises 42-million-words of more than 200,000 students from 173 countries.

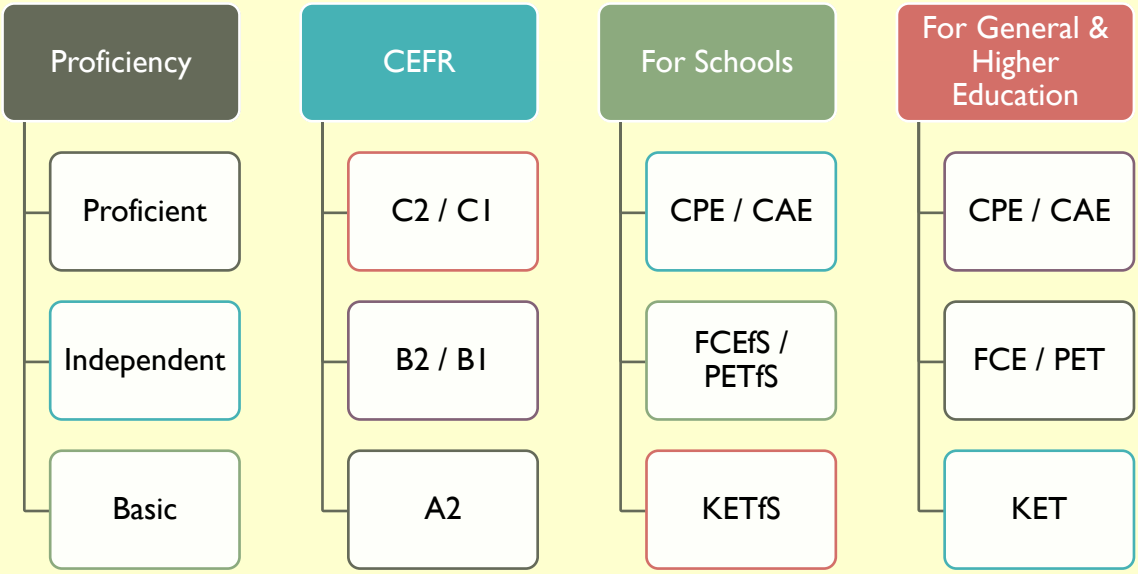


Figure 1: The representation of the included exams and their distribution according to the CEFR[9]

The figure presents the alignment of ESOL exams with the CEFR standards. This study aims to reveal interlanguage learner errors of Portuguese EFL learners across 5

[9] CPE (Certificate of Proficiency in English); CAE (Certificate of Advanced English); FCE (First Certificate in English); FCEfS (First Certificate in English for Schools); PET (Preliminary English Test); PETfS (Preliminary English Test for Schools); KET (Key English Test); KETfS (Key English Test for Schools)

distinct proficiency levels, A2; B1–B2; C1–C2, as defined by the CEFR, using SketchEngine. Subsequently, these errors are systematically categorized and aligned with the corresponding CEFR proficiency strata. The study discusses the most common and persistent errors along with their potential causes and offers insights for EFL teachers addressing the following questions:

1. What are the most common errors in the written sections of the Cambridge ESOL exams by Portuguese EFL learners?
2. How are these errors distributed across the A2–C2 proficiency range according to CEFR?
3. Are there any persistent errors observed across the language proficiency levels? If so, what are they?
4. Are there errors attributed to L1 interference, or are they characteristic of interlanguage dynamics?

2. Review of Literature

Errors, inherent in learning processes, display linguistic competence (Corder, 1967) and offer insights on the learners' learning strategies. Systematic in nature, these errors are integral to teaching. Learner corpora replete with naturally occurring language, facilitate the study of diverse error types and patterns unique to learners of various linguistic backgrounds. Such errors reveal learner strategies, facilitate FL learning processes, and allow learners to assess their evolving proficiency. Through learner corpus analysis, "descriptions of structure, reliable models of usage, how words and phrases are translated," may be revealed with specific genres and subgenres (Sinclair, 2001, p. xiii).

Error analysis (EA) has been crucial in FL teaching since the 1970s, serving as a tool for identifying students' linguistics needs (Dulay, Burt, & Krashen, 1982). Corder's (1967) seminal work underscored errors' informative value. However, defining errors remains complex (Corder, 1967; Ellis, 1994), necessitating precise root cause identification for effective remediation (Corder, 1973).

While both Second Language Acquisition (SLA) studies involving Contrastive Analysis (CA) and Error Analysis (EA) aim to understand language learning through interlanguage samples, they differ in methods, assumptions, data, and terminology. The primary distinction is their stance on learners' actions and errors. CA avoids interpretation, whereas Traditional Error Analysis (TEA) views errors as anomalies requiring corrections.

TEAs' focus on errors often overlooks learners' correct structures and potential avoidance of certain structures (Schachter, 1974). In contrast, CEA, rooted in learner corpora, "represents a major improvement over TEA, not least because instead of considering errors in isolation, it sees them as part of a system which includes both correct and incorrect uses" (Gilquin & Granger, 2015, p. 427), combining the underlying principles of both interlanguage and EA. Ellis (1994) emphasises the need for well-defined learner language samples in error analysis critiquing many studies for their interpretative ambiguity.

Dagneaux et al. (1998) highlights TEA's limitations such as its reliance on varied learner data, its focus on learners' shortcomings and its static portrayal of L2 learning, which does not account for phenomena for avoidance. Given TEA's constraints, corpus-based error analysis has emerged as a pivotal methodology in FL teaching. Literature on error variation vis-à-vis proficiency presents mixed findings. While some posit a decline in errors with increased proficiency (Grant & Ginther, 2000), others argue for their prevalence even at advanced levels (Dagneaux et al. 1998; Can, 2017; Aybek & Can, 2023). Moreover, it is usually expected that learners make different types of errors as their proficiency levels increase. In her comprehensive longitudinal investigation, Chamot (1987) identifies error typology shift across proficiency levels. Some studies suggest diminishing the native language (L1) influence with proficiency (Taylor, 1975), while others like Kellerman (1979) argue certain errors emerge only at advanced stages.

3. Methodology

Studies of grammatical development in SLA fall into two:

(a) those examining formal features

(b) those gauging overall progress by a developmental index (Bardovi-Harlig & Bofman, 1989).

The current study falls into the second category, focusing on the interlanguage errors of Portuguese EFL learners through a written corpus by analysing 45-million-word CLC corpus. In SLA, it is vital to use large sets of data in studies as they may provide significant insights to understand the language acquisition (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998). The Portuguese EFL learner sub-corpus extracted from CLC consists of 2,548,708 words. The breakdown of the corpus is as follows.

Mother Tongue	Corpus Size	Exam	Years	Exam Format
Portuguese	**A2**: 886,715 **B1–B2**: 752,163 **C1–C2**: 909,830 **Total:** 2,548,708	CPE CAE FCE FCEfS PET PETfS KET KETfS	1993–2013	Note/Email/Memo Story Report Informative/ Instructional text Article Proposal Informative/News

Table 1: The breakdown of Portuguese EFL learner sub-corpora

The study uses the Portuguese EFL learner sub-corpus of CLC, which comprises written texts of learners from 130 different mother tongue backgrounds as part of the Cambridge ESOL examinations. These exams annotate learners' errors and offer metadata detailing the learner's background, including mother tongue, nationality, age, gender, CEFR proficiency, exam format, register, and test name.

4. Findings

4.1 Bird's-eye view of the findings

The overall analysis of the errors by Portuguese EFL learners reveal 37,515 errors within a 2,548,708-words corpus. The breakdown of these errors along with the error codes regardless of the proficiency levels is presented below.

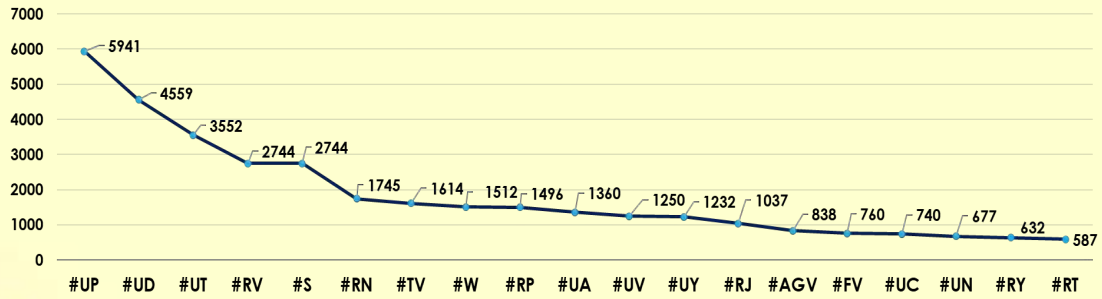


Figure 2: The bird's-eye-view of errors by Portuguese EFL learners across A2–C2[10]

[10] UP: Unnecessary Punctuation; UD: Unnecessary Determiner; UT: Unnecessary Preposition; S: Spelling Errors; RV: Replace Verb; RN: Replace Noun; TV: Incorrect Tense of Verb; W: Word Order; RP: Replace Punctuation; UA: Unnecessary Anaphor; UV: Unnecessary Verb; UY: Unnecessary Adverb; RJ: Replace Adjective; AGV: Verb Agreement Error; FV: Wrong Verb Form; UC: Unnecessary Link Verb; UN: Unnecessary Noun; RY: Replace Adverb; RT: Replace Preposition

As displayed in Figure 2, the most common error category across the proficiency levels is UP. This error typology is followed by UD and UT. RV and S errors follow these most common three errors. Next, RN with a frequency of 1745 and TV with 1614 frequency follow. And the rest of the errors may be seen in the figure given with the error codes. A further analysis has been conducted to discern the distribution of these error categories according to each proficiency band of the learners.

4.2 Dispersion of errors according to proficiency bands

Table 2 provides the frequency of errors found in three sub-corpora, along with the normalized frequencies per million, taking into consideration the differences in corpus sizes.

CEFR Level	Corpus Size	Frequency of Errors	f/1000000
A2	886,715	16,829	18,979
B1–B2	752,163	10,349	13,758
C1–C2	909,830	10,337	11,361
Total	2,548,708	37,515	44,098

Table 2: The frequency of errors according to proficiency bands

The distribution of the corpora sizes and frequency of errors according to proficiency levels are displayed in the table.

4.2.1 Dispersion of errors at A2 proficiency level

The analysis of the errors at A2 proficiency level indicates 16,829 errors of Portuguese learners in the 886,715-word sub-corpus of CLC. Figure 3 shows the distribution of these errors in this proficiency level.

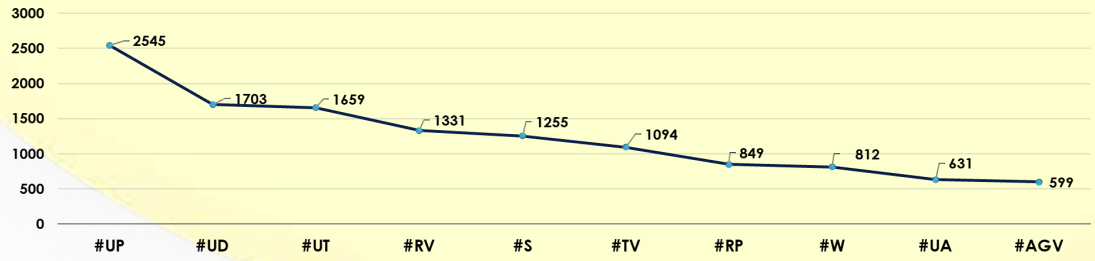


Figure 3: The distribution of errors at A2 proficiency level[11]

[11] UP: Unnecessary Punctuation; UD: Unnecessary Determiner; UT: Unnecessary Preposition; S: Spelling Errors; RV: Replace Verb; TV: Incorrect Tense of Verb; RP: Replace Punctuation; W: Word Order; UA: Unnecessary Anaphor; AGV: Verb Agreement Error

According to figure 3, the most common error made at A2 level is UP. UD follows as the second common error with a frequency of 1703. UT is the third common error (f:1659). Some examples of these error typologies may be seen below:

(1) <s>Dear Wendy,<#RP>here|Here</#RP>there is a big<#RN>shopping|shopping centre</#RN**><#UP>,|</#UP>**that you can go<#MT>|to</#MT>

(2) <s>This is a good, interesting and**<#UD>a|</#UD>**historic city.</s>

Then, RV, S, and TV follows respectively, examples of which are as follows.

(3) this|these</#AGD>misleading ads are those that<#TV**><#RV>pass|show</#RV>|**are shown</#TV>on the television

(4) the most famous<#DN>**<#S>turistic|touristic</#S>**point|tourist attraction

4.2.2 Dispersion of errors at B1–B2 proficiency level

The examination unveils a total of 10,349 errors in the 752,163-word B1-B2 sub-corpus. The distribution of these errors at this level is presented below.

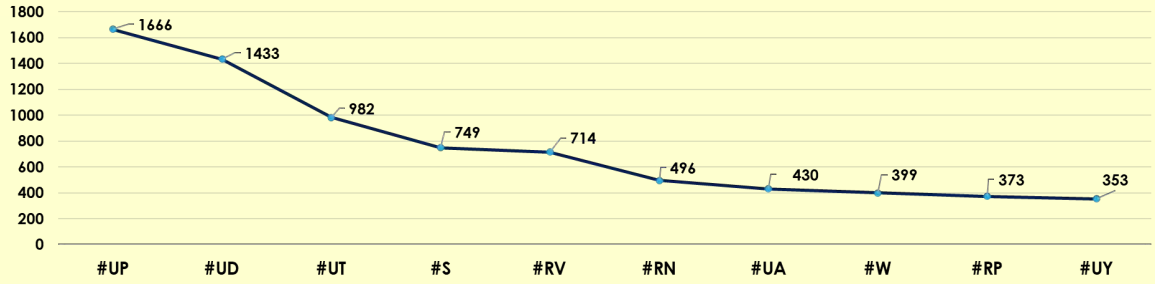


Figure 4: The distribution of errors at B1–B2 proficiency level[12]

As displayed in the figure, the most common errors, UP, UD and UT, mirror the error pattern observed at the A2 level. And then, S and RV follow these. In addition to the errors in A2 level, RN and UY errors are observed in this level of which the examples are as follows:

(5) <s>I met my new friend**<#UY>just|</#UY**>in a pub last year

(6) the|</#UD>womenexposed their<#AGN>**<#RN>nudity|body</#RN>|**bodies</#AGN>

[12] UP: Unnecessary Punctuation; UD: Unnecessary Determiner; UT: Unnecessary Preposition; S: Spelling Errors; RV: Replace Verb; RN: Replace Noun; UA: Unnecessary Anaphor; W: Word Order; RP: Replace Punctuation; UY: Unnecessary Adverb

4.2.3 Dispersion of errors at C1–C2 proficiency level

There exist 10,337 errors in the 909,830-word sub-corpus at this proficiency level. The distribution of these errors is displayed below.

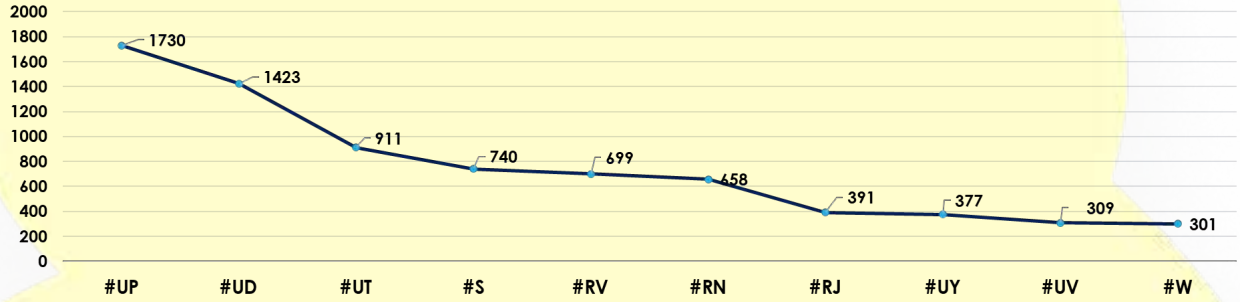


Figure 5: The distribution of errors at C1–C2 proficiency level[13]

The figure displays that only RJ and UV errors are different from the errors at B1–B2 level. The examples of these typologies are as follows:

(7) <s>I think<#UV>do|</#UV>you<#RV>can|should</#RV>visit both place

(8) <s>Well, I'm<#W><#RJ>scary|scared</#RJ><#RT>from|about</#RT>our future very|

It is observed that even though the proficiency levels increase, most of the errors seem to be persistent from A2 to C2, which may be seen below.

Error Code	Error
UP	Unnecessary Punctuation
UD	Unnecessary Determiner
UT	Unnecessary Preposition
RV	Replace Verb
S	Spelling Error
TV	Incorrect Tense of Verb
W	Word Order
AGV	Verb Agreement Error
RN	Replace Noun
UY	Unnecessary Adverb

Table 3: Persistent errors across A2 to C1–C2 proficiency level

[13] UP: Unnecessary Punctuation; UD: Unnecessary Determiner; UT: Unnecessary Preposition; S: Spelling Errors; RV: Replace Verb; RN: Replace Noun; RJ: Replace Adjective; UY: Unnecessary Adverb; UV: Unnecessary Verb; W: Word Order

As displayed in the table, the ten predominant error categories exhibit persistence across the A2–C2 proficiency bands. It warrants emphasis that an exhaustive discourse on these persistent errors, which permeate through English language proficiency levels as per the CEFR, is attainable through an in-depth Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA).

Given the disparate sizes of each corpus, a log-likelihood (LL) analysis has been instituted to juxtapose the frequencies of errors and reveal statistical difference amongst the proficiency levels. Table 4 displays the LL outcomes for all errors contrasted between the A2 and B1–B2 cohorts.

Error Typology	Freq. in A2	Freq. in B1–B2	LL	Significance
UP	2545	1666	68.66	0.000***+
UD	1703	1433	0.05	0.822 +
UT	1659	982	81.94	0.000***+
RV	1331	714	101.38	0.000***+
S	1255	749	59.44	0.000***+
TV	1094	-	-	-
RP	849	373	120.34	0.000***+
W	812	399	83.94	0.000***+
UA	631	430	12.41	0.000***+
AGV	599	-	-	-
RN	-	496	-	-
UY	-	353	-	-

+ indicates more errors in A2 proficiency band relative to B1-B2 proficiency band

- indicates more errors in B1-B2 proficiency band relative to A2 proficiency band

Table 4: Log-likelihood results (A2 vs. B1–B2)

According to the LL results, learners within A2 proficiency level commit a significantly higher volume of errors compared to their B1–B2 counterparts. The number of errors decreases as the learners' levels increase. A comparative analysis between B1–B2 and C1–C2 learners corroborates a marked decrement in all error categories, as illustrated below.

Error Typology	Freq. in B1–B2	Freq. in C1–C2	LL	Significance
UP	1666	1730	19.73	0.000***+
UD	1433	1423	27.76	0.000***+
UT	982	911	33.29	0.000***+
S	749	740	15.23	0.000***+
RV	714	699	15.79	0.000***+
RN	496	658	2.42	0.120 -
UA	430	-	-	-
W	399	301	38.74	0.000***+
RP	373	-	-	-
UY	353	377	2.82	0.093+
UV	-	309	-	-
RJ	-	391	-	-

+ indicates more errors in B1–B2 proficiency band relative to C1-C2 proficiency band

- indicates more errors in C1–C2 proficiency band relative to B1–B2 proficiency band

Table 5: Log-likelihood results (B1–B2 vs. C1–C2)

B1–B2 learners commit fewer errors relative to C1–C2 learners across all categories, with the exception of the RN category. Notably, UA and RP errors are absent in the C1–C2 dataset. Learners in the A2 and C1–C2 proficiency bands have also been compared to reveal the persistent error categories across proficiency levels, which is indicated in Table 6.

Error Typology	Freq. in A2	Freq. in C1–C2	LL	Significance
UP	2545	1730	178.01	0.000***+
UD	1703	1423	32.84	0.000***+
UT	1659	911	240.56	0.000***+
RV	1331	699	216.67	0.000***+
S	1255	740	148.05	0.000***+
TV	1094	-	-	-
RP	849	-	-	-
W	812	301	256.97	0.000***+
UA	631	430	43.66	0.000***+
AGV	599	-	-	-
RN	-	658	-	-
UY	-	377	-	-

+ indicates more errors in A2 proficiency band relative to C1–C2 proficiency band,

- indicates more errors in C1–C2 proficiency band relative to A2 proficiency band

Table 6: Log-likelihood results (A2 vs. C1–C2)

As displayed in the table, all error categories in A2 level are significantly higher than errors in C1–C2 level. TV, RP and AGV in A2 level learners are not apparent in C1–C2 level learners.

In order to answer the last research question, an analysis was conducted as presented in figure below. This analysis was conducted to elucidate the overall error patterns and also to assess how closely the interlanguage errors from native language backgrounds align with the errors made by Portuguese EFL learners.

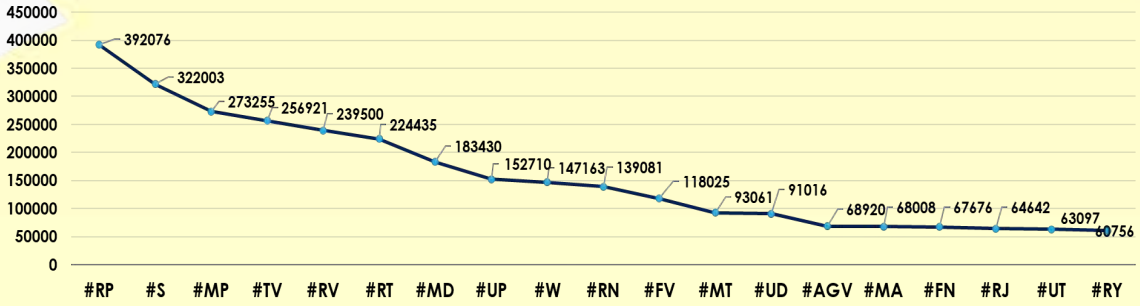


Figure 6: The overview of interlanguage errors in CLC[14]

The frequencies of errors made by EFL learners from 173 different countries were examined, with a focus on errors occurring 50,000 times or more, as depicted in the figure. The 19 most frequent error types in the CLC are observed in the figure. When the results in Figure 6 are compared to the most common error types analysed for Portuguese learners' sub-corpora presented in Figure 2, it is observed that 14 of these error types overlap. These are UP, UD, UT, RV, S, RN, TV, W, RP, RJ, AGV, FV, RY, RT.

On the other hand, the errors unique to the Portuguese learners are UA, UV, UY, UC, UN. While these findings may imply an interlanguage property, more comprehensive implementation of Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis, as proposed by Granger (1996), among learners from various native language backgrounds are needed. The study confirms that error frequency decreases as the proficiency level increases, aligning with prior research (Grant & Ginther, 2000; Can, 2017; Aybek & Can, 2023).

[14] RP: Replace Punctuation; S: Spelling Errors; MP: Missing Punctuation; TV: Incorrect Tense of Verb; RV: Replace Verb; RT: Replace Preposition; MD: Missing Determiner; UP: Unnecessary Punctuation; W: Word Order; RN: Replace Noun; FV: Wrong Verb Form; MT: Missing Preposition; UD: Unnecessary Determiner; AGV: Verb Agreement Error; MA: Missing Anaphor; FN: Wrong Noun Form; RJ: Replace Adjective; UT: Unnecessary Preposition; RY: Replace Adverb

5. Conclusion

Analysing errors at systematic intervals uncovers learning challenges and offers insights into learner profiles, guiding curriculum design and material customization. This research identified the most frequent errors of Portuguese EFL learners from A2 to C2 proficiency level. Key errors include unnecessary punctuation, unnecessary determiner, unnecessary preposition, replace verb and spelling error. These errors persist across all proficiency ranges. When juxtaposing Portuguese learner errors with those from 173 other countries, 14 of the 19 error typologies coincide which may be attributed to interlanguage properties; however, comprehensive CIA analysis is needed. Besides, unique errors among Portuguese learners, like unnecessary anaphor, unnecessary verb and unnecessary adverb, might arise from L1 transfer, warranting further investigation.

Considering findings, it is obvious that learners should be exposed to authentic language in the classroom as much as possible. Data-driven learning (DDL), as coined by Tim Johns (1991a), is needed to empower learners to self-explore the language patterns (Johns, 1991b) informing syllabus design and teaching methods. Also, language teachers need to be enlightened about the utilization of corpus data and corpus-based teaching methods within their classrooms.

As also underlined by Aybek (2023), the integration of the corpora applications into the English language teaching can be made by using the freely available and user-friendly web-based tools such as English-corpora.org (https://www.english-corpora.org/) (Davies, 2008-), Lancaster University BNClab (Gablasova, 2020), and Corpus Mate (https://corpusmate.com) (Crosthwaite, 2022). Furthermore, some of the platforms are interactive like FLAX (Interactive Language Learning: FLAX library (nzdl.org) and Compleat Lexical Tutor (https://www.lextutor.ca/) (Cobb, 2020). These platforms offer many activities and resources for English learners at every level. This software lets students discover the language by themselves, see the words in their contexts, enabling them to check their errors and use them while doing their homework. Teachers can have access or create corpora using these free tools while learners observe concordances, study patterns of language use in corpora and witness how a word may be used. As for the teachers who do not have any equipment and the Internet in their classrooms, some resources offer printed materials for DDL such as Tim Johns' Kibbitzers (https://lexically.net/TimJohns/), and Lancaster University's Corpus for Schools: lancs.ac.uk (Gablasova, 2020).

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Journey to the (He)art of Multimodal Storytelling: Student-produced Videos

Armanda Stroia[15]

Abstract

This talk aimed to help educators integrate impactful multimodal storytelling into their teaching repertoire/toolkit by guiding them on a research-powered journey drawing on *learner-generated digital media pedagogy* and best classroom practices.

To simplify the journey of planning and organizing a student-produced digital storytelling project, the session started with some engaging thought-provoking experiments. As the session unfolded, I invited attendees on a carefully planned 3-stop itinerary meant to dispel common misconceptions and myths surrounding digital literacies, allowing teachers to gain a deeper understanding of the digital landscape and its potential for empowering learners as *prosumers* in a multimodal world. Then, I deconstructed the digital storytelling process, providing essential tools and engaging materials for each stage of a video project–prompts, scripts, storyboard templates, video observation checklists, etc.

Finally, the session showcased the impact of learner-generated digital stories through inspiring science and eco digital stories.

Keywords: multimodality, digital storytelling, learner-generated digital media.

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1. Introduction. Teaching in a multimodal world

> We live in a world that is increasingly multimodal. The internet, social media, mobile phones, and other digital technologies, have given prominence to forms of discourse in which texts, images, and sounds combine to convey complex messages.
>
> ("The Visual and Multimodal Research Forum," 2021)

Undoubtedly, digital media is now "embedded in almost any human activity and is reshaping social practices" (Delfanti & Arvidsson, 2019). It is no wonder that digital or multimodal resources are currently in vogue in today's English language teaching landscape, sensitive to the latest trends in the digital arena: the rise of AI, app-based learning and the myriad of digital resources which offer immersive and personalized learning trajectories, conducive to empowering learners to interact with language at deeper levels, like never before.

2. What is multimodal storytelling?

2.1 Terminological notes

Although digital resources are at the epicentre of any modern teaching approach, is *multimodal storytelling* a new strategy?

Actually, according to the *Visual and Multimodal Research Forum*, *multimodality* was coined decades ago, in the 1980s, and, at a very basic level, this term signifies that as humans, we use many different "modes" or semiotic resources in order to make meaning. In other words, multimodality researchers examine "how meaning is made through the combined use of semiotic resources such as writing, speech, image, proxemics, (still and moving) image, objects, sound and music, colour, layout" ("The Visual and Multimodal Research Forum," 2021).

The implications for an educational context are highlighted by Meier (2022): "multimodal storytelling in educational contexts means that teachers and learners are prompted to bring the communicative functions of text, image, video, and audio into narrative coherence." (p. 10). In other words, in today's dynamic digital age, multimodal storytelling is a versatile and increasingly popular approach to traditional storytelling, exploiting a range of multimedia tools to create an immersive experience which brings narratives to life, with animated elements and interactive features, appealing to various senses.

If we take into consideration that digital storytelling combines, according to digital storytelling pioneer, Dana Atchley, "the best of two worlds: the 'new world' of digitised video, photography and art, and the 'old world' of telling stories", then, it is easy to understand that any digital story is multimodal, as it combines at least two different modes. So, for the purpose of this article, I will be using the concepts multimodal storytelling/digital storytelling interchangeably. However, it is essential to note that the former functions like an umbrella-term.

2.2 Why should students create multimodal stories?

Working in teams to create a multimodal story can provide a personalized, content-rich learning experience, support autonomy, and enhance language and digital skills, all while sparking high levels of engagement, but also invaluable soft skills (decision making, critical and creative thinking, problem-solving, collaboration etc. during the planning phase to name just a few).

Last but not least, from the perspective of learners as active producers not passive consumers of media content, students benefit in terms of developing not only digital skills but also other valuable literacies and life skills: visual literacy, information literacy, empathy and perspective-taking, self-understanding (see Robin, 2016). With all these benefits in mind, it is critical to reflect on the steps and challenges of implementing multimodal storytelling projects in our classes.

3. The APPI session

I chose to start the session with some engaging experiments meant to set the tone for an enlightening learning experience. As the session unfolded, I invited attendees on a carefully planned 3-stop itinerary that aimed to dispel myths, deconstruct the digital storytelling process, and demonstrate the impact of learner-generated digital stories. The talk was structured with the following objectives in mind: to develop understanding of learner-generated digital media frameworks essential to implement student-produced digital stories; b) reflect on the importance of supporting materials to complement student-produced videos and examine a wide range of materials to enhance language learning opportunities; c) empower participants to leave with a well-defined plan for a digital story ready to be easily integrated into their classroom curriculum.

3.1 First stop: experiments, myths, and digital media literacies

3.1.1 A thought experiment and a blindfolded darts challenge

I invited teachers to try a thought experiment and picture themselves entering a new class: “You can see the most enthusiastic students you have ever met! They are all engaged, buzzing with enthusiasm, their faces beaming with excitement to learn, their eyes sparkling with that special enthusiasm you adore! You can almost smell their curiosity and engagement in the air, as students raise their hands in a frenzy to share their thoughts!

Now pause for a moment and reflect! Is this really what you see every time you enter a classroom? As you take a closer look, reality sets in. Unfortunately, on a daily basis, the picture is often very different. You might find yourself faced with a classroom of disinterested, bored, apathetic students, yawning, or staring blankly at the wall. Despite our best efforts, we have all been there. And while it can be demotivating, it's also an opportunity to rise to the challenge and find creative ways to engage your students. So, how can we turn things around and reignite that genuine sparkle of enthusiasm for learning in our students' eyes? How can we inspire them to become the actors and (co)creators of their own learning scenario?”

In one of my Eureka moments I found one possible solution: learner-generated media. By empowering students to create their own videos, podcasts, and other media content, we can give them a sense of ownership and agency over their learning. This can be a powerful tool for sparking creativity, fostering critical thinking, and building essential 21st-century skills. I felt proud I had found a solution to save my students from apathy and boredom! Yet, I had some unexpected challenges along the way!

To help teachers become aware of those difficulties I had come across so they can avoid those in the future, I invited them to take part in a brief blindfolded darts experiment.

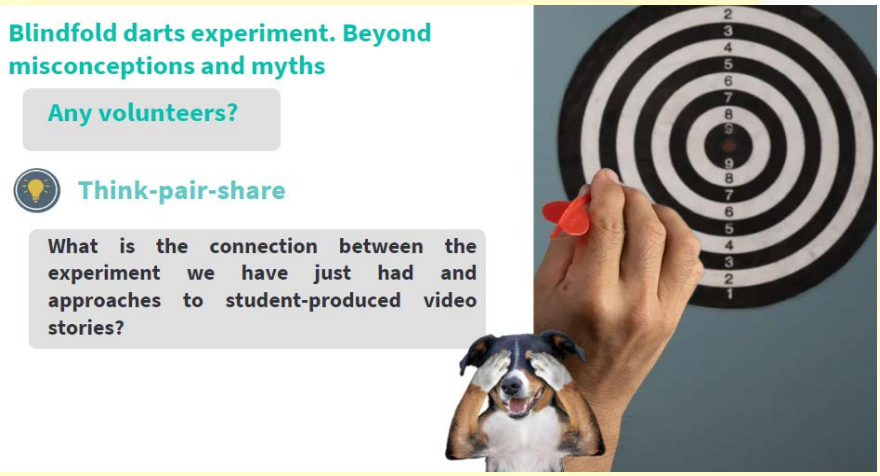


Figure 1: Experiment to help teachers predict challenges when working with digital stories

Even if you might be tempted to think there is no logical connection, try to put it in a larger context, by asking yourself this guiding question: Is it enough to design and assign your learners a digital story task and expect them to automatically develop digital and language skills?

When aiming to develop a set of targeted digital and language skills, especially when you lack experience and try something new, it is highly unlikely to succeed in a blindfolded way, guided only by intuition or pure chance. Similarly, merely asking students to produce media does not automatically lead to digital literacies. Just by creating a short video story does not necessarily lead to language learning either.

3.1.2 Other challenges: the digital native myth, intuitive versus evidence-informed teaching strategies

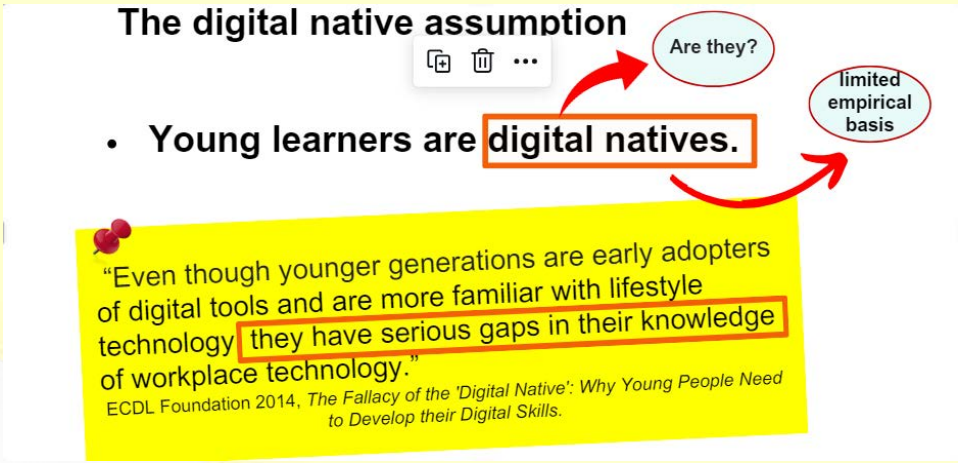


Figure 2: Dispelling the digital native myth, conference slide

Aside from the controversial digital native assumption popularized by Prensky decades ago, but widely debated and critiqued for its oversimplified approach, there are also misconceptions surrounding digital literacy. What does it mean to be digitally literate? Simply being a user of social media, apps, and smart devices doesn't automatically indicate digital literacy. According to researchers from University of Southern California, digital literacy encompasses a more complex set of skills: “the ability to extract implicit and explicit ideas from digital media, stay safe online, think critically, find high-quality sources with varying perspectives, evaluate sources, collaborate and communicate effectively across media, be creative with the tools at hand” (“11 Digital Literacy Myths, Debunked,” n.d.).

What about choosing not to be blindfolded by intuition, misconceptions or luck hoping for the best that we might hit the target of developing those desirable skills just by trying out some appealing teaching ideas? What if we actually applied a research-based framework rooted in a robust pedagogical approach? Indeed, we need specific materials for each stage of a multimedia project to give our students the full support they need. But in order to design effective materials, it becomes essential to understand the pedagogical frameworks and principles behind student-produced video projects and work in a systematic, evidence-informed approach.

3.2 The digital storytelling process

3.2.1 A closer look at the Digital Media Literacies Framework

As always, the best way to plan a journey is to have a clear perspective, a guiding map. To clarify, we need to start by understanding the bigger picture, the main components of the *digital media literacy framework*.

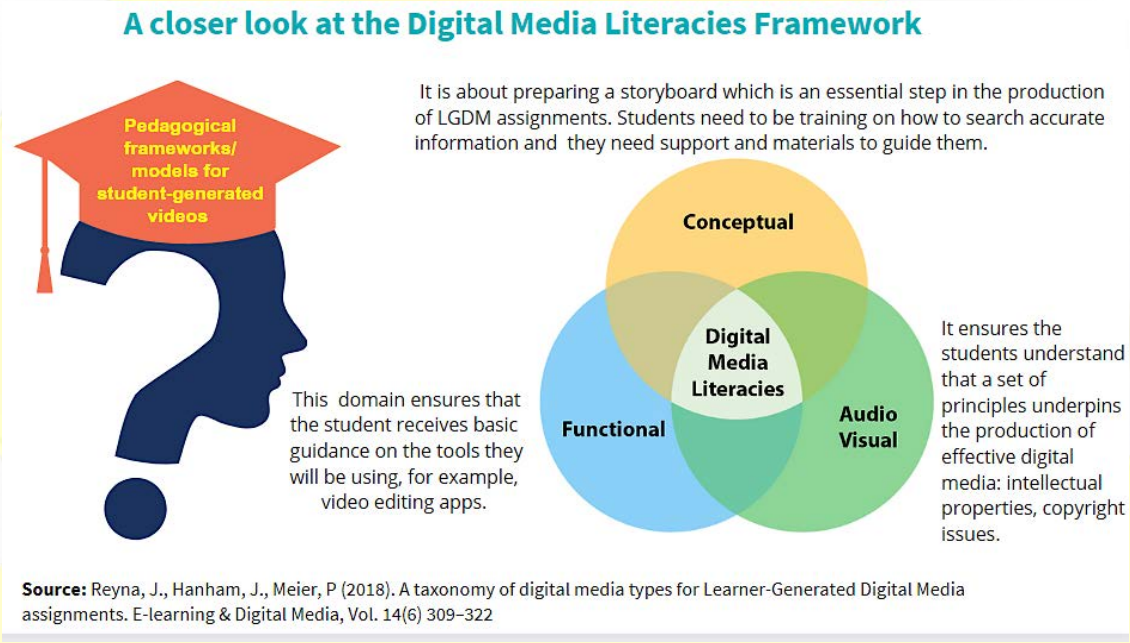


Figure 3: Digital Media Literacies Framework (Reyna & Meier 2018), conference slide

Basically, this model combines pedagogy, digital media training (despite the preconceived idea that students are digital natives, most of them still need training which can be delivered through setting peer mentors, expert student systems), video hosting (Google Classroom, Flipgrid, Seesaw etc.), marking rubrics, group contribution assessment, feedback, scaffolding strategies, among others. Research studies reveal that, when working with learner-generated digital media, it is critical to take into consideration the three overlapping areas: conceptual, functional, audio-visual.

3.2.2 Key elements and a checklist for student-produced multimodal stories projects

First, decide *the type of student interaction* (individual or group – collaborative assignment). For instance, depending on the project, I personally encourage my students to choose how to work.

Digital media training: You must consider ethics, intellectual property, and copyright issues. It is essential to ensure that students become aware of their importance when designing their digital projects.

Students' roles and types of interaction: "peer mentors" structure

I usually use the "expert system" or "role rotation system" suggested by Kearney and Shuck (2005, 2006). In other words, this means that we give students the freedom

to choose the area they wish to contribute. For example, they can become responsible for different jobs ranging from research for the storyboard, scriptwriting, acting, directing, or editing the video. Thus, they feel empowered to be sharing their knowledge or use their skills. Furthermore, they take responsibility for their expert role in front of their peers.

Providing models and support

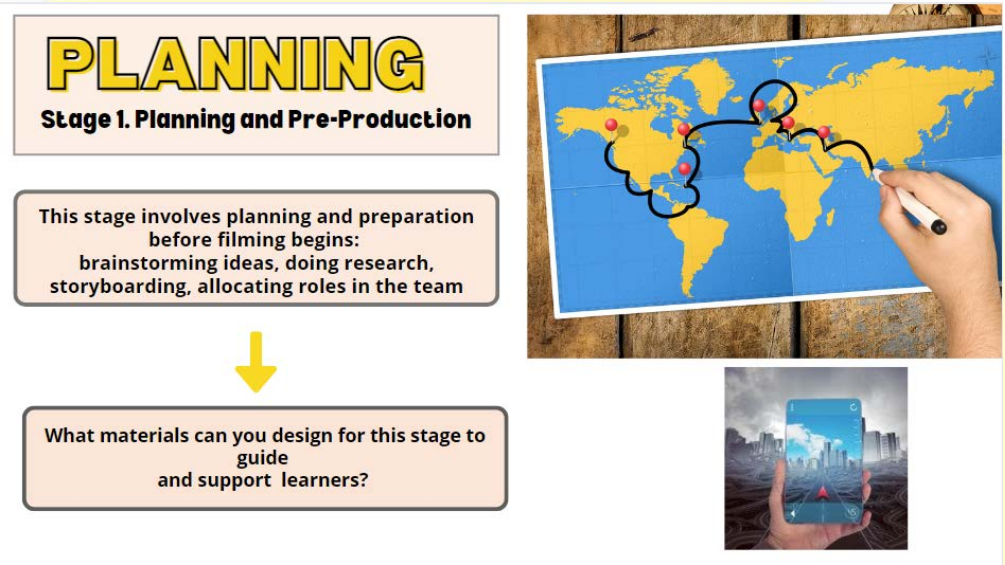
Project stages

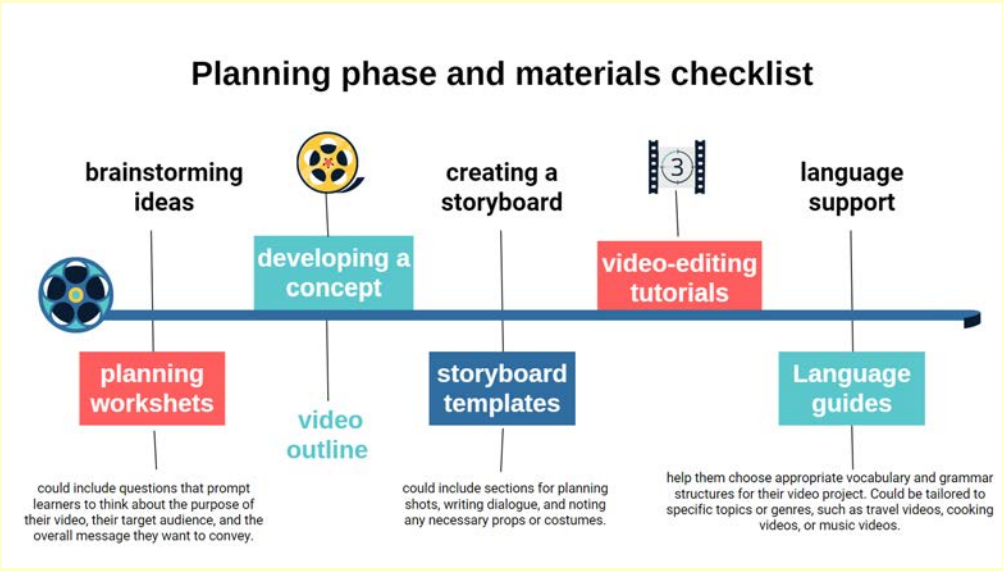


Figure 4: Stages of student-produced video projects, conference slide

3.2.3 Planning phase

Before embarking on the video creation journey, students should spend some time planning their trip. During this stage, they need to choose the modes of communication that they will be using to tell their story, just like selecting the destinations on a trip. This includes brainstorming ideas, developing a concept, outlining the video, and creating a storyboard. This stop is crucial for ensuring that the video has a clear purpose and direction. Understanding *the story ARC* (Robin, 2016) — beginning, climax, end — is essential from the first draft.





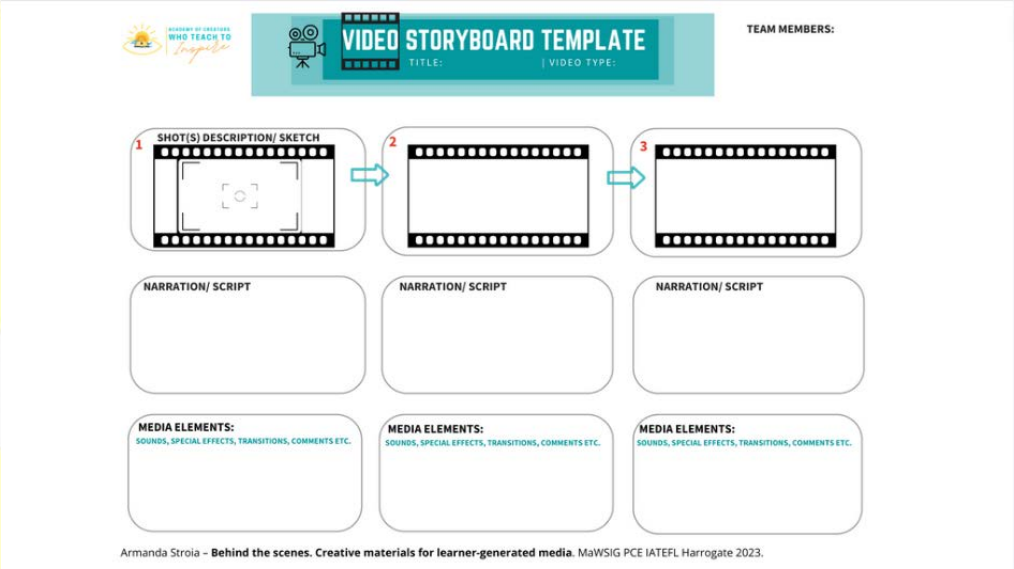
Figures 5 & **6:** Planning phase and materials to support learners in this stage, conference slides

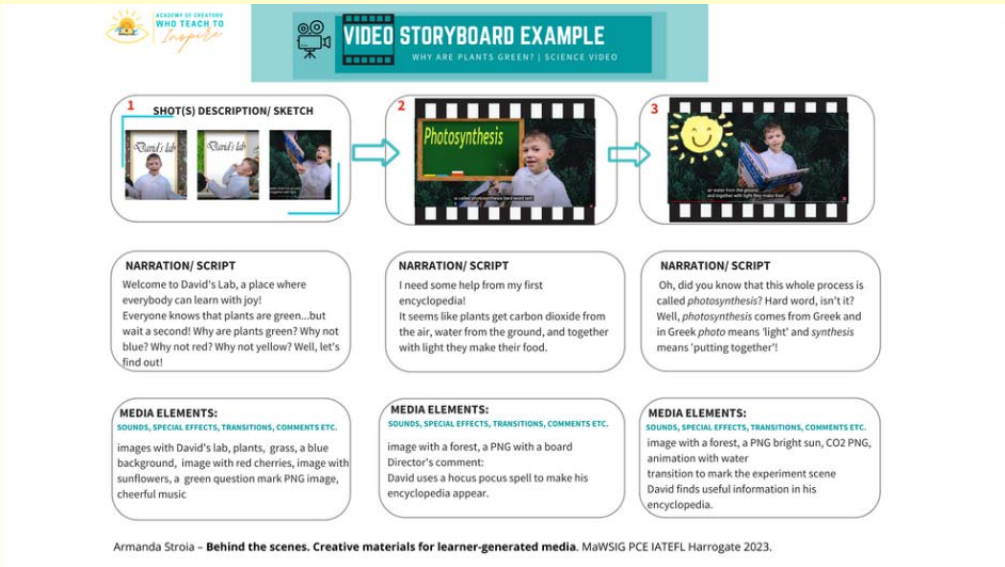
Storyboarding templates: Provide learners with storyboard templates to help them plan their video project effectively. These templates could include sections for planning shots, writing dialogue, and noting any necessary props or costumes.

Planning worksheets: Give learners planning worksheets to help them brainstorm ideas for their video project. These worksheets could include questions that prompt learners to think about the purpose of their video, their target audience, and the overall message they want to convey.

Language support: Provide learners with language guides that help them choose appropriate vocabulary and grammar structures for their video project. These guides

could be tailored to specific topics or genres, such as travel videos, cooking videos, or music videos.





Figures 7 & **8:** Storyboard template and example for a science digital story, conference slides

3.2.4 Production phase

The production stage of multimodal storytelling involves creativity and exploration. This stage involves capturing footage and recording audio, as well as directing actors and coordinating the crew, etc. As useful materials to support learners during this stage, it is recommended to provide them with checklists for effective production, planning timelines for rehearsing the script, tips on camera angles, shot types, lighting, sound recording and other technical aspects of media production. The *Australian Centre for the Moving Image* provides a free practical course in filmmaking tailored for primary and secondary

school students (https://www.acmi.net.au/education/school-program-and-resources/film-it-resource/).

3.2.5 Post-production phase

This stage involves editing the raw footage into a final product, selecting the best takes, cutting and trimming footage, adding sound effects and music, and adding titles and credits. In order to support learners, it would be useful to give them access to a variety of resources, such as lists with user-friendly apps, with links to tutorials, curated collections of free-copyright images, videos and music (Pixabay, Pexels, Unsplash, Canva, etc.). Encourage them to explore and rate the best/user-friendly video-editing apps.



Figure 9: Students' curated list of video-editing apps, conference slide

3.2.6 Reflection and feedback phase

This stage involves analyzing the final outcome using a special rubric or video observation worksheets (peer/self-assessment).

3.2.7 Sharing and distribution: Publishing your multimodal story

It is important not to neglect the final stage, which implies finding creative ways and opportunities for students to "celebrate" their work and final products (Digital Stories Festivals, Competitions for inspiring and raise-awareness digital stories on current local and global issues, etc.). The finished video is shared with its intended audience. This can

involve uploading the video to a website or social media platform, classLMS, Flipgrid etc. It is essential to collect parental/guardian consent forms in a manner that complies with your local laws before onboarding students to a social media platform/Flipgrid.

3.3 Impactful learner-generated multimodal stories

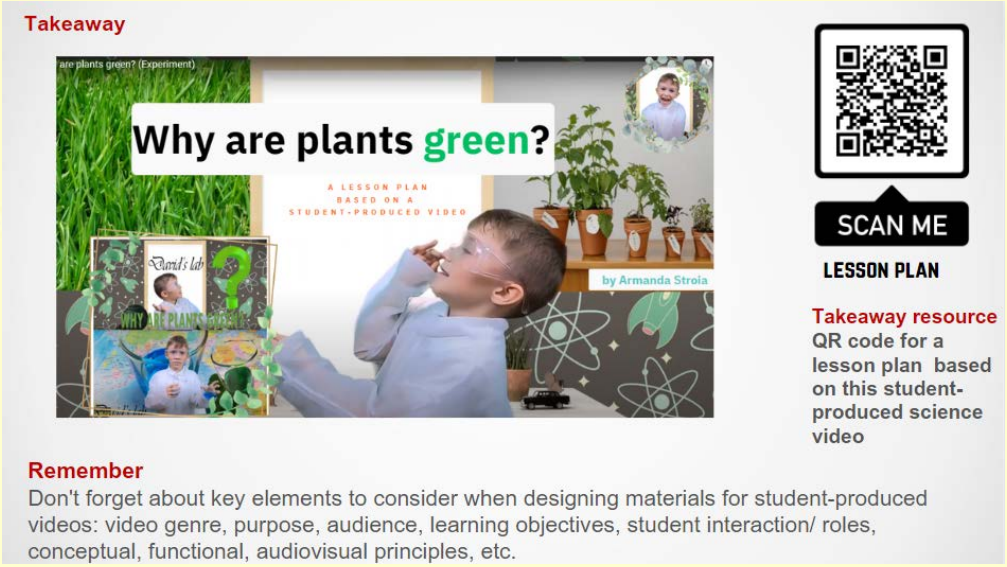


Figure 10: Takeaway resource for participants with an example of science digital story, conference slide

Finally, the session showcased the impact of learner-generated digital stories through inspiring science and eco digital stories.

4. Final remarks

This workshop aimed to simplify the journey of planning and organizing a multimodal storytelling project, ensuring an enjoyable and rewarding experience for learners. The key insight from this journey is to remember that the ultimate goal of any digital storytelling project is not to get lost in technical intricacies or to rely on too many sophisticated apps for the final outcome. It is, fundamentally, about crafting a meaningful, coherent narrative that effectively conveys a compelling message and empowers our learners with voice and a perspective.

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Tips on how to integrate language learning influencers in the classroom

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Polytechnic Institute of Beja

Abstract

In a world where technology and social media have taken over everyday life, the fact that social media influencers are part of most of our students' daily routine does not come as a surprise. Bearing this in mind, this article aims to highlight the concept of 'language learning influencers' and to explore how these players' presence can be optimised in language courses. To achieve this goal, several examples of content produced by language learning influencers are analysed and strategies on how to use them in ELT contexts are suggested.

Keywords: language learning influencers, social media, ELT

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1. Introduction

It is a self-evident truth that technology has become a crucial part of contemporary life. In fact, the ubiquitous presence of mobile devices permanently connected to the Internet has changed human communication in an indelible way, especially since the advent of an era of generalised access to social media platforms. Born into a world dominated by technology, most 21st-century teenagers spend a significant amount of time on their social media accounts every day, scrolling up and down an infinite continuum of content displayed in various formats, such as posts, reels, and stories, among others.

Technology and social media have also conquered their space in the realm of education in general and of language teaching in particular, as shown by the dramatic increase in the number of articles, projects and dissertations published on this topic over the past years. In this field, a wide range of subtopics has attracted researchers' attention, such as the integration of technology in the classroom, the use of learning platforms, the importance of digital literacy reinforcement, the role and potential of social media in education, the potential of gamification and learning apps, among many others.

This article aims to focus on a specific aspect of the use of social media in the classroom by drawing attention to celebrities and social media influencers in the context of language teaching. After a brief clarification of key concepts, this short article focuses on examples of content developed by language learning influencers and on practical tips on how to enhance the potential of such content in the language classroom.

2. Language learning and teaching beyond the classroom and language learning influencers

The idea that languages can be learnt not only in the classroom but also beyond it is not new. The recent publication of *The Routledge Handbook of Language Learning and Teaching Beyond the Classroom* (Reinders, Lai, & Sundqvist, 2022) highlights the importance of this topic by presenting a set of theoretical perspectives that focus on insights into how language learning can be enhanced in various contexts other than the classroom.

The role of influencers can be considered in this regard and, in fact, over the past years, several publications have drawn attention to their relevance in the field of education. For example, Izquierdo-Iranzo and Gallardo-Echenique (2020) use the term "studygrammers" (or "learning influencers") to refer to students who work as mentors and peer leaders on Instagram by sharing notes and conveying advice, support, and

experiences, resorting to strategies commonly associated with social media influencers. Paula Marcelo-Martínez (2020) refers to “educational influencers” and analyses the way they interact with followers. Carpenter et al. (2022) emphasise “education influencers” as “new player[s] in the educator professional landscape”, by retrieving and clarifying key concepts that are particularly useful when one speaks of educational influencers, namely the concepts of micro-celebrity and social media influencers.

Based on Abidin’s input (2015), Carpenter et al. (2022) state that micro-celebrities are “supposedly ordinary people leveraging strategic self-presentation practices and interactions with followers on social media to increase their status online.” (p. 2). They share aspects of their personal life and perspectives on social media, create a feeling of interconnectedness and intimacy, are often seen as ‘regular people’, and convey an idea of authenticity in their interactions. In turn, social media influencers profit directly from their ability to influence, and use social media platforms “to attract attention, display a certain lifestyle, create personas and personal brands, and develop social capital” (p. 3). They are usually also “effective at producing and distributing content […] and interacting with followers” […]. [Social media influencers] also cultivate connectedness with their followers through responses, acknowledgements, and public appreciation” (p. 3).

As one can see in the sections below, the authors of the content analysed in this article — language learning influencers — share some of these characteristics, as they try to establish themselves as celebrities within the world of English language teaching (ELT) through the development of content on topics related to language learning and through the creation of a community of followers with whom they interact regularly, sometimes with the aim of promoting their own services or products (e.g., online language courses, e-books and other types of language learning material).

3. Tips on how to integrate language learning influencers in the classroom.

This section is aimed not only at identifying the key features of input provided by different language learning influencers connected with the world of ELT, but also at highlighting the ways in which their content can be optimised to deal with different topics/skills in class or beyond the classroom. In fact, after analysing a series of language learning influencers’ pages on Instagram, it becomes evident that the input developed by these influencers can be useful to tackle a wide variety of key areas, such as pronunciation, vocabulary/idioms, specific grammar topics, cultural aspects, among others.

3.1 Key features of posts by language learning influencers

Although each language learning influencer may adopt a unique style and create or embody a specific *persona*, there are several common characteristics that can be identified on various influencers' profiles. Despite the fact that several influencers have accounts/channels on different platforms (e.g., Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, among others), this chapter focuses exclusively on examples extracted from Instagram. All examples provided below can be accessed by clicking on the hyperlink as well as through the link provided in the references section.

Content posted by language learning influencers usually deals with a very specific language topic. Be it in a post based on a sequence of pictures with simple explanations and examples, be it in a short video or on an Instagram 'story', no long and thorough lessons are to be expected – instead, attention is usually given to a particular aspect of the language, which can be easily explained and illustrated with resort to a few pictures or to only a few seconds of video material. Here is an example from an Instagram account dedicated to pronunciation (https://www.instagram.com/pronunciationwithemma/) (figure 1):

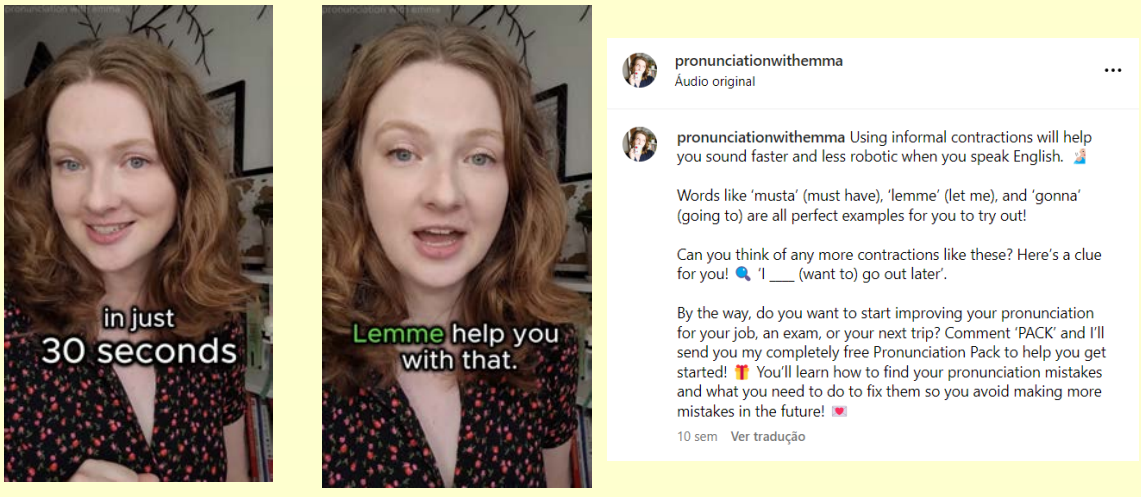


Figure 1: Example of Instagram post from @pronunciationwithemma (https://www.instagram.com/p/C2NDkSjNQuG/)

In this case, Emma's post gives three simple tips on informal contractions and on how they can help learners sound more fluent in English ("gonna", "lemme", "musta"). The explicit reference to the length of the video in the introduction complies with the expected speed and rhythm on this type of platform, also immediately conveying the feeling that it is possible to learn something useful almost instantaneously.

It is also worth noticing that this video, like many posts produced by language learning influencers, is based on a combination of image/video and text, a strategy that helps followers/learners grasp the key words/ideas or rules being conveyed in a more effective way, as learners can both listen to and read what is being said. Furthermore, as one can see, content is explained in more detail in the comments section, allowing followers/learners to consolidate the topic addressed more thoroughly. Moreover, there is also an explicit invitation for interaction in the comments — in this case, a simple gap-filling question on another contraction ("wanna") urges learners to use the content presented in the video in a new situation. In fact, many language learning influencers conclude their posts by inviting followers to answer a question, write an example sentence or simply share something about their own learning experience in the comments.

As mentioned above, the content developed by many influencers is often aimed at selling a specific product or service (even if indirectly); consequently, also in the case of language learning influencers, it is common to encounter instructions on how to enrol in online courses/sessions, how to access/purchase an e-book or another type of learning materials. That is the case of the post above, in which Emma invites followers to ask for more detailed information on how they can improve their pronunciation. The same applies to the examples below (figures 2 and 3), extracted from two other famous language learning influencers — Lucy (https://www.instagram.com/englishwithlucy/) and Sandro (https://www.instagram.com/englishwithsandro/).

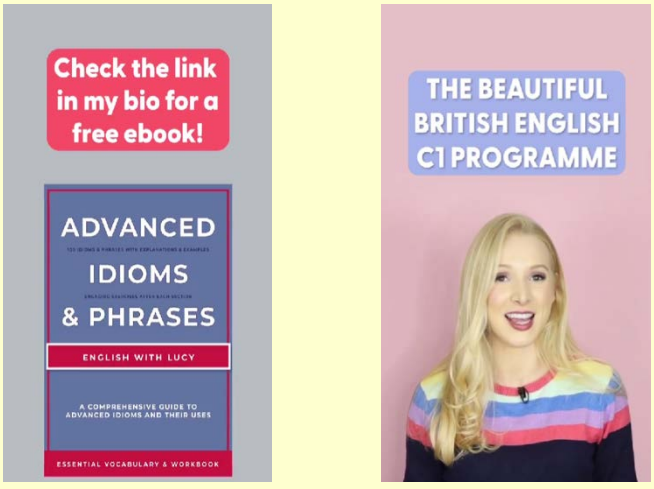


Figure 2: Extracts from the Instagram profile @englishwithlucy (https://www.instagram.com/p/Csde5GJuJ5l/)

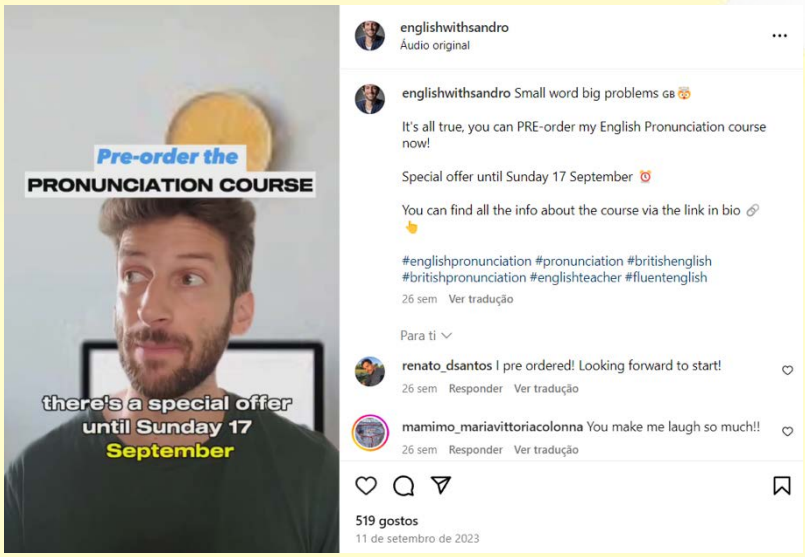


Figure 3: Extract from the Instagram profile @englishwithsandro (https://www.instagram.com/p/CxD0QHIoiFn/)

By scrolling down various posts by these influencers, one also realises that, in many cases, posts reveal visible consistency not only in their format of content, but also in their style — for instance, sometimes various posts developed by the same language learning influencer have a similar length and follow a pattern regarding the way in which they are structured, i.e., how they start/end, how key information is conveyed/summarised, etc.

This consistency helps learners become familiar with and get used to a specific presentation style. For example, by looking at several posts by @englishwithlucy, one can easily notice that Lucy uses the "British English" label as one of the key aspects of her 'brand image'. On the other hand, in the case of @englishwithsandro, most posts hold the viewers' attention through humour, as content is usually based on the simulation of funny dialogues in which common errors are highlighted and corrected through simple explanations. Non-verbal language is another key element which strengthens the remarkable humorous effect in most of Sandro's posts. In fact, Sandro's bio (https://www.instagram.com/englishwithsandro/) also confirms the central role of humour in his 'brand image' as a language learning influencer, as he clearly acknowledges his aim to "[help learners] progress in English with storytelling and humour". Followers' reactions in the comments section also illustrate the success of this approach, as exemplified in mamimo_mariavittoriacolonna's comment in figure 3: "You make me laugh so much!" Many similar comments hint at the fact that followers keep coming back to Sandro's profile due to his ability to make others laugh. This confirms the well-

established notion that emotions can play a key role in learners' motivation and in the success of their learning experience/process.

Drawing on the previous characterisation of social media influencers, one can say that influencers try to establish and promote regular and significant interaction with their followers by addressing them directly and sometimes even creating the feeling of closeness and intimacy. At times, this proximity goes beyond language-related contexts, as in the case of Sandro's justification for his temporary absence from his social media platforms with the need to take a break from the intensity of the digital content development routine (figure 4).



Figure 4: Extract from the Instagram profile @englishwithsandro (https://www.instagram.com/p/CsdOw7LIrxB/)

As one can see, the sympathy expressed by many followers shows the sense of community created around this profile and the learning experience it provides.

3.2 Examples of topics addressed by language learning influencers

This section aims to explore how content developed by language learning influencers can be used to tackle a wide variety of topics of significant relevance within the language learning process.

As shown in the previous section, pronunciation is one of the popular areas among influencers who design/produce content for learners of English, as illustrated in the figures below (figure 5). For instance, Lucy provides several tips on individual

sounds, drawing followers' attention to commonly challenging sounds in words that are often mispronounced. Here is an example of words in which the consonant <b> is silent.



Figure 5: Example of post on pronunciation from @englishwithlucy (https://www.instagram.com/p/CirsDrioPJ0/)

As we know, correcting learners' pronunciation can be a challenging task since many learners feel discouraged when corrected in front of their peers. As a result, this type of simple input can help students not only notice a pronunciation mistake they make (of which they are probably not even aware), but also get them to learn how to correct it.

However, in my opinion, the advantage of this material goes beyond the simple presentation of a particular sound – as one watches the video, one cannot fail to notice how the author provides examples slowly, subtly encouraging the student to repeat the words as they are presented both orally and in writing. Moreover, the fact that learners can watch the video as many times as they like or even save it in their favourites list proves to be an additional benefit to be considered.

It is also worth mentioning that content on pronunciation is not limited to input on individual sounds. Some influencers, for instance, focus on helping learners improve their fluency and sound more natural, as shown in the post below on the Instagram profile @tofluency, run by Jack (https://www.instagram.com/tofluency/).



Figure 6: Example of post on fluency from @tofluency (https://www.instagram.com/p/CVkhC9ggodV/)

This video exemplifies a simple type of exercise that many teachers have most likely tried out spontaneously in class – helping learners to work on chunks of language step by step and then encouraging them to combine all of them is, as we know, a common teaching strategy. Just like in Lucy's video presented above (figure 5), in this case, one similarly tends to try and repeat what is being said. Students that are not so confident and that probably resist doing this type of solicited repetition in front of their peers may possibly end up doing this exercise in private if they come across it spontaneously as they check their social media.

Another example of pronunciation-related content is the case of videos on tongue twisters (figure 7), which can be especially interesting to students who like to be challenged. Here are two more examples from profiles mentioned above:





Figure 7: Examples of posts on tongue twisters from @tofluency and @englishwithsandro (https://www.instagram.com/p/CPqS_XqHqNz/, https://www.instagram.com/p/Ci-iIEeIYxY/)

As one can see, these posts clearly exemplify the strategy/structure mentioned above, as they elicit followers' reaction and/or interaction.

Vocabulary is another popular topic — from the explanation of simple words to idioms or to specialised vocabulary within a specific field of study, there is a wide range of vocabulary-related content developed by language learning influencers. The videos below — "Advanced ways to describe the weather" and "Advanced Phrases to describe feelings", posted by Lucy (@englishwithlucy) (figure 8) —, are examples of vocabulary content targeted at upper-intermediate/advanced students. Although one could argue that this type of material may be ineffective for its random nature, the truth is that, in many cases, vocabulary is in fact presented in ways which make memorisation easier – for instance, the first video in figure 8 provides a simple list of synonyms that helps learners use more varied vocabulary when talking about the weather; the second video goes beyond the simple presentation of a list of words and highlights how each of the expressions ("to be down in the dumps", "in a muddle", "on top of the world", "to blow a fuse", "scared to death", "to be buzzing") can be used in context through example sentences.



Figure 8: Examples of posts on vocabulary from @englishwithlucy (https://www.instagram.com/p/ChU2X1doxJe/; https://www.instagram.com/p/CgWVeegoBTp/)

In fact, various language learning influencers' posts focus on idioms. The profile titled Learn English Phrases (https://www.instagram.com/learn.english.expressions/), by an English teacher called Mike, is a good example — each video deals with expressions used in the context of a simulated dialogue, followed by an explicit clarification of their meaning, as in the example below, which focuses on the phrase "to have a pep talk" (figure 9). Learners particularly interested in expanding their mastery of this language item can benefit from such a page, where they find a plethora of idioms used in everyday situations which can help them sound more natural (figure 10).



Figure 9: Example of a post on vocabulary from @learn.english.expressions (https://www.instagram.com/p/CgP6it6sY6-/)



Figure 10: Extract from @learn.english.expressions (https://www.instagram.com/learn.english.expressions/)

This is also the case of other videos in which influencers draw learners' attention to expressions commonly used by learners of English, but which are somehow rarely used in real life. As an example, one can consider the content produced by Sandro (figure 11) and Nab (figure 12), who provide alternatives to the idiom "It's raining cats and dogs". It is worth highlighting the fact that Nab's post (figure 12) evinces another common strategy, namely the resort to extracts from films and TV shows to help learners visualise the use of the expression in a real context.





Figures 11 & **12:** Examples of posts on vocabulary from @englishwithsandro and @englishwithnab (https://www.instagram.com/p/ClotM7AuEHH/, https://www.instagram.com/p/CmoelhxtQZW/)

As regards vocabulary, one can also notice the fact that some influencers specialise in specific topics and can thus provide invaluable material in the context of ESP courses. Derek Callan's profile (https://www.instagram.com/derekcallan.english/) is an example of such a page, where various Business English tips are provided (e.g., meaning/use of business-related words/idioms, acronyms, tips on specific professional skills, for instance, presentations, small talk, etc.) (figures 13 and 14).

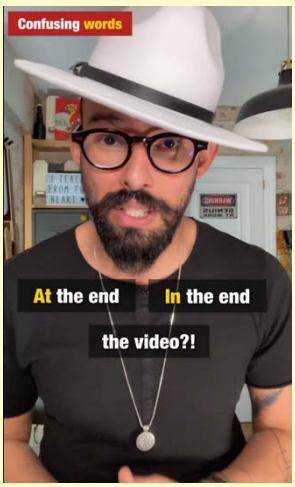




Figures 13 & **14:** Examples of posts on vocabulary by @derekcallan.english (https://www.instagram.com/p/CwU5odvIToH/, https://www.instagram.com/p/C0gxco9oi8b/)

Grammar is another area of interest to several language learning influencers. Various authors focus on common errors by drawing learners' attention to those errors and by stressing correction. The examples below illustrate two very common grammar

mistakes: the first related to prepositions — in the end/at the end (figure 15) — and the second to verb tenses, namely to the use of the Present Perfect Continuous (figure 16).





Figures 15 & **16:** Examples of posts on grammar by @englishwithnab and @englishwithsandro (https://www.instagram.com/p/CcacE3hlzzH/, https://www.instagram.com/p/CWAuBTIo-ml/)

It is also interesting to notice that language learning influencers sometimes cooperate with peers, as in the case of Lucy and Nab, who illustrate some of the key differences between British and American English (figure 17). This type of dynamics and collaboration can help each influencer grow their 'communities'.

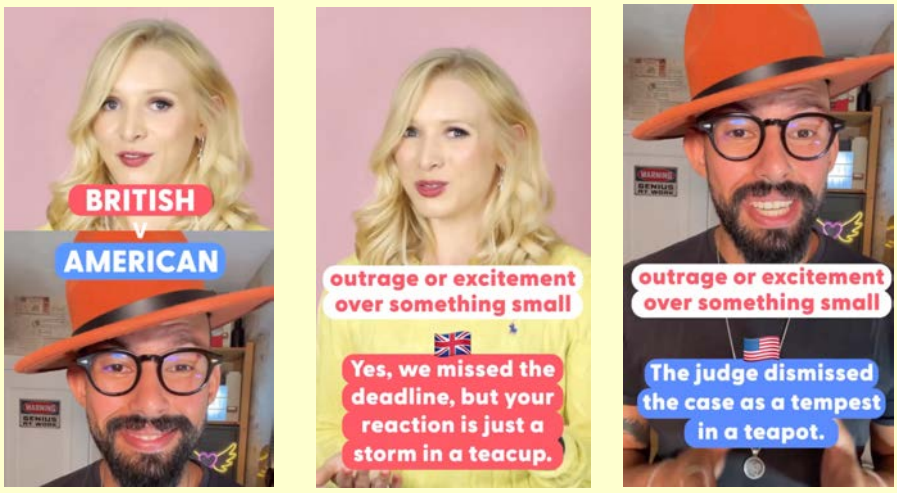


Figure 17: Example of joint content developed by @englishwithlucy and @englishwithnab (https://www.instagram.com/reel/CkNamldIebk/)

In fact, this type of cooperation may apply not only to language learning influencers working with the same language, but also to those who teach other foreign languages, as is the case, for instance, of the videos posted by Lucy and German-

speaking language learning influencers, in which funny differences between English and German are highlighted (figure 18).



Figure 18: Examples of joint content by @englishwithlucy and @learn.german.fast (https://www.instagram.com/reel/Cn8_9TpjQcn/, https://www.instagram.com/reel/CiuYq7ljac2/)

3.3. Strategies to develop language learning influencers' content in ELT

As previously demonstrated, the content developed by language learning influencers can be used to approach a wide range of relevant areas in the context of ELT. The main aim of this section is to highlight a few practical tips on strategies that may be useful when one intends to incorporate this type of input in the classroom.

In this context, an initial step could be for teachers to map the field, i.e., to start following several language learning influencers' pages themselves. By doing this, teachers will become familiar with various profiles, identify items to be used in their practice and be able to evaluate the quality of selected content. Although not all profiles display content of the same quality, it is highly likely that this process will result in finding a lot of valuable posts that may be used in the classroom. The suggestions below aim to help plan possible ways of integrating language learning influencers' content in the classroom.

- Ask students to look at the profiles of several language learning influencers and to start following a few — e.g. 3-5 — on a regular basis (according to their

preference). By doing this, teachers will be indirectly bringing English into the 'feed' of posts that learners check as part of their routine.

- Encourage students to save posts they particularly liked. One of the difficulties with this type of platform is the fact that it is often hard to retrieve content one has come across. Saving favourite posts may help students retain significant moments and keep a record of content that is meaningful to them.
- Ask students to share one thing they have learnt on a regular basis (e.g., once a week, every two weeks), which can be done through any suitable collaborative platform (e.g. Padlet, Whatsapp group, Microsoft Teams or Google Classroom). This may help strengthen a sense of learning community and allow the whole group to benefit from the content other students have come across.
- Ask students to comment on content shared by their classmates. This may not only encourage students to work actively on content shared within the group, but also motivate students to share more content, as receiving feedback from peers may be a gratifying experience.
- Ask students to create their own posts/videos based on a specific aspect they have learnt and that they would like to share with their peers. Such an activity may help students not only consolidate and activate knowledge, but also develop different types of digital skills.
- Encourage students to start a learning community of their own, for example, a class project based on the creation and management of an Instagram profile with students' videos. Such an initiative could help strengthen their learners' agency and lead to a visible output with significant growing potential.[17]
- If appropriate, try to integrate the content shared by students in your own teaching. Some of the topics shared by students may coincide with vocabulary/grammar topics to be dealt with in class. Retrieving the posts selected by students can be a way of enhancing their input and contribution to the group.
- Recycle material shared by students through interactive activities, for example through quizzes (e.g. Kahoot). This can be a way of optimising the potential of all the content produced by language learning influencers. However, it may be important to bear in mind that giving this an excessively formal format may be discouraging.

[17] I would like to thank Carlos Lindade for this suggestion during a follow-up discussion at the APPI Conference 2023.

5. Final remarks

In conclusion, one can undoubtedly say that language learning influencers represent a valuable tool in the context of language learning and teaching. Not only can they help motivate learners, but by playing a significant role in the context of language learning beyond the classroom, they also contribute to students' autonomy.

Above all, raising students' awareness of the existence of language learning influencers can create new opportunities for spontaneous learning. In fact, one of the key aspects to be highlighted in this context is that encouraging students to follow some of these influencers' profiles will naturally bring the language learning process into the learners' daily routine. Language learning moments may end up becoming an integral part of the feed of posts learners regularly check on their social media accounts. The wide range of topics dealt with by language learning influencers is also a significant advantage, as it is easy for students to find material on different areas according to their interests (e.g. everyday/specialised vocabulary, idioms, grammar, pronunciation, etc).

To sum up, this type of content can also be useful to teachers as it helps them bring creativity and diversity into the classroom, bridge formal and informal education, and hopefully explore new ways in the (he)art of teaching.

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At the (He)Art of digital teaching development in the classroom

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Abstract

Nowadays digital teaching development is on every school's agenda. However, It is up to the teachers to make the most of this reality with full (He)Arts. This contribution explores tools and resources to help one teach from the heart, not from the book, and inspire others!

Keywords: digital teaching, Artificial Intelligence, AI integration

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1. Introduction

Some time ago (not that much time, I should say…!) I always told my fellow teachers that we may love to teach “from the book”, but to help us teach “from the heart” we must adapt and include technology and technological resources in the equation to take the most out of what is available to us.

AI's impact on society is profound, influencing not only technology but also economics, politics, culture and, of course, education. Governments and organizations worldwide are investing heavily in AI research and development to stay competitive in the global landscape.

The emergence of machine learning, particularly deep learning, has been a game-changer in AI and has brought a true revolution to the field of foreign language learning. Deep neural networks, inspired by the structure of the human brain, have excelled in tasks such as image and speech recognition and natural language understanding. All essential when it comes to learning English (and other languages, obviously) as a foreign language.

> Artificial intelligence in education (AIED) is currently experiencing a period of increased success and heightened scrutiny. On one hand, AI products are now being taken up at scale throughout mainstream schooling and higher education. […] On the other hand, we are also witnessing growing pushback against the presence of AI technologies in education. (Selwyn, 2023)

And this does not just happen in education! As AI develops so does skepticism around digital technologies in most areas in our society, especially due to the development of AI technologies in the areas of facial recognition, natural language generation, weapons and many others. Atkinson et al. (2019) call it the “tech-lash”. Are we getting to the point when we are starting to think like Vallor (2022) when he says: “We used to get excited about technology – what happened?”

Well, as far as I am concerned, I still get excited with all the novelties and developments! This is so since I agree with Neil Selwyn (2018), who has written extensively about the use of technology, including AI, in education, when he points out six reasons why AI technology will never take over from human teachers! – We have learned what we know, make cognitive and social connections, talk out loud, perform with our bodies and we improvise and ‘make do’! The heart and the body together do still make a difference!

That is why I bring you here today a series of, for many of you, already familiar tech tools that have already developed AI integration, together with a few other

suggestions related to image creation, all of which can be invaluable for English language teaching and learning as a foreign or second language.

2. Some tools that have developed AI integration

2.1 Quizalize

Quizalize is a quiz platform for remote or real classrooms that delivers game results. It lets us engage our classes with fun quizzes, get instant data on student mastery and automatically differentiate follow-up activities. It now has AI Integration, meaning that we have access to an instant question bank creator powered by ChatGPT and we can personalize teaching, according to our students' results, thanks to the definition of personalized follow-up activities.

For English language teaching and learning, Quizalize offers several advantages. It makes formative assessments fun and engaging for students, thus potentiating their motivation and participation and consequently language attainment. By using Quizalize, teachers can easily differentiate instruction, this way personalizing the learning experience, since it allows teachers to tailor the quizzes to meet the students‘ individual needs.

This platform also makes it possible for teachers to track which students need help and in which specific areas. It is a sort of virtual teaching assistant, giving valuable information for teachers who will then be better able to support the students’ language development.

In a nutshell, Quizalize combines engagement, differentiation, and automated insights to enhance English language teaching and learning. Its interactive features empower both teachers and students in the learning process.

2.2 Edpuzzle

Edpuzzle is a video-based lesson creation platform that allows us to easily create beautiful interactive video lessons for our students that we can also integrate into our LMS platform if needed. It has now integrated an AI Teacher Assistant that automatically generates questions to add to the video assignments we prepare for our students. Multiple-choice and short-answer questions are just a click away from videos we’ve made or videos we’ve found online.

The gains of using this tool to promote the English language learning and teaching are many since we are all aware that students engage a lot more in the activities when we use video in class.

Edpuzzle allows educators to enhance videos by embedding interactive elements such as quizzes, polls, and open-ended questions directly into the content of the video. This means teachers can customize existing videos or create their own, to suit specific language learning objectives. They can add subtitles, clarifications, and vocabulary explanations to meet their students' needs, thus making content more accessible for language learners. The platform provides real-time data on student engagement, progress, and understanding. Edpuzzle's interactive features encourage active participation and critical thinking since students can replay the videos and review content.

In summary, Edpuzzle empowers teachers to create engaging, personalized, and formative learning experiences for English language learners.

2.3 Canva

Canva is an online graphic design platform that allows users the possibility of creating professional-looking posters, slideshows, images, event flyers, resumes, cards, and many others. It has now integrated AI into many of its features.

For instance, the Canva Magic Design Tool can be used to create a complete slideshow presentation from just one sentence – it designs the layout of the slides, and it fills the slides with text and graphics to support the presentation based on the topic sentence we wrote.

As for the Canva Magic Write, it is an AI tool built into Canva Docs, which is quite similar to ChatGPT – we enter a short prompt like "tips for being green at home" and it generates a short list or paragraph we can then insert into our document just as it was written or edited.

Another AI integration development is the Canva Text to Image – APP for creating pictures from text. We write a text prompt describing what we would like it to create, and it generates several picture suggestions based on what we wrote.

Finally, the Canva Di-D AI APP is directed to the creation of avatars from pictures we upload or from predefined characters, available on the website, this including the possibility of making our own picture speak with AI generated voice and facial movements.

With all that has been said above and much more that Canva offers, it is obvious that teachers can use Canva's templates to efficiently create teaching materials, this way saving time and ensuring consistency. As for students, Canva enhances student digital literacy by giving them easy access to diverse formats and by providing a user-friendly platform for creating visual content.

3. Text to image with AI

Text to Image activities with AI can be another powerful tool for English learning as a foreign language, to improve the students' language skills while also fostering creativity and critical thinking. These activities can be adapted by teachers for various age groups and educational settings, thus providing a modern and engaging learning experience.

3.1 AI text to image tools

Besides Canva and its text to image tool, which was previously mentioned I can add a few more, such as nightcafe.studio, starryai.com and iamfy.co.

NightCafe Studio is a generative AI platform that empowers users to create captivating artworks using various cutting-edge technologies. Our creations belong to us, and we can use them for our art projects, prints, or share them on social media.

StarryAI is another AI Art Generator app that turns our words into beautiful artworks. We enter a text prompt, choose from various AI image styles and watch as our words transform into captivating art. It's available for free on both iOS and Android platforms.

Iamfy offers an extensive collection of wall art and home decor, categorized by room, style, and themes, which we can explore and can be of use for our language classes. It allows not only the creation of images but also the upload of a photo of our room, for example and it will generate realistic restyles in seconds.

All of these are worth trying out and have free versions that allow the creation of images based on text prompts and their download for later use. Of course, there are many others available besides these!

3.2 Text to image activity suggestions

Here are some suggestions for text to image activities. I am sure you will be able to come up with many more!

While using an AI text to image tool, the teacher can ask the students to:

- Write the description of a fantastic/technological character/scenario.
- Create a scenario for a story: write the description of the landscape.
- Describe their favourite actor, singer, writer, or influencer in writing and see what comes up.
- Create illustrations for research work.
- Describe a specific natural scene or environment in rich detail.
- Describe abstract ideas or emotions to create their visual representations or abstract artwork.

4. Final remarks

Artificial Intelligence is a dynamic and evolving field with a relatively short, but rich history and a bright future. Its applications are already transforming every field of our life and reshaping how we live, learn and work. However, it also presents challenges that require careful consideration and ethical oversight to ensure its responsible development and deployment.

Artificial Intelligence in education is not about replacing teachers; it's about empowering them with new tools and possibilities to enhance the learning experience and promote digital teaching development. Let us truly do that and make it an Art! With all our Heart!

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Exploring ChatGPT to Enhance EFL Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

ChatGPT (short for "Chat Generative Pre-trained Transformer") has been the subject of intense debate throughout 2023. While its role within the scope of ELT is still largely under-researched, its potential for lesson planning, material development, formative assessment, differentiation, or even professional development is auspicious. This article aims to explore how different prompts can support educators to enhance teaching and learning scenarios inside and outside the EFL classroom. It also aims to share the views of the teachers that attended this session during the 36th APPI Conference.

Keywords: ELT, generative AI, agency, ChatGPT, material development

[19] https://www.cienciavitae.pt//en/2D12-FED4-826E ; clindade@letras.up.pt

1. Introduction

In recent years, the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) and natural language processing (NLP) technologies have brought forth transformative possibilities in the field of education (see Wilske, 2015; Malik, Tayal, & Vij, 2018; Yanhua, 2020; Wang, 2021; Zhang, 2022, for examples of such developments). These technologies are paving the way for innovative approaches to teach and learn in the physical and digital classroom, particularly in the realm of EFL education. Moreover, it is well known that western societies have become increasingly interconnected and proficiency in English has become a valuable skill, enhancing individuals' opportunities for communication, employment, and academic achievement on a global scale (Graddol, 2006; Patel, Solly, & Copeland, 2023). Traditional (and current) EFL pedagogies have relied heavily on standardised curricula, textbooks, and teacher-centred approaches. However, the emergence of AI-driven language models, such as ChatGPT, offers a paradigm shift considering that such an advanced language model can generate coherent and contextually relevant content that could potentially replace coursebooks and aid teachers in adopting a materials light approach.

While authors such as Ye, Sun, & Li (2021) provide a general overview of the origin, development and rise of AI in education, much research is still missing in order to provide a strong theoretical foundation of AI-assisted language teaching and learning in the European context. The examples featured ahead hint at the potential of AI integration into EFL instruction and educators, researchers, and policymakers require these insights to make informed decisions moving forward. Though this article explores the use of ChatGPT as a supplementary tool within the EFL classroom by suggesting how it could aid teachers in generating tailored ELT lesson materials, creating formative tasks for assessment, or sustaining lesson planning over a period of time, these are merely potential areas for AI support to enhance EFL teaching and learning. Ethical considerations surrounding the use of AI in education are also addressed throughout this contribution, ensuring a fair overview of its potential benefits and risks. However, it is important to mention that this contribution was written in June 2023 and it is quite difficult to predict how much ChatGPT will evolve in the upcoming months or year.

2. ChatGPT

If a teacher were to feed ChatGPT a prompt like the following: “provide a brief and unbiased overview of ChatGPT” this would be the result:

> ChatGPT is a language model developed by OpenAI. It's part of the GPT (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) family of models. GPT models are designed to understand and generate human-like text based on the input they receive. These models are trained on a diverse range of text sources to learn grammar, vocabulary, and contextual patterns.
>
> ChatGPT, specifically, is fine-tuned to facilitate natural language conversations. It's designed to take a series of text inputs from a user and generate coherent and contextually relevant responses. It can be used for a variety of applications such as answering questions, providing explanations, generating text, offering suggestions, and engaging in interactive dialogues.
>
> It's important to note that while ChatGPT can generate impressively coherent and contextually relevant responses, it's not infallible. Its responses are based on patterns it learned during training, which means it might sometimes produce inaccurate, biased, or nonsensical answers. OpenAI has put efforts into mitigating these issues, but users should exercise critical thinking and verify information when using the model for important tasks.

And for all accounts and purposes this is an accurate account that reflects its human-like attributes by addressing the prompt while attempting to remain unbiased by focusing on the issue in the final paragraph. Nevertheless, while educators may spot misleading information almost immediately, this might not be the case for young learners that might take an AI generated reply for its word.

Brandl & Ellis (2023), who are contributors for Tooltester[20], have been following the growth of ChatGPT since its launch and have shared surprising statistics. On the one hand, it has set a record for having the fastest-growing user base in history for a consumer application, gaining 1 million users in just 5 days (it took Facebook in 2004 10 months and Instagram in 2010 75 days). However, running this Chatbot is expensive given that it costs approximately $100,000 per day or $3 million per month to run on Microsoft's Azure Cloud, with each word generated costing $0.0003. In a parallel contribution, the same authors ran a survey to determine if people could tell the difference between human and AI writers. The results indicate that over 53% cannot accurately identify content purely made by AI chatbots, which is a relevant figure that requires further reflection. Furthermore, the GPT-4.0 language model is 16.5% better than GPT-3.5 at convincing people AI-generated copy was written by a human, which may lead one to wonder if this figure will increase significantly with the launch of future versions. An online report from Wired details that ChatGPT contains 100 trillion

[20] https://www.tooltester.com/en/blog/chatgpt-statistics/

parameters, 300 billion words and 570 gigabytes of text data and Lambda Labs from Stanford University reports it took 34 days to train it. Brandl & Ellis (2023) suggest a wide range of professional or personal scenarios where ChatGPT could be used such as: writing and debugging code, copywriting, creating websites, creating newsletters, writing resumes and cover letters, producing simplified summaries of text, writing jokes, songs, and poems, chatting, and drawing up contracts and legal documents. While some of these scenarios may raise serious privacy concerns given that contracts and legal documents are often full of confidential information, the potential of ChatGPT seems limitless. The next section will provide an overview of scenarios where it could be used to enhance EFL teaching and learning.

3. Using ChatGPT for ELT

During the 36th APPI Conference this session shared 23 scenarios where ChatGPT was tested to support the EFL teacher. Firstly, it was used as a search engine. While ChatGPT is not connected to the internet, such a use can provide one with an answer rather than a set of recommended websites to visit. While Google is currently trying to provide a similar experience through Bard AI, when using the prompt “suggest authors who have written extensively about ELT”, ChatGPT provided a satisfactory list of experienced authors. It was also able to provide additional authors and confirm that Penny Ur is an ELT expert. Figures 1 and 2 feature the results:

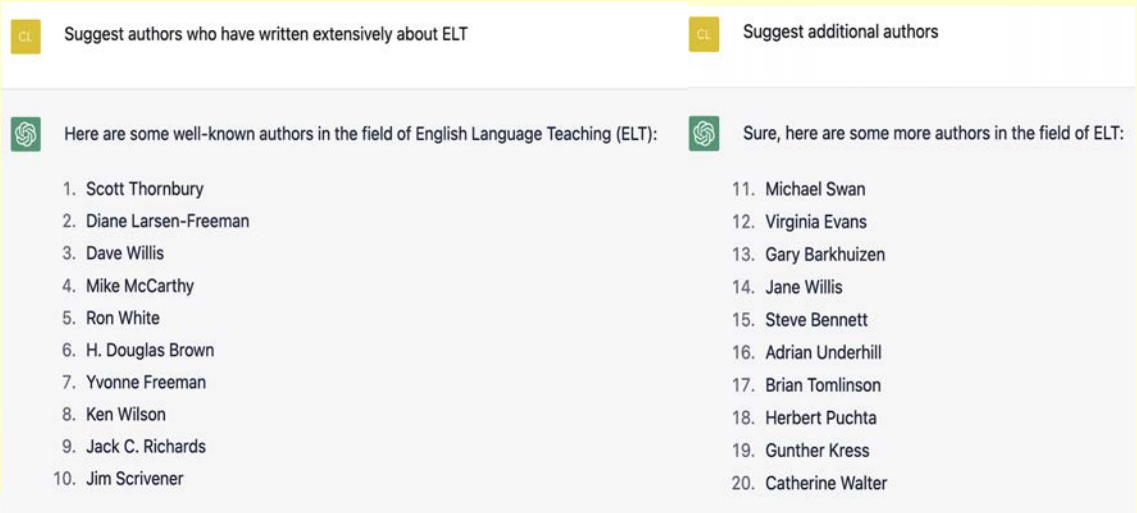


Figure 1: Authors who have written extensively about ELT

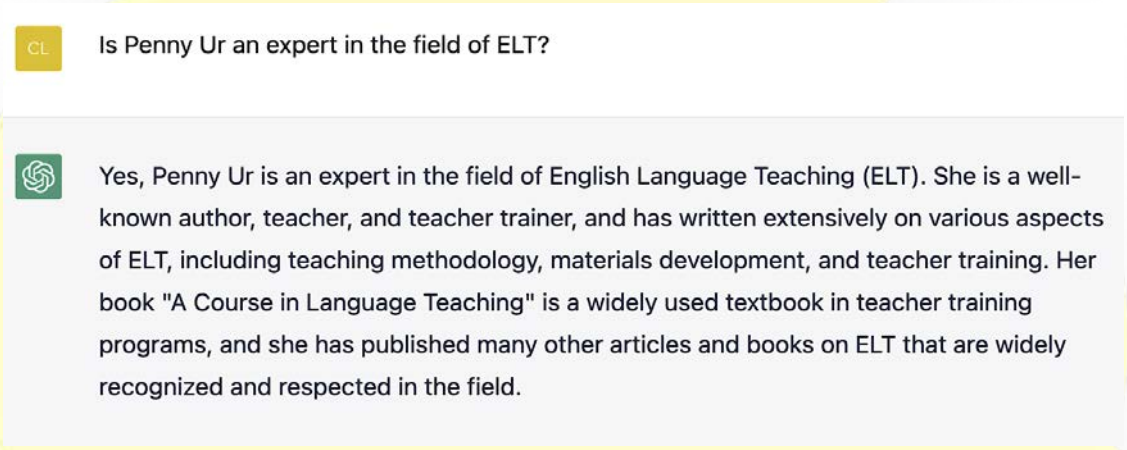


Figure 2: Penny Ur

A similar use would concern using ChatGPT to provide recommendations. However, there is an art to writing prompts. The more general the prompt, the more likely the user will be unsatisfied with the result. In this scenario the prompt omitted the age group of the learners and consequently provided a reply that would only satisfy teachers working in a high school context or in higher education (see figure 3). Although the prompt could be adapted to obtain results for primary learners, it provides an excellent starting point. One could easily research more about these film suggestions or even ask ChatGPT to draft questions for an extensive viewing worksheet.

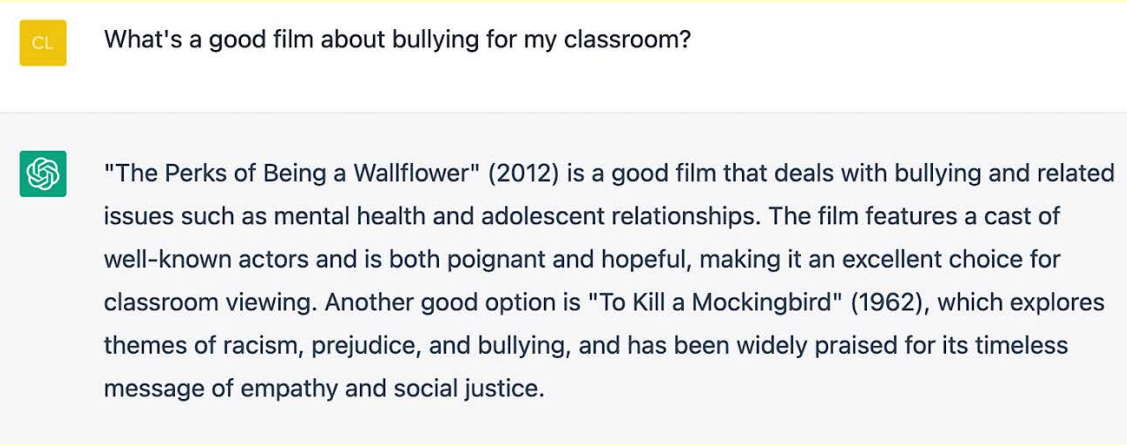


Figure 3: Film recommendations

ChatGPT can also be used to suggest classroom activities, which may be very useful for novice teachers who might require additional support or in-service teachers searching for new approaches to engage students. Figure 4 outlines fun ways to teach the past tense and although the recommendations are general, it provides a context for teachers to brainstorm or find inspiration.

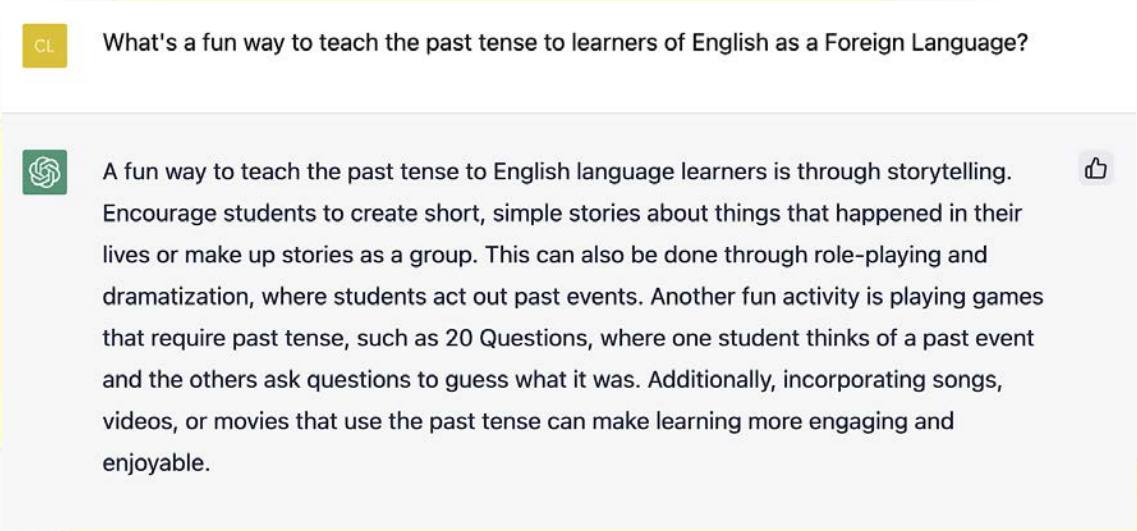


Figure 4: Fun ways to teach the Past tense

Another way to use ChatGPT as a support tool is to have it draft lesson plans. By feeding it the prompt: write a lesson plan for a 90-minute foreign language class on the topic of recycling. The class has 30 students, and they are all at a B1 level, It drafted a lesson plan that provided objectives, required materials, procedures, and assessment. While such a lesson plan should not be taken at face value, it did provide a Presentation, Practice, Production (PPP) lesson structure that could be adapted to different teaching contexts and goals. Such potential could help an educator find an alternative to existing lesson plans (or create new ones).

Concerning productive skills, ChatGPT is capable of providing numerous speaking and writing prompts which allow teachers to provide differentiated discussion areas within the theme of the lesson. When asked to “generate speaking/writing prompts for teenagers attending B1 English on the topic of healthy lifestyles”, ten different prompts were provided immediately. A similar result was obtained when asked to generate hypothetical questions for a job interview. While current EFL coursebooks include scenarios for discussion or for role-play, they adopt a one-size-fits-all approach which may hinder an educator’s efforts to sustain differentiation in a mixed-ability classroom. Within the scope of speaking and writing ChatGPT can also generate dummy data for a debate or an essay (see figure 5) and is also able to write a draft essay on a given topic, which may be used as a model when the coursebook does not provide one.

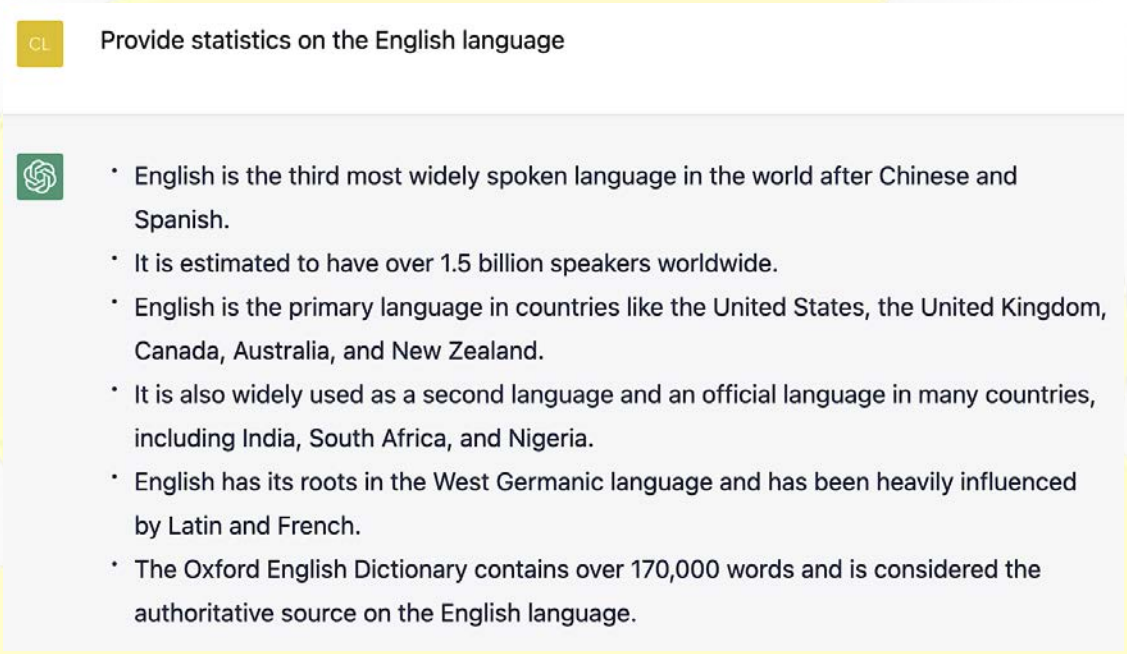


Figure 5: Dummy data

Regarding essay writing, having students access ChatGPT to write their essays (or a summary, a biography, a story, a CV, a cover letter…) is likely one of those areas that cause apprehension among educators. Within the scope of EFL, asking ChatGPT to write an essay in a formal or informal tone will provide a perfectly crafted essay that will likely not conform with the writing abilities of a B1 or B2 EFL student. However, as students become more proficient in writing prompts, they may find ways to obtain an essay that is closer to their own writing skills (see figure 6).

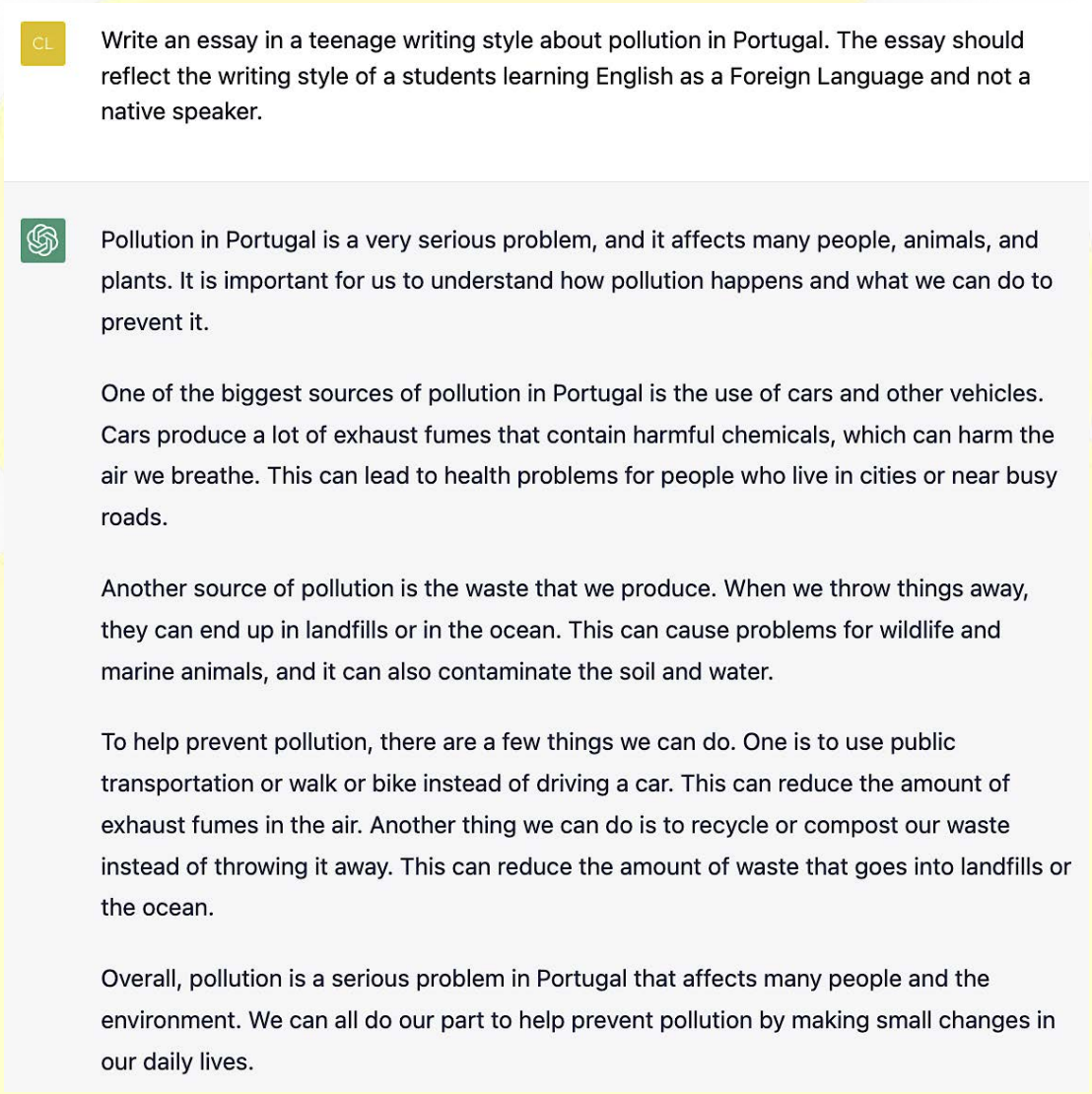


Figure 6: Mock essay

Considering the above mock essay, perhaps one would have to read the essay twice to find evidence of AI intervention. Theodosis Karageorgakis (2023) suggests a step-by-step guide for teachers on this matter. Step 1: look for issues with the content. The use of overly complex structures and vocabulary or repetitive sentences may hint that the essay was generated by AI. Step 2: Compare the essay with the student's previous work. This might not always be possible, but platforms like Google Classroom or tools like Padlet or Wakelet allow students to share their written work over the school year and facilitate the teacher's effort in keeping track of progress. Step 3: use AI detection software. There are currently several tools to detect AI produced essays. Perhaps the most popular is ZeroGPT. Nevertheless, AI detection software is not perfect, and it may not detect an AI text that has been heavily edited by the student. Perhaps this is a valid

point to avoid relegating essay writing as homework and have students work on their productive skills in the classroom.

While the previous paragraph looked at how students may take advantage of ChatGPT to do their coursework, educators can also use this tool to their advantage and have it grade an essay or ask it to provide suggestions to improve a piece of written work. In the public school system, where EFL teachers often have countless classes to teach, this might be the fastest way to provide feedback to all students. It can also be used to generate writing tips, vocabulary lists or other useful resources. Figure 7 provides an example of a bilingual vocabulary list. Such a list could include other foreign languages the student is learning.

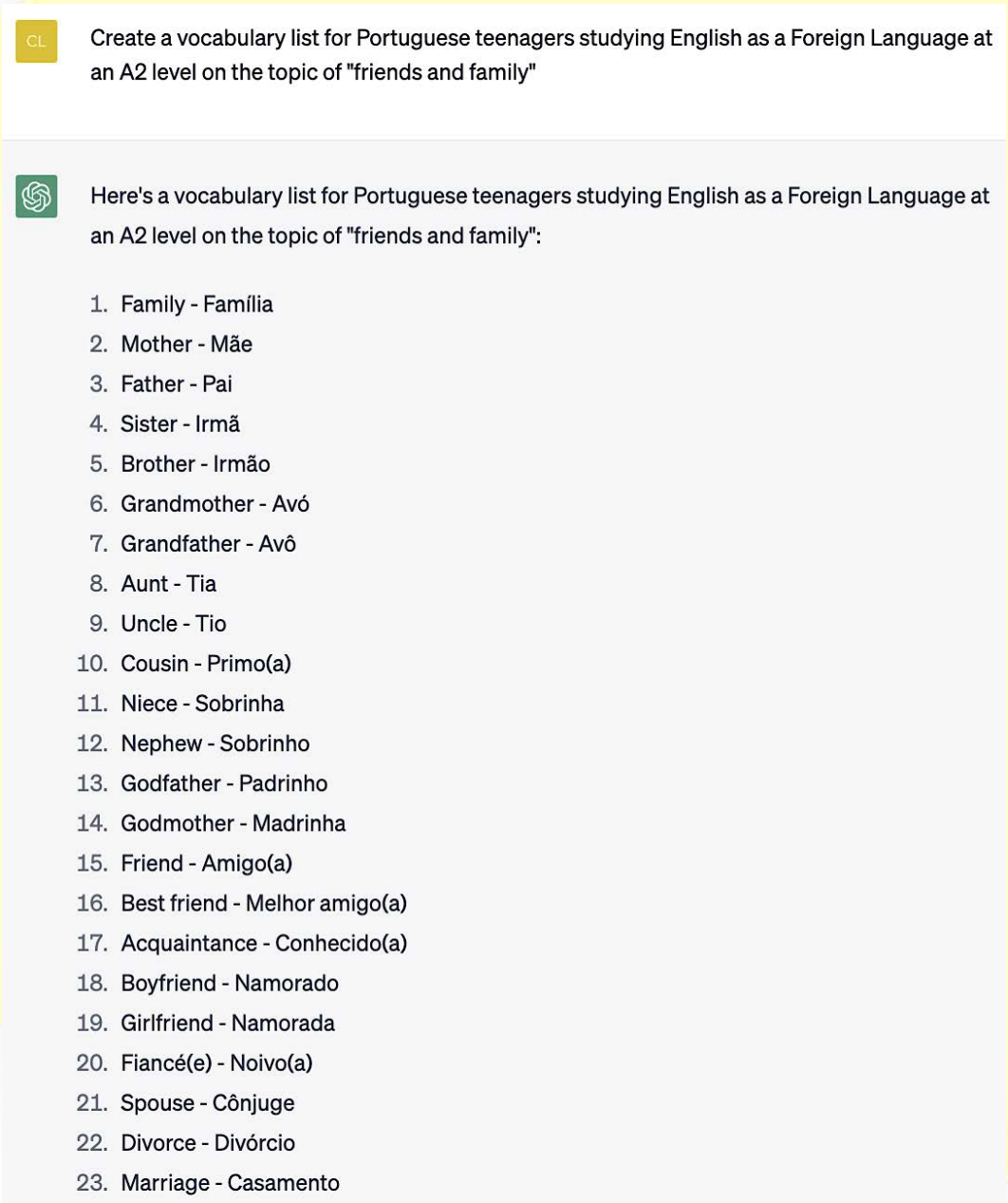


Figure 7: Vocabulary list

Within the scope of grammar, ChatGPT can promptly explain complex grammar items using straightforward terminology (example: explain conditional statements in simple terms), which may be useful to tutor students who require additional support. It is also able to create a quiz on a given topic (example: create a grammar quiz for young EFL learners to revise the present simple of the verb to be) or help a teacher draft a section of an exam (example: create a reading comprehension test for A1 EFL learners on the topic of daily routines). Nevertheless, quizzes must be carefully revised considering that in my personal experiments with ChatGPT I have found situations where two options were the correct answer for a question.

Regarding assessment, ChatGPT may be used to create rubrics for different tasks, which may be useful for teachers who are not experienced in creating their own rubrics or wish to create new rubrics for areas such as project work, essay grading or spoken assessment. However, these rubrics need to comply with the assessment criteria followed by each school and often require proper adaptation.

While ChatGPT can be used in many contexts, it is useful for other purposes: as an alternative for Google Translate, to brainstorm ideas for a field trip, or to write minutes for a staff meeting. And as suggested by Brandl & Ellis (2023), ChatGPT has a huge amount of source material to craft jokes. Educators who struggle with humour may use this to create personalised jokes (see figure 8). The next section will consider how the audience reacted to the presentation.

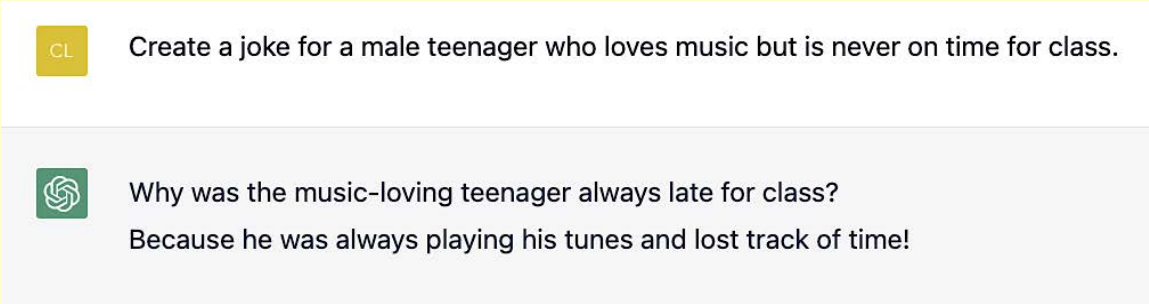


Figure 8: Fun ways to teach the Past tense

4. Teachers' perception

By the end of the session, and using Wooclap as a data collection tool, teachers were asked to reply to the following questions: *how does ChatGPT make you feel?* and *do you see yourself using ChatGPT to help you teach?* Regarding the first question, the audience of 138 teachers offered a wide range of replies. 27% of the participants stated they were excited, 11% claimed they were curious, while 8% shared they were amazed.

On the other end of the spectrum, 7% replied they were worried and 6% shared they were overwhelmed. The remaining replies were less frequent and varied from those who were afraid, astonished, enthusiastic, fearful, flabbergasted, happy, inspired, mesmerised, motivated, nervous, relieved, speechless, and surprised. Regarding the second question, 94% of the participants replied 'yes', 1% answered 'no' and 5% replied 'I'm not sure'. While there are currently no published studies in what concerns the perception of EFL teachers regarding ChatGPT, Arianna Prothero (2023) reported on findings from a survey of more than 1,000 K-12 teachers and 1,000 students by the polling and research firm Impact Research for the Walton Family Foundation. In this context, 51% of teachers say they have used ChatGPT, with 40% of teachers saying they use it weekly and 10% reporting they use it almost every day. In contrast, only a third of students aged 12–17 reported using ChatGPT for school, and just 22% said they use it on a weekly basis or more. Unfortunately, we are still far from understanding how this will truly impact foreign language acquisition.

Lastly, teachers were confronted with the statement: *Considering the presentation, think and share an additional use for ChatGPT.* While many contributions overlapped with the uses presented in the previous section, several new creative uses were suggested: generating prompts to communicate with parents; preparing meetings; generating report cards, creating recipes, preparing a play for the drama club, creating a playlist, drafting instructions for dyslexic students, and suggesting games. Such contributions widen the use of ChatGPT in the EFL classroom.

5. Final remarks

ChatGPT, like other language models, has undeniable potential. However, as educators we need to be aware of its limitations and flaws: it can generate coherent responses, but it does not possess genuine comprehension or understanding of the text. It relies on patterns it learned during training and may produce plausible-sounding answers that are factually incorrect or nonsensical. Ultimately, it is up to the teacher to make responsible use of ChatGPT. All things considered one can begin to foresee the importance and advancements in the field of AI in the next decade. According to Bill Gates (2023):

> The development of AI is as fundamental as the creation of the microprocessor, the personal computer, the Internet, and the mobile phone. It will change the way people work, learn, travel, get health care, and communicate with each other. Entire industries will reorient around it. Businesses will distinguish themselves by how well they use it.

As AI continues to redefine the boundaries of what is achievable in education, it is imperative that educators remain at the forefront of these advancements, harnessing its potential to create dynamic and effective learning environments. Perhaps it is paramount to remember Professor Carlos Ceia's (2023) words on this matter: "Let us follow this evolution with an open mind, let us, as educators, be increasingly human in our actions." After all, this is what makes us irreplaceable.

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