

CETAPS / TEALS Advanced Research Seminar
Researching Materials Development for Language Learning
4 February 2022

Keynote 1: Brian Tomlinson

Anaheim University, California/ President MATSDA

Materials Development Research: What Has Been Done and What Needs to Be Done?

In my (hopefully) interactive talk I'll be reporting research which I know has been conducted on materials development and I'll be proposing research studies which I'm not aware have yet been conducted. I'll also be commenting on how materials development has moved from being an apparently atheoretical field to a field which is possibly becoming overtheorised. I'll be reporting and proposing research related to how materials developers develop, to the analysis of materials, to pre-use, whilst-use and post-use evaluation of materials, to materials adaptation and to how materials are actually used by teachers and by learners. In my proposals I'll be stressing how important it is that we are not content with just finding out what teachers and learners think about the value of materials. We need to also strive to find out what learning outcomes the use of materials in our studies actually achieve and in particular to discover what sort of materials and what ways of using them are most likely to help learners to become communicatively effective in the language they are learning.

Keynote 2: Carolyn Leslie

Nova University, Lisbon

The Use of Youtube Observation in Initial Teacher Education

Classroom observation, defined by Bailey (2001, p.114) as “the purposeful examination of teaching and /or learning events through the systematic processes of data collection and analysis”, is a commonly used tool in initial teacher education to nurture key pedagogic skills (O’Leary, 2020). Observation for professional development during the Practicum stage of M.A. degrees in education takes place when student teachers observe experienced others (often their cooperating teachers), with the aim of seeing particular skills and methods demonstrated in action in a classroom context (Wragg,1999), with the expectation that trainees will later demonstrate these same skills when they themselves teach. In addition, trainees may be encouraged to critically reflect on the teaching they observe, leading to a greater understanding of teaching skills, the classroom and learners. However, with the arrival of Covid-19, classroom observation by trainee teachers was no longer possible and an alternative had to be found for learners on an MA in teaching English in primary education. Video as a resource to develop pedagogical practices has been in use for the past 50 years, and research has shown how the use of videos of trainee teachers’ lessons has been shown to develop their capacity for reflection, and to develop their noticing skills (Marsh & Mitchell, 2004). However little or no research has been carried out on the use of online YouTube videos in initial teacher education. This talk describes how YouTube videos of practitioners teaching young learner classes were used as an alternative tool to enable trainees to observe teachers of this age group and reflect on their observations during term 2, 2021. Data was collected on trainee teachers’ opinions on this method of observation through questionnaires and interviews, and extracts from written reflection records were also used to gain a greater insight of the value of using this tool to help develop teaching skills. This talk discusses the results of this research.

Keynote 3: Sandie Mourão

Nova University, Lisbon

Picturebooks as prompts for Intercultural Citizenship Education: an analysis of teacher-made materials

Intercultural Citizenship Education (ICE) combines the intercultural communicative competence of language education and civic action of citizenship education (Byram, 2008). It requires that teachers and their children take action beyond their classrooms and through English engage with other teachers and children to 'reflect together, propose and instigate change in their respective societies' and become a 'community of intercultural citizens' (Byram et al., 2008: xxii-xxiii). Picturebooks, a form of children's literature where pictures and words interanimate to create meaning, often touch on relevant topics and themes which prompt meaning-making, reflection and discussion (Mourão, 2015) and facilitate access to the concepts of interculturality and citizenship education (Bland, 2018; Short, 2009). Intercultural Citizenship Education through Picturebooks in early English Language Learning is an Erasmus+ project which aims to support practitioners to confidently integrate ICE into their EFL lessons and library sessions with children aged 5 to 12 years old. One of its intellectual outputs is a collection of ICEKits, teaching packs developed by practitioners for practitioners around picturebooks. This paper takes a close look at a corpus of 15 practitioner-made ICEKits, with a view to analyzing how they support mediation of the picturebook as a scaffold for interculturality and citizenship, as well as how successfully they integrate ICE. The results point to all ICEKits including well structured mediation strategies, however the concept of ICE, developed through a taking action cycle, is less successful. I will discuss possible reasons for this and outline implications for teacher education and materials development.

Keynote 4: Nicholas Hurst

University of Porto

The Great Escape: flipping grammar teaching for young adult learners in Portuguese schools

In the Portuguese compulsory education sector, and more specifically in the field of teaching English as a foreign language (TEFL), the way that 'grammar' is taught, traditionally, relies on the presentation and practice of discreet grammatical structures, usually by means of materials provided by locally-produced coursebooks. There is a strong focus on the pedagogical framework that has become known as PPP (Present, Practice, Produce) ignoring what are well-documented alternatives (see Ellis, 2006 & 2016; Willis & Willis, 2007). The PPP model has been widely analysed (see Criado, 2013) and its weaknesses thoroughly divulged (see Hurst, 2010) and yet it survives (thrives?) in Portuguese coursebooks and classrooms. This presentation seeks to provide additional argumentation and exemplification in favour of abandoning the PPP model, initially, in the specific context of the teaching of English at secondary level. The theoretical opposition to PPP in this context will be explored by reference to research with a specific focus on the notion of a 'flipped classroom' and what implications may be drawn for the teaching of grammar. The case for a renewed approach to teaching grammar will be exemplified by samples of teaching materials from TEFL coursebooks which clearly fail to provide an adequate description of form-meaning relationships, an appropriate number of opportunities to learn actively in collaboration with peers or any focus on higher level cognitive processes. Thus learners are not in a position to actually 'understand' and, perhaps more pertinently, USE the target grammar to express their individual meanings. Possible alternatives will be exemplified by samples from 'grammar lessons' conducted in secondary EFL classes in a local school in the north of Portugal.

Andriana Hamivka

University of Porto

An increased complexity of English classrooms in modern society: A study of learning and teaching skills applied to Portuguese context

The world is changing at an increasing speed, creating new challenges for education and placing new demands on teachers. They face more children lacking parental support, or those who come from other countries. They have to keep abreast of latest technology, as society has become more and more digitized. How can teachers respond to demands of modern society? A lot of literature explores the pragmatic aspect of teaching and learning, methodologies and the pedagogical knowledge about language, curriculum, identity, cognition as well as experience or learner personal factors, such as age, affection, motivation, creativity, styles and strategies. These factors have a great impact in English classroom nowadays, being responsible for the complexity of the act of teaching. However, the main aim of communication is to explore some other factors which justify the even greater complexity of teaching English in the 21st century. Specific characteristics of today's students, the impact of digital technology on teaching and learning and multiculturalism of present society will be studied in this essay and applied to the Portuguese context. This is the case of research in action and not about action (although this is also part of it) that goes from planning the action to reformulating that planning, going through stages of action and its evaluation. This means that the entire process was constantly controlled through different mechanisms (questionnaires, case studies, interviews, among others), so that the results of an action step led to reflection capable of introducing necessary modifications and adjustments in the subsequent step, bringing more desirable and lasting benefits throughout the ongoing process. The results showed that teachers have to implement more intensive reflective methodologies to foster authentic, caring development of their students as individuals with moral obligation toward society rather than mere standard-based technical exposures of knowledge. Technical teaching and learning must give place to a wider understanding of education. Empowerment,

motivation, creativity and resilience must be implemented instead of standardization, redundancy and replication. These results arise some important questions on how teachers should be prepared to lead with the complexity and how it is possible to balance between the individual and the collective, a student and a class in order to reach all and each one. It seems that teachers should plan some variations of the same class and be able to change the strategy whenever needed.

Lúcia Claro

Nova University, Lisbon

Authentic oral communication, digital media and civic university education in language learning: a case study

The main hypothesis of this study is that oral communication strategies awareness and the use of social spaces combined with the use of oral authentic materials (e.g. movies, TV series, songs, YouTube videos, and documentaries) would contribute to the development of student's oral skills (listening and speaking) by enhancing their confidence and encouraging them to get immersed in the language.

A case study will be conducted focusing on Language undergraduate students at a public Portuguese university. The data for the study will be obtained through the use of mixed methods: quantitative, in the form of questionnaires answered by undergraduate students, and qualitative, in the form of focus group interviews with four undergraduate students and authentic oral material tasks (these four students will be exposed to authentic oral materials and oral activities adapted to their interests, focusing on stimulating students' oral communication strategies awareness and global competencies development). The study addresses mainly these two research questions: 1) How can ELT integrate/address the development of oral communication alongside 'global competencies' through digital media (in higher education). 2) How did the intervention help students to develop their argumentative skills, critical thinking and dialogism? The study intends to show how authentic digital oral materials exploring relevant citizenship education matters can promote motivating oral interactions improving students' vocabulary, pronunciation, fluency, and beyond, i.e. global competencies (digital literacy, civic education, intercultural competence, critical thinking, emotional literacy). The results can contribute to show how the use of digital oral materials, combined with the creation of social spaces may foster the development of oral

competencies within the framework of civic education as a proposed answer to the needs of 21st century higher education students.

Isabel Ferreira

Beira Interior University

Applications of Task-Based Learning and Teaching to promote oral interaction of young learners (1st cycle of Basic Education)

Teaching a language aims at developing skills that allow students to correctly use it in communication situations. This competence must be the teacher's focus, as well as a methodology that involves the student, motivating and leading him/ her to be more learning autonomous. In this sense, informally listening to other elementary English teachers, it became clear that there is a general problem in classes that aren't being properly addressed through teaching strategies used in the classroom. It concerns the difficulty in giving time to each child during class, promoting truly communicative activities and not just drill exercises or teacher-student interaction. Furthermore, as an identified obstacle, not all children feel comfortable participating, and thus exposing themselves, due to factors as inhibition, insecurity and anxiety to speak a foreign language in front of peers. The most recent investigations have shown that the teacher must build a communicative task plan that meets the interests and learning preferences of their target group. Other research shows how strategies using TBLT can encourage students to express their ideas spontaneously and improve their quality of oral interaction. My study will attempt to address the following main research on the application of the TBLT methodology, in the promotion of oral interaction, as a strategy to encourage opportunities for real language use, applied to 3rd and 4th graders in a classroom context. As such, these research aims are: exploring TBLT in the development of oral interaction skills; encourage student involvement in oral interaction activities; develop self-regulatory language learning skills, focusing on oral interaction through TBLT; assess the impact of various TBLT interventions on student learning as well as his/ her motivation for this kind of work. In addition our purpose is to reflect on classroom practices by promoting this type of challenging activity as well as the management of behaviours and attitudes in the classroom. By doing so, we want to shift the teacher's control role in oral interaction assigning him/her a mediator role (task-solving, time controller and behaviour management).

Susana Frutuoso

Nova University, Lisbon

Addressing controversial issues in foreign language education

Addressing controversial issues in foreign language education remains a controversial topic. This may be because controversial issues typically stir up emotions and deal with matters of value and strong beliefs. Over time, there have always been issues which divide opinions, not only in different communities but even within the same sociocultural group. Recent events, particularly in Europe and Portugal, reinforce the importance of tackling controversial issues in schools, as a way of developing shared values. Since English as a foreign language has an educational value, it should aim at developing criticality, democratic culture and intercultural competence. Nevertheless, even though the English as a foreign language classroom could become an excellent space to address controversial issues, ethical and pedagogical dilemmas arise, putting educators off the prospect. Thus far, empirical research that addresses how foreign language teachers can handle controversial issues is scarce. In this sense, and because some emphasis has been given to the use of debates as the preferred activity to somehow tackle controversial issues in the classroom, the purpose of this study is to reflect on diverse ways to integrate these issues in English as a foreign language classes in a systematic way, promoting the development of critical thinking and intercultural citizenship, while working within the syllabus of English as a foreign language in Portugal. Furthermore, it is our goal to produce relevant materials which may facilitate approaching these topics in foreign language classrooms. The need for teacher training concerning controversial issues urges, specifically in foreign language teaching, and it is essential to encourage teachers to become teachers of intercultural citizens.

Maite Santiago

University of Deusto, Spain

Universal literature masterpieces for L2 learning: a case study on the Dialogic Literary Gatherings

Addressing issues such as the widely reported '30 million-word gap' among children belonging to wealthier and less affluent families (Hart & Risley, 2003) is essential to advance towards the global goal of achieving inclusive quality education. Several studies point to a correlation between lower SES families and having fewer opportunities to work with high quality texts and discourses of a certain level of difficulty (Snow et al., 1998). It is therefore essential to identify educational actions and materials that can create affordances to bridge that gap and to succeed in education, regardless their background. Ensuring the required L2 proficiency is particularly relevant in educational settings where it is the main language of instruction, as is the case of the Basque language in the Basque Country (Spain) (Eustat, 2021). Thus, if the school does not implement appropriate strategies to develop learners' knowledge in the L2, they may have difficulties in accessing the curricular content and in achieving academic success. Despite years of research on the effectiveness of Dialogic Literary Gatherings (DLG), an educational action that involves reading and discussing classic universal literary works based on egalitarian dialogue (Flecha, 2015), the potential impact of using classic universal literary works when doing DLGs to learn L2 (Basque) has been underexplored. Through an exploratory case study (Yin, 2018), the impact of DLGs on 12 high school students has been conducted. A total of 9 TLD sessions were recorded and interviews were conducted with two students and one teacher. Preliminary results of the qualitative analysis suggest that the DLGs have had a positive impact on two main aspects: overcoming prejudices towards classical literature and increased vocabulary. This study goes a step further on clarifying the impact of reading universal literary works on DLGs, enabling learners to read and interact using their L2 and to acquire new vocabulary in Basque. This creates affordances for a wider exposure to the language and learning for all students. Hereafter, further research is needed to analyse in depth how vocabulary acquisition evolves.