



# ELT RESEARCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IATEFL RESEARCH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



## February 2017 - Issue 32

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## About IATEFL Research SIG

The IATEFL Research SIG (ReSIG) is a unique forum for the discussion of issues connected with research into (or relating to) ELT, bringing together teachers, teacher-researchers, teacher educators and researchers from around the world. In this active community, members share their experiences of research, as well as findings from and interpretations of research, and network face-to-face at regular events, online via our discussion list, and in print via *ELT Research*.



If you are a teacher interested in investigating your own practice, a researcher involved in other kinds of ELT inquiry, a teacher educator engaging others in research or not a researcher but curious about what research is and how you can get involved with and in it, then the Research SIG is for you! Our members come from all around the world and we have a large and diverse committee, reflecting our desire to be as open to members' initiative as much as possible.

If you enjoy reading this issue and would like to subscribe and/or join us at future events, you can find out more about how to become a member of ReSIG via our website: <http://resig.weebly.com/> (in the section titled 'Join us').

You can renew your membership of IATEFL or become a new member of IATEFL (and the Research SIG) online via [www.iatefl.org](http://www.iatefl.org) or you can contact IATEFL Head Office at:

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For more information about ReSIG see our website: <http://resig.weebly.com/>

## About *ELT Research*

Submissions for *ELT Research*, published once a year by the IATEFL Research Special Interest Group, should be sent to [resigeditors@gmail.com](mailto:resigeditors@gmail.com). Please visit the SIG website <http://resig.weebly.com/> for author guidelines (under 'Publications').

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### Disclaimer

Views expressed in this issue (32) of *ELT Research* are not necessarily those of the editors, of the IATEFL Research SIG, of IATEFL or its staff or trustees.

### Editing, layout and cover artwork

This issue was edited by Ana Inés Salvi, Mark Wyatt and Harry Kuchah Kuchah.

Layout by Ana Inés Salvi and Mark Wyatt.

The front cover artwork, called *Systole*, is by Guillermina Victoria, and here is the link to her website: <http://wilhelmina18.wix.com/arte-victoria>

# Editorial

Dear all,

We are delighted to bring you the 2017 issue of *ELT Research*, which, as with recent issues, is characterized by a strong practitioner research element. Highlights, indeed, include a section of researchers' stories. These include accounts that focus on the research methods used in the carrying out of investigations, as well as examples of research being written up in highly creative and original ways. Other features of this issue include conference and workshop reports, and an in-depth interview with a leading figure in the practitioner research movement, Anne Burns.

The first section, following a note from the ReSIG coordinators, is entitled: **Researchers' stories**. These open with Bethany Miall's account of using auto-ethnography to reflect on her experience of the CELTA, which Bethany took while studying towards a Master's degree. Bethany reports that using this methodological approach was highly valuable as it led to deeper insights into her learning than she might otherwise have gained.

Next, Susan Dawson chronicles her experience of using exploratory practice with EAP learners while she was studying for a PhD. Her engaging narrative, fast-forwarding the reader through 10 hectic weeks, raises various issues, including those that relate to ethics, which she then reflects upon.

The following story by Marianna Goral also draws upon experience with exploratory practice. Working in an EAP context, Marianna reports on involving seven successive cohorts of undergraduate exchange students as 'learner-practitioners' becoming 'topic experts' and discussion board administrators' on her course; the learners seemed to embrace these new responsibilities and benefit from them.

Involving students in taking on new roles is also central to the next account. This is provided by Elena Ončevska Ager, who shares her experience of sensitizing pre-service teachers to research writing through engaging them in 'research storytelling', i.e. sharing someone else's completed research through a creative narrative; the learners generally seem to have valued this.

Creativity is also central to the next account, this provided by Loreto Aliaga-Salas, who explores innovative formats for research dissemination, specifically drawing upon visual representation. Invoking her own research journey, she considers photographs, diamond poems, posters and storytelling as ways of sharing research.

The next account is also centred on a research journey. Robert Cooper reflects on how academic studies that had focused in one module on English as a lingua franca had encouraged him to question his teaching practice and engage in practitioner research, this process helping him on his research path.

The final researcher's story in this section also focuses on the research process. Nikolina Vaić reflects on ethical issues relating to using social media for research purposes and considers the potential benefits for both participants (making friends) and researcher (access to wonderfully rich, dynamic data).

Following these researchers' stories, we present an **interview** with Anne Burns, conducted by Mark Wyatt. Anne reflects on transformative examples of action research she has been involved with, her experiences of mentoring action researchers and working with developing networks.

We then present a series of **conference and workshop reports**, these reflecting in part the geographical spread and range of activities of ReSIG and ReSIG-supported events: <http://resig.weebly.com/events.html>. This section commences with Laura Aza, Débora Izé Balsemão Oss and Richard Smith reflecting on a teacher-research conference that was held in Chile in March 2016, followed by Yasmin Dar's reflections on a similar event that was held in Istanbul in June 2016. Both of these conferences attracted large numbers of enthusiastic participants.

Next are reports on one-day events. Mariana Roccia reflects on a Pecha Kucha event held at the University of Warwick in August 2016; Kenan Dikilitaş reports on the launch of a British Council publication in Ankara, Turkey, on the state of higher education in that country; Züleyha Ünlü recounts giving a workshop on grounded theory at a University of Warwick post-graduate conference in June 2016.

Continuing with a research methodology (and Warwick) theme, our final report in this section is of Steve Mann's ReSIG PCE event at the IATEFL conference in Birmingham in April 2016. This was entitled: 'Conversations with a purpose: Reflecting on interviewing in EFL research'. In their contribution to this issue, Christina Gkonou and Sian Etherington, the co-organizers of Steve Mann's PCE, reflect on it.

Our final article in this issue of *ELT Research*, under the section title **On the Internet** (and consistent with our story theme), is 'TESOLacademic.org - our ever changing story' by Huw Jarvis. Huw describes the development and growth of his website [www.TESOLacademic.org](http://www.TESOLacademic.org) as a space for making research more accessible through different channels.

We would like to conclude this editorial by thanking all those who have contributed to this issue and by extending our hopes that you enjoy reading it. We would also like to thank Sandie Mourão, who co-edited *ELT Research 31* (with Ana Inés Salvi and Mark Wyatt), before stepping down. Harry Kuchah Kuchah has joined us in her place to co-edit issue 32.

Looking to the future, we would like to remind you that if you would like to contribute to *ELT Research*, please get in touch – [resigeditors@gmail.com](mailto:resigeditors@gmail.com). The deadline for Issue 33 is the end of June 2017. We do welcome diverse contributions representing a wide range of methodological standpoints, not just those represented in this or previous issues. So if you have an idea for a contribution that you think might be of interest to IATEFL ReSIG members, please do share it with us.

Ana Inés Salvi  
Mark Wyatt  
Harry Kuchah Kuchah

February 2017



## A note from the coordinators

Welcome to another issue of *ELT Research*. We are incredibly proud of this high quality annual publication in which early-career researchers, teacher-researchers and academics share reports about ELT research projects that they have undertaken or been involved in. It also serves to help members learn more about research-oriented initiatives that the SIG has organised or supported in the previous year. We are also extremely grateful to the editors for all their incredible hard work and commitment in bringing the threads together into this wonderful publication.

In 2016, ReSIG organised a number of live and online events. The SIG's main event was the PCE at the IATEFL Conference in Birmingham. This focused on the use of interviews in ELT research and it was led by Steve Mann from the University of Warwick. In the course of the day, Steve provided participants with hands-on experience of different interview approaches and demonstrated the value of reflective practice and reflexivity in the analysis and representation of data. The PCE involved the participation of Graham Hall, the editor of *ELT Journal*. Another key event was our annual ReSIG Teachers Research! Conference, which was held this time in Istanbul. This was the second year that ReSIG organised such a conference in Turkey. The conference included talks by Derin Atay, Anne Burns, Kenan Dikilitaş, Judith Hanks, Richard Smith and Mark Wyatt, all of whom highlighted recent developments in teacher-research with a focus on different aspects of research engagement.

Last year, ReSIG organised three excellent webinars run by experienced researchers. In January, Richard Smith introduced some of the whys, whats and hows of doing historical ELT research, this being the focus of this year's PCE in Glasgow too. In June, Jane Spiro from Oxford Brookes University discussed the creative links that can be forged between research and practice. Finally, in November, Elena Ončevska Ager and Mark Wyatt examined the discourse of EFL teachers on continuing professional development. Links to recordings of all three webinars can be found on the events page on the SIG's website: <http://resig.weebly.com/events.html>. If you would like ReSIG to invite a particular speaker to run a webinar on a topic related to ELT research, please get in touch with us.

Other online events organised by ReSIG in 2016 consisted of discussions expertly moderated by Mark Wyatt and a number of renowned guests. In February, Dario Luis Banegas, Inés Miller and Paula Rebolledo moderated a discussion on teacher-research in Latin America, and immediately before the Birmingham PCE

Steve Mann focused on qualitative interviews. The online discussion in June took the form of a roundtable on developing networks to support teacher-research. The last discussion in 2016 involved Friederike Klippel and Richard Smith exploring views of ELT history, this being the topic of the Glasgow PCE. If you'd like to contribute to the SIG's online discussions as well as learn more about previous discussions, we encourage you to join our [Yahoo! Group:](https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/resig/info) <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/resig/info>

Besides organising its own events in 2016, ReSIG supported the first annual Latin American conference for teacher-research in ELT. This took place in Santiago and was co-organized by the British Council Chile and RICELT (Red de Investigadores Chilenos en ELT). The SIG awarded two scholarships to South American teacher-researchers in order for them to attend the conference. In 2017, the SIG is keen to support similar events taking place all over the world. If members are involved in organising an ELT research event in their region and would like the SIG to support it, please contact us. Details of previous scholarship winners and upcoming awards can be found on our website: <http://resig.weebly.com/scholarships.html>

The upcoming year also promises to be busy for the SIG with initiatives aimed at promoting ELT research. The first ReSIG webinar of 2017 features Christina Gkonou discussing the use of questionnaires in research into emotions in ELT, while the first online discussion consists of Mark Wyatt and Simon Borg examining recent reflective practitioner and practitioner research-oriented Editor's Choice articles in *ELT Journal*. At the beginning of the year, ReSIG is also supporting an Electronic Village Online on classroom-based research for professional development. At the IATEFL conference in Glasgow, Richard Smith and Friederike Klippel will lead the ReSIG PCE, which will take the form of a hands-on workshop on researching ELT history. The PCE's topic is quite apt given that 2017 marks IATEFL's 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. The SIG day at the conference will consist of sessions led by Judith Hanks and a number of other speakers. If you're interested in benefiting from good quality professional development focusing on ELT research, you definitely can't miss attending both SIG events at the Glasgow conference.

*ELT Research* is not the only communication channel used by ReSIG. Besides our online discussions, we regularly post content on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube. Please follow our accounts on these platforms and join the conversation about ELT research. For the past year or so, members have also three times per year been receiving ReSIG's e-news, which is competently edited by Nicola Perry and Larysa Sanotska and helps keep members up-to-date with the latest news

and events. If you'd like to contribute any relevant information to the e-news, please get in touch with the editors.

We hope that as many members as possible continue to take an active part in our events and initiatives. If you have any enquiries or suggestions, please email us: [resig@iatefl.org](mailto:resig@iatefl.org)

Best wishes for 2017,

Sarah Mercer and Daniel Xerri  
**Joint ReSIG Coordinators**



Sarah Mercer and Daniel Xerri

### Upcoming IATEFL Special Interest Group Events 2017

Research SIG event:  
2-3 June, Istanbul, Turkey

Learner Autonomy SIG event:  
2-3 June, Graz, Austria

Pronunciation SIG event:  
17 June, Cambridge UK

English for Specific Purposes event:  
24 June, Sheffield, UK

Business English SIG annual conference:  
10-12 Nov, Salini Bay, Malta

Book online for **all** IATEFL SIG events at  
<http://secure.iatefl.org/events/>

# Using auto-ethnography to reflect on the CELTA: a Master's student's personal account

Bethany Miall

## Introduction

Whilst undertaking an MA in Applied Linguistics for English Language Teaching at Queen Mary University of London, I was offered the opportunity to complete a CELTA and to subsequently use my personal experience of the course as the basis of my MA dissertation research. My dissertation supervisor advised me that auto-ethnography was well-suited to research, such as this, in which the researcher wishes to reflect on personal experiences. I was therefore in the unusual position of being both a CELTA trainee and an applied linguistics student simultaneously. From my MA studies I had formed personal opinions regarding good ELT practice, for example that teaching methods should be flexible and responsive to learner needs. Having prior knowledge of applied linguistics theory, as well as pre-conceived ideas about teaching and learning best practice, meant I was an unconventional CELTA trainee. I was curious to discover how my ideas compared to the training provided on a CELTA course.

The Cambridge Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (CELTA) is a well-known and reputable qualification within ELT. It can, however, be described as a crash course of sorts as it attempts to prepare its inexperienced trainees for a career in teaching within four short weeks. As anyone who has completed the CELTA can attest to, the huge amount of theory and practice that must be learnt makes for an intense experience. This also means a trainee's CELTA experience is an engaging research topic.

As it was based on reflection on personal experiences, the research called for an approach that could accommodate its highly subjective nature. Auto-ethnography, which is described by Ellis, Adams and Bochner (2010: 3) as 'one of the approaches that acknowledges and accommodates subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research', was chosen as the research approach.

This paper describes in further detail what auto-ethnography is, indicates how I used it to reflect on my

experience of completing a CELTA course, and provides examples of insights I gained through using auto-ethnography.

## Auto-ethnography

As the name suggests, auto-ethnography utilises elements of both autobiographical and ethnographical approaches by linking the researcher's own life and experiences with those of the culture or group they are studying (Ellis et al., 2010). In this case, I reflected on my experiences and thoughts during the CELTA course and linked them to the experiences and opinions of people around me including course trainers, fellow trainees, qualified teachers at the course provider college, and the learners I taught.

Auto-ethnography enables researchers to reflect on personal experiences in a structured way. It differs from basic story-telling or diary-keeping because it uses three main methodological tools which make the process more rigorous. The first of these tools is 'thick description', as described by Geertz (1973). Thick description involves recording events or experiences precisely and in detail, and then interpreting rather than simply observing what has been witnessed or experienced. Such detailed record keeping can help researchers to extract relevant data from the multitude of stimuli they are inevitably faced with whilst immersed in their target culture, group, or setting.

Thick description is used closely alongside the second methodological tool: reflection on events and experiences. This tends to involve linking events to thoughts and emotions; the researcher must question where their thoughts and reactions to what has happened stem from. This concept of reflection takes influence from Dewey (1910: 8) who differentiates between thought and reflective thought, saying 'reflection thus implies that something is believed in (or disbelieved in), not on its own direct account, but through something else which stands as witness, evidence, proof, voucher, warrant; that is, as ground of belief'. Researchers taking an auto-ethnographic approach must therefore strive for reflective thought.

The third tool is linking these descriptions and reflections to relevant academic literature in what Spry (2001: 713) describes as a 'weave of story and theory'. This enables the researcher to further unpick and analyse personal experiences and interpretations in light of what others have written about the topic.

Through its application of methodological tools, which may go beyond those outlined here, auto-ethnography enables researchers to reflect on personal experiences rigorously and helps them to draw out significant data from potentially complex experiences.

## Using auto-ethnography to reflect on the CELTA

I completed the CELTA at a UK course provider (independent from my university) over four weeks in the spring of 2015, during the dissertation research phase of the MA programme I was doing. I applied the three aforementioned methodological tools in two separate phases; during the CELTA, I kept a daily journal in which I used thick description and reflection to record my experiences. This journal can be described as my research data. Following the CELTA, I linked these descriptions and reflections to applied linguistics literature in the discussion section of my dissertation.

To make recording my experiences of the CELTA more manageable, before beginning the course I narrowed the focus of the research to my experiences of a limited number of ELT related topics. I initially recorded my experiences of events related to teaching materials, technology use, teaching approaches and ideology, teacher anxiety, and my motivation levels. However, as the CELTA progressed I found myself reflecting mostly on teaching approaches and ideology, so this became the sole focus of the subsequent data analysis and discussion.

To ensure accuracy, I hand-wrote about significant events or thoughts, referred to as critical incidents (Boufoy-Bastick, 2004) and epiphanies (Ellis et al., 2010) respectively, as soon as possible after their occurrence. Each evening I would type up these notes and add further post-event reflections; this was often the point at which I would use reflective thought to analyse my feelings about events. I further reflected during the CELTA course through weekly e-mail discussions with my dissertation supervisor, who offered an outside perspective. After the course, whilst writing my dissertation, I added a 'Post CELTA Reflections' section to my journal for additional reflections.

My dissertation's discussion section linked my journal writings to applied linguistics literature. I used content analysis of my journal to systematically generate data (in the form of journal extracts) for the discussion. When reviewing my CELTA reflections after the course I identified several subtopics related to my main topic of teaching approaches and ideology which seemed significant: L1 (learner's first language) use, phonology instruction, and communicative approaches. Their significance was based either on the frequency with which I had reflected on them, or the impact they had had on my thinking. I then chose four to five keywords related to these subtopics and searched for the keywords in my journal. I then discussed the resulting journal extracts in relation to relevant academic literature. This ensured I did not selectively choose journal extracts for discussion.

To break this down further, and express the ideas in more conventional terms: I was both the sole participant and the researcher, my daily journal was my data, and

the discussion section of my dissertation which linked my experiences to literature constituted the findings of my research.

## Insights gained through auto-ethnography

The nature of my research means that the conclusions I came to relate only to my experience of the CELTA, with the particular course provider I chose. As Ellis et al. (2010) say, the generalisability of auto-ethnography research refers to the extent to which the reader can relate to the experiences and interpretations of the researcher.

Three main insights emerged from my reflection on my CELTA experience: the CELTA prioritises teaching approach over learner needs, some methods advocated by my course provider could be considered outdated, and, contrary to the syllabus' claim (Cambridge English Language Assessment, 2015: 2), trainees are in fact not adequately prepared to teach worldwide.

I came to these conclusions by reflecting on both my personal experiences (as recorded in my CELTA journal) as well as considering academic literature regarding each issue. For example, in the following extract from my journal I reflect on a trainer's dismissal of the benefits of L1 use:

*The trainer even said L1 use is now thought to be beneficial because researchers have done everything else and needed something new to focus on! This totally undermines legitimate research that shows the benefits of L1 use.*

As L1 avoidance was an aspect of my experience which I reflected on numerous times in my journal, I decided to include it in my dissertation discussion where I highlighted that there is mounting evidence to suggest the L1 plays a central role in language learning, and can be utilised as a learning strategy (Jarvis and Pavlenko, 2008; Scott & de la Fuente, 2008). This, along with other examples such as the use of pronunciation drilling, led to the finding that my course provider used some methods that could be considered outdated.

A second example is the following journal extract in which I reflect on the lack of guidance trainees receive regarding how methods can be adapted:

*Trainer two mentioned that in some cultures learner autonomy is more challenging to develop because the teacher is seen as the authority and students are often reluctant to use the language for fear of making errors. As with the CELTA approach as a whole though, solutions to these cultural differences were not offered.*

I then linked this, and other similar examples, to Kumaravadivelu's (2006) claim that communicative approaches can conflict with local cultural and educational beliefs in some parts of the world. The

potential for teachers using the highly communicative CELTA approach to encounter difficulties in some parts of the world, along with the lack of guidance I experienced regarding how to adapt methods appropriately, led to the finding that the CELTA does not adequately prepare trainees to teach worldwide, and the teaching approach the course advocates takes priority over actual learner needs.

The implications of these insights are that several changes could be made to the course offered by my provider in order to better prepare trainees for the realities of teaching:

- trainees should be made better aware of the varying teaching contexts and types of learners they are likely to encounter in their future careers
- trainees should be shown how they can select or adapt methods that will work best for them, their teaching context, and their learners
- better incorporation of the L1 into the CELTA syllabus is needed to reflect research findings regarding L1 use and its potential as a learning strategy

## Conclusion

Auto-ethnography is a research approach that allows us to reflect on our own experiences in a structured way, and is a valuable tool for research that is not well-suited to conventional research approaches. As can be seen from the above, using this approach helped me gain deep insights into how the CELTA could be improved.

I would also strongly encourage all teachers to continually reflect on their teaching practice, either casually or through an approach such as auto-ethnography. I believe the process makes us stop taking our beliefs and ways of doing things for granted, and helps us to identify how we might evolve and improve.

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## Biodata

Bethany Miall completed her MA in Applied Linguistics for English Language Teaching at Queen Mary University of London in 2015 and went on to join the university's Language Centre as an English Language and Study Skills teacher. A copy of her dissertation (including the research findings in full) is available upon request from the e-mail below.

E-mail: [bethany-g-c@hotmail.com](mailto:bethany-g-c@hotmail.com)

## Do you know what the IATEFL Associates do?

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Don't forget to also check out the back pages of the *IATEFL Voices* bi-monthly magazine to connect with them.

Go to [www.iatefl.org/associates/introduction](http://www.iatefl.org/associates/introduction) for more details.

# Chronicle of a teacher researcher

Susan Dawson

The following 'story' began its life during a course entitled 'Creative Writing for Academics' run by Kip Jones at Bournemouth University. One challenge, among the many he gave us over the weekend, was to write a story in 500 words based on a photo he provided. I tried, but it didn't flow. What did begin to flow however was the story of my experience of doing doctoral research as a practitioner researcher in which I used the principles of Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2005; Hanks, 2015a, 2015b) as both my approach to classroom pedagogy with a group of EAP (English for Academic Purposes) learners and as my doctoral research methodology. In (just over) 500 words, I have attempted to capture in a very different 'non-academic' style some of the personalities in the class, the interactions, the ups and downs, contradictions, ambiguities, tensions, and emotional work going on throughout the course. The style I have used sets some of these contradictions and contrasts quite starkly against each other, and so I follow this with a short, more 'academic' reflection at the end.

*17 international postgraduate students. A 10 week course. 17 sets of dreams, ambitions, hopes, expectations, and a teacher. A teacher who wants them to explore their own language learning puzzles. A teacher who needs data. A teacher who thinks quality of life is more important than exam results. A teacher who wants them to understand 'why' things are as they are.*

*Eshrag wants to go to Cambridge; she has the lowest level in the class. Annie doesn't really want to be here. It's hard, no one understands her. But her parents insisted and she loves them. Pete seems shy and sad. He doesn't know how to cook and is always hungry. Antonia misses her mother. They speak everyday. Monzer is playing games with the system. He and his wife don't want to go back home. Bert wants to speak 'fluent and idiomatic' English. Who will give him the secret to success? All 17 students want to get IELTS 5.5 in every skill. All want to do an MA. All think this class is the answer.*

*Such responsibility. Such diversity.*

*The beginning. Research explained. Consent forms signed. Students engaged, learning, laughing, working, exploring their puzzles, exploring their 'whys'. Teacher is tense – researcher or teacher? Research or pedagogy?*

*It's week 6. Boris says 'it's really awesome, I am into it'. Antonia and Bena say 'it's an excellent experience'.*

*Monzer says he's not moving forward. The teacher ignores the class and talks to Monzer ... for 17 whole minutes. He doesn't recant. It's a waste of time. He doesn't want to do the puzzle work.*

*The class rebel en masse. 'This is not helping us', 'it's wasting our time', 'we're not learning'. 'We want IELTS'. 'We need IELTS'.*

*The teacher goes into meltdown. How to salvage this? How to regain her professional integrity, her PhD, the quality of classroom life? Twist it, change it, practise mild deception. IELTS is the mantra – 'This is good for IELTS' she says (and it gives her some data), 'this will help your IELTS score' (and it keeps the project on track). Never say 'research'; try not to say 'puzzle work'; just say 'IELTS'.*

*Week 8 and the IELTS results roll in. Annie is distraught. Her speaking is still 4.5. Antonia gets 6.0 for speaking. Her writing falls to 5.0. She's not happy. Orlan spends the class on his phone. Visa issues. Leo spends the class on his phone. Checking his IELTS results. Boris gets a 6.0 overall. He gets a minimum of 5.5 in every skill. Teacher elated. Boris withdraws from the course. The score's not good enough for his parents. Monzer is distracted by a pending court case. Eshrag breaks her leg at the train station. She has childcare issues. She misses classes. Kan is happy. He stays behind after class. He likes the puzzle work. He likes the classes. He likes England. He likes English.*

*Poster making. Team work is great. Team work is hard. Poster making is fun. Poster making is a waste of time. Jake flips. He is angry. He starts shouting. This is not helping his English. He wants to do it at home. Teacher says that's fine. Next class Jake is absent. He's in the Learning Centre making his poster. Working on his own. Missing class.*

*The final week. Reports on the puzzle work are in. 'They helped improve our writing skills' say the students. Poster presentations done. 'They helped improve our speaking skills' say the students. Is that it? Are those my findings? Teacher is concerned. Teacher is exhausted. Teacher says 'never again'.*

The above story is just that, a creative interpretation from my perspective of the experience of attempting to hold together during a ten-week course the expectations of the students and their learning needs with my own research agenda. The response I record here to the end of the course is very much from a researcher point of view, and does not imply either a rejection of Exploratory Practice (EP) or my own continuing commitment to practise it. On the contrary, distance (and a lot of data analysis) has given me fresh understandings of how I can continue to work within its principles. However, the narrative does, I believe, raise various issues, and I briefly address some of these below. I begin with some

of the ethical questions it suggests, linking those to the practical need for perceived relevance. I conclude with a more conceptual issue related to the nature of 'quality of life', the first principle of EP.

In choosing to work within the principles of EP, I believed I was pursuing both a democratic and socially equitable way of working (Mockler, 2014), giving the learners themselves the opportunity to set the agenda and inquire into the issues that were important for them (Hanks, 2015a), and subjugating my own research agenda to their ongoing and expressed needs. However, even within a framework such as the EP principles, which are ostensibly an equitable and ethical way of distributing power within the classroom, ethical tensions still exist as demonstrated through the above story. Yes, these were undoubtedly compounded by the fact that I was using EP not only as an approach to pedagogy, but also as my doctoral research methodology, and yet it does raise questions about what is 'best' for students, who decides that, and the power that the teacher can unwittingly yield even when practising something like EP. To what extent was I imposing EP as a means to an end for my own purposes, even though I held an unwavering belief throughout in its potential to facilitate deep learning and engagement in the students, and had worked with the EP principles for some years? These are ethical questions and are central to the EP principles of ensuring that all have the opportunity to develop (Principles 3-5). Perhaps one way of judging how well I dealt with these ethical tensions, is to consider whether the learners did feel they had developed their own thinking, abilities and understandings.

In this regard, I think the story suggests that the learners did find their own ways to make their voices heard and assert their idea of what is 'best'. The multiple references to IELTS in the middle of the story reflect the need for the learners to perceive the EP work as relevant to their immediate needs and my own attempts (although not detailed in this story) to help them see that the EP work could be both relevant and academically helpful. Their final remarks suggest that the majority did perceive a benefit to their language learning.

Related to the idea of perceived relevance is that of the first principle of EP which is to 'focus on quality of life as the fundamental issue' (Allwright & Hanks, 2009: 260). The 'rebellion' of week 6 distinctly diminished our (temporal) experience of quality of life in the classroom, in terms of it making our 'time together both pleasant and productive' (Allwright, 2003: 114). I felt as if we were violating the first principle, and the decisions I made as to how to take the class forward from that point reflected

to a large degree my desire to reinstate some tangible sense of quality of life in the classroom. However, this desire, coupled with the reality I was facing in class, for me raises the question as to what extent quality of life is defined by that which is pleasant, enjoyable and productive in the present and to what extent it may also be seen as a longer term goal, in which periods of tension and conflict might trigger a greater search for understanding (Principle 2) and ultimately then, an enhanced quality of life.

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## Biodata

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# Exploratory Practice: Exploring the benefits of student-led module components with learner-practitioners

Marianna Goral

## Introduction

This article will focus on my two-year reflective classroom practice and research of seven successive cohorts of Business English for Exchange Students at Regent's University London, following the principled and theoretical framework of *Exploratory Practice* (EP) (Allwright, 2003; Allwright and Hanks 2009). EP concerns itself with 'puzzles, which may or may not be resolvable, and these are based around gaining a deeper understanding of classroom practice, asking 'why...?' questions rather than focusing on negative issues and rushing to problem-solving. This form of practitioner research is aimed at guiding teachers and their learners to develop a better understanding of their classroom practice, where both teachers (the teacher-researchers) and learners (the learner-practitioners) must be involved together in seeking their own enhanced understandings.

The research focuses on understanding my puzzle: 'Why can student presentations and discussion boards work well? A critical view will be provided of learner attitudes towards student-led module components utilizing self-generated materials, namely student presentations and computer-mediated networked discussions.

## The learner-practitioners

This study explored existing practices, specifically for my 50-minute seminars for Business English for Exchange Students, a 12-week one-semester module. Each group of learners was given an explanation of the research I was undertaking and they agreed to participate by taking on the role of co-researchers, otherwise referred to in EP as 'learner-practitioners'. In total, I observed seven groups over a period of four semesters. The number of learners per class varied between 8 and 16. All the groups consisted of undergraduate exchange students between the ages of 19 to 22 from various Asian, South American, African and European linguistic backgrounds. They were all non-native speakers of English ranging from an upper-intermediate to an advanced level. English was the medium of instruction. The module content includes two student-led components i.e. the discussion board and

student presentations. Materials have been designed so they lend themselves to flexible change and adaptation from one group to another, depending on the topics chosen and presented by the learners.

## The student-led module components: student presentations for Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) discussion boards

Every week during seminar slots, in the first seven weeks of the course, small groups of learners (working in groups of 2-3) give group presentations about current business topics and provide clear definitions of 'topic related vocabulary'. At the end of the presentation, the group members, also referred to as 'topic experts' for their respective topics, must provide a set of questions for the rest of the class and try to generate an in-class discussion. At this point, the class is subdivided into smaller groups. Next, each 'topic expert' leads a discussion in their designated groups. Their role is also to clarify any information that the other learners may not have understood about the topic. After the discussion takes place, the 'topic experts' are expected to report back to the entire class about the key points that were discussed or any conclusions that may have been drawn.

After the seminar, the 'topic experts' become 'discussion board administrators' for a week and continue the in-class discussion on the VLE. They are encouraged to provide further links, videos and updates related to the topic; they should also try to continue generating topic interest and keep the discussion about the presented topic 'alive'. The discussion board closes after 7 days and all the learners are expected to contribute to the discussion board at least once. The teacher then goes through the discussion board and identifies learner language and content issues. This information is then collated, with the language and content issues underlined and copied into a word document; the learners' names are not visible. The teacher identifies in brackets a description of the type of problem that has been highlighted, e.g. punctuation, missing article, collocation issue, or inaccurate information provided about the topic. The learners are later given back this document in order to reflect on mistakes and try to pinpoint the issues and make corrections where necessary. Later, the teacher asks the group to give their suggested corrections and also shows them a model answer. This all leads into the learners' assessment, which involves the students in writing a business report on one of the topics they have discussed.

## The research framework and tools

The research design involved profiled examples of collaborative learner feedback and the teacher-researcher's 'understanding'. Working towards this initiated a journey in which learners could be conceived as partners, i.e. 'learner-practitioners' in research, while the classroom was viewed as an interface of teaching, learning and research. As suggested by Allwright (2003),

EP places great emphasis on bringing together everyone involved (both teacher and learners) in order to develop a mutually beneficial understanding of classroom life. This holistic approach is motivated by seven key principles, one of which is to get research done at the same time as teaching. As Principle 6 states *'integrate the work for understanding into classroom practice (use of normal pedagogic activities as investigative approaches)'* (Allwright, 2003:129-30). The teacher-researcher integrated research into pedagogy in this context by developing Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities (PEPAs) from which the below outlined learner-practitioner feedback has been obtained.

### Learner-practitioners' feedback

One of the main observations recognised by the learner-practitioners was that a paradigm shift in classroom dynamic created better learning opportunities and a better environment. Teachers are generally expected to teach and lead. Many of my learners come from traditional educational backgrounds and expect to be taught not to participate in the teaching process and course content creation. However, my learners did not seem daunted by and rather embraced the 'flipped classroom' approach of collating information and 'teaching' or rather, as one student put it, 'sharing' relevant and meaningful content. In general, the learners did not find this process overwhelming and enjoyed the fact that they were all not only teaching each other relevant content and language but also passing on content to their teacher. A 'team mentality' arose from this and as a result a very positive shift in classroom dynamic. The learners clearly preferred working alongside their teacher rather than for the teacher. What is more, the learners appreciated this collaborative effort and saw the pedagogic value. One learner-practitioner voiced her opinion on this by saying: "I really like this format of learning. The teaching role doesn't scare me and from my point of view is very useful for learning". The learners were considerably more active and involved. There was no longer a wall dividing us: a teacher versus learner dynamic but rather an 'us' dynamic. In my view, this thus truly tapped into the EP principle of *'work cooperatively for mutual development'* (Allwright, 2003: 129).

Furthermore, the learner-practitioners recognised that they too were valuable contributors to classroom discourse and that student-generated content is a valid learning resource. They were passing on valuable knowledge and content and generating relevant and high quality material which would be relevant to their assessment (now no longer solely the teacher's domain). As one learner-practitioner pointed out: "I think my material is really interesting and my classmates will be interested too." I observed that my learners' confidence grew not only in their own materials but also in peers' materials.

Another important finding was that learner engagement continued outside the classroom environment with the aid

of VLE tools i.e. the discussion board. This gave both the teacher and learners time to reflect on the topic and contribute ideas, thoughts and share opinions through written discourse. The learners also had more time to observe and reflect on these topics (unfolding business news stories) and they really seemed to appreciate each other's different points of view. One learner-practitioner wrote. "I can see the many advantages of writing in Blackboard. I like to take my time to clear my thoughts and write everything the best that I can so that others can understand my point of view". Other learner-practitioners recognised that the discussion board formed a sense of community. They said they felt they were "bonding on some level" with the other learners outside of the classroom as well as in the classroom. Furthermore, the learners found my feedback on their written language particularly useful and relevant for improving their language skills and in supporting their assessed writing.

### Conclusion

The privileged familiarity of teachers with the classroom environment and their close contact with the learners provides a real opportunity to contribute to knowledge building about language learning and teaching. Indeed, this project has demonstrated that my learners and I were able to develop a better understanding of classroom practice via engaging with research as my learners rose to the challenge of becoming learner-practitioners. They not only benefited from the research engagement but also from co-shaping and designing locally relevant course materials and assessment resources.

The research so far has helped reinforce my initial 'feelings' that my existing seminar set up is, as Allwright (2000:8) states: 'pedagogically attractive'. Addressing my 'puzzle' has been valuable in allowing for ample reflection on the opportunities and challenges brought about by the student-led module components for both the teacher-researcher and learner-practitioners. By following the EP theoretical framework and in particular Principle 3 (*'Involve everybody as practitioners developing their own understandings'*) (Allwright, 2003:129), I have been able to further clarify what contributes to the success of my Business English seminars.

From a teacher identity perspective, facilitating the incorporation of the teacher-researcher role into my professional make-up challenged my preconceptions, but also prompted my first steps into dissemination and allowed me to enjoy the resultant benefits. This has been beneficial for my professional development.

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### Biodata

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# Research storytelling: sensitising pre-service teachers to research writing

Elena Ončevska Ager

## Introduction

This paper is based on a talk that I gave as part of the IATEFL 2016 Research SIG Open Forum, entitled *Helping teachers evaluate, engage with and communicate research*. In that talk, I reported on my recent work of exposing pre-service teachers to research writing to help them prepare for writing up their own small-scale research as part of their degree. In this paper I will describe my research storytelling project and look closely at my students' responses, gathered through their end-of-course reflections, analysed via thematic coding.

## Research storytelling project

The research storytelling project was embedded in an academic writing module that I was teaching, a compulsory module for English language undergraduates in their final year of studies at Saints Cyril and Methodius University, Republic of Macedonia. Apart from language modules, the students also do compulsory modules in (applied) linguistics and literature.

One of the aims of the academic writing module I teach is to help students prepare to write their graduation theses, which have the standard format of research papers (abstract, introduction, literature review, research methodology, findings and discussion of findings, and conclusion). Researching a topic inspired by one of the compulsory modules, writing it up in a graduation thesis

and defending the thesis are requirements students at the university must meet to graduate.

My experience of supporting undergraduate students in writing their graduation theses suggests that even the best students struggle to develop their research into a graduation paper. Indeed, writing up research findings can be a challenging task for academics, well-versed in the genre! It does not help that our students get limited exposure to this genre and do not seem to be particularly excited at the prospect of engaging with academic writing. Informally explaining why, the students have mentioned the length, layout and presentation (usually PowerPoint) of research papers as reasons for their lack of enthusiasm.

To support students in considering others' research and writing up their own, I decided to expose them to sample graduation theses on teaching topics, such as classroom talk and external testing, submitted by our recent graduates. I invited my students to work individually or in groups of up to three and engage with a graduation thesis of their choice by first carefully studying its structure and content. Then, they were to present the graduation thesis to their class as if they were telling them a story. To support my students in their preparation for research storytelling, we brainstormed as a class a number of narrative formats which could be used to tell research stories, from text-based formats such as roleplays, (news) stories and banners, to formats which rely less on text, such as photography and music. This was also an opportunity for the students to ask any questions they had and discuss some of the narrative formats they were thinking of using.

Once the students were comfortable with the concept of research storytelling, i.e. telling a story about someone else's graduation paper by employing a narrative storytelling format, they were given two weeks to prepare their research stories before presenting them in front of their peers, at a research storytelling event. The project was voluntary and two thirds of a class of 20 signed up for it.

## The case for research storytelling

Research and storytelling do not normally collocate very well, perhaps because of the way in which we

traditionally view the two genres: “We think of storytelling as ‘unserious’, as fictional, whereas the dominant image of research is that it is about finding the ‘truth’ and therefore an altogether more serious business” (Usher, 2001: 47).

I thought the academic writing module was a suitable context in which to challenge this myth. This is why I invited the students to reconceptualise the genre of research as a story - non-fictional, but a story nonetheless, with a recognisable narrative structure: characters, settings, a plot, sometimes conflict and some form of resolution.

One advantage of doing this is to support students’ creativity, understood in this paper as entailing “both originality and effectiveness” (Runco and Jaeger in Saleem *et al.*, 2016: 22). In the context of telling research stories, the *originality* lies in seeing research writing from a new perspective, for instance, by embedding it in a context not primarily associated with the genre and still *effectively* communicating the gist to an audience. To illustrate the synergy between originality and effectiveness, I now share the beginning of one group’s research story, a dubbed excerpt from The Ellen DeGeneris Show featuring Jenifer Aniston as a guest. By putting a research story in the context of a talk show, the students provoked laughter in the audience, but also a valuable discussion on why we find it so unlikely (to the point of laughter!) for research findings on, e.g. teacher talk (TT) and student talk (ST), to be discussed in a talk show:

*Ellen DeGeneris:* Hi, welcome to our show! You recently conducted a very interesting study on TT in the EFL classroom. Tell me, what did you discover? Did the amount of TT surpass the amount of ST?

*Jennifer Aniston:* My expectations about TT proved correct.

*Ellen DeGeneris:* Did they?!

*Jennifer Aniston:* Yes, I nailed it.

The students opted for various narrative formats to talk about the graduation papers they had read. Some told the audience a bed time story, others staged a protest, one pair role-played a conversation between two puzzled readers and another pair staged an excerpt from *Romeo and Juliet*, all inspired by the graduation papers.

Saleem *et al.* (2016) argue that such creative thinking is central to life in general and to carrying out research (from its very conception to its sharing with a wider audience) in particular. I hoped that approaching graduation theses from a new (their own and therefore engaging), storytelling perspective would help students meaningfully address the research-related challenges they initially identified (the length and the layout of research papers) as well as provide practice for strategic reading. The research storytelling project, however, was not designed to address only the cognitive aspects of

learning. The stories also connected with the social and the affective domain (Oxford, 2011), as the students were invited to engage with their audience, thus improving their confidence as storytellers; this might subsequently help them as speakers at a variety of events, professional (e.g. conferences) or not (e.g. informal community gatherings).

### Student response

The research storytelling event seemed to be very successful as the ‘audience’ responded eagerly to the research stories, at times taking an active part in them (e.g. when they were invited to shout the contents of a banner which summarised a graduation thesis on a controversial testing model). It was all well and good that the students appreciated the research storytelling event, but did they learn anything from doing this? I incorporated several project-related questions for the students to address in their end-of-course reflective notes, inquiring into their reasons for participating (or not) in the project and its overall usefulness, with a particular focus on the perceived learning that took place. All the questions were open-ended. The main emergent themes from the students’ answers will be presented below.

### **Why did the students sign up (or not) for research storytelling?**

The main reasons for the students to join the research storytelling project were that it sounded new, interesting and/or suitably challenging; it was a chance for them to develop their creativity as well as public speaking skills and it was educational as it was designed to expose them to graduation thesis writing. Most of them welcomed the novelty of the project, which provoked curiosity:

*“I chose to present [...] because I was curious if it would be successful. [...] It probably comes from the fear of the everlasting boring presentations on dry and uninteresting subjects.”*

*“I like to be challenged [...] [to] have the freedom to choose [...] what to do. This was the first time that we were asked to do something creative at the university.”*

The students who chose not to take part in the project provided the following reasons: finding out about it late, not having time to participate (e.g. because they were busy with other modules) or not feeling competent to join an unorthodox project:

*“I don’t really [...] feel comfortable doing those kinds of activities. I am more for the ‘old-fashioned’ way of presenting although I enjoyed my classmates’ presentations.”*

### ***How conducive to learning about academic writing did the students perceive research storytelling to be?***

The students reflected on the project as being useful for them, with only one student finding it 'not very useful' and the rest being equally split between 'useful' and 'very useful'. Some students appreciated learning "how creative we could be if we just thought outside of the box" as well as witnessing "the limitless creativity" demonstrated by their peers. This has affective (e.g. learning about oneself and one's own place in the class) as well as cognitive (e.g. learning about alternative approaches to research storytelling) and social (e.g. getting to know one's peers for how creative they are) implications.

Other participants appreciated the opportunity to learn about the content and structure of graduation papers. The experience was conducive to "us actually retaining information, rather than forgetting [as can be the case with] a PowerPoint presentation". The research stories, therefore, were viewed not only as being *original*, but also *effective* at communicating what the theses were about.

Some students reported developing their team skills, and others learning new computer skills (e.g. how to use Movie Maker to dub the talk show mentioned above).

Quite a few students, perhaps in part because they were preparing to become teachers, reported benefiting from reflecting on their presentation skills and developing audience awareness:

*"I learnt that people will understand you more if you present [the story] with simple words, like everything in a nutshell and in a way that is fun, so it will actually leave an impact."*

*"When we [were] prepar[ing] the presentation, we were constantly asking ourselves whether we would be bored if we were the audience, whether something would be intelligible if we knew little about the topic, and the like."*

*"I found this experience as a step further towards our own image as teachers, where we should know or try to know how to keep the students' attention."*

This exercise reportedly helped a shy student grapple with their stage fright:

*"[...] for me it is very difficult to capture the audience's attention and to keep it, because I am [a] very anxious person. But when presenting [it], even I felt relaxed and I wanted it to last longer."*

Few students expressed reservations about the usefulness of the project: one didn't find the task appealing, another student was not impressed by the quality of some research stories and yet another one was

confused about how presenting research as a story was connected to academic writing at all. On reflection, we only briefly discussed the rationale for research storytelling and how it fed into writing, exposure to the target genre being an essential prerequisite for engaging in it. Perhaps this link should have been made clearer.

The impact of research storytelling on learning about research writing could also be explored by following the students' academic writing progress after they have taken part in research storytelling. However, this was beyond the scope of this study.

### **Implications**

The students' response suggested that overall they appreciated the cognitive, social and affective opportunities for learning about research writing that research storytelling had offered. Even though the findings of this small-scale investigation are not generalizable, they may still suggest avenues for further thinking about how to increase students' engagement with research writing in enjoyable, and therefore memorable, ways.

On teacher education programmes, already produced research stories can be used as 'tasters' to prepare teachers to read full research papers prior to engaging in writing their own research stories. Some of the feedback I received after IATEFL suggested that research stories can also be used as stand-alone portfolio activities and/or end-of-course evaluation tasks. Furthermore, the opportunities for developing creativity inherent in research storytelling (e.g. supplying novel perspectives to seeing things which are normally taken for granted) can empower teachers in all aspects of their lives, private and professional – and not only to do with their teaching, but also with the subsequent reflection on their teaching.

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# Using visual representations to reflect on research: Exploring innovative formats for research dissemination

Loreto Aliaga-Salas

## Introduction

When I started my PhD, I assumed that I would share my PhD journey using the conventional models such as writing papers and presenting in conferences. Although writing for this newsletter still fits within the ‘traditional’ approach of dissemination, here, I will explore how I have made sense of some critical events of my research through the use of pictures and poetry. I will also share some other visual formats to disseminate research.

## My research journey

My research focuses on teacher educators’ cognitions regarding curriculum innovation on a pre-service ELT programme in Santiago, Chile. During data generation, completed between May and June 2015, I used interviews and classroom observations to explore the journey of four teacher educators, the implementers of curriculum change. I also interviewed student teachers, since they are to be intimately involved in enabling change in school classrooms. Likewise, I interviewed the university programme authorities as initiators of the change (Fullan, 2007).

During data generation, I faced unpredictable circumstances that led me to make complex changes to my methodology. Everything started smoothly: I met teacher educators and programme authorities to interview them, and I performed some classroom observations. I also arranged group interviews with student-teachers representatives. However at the end of May, a month-long student strike started as part of a nation-wide student movement that has, since 2011, been asking for secular, free, and quality education (Bellei, Cabalín, & Orellana, 2014). The strike involved a sit-in and a fire in one of the university buildings, which prevented me from finishing the classroom observations, and from doing the planned five student- teacher group interviews (I replaced them with more than twenty individual interviews).

Despite the adverse circumstances, I tried to obtain as much data as I could, contacting student teachers and teacher educators individually and, thanks to the participants’ good will, I could organise some post-data generation interviews online instead of face-to-face.

## Use of photography

The convoluted data generation did not prevent me from reflecting during this critical stage of my PhD. During data generation, I took some pictures of the strike and sit-in and Figure 1 presents a collage portraying the difficult circumstances that I faced. The three pictures were taken during and after the university sit-in.



**Figure 1:** *Strike, a.k.a. the fight for free and quality education* (Winner of the 2016 Research Image Competition; Faculty of Education, Social Sciences and Law, University of Leeds)

This collage evidences data generation limitations; it can help an audience who may not know the Chilean context to understand the events. Hence, it aims to provide readers or viewers a fuller understanding of what the actual situation was rather than a textual description. On the left is graffiti, ‘No time for justice, only for vengeance’, possibly written by the ELT programme student-teachers, since they are the only ones who appear to speak English at the university. On the top right, ‘Derecho en toma’ (Law on sit-in), shows how widespread support for the student movement was in the demonstrations. The bottom right picture portrays the entrance to the main classroom building blocked with chairs, and an upside-down Chilean flag. I could reflect on the impact of these demonstrations on my research and participants by witnessing the strike, collating the collage, and presenting it. I faced limitations such as not completing my targets and the adaptations to my plan. At the same time, both teacher educators and student teachers were affected by having missed over a month of classes – squeezing in or simply not covering content to finish the semester.

## Diamond poems

Another event that has encouraged me to think about creativity in presenting research was held at the Kaleidoscope postgraduate conference at the School of Education of the University of Cambridge in June 2016. In a workshop named “Arts Kaleidoscope”, presenters asked participants to write a short poem based on their PhDs. In my experience, student teachers find poetry difficult and inaccessible. However, I used to ask student teachers to write diamond poems, which follow a very simple structure. They used to find it a friendlier form than a ‘traditional’ poem.

I learned about diamond poems in a workshop with Angela Harnish, an English Language Fellow at Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación, in Santiago, in 2009. A diamond poem has seven lines or stanzas linking two concepts, located at either end of the diamond (see Kaufman [1975] for more details about the form).

When asked to write a poem at the event in Cambridge, I opted for a diamond poem, as these are not only engaging and accessible but also visually attractive. In my poem, presented in Figure 2 below, I transit from *innovation* to *language classroom*.

### Innovation

	engaged	challenged	
changing	transforming		conflicting
beliefs	teacher	decision	student
	educators	makers	teachers
limiting	(language)		practicing
	learning		
	critical	empowered	

### language classroom

**Figure 2:** Changing the language classroom

In the Chilean context, I thought of participants being engaged yet challenged. I thought of the curriculum *change* which promotes a conversion to a new approach to language teaching and teacher education, in order to *transform* ELT in the school classroom. Changes often *conflict* with one’s *beliefs*, particularly those of the curriculum implementers, i.e. the *teacher educators*. I then shift to the second concept: the *language classroom*. I think of the other actors taking part in the innovation: *decision makers* and *student teachers*. Curriculum innovation poses tests that may *limit* the scope of both teacher educators’ and student teachers’ actions. The latter are the ones who are expected to practice and enable the curriculum, and to become *critical* and empowered *teachers* in service of the *language classroom*, and most importantly, the students.

I see creative writing, e.g. poetry or short stories, as a way to give emphasis to key concepts in research and interweave lives of research participants with research objectives and findings. In poetry, for example, each stanza can convey a different research outcome, stress a particular issue, finding, or challenge, and link these to potential audience. Therefore, diamond poems can trigger initial concepts around a problem that can lead to discussions focused on a particular context, and can be used by inexperienced and experienced researchers and/or practitioners.

## Posters and story-telling

Finally, although I have not used posters or story-telling myself, I have learned about these means of sharing research in an innovative way. For teachers who do not necessarily know about, or feel interested in, publishing in journals or presenting at conferences, posters and story-telling are feasible and user-friendly alternatives to disseminating research.

One example of an accessible and meaningful way to promote research dissemination is presented by Rebolledo, Smith, and Bullock (2016) in the context of the Champion Teachers project in Chile. This book contains nine teacher-led projects that use posters and images to illustrate teachers’ research projects. By using hand-made posters, school classroom teachers share their exploratory action research projects, explaining their puzzles, research questions, action plans, proceedings and reflections.

A second example was shown by Elena Ončevska Ager at the IATEFL research forum in Birmingham 2016 on helping teachers evaluate, engage with and communicate research. Ončevska Ager (2016) presented an experience of encouraging pre-service teachers to disseminate their research projects using story-telling, involving also poetry and role playing. She shared some of her student samples.



**Figure 3:** The presentations - *Instilling a passion for research in pre-service teachers* by Elena Ončevska Ager (2016).

Figure 3 illustrates a student reflection using story telling. Vera, the story character, is pondering about her end-of-semester paper and how she found inspiration based on an actual classroom situation. Ončevska Ager's presentation followed the format of a story book, being consistent with what she promoted in her talk.

### And so?

Using visual representations of various formats at any research stage constitutes an alternative strategy to navigate through extensive sets of plain text. Designing visuals implies an exhaustive process to collate a composition that can be interpreted by a wide audience. Similarly, the writing up of a creative piece, e.g. a poem or a story, also entails a process where research notions have to be organised thoroughly, and worded carefully to fit the chosen genre while still communicating research. In my research journey, I have learned about using images and poems to share and reflect on my learning process, and they have allowed me to discover a different perspective of my own work, now part of the methodology section of my PhD project.

Furthermore, internet-based platforms such as Researchgate.net, Academia.edu, *ELTED*, and *ELT Research* have become a mainly open-access source for dissemination. Some of them allow users to create discussions to give and receive feedback on on-going research or draft papers, e.g. Sessions on Academia, and Projects/Questions on Research Gate. Apart from being free-access, these platforms promote dialogue between different parties, fostering collaboration and networking.

It seems, therefore, there is considerable potential to share findings and experiences of ELT research in innovative ways. To find out what my former student teachers feel about this, I sent them a quick question online:

If you had had the chance to write your thesis in an alternative format (without compromising the research rigour), would you have done it? For example, a story book, a movie script, a stand-up, a poster. What other formats could be attractive instead of a 'traditional' thesis? (For both researchers and readers)

I received 17 replies with several suggestions (some of them repeated), which I have summarised in Table 1 below.

Innovative research formats, as the ones suggested in this paper, do not compromise rigour and reflexivity embedded in research. It is only the presentation format that changes. Innovative formats can also reach the emotions of both research producers and users, and encourage reflection from different perspectives. Likewise, alternative formats can increase research readership, and foster new ways of understanding, transferring and applying knowledge to multiple contexts.

Audio-visual	Written
Videos (news reports, interviews, campaign-like videos, documentaries, reality shows) Plays A photo novel / Comics Songs (that embed student-teachers' puzzles)	A newspaper A story book Blogs An instruction manual (For ESP-related topics)

Table 1: Alternative formats for research dissemination

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### Biodata

Loreto is a PhD student at the School of Education, University of Leeds. Originally from Chile, she has worked as an English teacher in schools and in pre- and in-service teacher education. She is co-founder of RICELT, the first Chilean network of researchers in ELT. Her interests are mainly in teacher education, teacher change, and most importantly, narrowing the gap between teacher education at universities and teachers' practices at schools.

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# How I learned to stop worrying about English as a Lingua Franca and to start loving research

**Rob Cooper**

What follows is a confession of how I became a teacher-researcher and why I value that transition, as opposed to a pure research account. After teaching for ten years, I had started doing an MA in order to break out of my teaching routines, although the first few months had relatively little direct impact on my work. This all changed, however, when an apparent routine assignment provoked me to stand up and question what I, as a teacher, was being encouraged to do by a group of (admittedly well-intentioned) researchers. This account, therefore, does not seek to describe a specific piece of research, but rather to highlight what teachers stand to gain by recognising their doubts about established research and practice, and directly conducting their own inquiries to explore these doubts. I would like to argue that it is not wider reading or engagement with research that empowers us as teachers, but rather the ability to pause, consider and, via systematic inquiry, directly challenge the recommendations we are offered.

## From assignment to inquiry

English as Lingua Franca (ELF) is increasingly hard to avoid within the world of English language teaching. Based upon seemingly reasonable ideas that native-speaker norms are not universally applicable, we might reposition learners as innovative 'language users' who actively control their own linguistic needs and resources (Seidlhofer, 2004:222; Jenkins, 2006:170; Kirkpatrick, 2007:188; McKay, 2010:92). When users are apparently most likely to use English with speakers of other languages, fixed concepts of acceptability appear somewhat less plausible. I first encountered these ideas while researching for an assignment, and they seemed a revelation. Who was I to dictate what students should and shouldn't say? And, furthermore, in my Business English classes, where Polish bankers needed to communicate with their Spanish bosses, ELF made good practical sense.

I was a convert, and exploring how to apply ELF principles in my classes merely reinforced my commitment. By removing external norms, we must look at teaching in a

completely different light (McKay, 2010:111-113). Our methods might change, our materials certainly should, and traditional assessments may have to be jettisoned (Jenkins, 2006:174; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010:401; McKay, 2010:112). However, at this point, my enthusiasm was briefly checked. Lofty ambitions are one thing, but somehow I had to fulfil them in class. If I was to use different materials, what should these look like and how could I design them? Then came the next revelation: if I wished to introduce dramatic changes to my teaching, shouldn't my students have a voice?

For months, I had been reading and studying in complete isolation from my teaching. Perhaps I saw academic study as only the passive consumption of ideas from/in books. I had always considered myself an innovative teacher, but the key word was teacher. I may have felt reluctant, or even unqualified, to challenge the theoretical texts I was reading or to implement them in the classroom. Surely other, cleverer, people did this, people who understood concepts and designed materials far better than I could. However, no matter how much I read, I only found ever more theoretical arguments about why ELF mattered to language teachers, and no accounts addressing the design of lessons and materials. Writers seemed comfortable telling teachers what they should be doing, but less keen on demonstrating that they had taught in this way themselves. It seemed that if we, as language teachers, did not test these theoretical recommendations in the classroom, nobody else would. So, even though I was convinced it was beyond me, I decided that I should abandon my assignment, design a set of ELF-friendly lessons and explore my students' reactions to these.

## Methods (of a sort ...)

This was not a deeply-planned and robust research study, it was haphazard and often improvised. Interestingly, I recall being far more worried about how my tutors would judge my teaching innovations than the inquiry's results. I began by locating some materials that I could easily adapt. As the more flexible communicative goals of ELF are considered highly relevant to Business English (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010:400), I selected two activities on telephoning skills from two popular textbooks (Cotton, Falvey & Kent, 2006:11; Cotton, Falvey, Kent & Rogers, 2007:11). Nevertheless, adapting these to fit within ELF recommendations presented an enormous challenge. Researchers suggest a focus on open-ended activities which value communicative efficiency and coping strategies over a limited menu of formally correct options (Jenkins, 2006:174; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010:396; McKay, 2010:112). While this may jar slightly with teachers' and students' expectations of classroom practice, the lessons I designed encouraged spontaneity and real-time adaptation over scripted accuracy.

At the lower level, I conducted 'Polish as a Lingua Franca' phone calls before the lesson, and my students reviewed my performance. Then, we discussed literal Polish translations of supposedly 'useful' English expressions, examining Polish norms in telephone communication, and how these might compare to English phone conversations. This foreshadowed the coursebook activities, but instead of the suggested 'listen and fill the gaps' routine, we identified the calls' purpose and devised multiple potential solutions. Students then evaluated a narrower list of options, none of which, crucially, were 'wrong', and which differed only in their potential impact and appropriacy. Only then did I introduce the book's prescribed models. A follow-up activity involved students actually phoning an unknown, non-Polish, recipient to request specific information.

The higher proficiency lesson followed similar lines. A recorded conversation in an unknown language prompted broader conversations about global norms in phone calls in order to validate the use of existing translingual knowledge in English speaking contexts. In this lesson, we focussed on solving communication difficulties while telephoning, using one coursebook text to model ineffective communication. We then brainstormed potentially useful phrases to avoid breakdown, in English and in Polish, and analysed them, before finally hearing the book's proposed model. The follow-up activity tasked learners with collecting detailed information from intentionally uncooperative callers.

The emphasis of these activities, therefore, was the exploitation of users' existing linguistic resources and the creative and adaptive decision-making involved in flexible language use (Seidlhofer, 2004:226; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010:390). The activities valued maintaining communication via coping strategies and pragmatic devices over prescribed accuracy (Seidlhofer, 2004:218; Cogo & Dewey, 2006:87), supported by a broader 'meta' approach to language and communication (Seidlhofer, 2004:226-227). Eighteen different learners, with varied needs and backgrounds, used these lessons across both levels. This diversity reflects my students at the time, but covers an interesting range from bankers using English every day to entrepreneurs who had infrequent encounters in English. Lessons were not recorded and the following analysis uses only three limited data sources: my own notes and reflections, feedback from the 'mystery callers' and, most importantly, discussion activities involving the learners in subsequent lessons.

### **(Unexpected) observations and conclusions**

As you will remember, I was a convert to ELF, and confident my students would share my enthusiasm for the innovation being done on their behalf, and the theories that underpinned it. I had anticipated, however, that while the higher-level learners would welcome such activities, the less-proficient ones might feel less comfortable.

In practice, the opposite seemed to be true. The novel experience of engaging in more abstract discussions about communication was embraced by the less-experienced groups, even if we frequently dipped into Polish. However, there remained a strong desire for more tangible outcomes or an absolute decision on the 'right' thing to say. In contrast, higher-level groups were lukewarm about the activities. For them, the value of coping mechanisms to avoid communication breakdown was self-evident, and the use of ELF was mundane, thus supporting claims that it may represent a reality of daily working life (Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010:400). While the broader discussions of communication norms were deemed interesting, they presented little novelty to highly adept professional communicators. Interestingly, success in both follow-up tasks appeared to strongly favour those who frequently had to navigate ELF interactions, even if they were nominally less proficient. This suggests to me that the successful 'ELF speaker' is more characterised by their personal experience than by linguistic skills or teaching alone.

So much for my grand ambitions. However, my students had demonstrated an underlying issue with bringing the ELF concept into the classroom that I could not have recognised from reading alone. On the one hand, we have clear issues with whether students see value in more fluid definitions of acceptability. More worryingly, perhaps, is that if we view language as a selective communicative tool, we must recognise 'getting-by' as an entirely natural by-product. The goodwill and patience observed in ELF interactions (Kirkpatrick, 2007:163; Kankaanranta & Planken, 2010:390) might be expected across other linguistic barriers. As teachers, we should surely question whether we can justify trying to teach something which may correlate more strongly with individual experiences. This suggests we should focus less on *what* we teach as ELF but rather *how* we create conditions where users are comfortable with communicative grey areas. This does not directly oppose the ELF concept, but seeks to look at it in more nuanced terms. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space for a full commentary on ELF, as the bigger conclusion is a reminder that we should be wary of implementing innovations on our students' behalf without first involving them in that decision. It is entirely thanks to the involvement of my students that I could bring any coherence to my own doubts. And I was only able to do that by taking a step back, questioning what I was reading and conducting my own research.

### **Final reflections: Why love research?**

I freely admit this inquiry was flawed and riddled with holes, but my concern about its imperfection is easily outweighed by the thought and self-examination it has provoked. I went through this process without naming it, and only later discovered that it might have one, or indeed many. Now, four research ventures on, I am doing a PhD on classroom studies done by English language teachers, which all stemmed from having the temerity, as a humble

teacher, to say 'hold on a moment'. That simple act took me out of just another academic course into something which made me a different kind of teacher. For me, that expression of 'hold on' is what we as teachers ought to do more, questioning and challenging the materials, methods and beliefs that are thrown at us from all quarters: publishers, experts and researchers alike. In the same way that imposing innovation in my students' presumed interests was contrary to my beliefs as a teacher, we owe it to ourselves to take a far more active approach towards the innovations we are offered.

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## Biodata

Rob Cooper is an English teacher who is doing PhD research on how teachers conducting and sharing their research can help us to challenge assumptions and received wisdom within ELT. He would happily share all the materials described with anyone who wishes to conduct a similar inquiry, and take any questions or comments at robert.cooper@stmrys.ac.uk



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# Issues in using Facebook for research purposes

Nikolina Vaić

Over the past decade, Facebook has transformed our lives and left only few internet users untouched. In September 2016 Facebook had a reach of 1.79 billion monthly active users and an average of 1.18 billion daily active users and no other social media website comes close to being so widely used. The appeal of using Facebook in research is compelling due to this staggering amount of easily accessible data. As Wilson et al. (2012) explain, it provides "an unprecedented opportunity to observe behaviour in a naturalistic setting, test hypotheses in a novel domain, and recruit participants efficiently from many countries and demographic groups" (p. 204).

Despite this, there are a whole range of issues arising from research using data from social media websites such as Facebook that must be taken into account beforehand. In the following sections I will present a brief overview of possible issues that, in my opinion, should be considered before using Facebook for research purposes. These

considerations are based on my own experiences in trying to manoeuvre and overcome the pitfalls of using Facebook in qualitative research.

### **An example of using Facebook in research**

I was interested in researching a specific small group of university students participating in a study abroad programme, most of whom I had previously taught. Due to the fact that they were strewn across Europe, I decided to use Facebook not only as a convenient means of communication, but also as a tool for data generation.

I made this decision because my participants had all been active Facebook users before agreeing to participate in my study and were already in the habit of visiting Facebook on a regular basis. Therefore using Facebook would reduce the amount of conscious effort they needed to invest, and would increase the likelihood of them remaining committed throughout the duration of the research project. Also, since they mostly did not know each other well, I wanted to use Facebook to create a space where they could get to know one another and share their stories with fellow students who were also experiencing studying abroad for the first time. Furthermore, by allowing participants full access to my personal Facebook profile they would be able to find out much more about my own private life than they would have if we used a different medium of communicating. This would build trust between my participants and myself and help transition from a teacher-student relationship towards a less formal, friendly relationship in which they could feel free to share their thoughts and feelings without fear of repercussions.

However, although I decided that using Facebook would fit my research project, I still had to consider how I would do this without compromising my participant's privacy, which data I would include in my research and to what degree the information I obtained would be accurate.

### **Ethical considerations**

The conceptualization of public versus private, i.e. whether the participants of the study perceive the social networking site as a private or a public space (Eysenbach & Till, 2001) is perhaps the main ethical consideration when conducting this kind of research. In other words, are the participants aware that the personal information they post on their Facebook profiles might be used for research? According to reports issued by the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR), in order to ensure high ethical standards researchers should "remain flexible, be responsive to diverse contexts, and be adaptable to continually changing technologies" (Markham & Buchanan, 2012, p. 5). One could argue that when Facebook users fail to use restrictive privacy settings they inherently agree to make everything they contribute publicly available and that therefore there can be no ethical opposition to using this data for research. However, this kind of information is often perceived as

private; not only by the person who created the profile, but also by institutions reviewing the research. Eysenbach and Till (2001) point out that people participating online are not always "seeking public visibility", therefore, the "dichotomy of private and public sometimes may not be appropriate" (p. 1104). Markham and Buchanan (2012) state that "social, academic, or regulatory delineations of public and private as a clearly recognizable binary no longer holds in everyday practice" (p. 7). Therefore, the first step when conducting small scale studies such as my own is to obtain each participant's consent and to clearly and precisely state which data will be used before using any of the data available on Facebook.

In order to do this I met with each of my participants in person to discuss the nature and extent of their participation as well as to obtain written consent. At the time I also informed them that I would create a restricted and secret (i.e. "invisible" to non-members) Facebook group which would include all of them and that some or all of the data (textual and photographic) in that group would be used in my research. In this kind of qualitative study it was paramount that both the group and its members remained secret, i.e. "unsearchable" by other Facebook users, otherwise the participants' identities could easily have been revealed and the anonymity of the data compromised. To make it possible for them to further manage the degree of privacy for certain information, they could also submit any assignment privately by messaging me directly. Therefore they could choose to not share certain information with the rest of the group, i.e. opt for an increased level of confidentiality. What is more, using a Facebook group for generating data also facilitates the data selection procedure.

### **Data selection**

At its core, information on social media websites such as Facebook is networked and multimodal. Researchers have to decide which type of data they want to include (textual, audio, video, photographic data) and whether they will analyse wall posts and comments made by the participant, by others (their "friends") on the participant's profile, group posts, other liked/shared content, etc. This decision presents researchers with a dilemma – if they decide to include other people's comments, then this is ethically questionable since these people have not consented to having their information used in research and are utterly unaware of that being a possibility. However, should they decide to exclude other people's reactions and comments then they are dismantling the inherent complex structure of social media networks. As my study did not aim to investigate these kinds of interactions, I did not use any information that originated from outside the group. Utilizing a restricted, secret group meant that my participants still had freedom to use the remaining website uninhibitedly – to post, share and comment as they always had. The group served as a boundary between information used for research and information that was not going to be used, while creating

a safe space for study abroad students to network and share their thoughts, feelings and experiences amongst each other. I also encouraged them to post photos and videos, if this helped them express their thoughts and feelings better.

### Authenticity of the information

Another benefit of using a restricted Facebook group for research was that I, as the researcher (and group administrator), could be certain that I had full access to all the information the participants posted in the group. Had I, for instance, decided to use data from the participants' personal profiles, I would have had no way of knowing whether I was getting the whole picture. Facebook users can change and restrict the privacy settings for each of their Facebook posts without other users knowing which restriction level the posts they are seeing belong to. Thus, even though research participants may initially agree to take part in the research, they can decide not to share everything with the researcher, or they can change their minds and privacy settings afterwards, without the researcher ever knowing this change occurred.

We should therefore keep in mind that it is only possible to draw conclusions from information that we have access to and that is, in fact, visible to us on Facebook. Some parts of Facebook are not visible by definition – e.g., private messages or information shared within restricted groups. But for the remainder it is only possible to analyse what the social media user has *chosen to share* with their select audience, i.e., what this person *wants* us to see. Creating an online profile enables social media users to express their identity and to reinvent themselves by sharing their preferences (Pempek et al., 2009). This process allows individuals to create “dynamic and shifting constructions and presentations of self” (Coiro et al., 2008, p. 526), i.e., to use their Facebook profile “as a stage on which users can make public or semi-public presentations of themselves” (Wilson et al. 2012, p.210). Facebook users can change their self-presentation by deciding what they share, what they hide (“untagging”, deleting comments or photos), by joining certain groups, checking-in, etc. Slater (2002) suggests that by expressing your identity online you essentially *become what you type*, which means that by using social media to express yourself you can actually create and modify your identity as well as the way others perceive you. Some might even deliberately showcase themselves in a certain light or even fabricate a certain image for themselves (Wilson et al., 2012). However, recent studies have found that even though there is a certain degree of self-enhancement, online profiles are nevertheless relatively accurate portrayals of users' offline identities (e.g. Back et al. 2010). Even though this particular aspect was not the focus of my study, it was interesting to note the subtle differences in writing style and tone by some of my participants when they were posting to the group or to their personal profiles.

### Conclusion

Using Facebook in qualitative research enables researchers to explore new avenues of rich, dynamic, multimodal, longitudinal data. As long as the necessary ethical and pragmatic considerations for the intended research design have been made, social media websites such as Facebook can provide a bounty of data and resources that benefit the overall outcome and quality of the study.

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### Useful links

- <http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info/>
- <http://www.apa.org/gradpsych/2011/11/social-media.aspx>
- <http://www.s-r-a.org/announcements/online-newsletter/2011-02-15-benefits-and-challenges-using-facebook-research-adolescenc>

### Biodata

**Nikolina Vaić** has been working as an English and German language teacher for the past ten years in various countries and educational institutions. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Graz in Austria. Her main research interests include language learning beliefs, self concepts and study abroad. [nikolina.vaic@gmail.com](mailto:nikolina.vaic@gmail.com)

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## Interview: The privilege of working with teacher action researchers

Anne Burns speaks with Mark Wyatt

Mark Wyatt (MW): *Anne, thank you very much for agreeing to this interview. Your support of the IATEFL Research SIG (e.g. through being a plenary speaker at our ReSIG conferences in Turkey since 2014, facilitating the pre-conference event at IATEFL in Harrogate two years ago, and moderating recent online discussions on practitioner research) has been very much appreciated. Furthermore, your work in championing action research (AR) over many years has been an inspiration to many of our members. My first question is about AR.*

*You have highlighted in the past that while AR can be a valuable means of enhancing teacher professional development, it can also be much more than this, i.e. a valuable means of producing “knowledge about curriculum, pedagogy or educational systems” (Burns, 2005, p. 63). I wondered whether you could give an example of a teacher or teachers you have worked with achieving these multiple goals through AR.*

Anne Burns (AB): Wow, you've started with a challenging question, but one that I think is extremely important. It takes us beyond the idea of a lonely individual teacher researcher trying to carry out action research on his or her own – a model I don't particularly support, especially when there's a danger that action research is imposed on teachers by educational systems. What I was trying to get at was a more “bottom-up approach” where what teachers research in their institutions has a kind of ripple effect out to others (students, colleagues, parents, local curriculum developers, and managers/administrators) and also permeates the broader development of the curriculum at their institutions or brings wider recognition to their work.

In the work I've done with teachers in the Australian ELICOS sector (English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students – yes, a mouthful, I know, but it's essentially the sector that teaches international students coming to Australia), there have been many inspiring examples. One is the research carried out by Vicki Bos and Megan Yucel (2013, forthcoming). Vicki and Megan wanted to assist students at their centre who were identified as ‘at risk’ of failing the speaking assessments

that would allow them to gain entry to university, because of pronunciation difficulties.

The 30 students who were invited to participate in their research were enrolled in a 20-week course and were identified from a diagnostic test they were given in the first three weeks after they arrived in Australia. Vicki and Megan developed a Pronunciation Assistance Program (PAP), which had two components: a pronunciation workshop, led by Megan, and held in the centre's multimedia labs where they could use computers, or students' smart phones for recording, listening practising, and modelling; and the centre's Chorus Rehearsal. The chorus was led by Vicki, who was trained in drama and music, and had been established for some time as a social and recreational activity for students. The chorus rehearsal focused on exercises in breathing, vocal projection, expression, sounds, connected speech, enunciation, stress and rhythm for singing three songs: *The Lion Sleeps Tonight*, *Hallelujah*, and *Keep Holding On*. Participation in PAP was voluntary, but 24 of the students continued throughout the whole program.

As they carried out these activities, Vicki and Megan collected a great variety of evidence about how the PAP was working, through needs analysis surveys, recorded discussions by pairs of students on what they had learned, observations of student reactions to chorus rehearsals, journals of their own responses to the teaching sessions and rehearsals, photographs from the workshops, chorus rehearsals, and final public performance, audio and video files of all the diagnostic speaking tests and examiner feedback, and records of classwork and homework tasks. They also analysed the students' test scores before and after their action research. This collection of data seems like a lot (and indeed Vicki and Megan were very thorough!), but quite a bit of this information came out of their teaching and the activities that were going on in their program and in the institution, so they were able (very sensibly) to capitalise on what was readily available.

What was most interesting though was the broader impact their research had beyond their immediate program. What they called “an unforeseen outcome of their research” was how much attention it was given by the management of their institution. They were asked to build the PAP into the curriculum for future courses so that more students could be included, and the program has continued to develop at their institution. PAP also had “a dramatic effect” on the popularity of the chorus, both for language development and student community-building. One reason for this, they felt, was that they had solid evidence to show the effect of the program, rather than just suggesting it was ‘a good idea’. The chorus has also come to the wider attention of the university and the community as they now perform on occasions where the university wants to draw attention to its international activities, and it's gone even further than that by performing at public events, functions and community

music festivals in their city. They now feel that without the research it would have been unlikely that the benefits of the choir, both linguistic and social, would have come to the attention of the institution as rapidly as they did, or be taken so seriously. If you want to see an example of the chorus performing you can go to: <http://www.icte.uq.edu.au/icte-uq-chorus-play-music-festival> and you can find more information about it at: <http://www.icte.uq.edu.au/chorus>

*MW: Thank you. That's a really inspiring example. AR with a real ripple effect, and centred on principles you value highly – collaborative, intellectually engaging, sustainable and of great educational and social benefit to the local community. You've been helping action researchers such as Vicki and Megan for a number of years now, in Australia and beyond, as the AR movement in ELT has gained strength. How do you go about mentoring teachers who want to try AR and what do you find most rewarding about the process?*

*AB: Yes, I have. I've been mentoring teachers in action research since 1990 when I joined the National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research at Macquarie University in Sydney. The centre was funded by the Australian government to provide research and professional development for the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP), which provided English courses for settlement for new immigrants and refugees arriving in Australia. We worked with language teaching professionals right across Australia and needed to find a practitioner-oriented way to bring them into the research agenda for the AMEP. Action research was already quite a well-established concept in Australia, and so we adopted this approach to respond to what practising language teachers saw as important areas to research in their courses. From 2010, I moved into working in action research with ELICOS teachers such as Vicki and Megan, after being invited by the professional body for that sector, English Australia. We've been very fortunate to be supported with funding from Cambridge English Language Assessment.*

Over the years working with my various colleagues, I've honed my ideas about working with and mentoring teachers and for me a number of key issues have become clearer. First of all, I never work with teachers who have not volunteered to do action research. Well, actually I did once and that taught me a very important lesson about the resentment and resistance (hidden or otherwise) that can happen when teachers are 'forced' to do research. I absolutely do not recommend that; in my view there should be a smorgasbord of ways for teachers to develop reflective, creative and transformative practices, depending on their local context and how they want to take up opportunities for professional development. Doing action research should be just one of the ways open to them.

Then, it's really important in my view for teachers to choose what they themselves want to research. In our projects, we have sometimes had themes or topics for the period of time we allocate for AR. That's because teachers I've worked with in Australia have been sponsored by organisations where there are usually plans or priorities for what that sector wants to pursue. But within that topic (e.g. this year we are looking at technology and learning-oriented assessment), teachers are completely free to pursue their own research interests. I guess it could be argued that having a theme constrains teachers, but actually we've found several advantages. The sector or organisation are much more likely to recognise and take up the teachers' research for curriculum improvement because it chimes with their own interests, and also, because the teachers work together, they see lots of commonalities and overlaps in each other's research areas and can share ideas.

Mentioning working together brings me to another area of mentoring. I'm a strong advocate of collaborative action research, since I've witnessed first-hand so many times how much teacher-researcher colleagues benefit from each other's wise and thoughtful input, and how their ideas and confidence can be expanded by support from their peers. The dialogues and discussions we have seem to extend everyone's horizons so much, which is why I favour individual forms of action research or reflective practice less than where teachers can work together.

I could go on for a long time! But one other thing to mention is that I see mentoring roles as shifting and complementary. While I can support teachers with guidance about the processes or procedures of doing action research and perhaps recommend articles to read or suggestions about other research ideas, equally teachers can educate me with 'reality checks' about what it means to do research in real live classrooms. So, my view is that the expertise in the group is not located just in the facilitator, but it shifts across who has different kinds of expertise as needed at different points in the process. We all benefit by learning in a more mutual way through that kind of shared expertise. For me, as an academic but also as a former teacher, this way of working is infinitely more rewarding than going into a classroom and researching in a formal and objective way, but not being part of the lives of those teachers.

*MW: Thanks, Anne. I think what you say really resonates. That's a lovely expression - a smorgasbord of ways to develop. And that's a very interesting point about teachers working on inter-related research projects tied in with institutional priorities that they nevertheless have ownership over and can develop in their own ways. We are doing something similar at the moment where I work and I agree a shared theme can strengthen bonds and facilitate mutual support. I have just one more question for now. You have supported AR in many international contexts and worked with various national/regional/local*

*networks of researchers. Is there any general advice you would give to anyone looking to build up such a network or connect theirs with other networks? Indefatigable energy helps, I guess. What else?*

AB: Well, I think networks take many different forms so the more ways that are used the better! One way of networking, that I've always very strongly supported, is for teachers to publicise their research. For example, the teachers I've worked with in Australia have always produced written reports (either through the series *Teachers' Voices* for AMEP teachers or Cambridge English's journal *Research Notes* for ELICOS teachers). It always seemed to me that this was a great way for teacher action researchers to network their research to others who might benefit from it, and could be in touch with them if necessary. In fact, many teachers have mentioned to me that they've enjoyed reading these reports as they can relate to what happens in their own classrooms too. I've also put teachers who've written the reports in touch with other teachers, so they can share ideas. In Australia, I often get the chance to introduce teachers who've participated in the programs I mentioned to each other, for example when we meet at the annual English Australia conference. That usually starts lots of interesting conversations off because the courses they are teaching have a lot in common.

But by publicise I don't mean that teachers necessarily need to publish a written article, in the way research is usually formally produced. There are lots of different ways to get information out there to other teachers and teacher educators, for example, giving presentations or poster sessions at conferences, writing a short description for a professional newsletter, or doing a short talk for colleagues at staff meetings. I'd also like to see more networking sessions offered at ESL/EFL conferences where teachers and/or teacher educators could be assigned some time on the program to get together to have general or group discussions about research they have done or are interested in doing. The sessions could be pretty informal so that people can mingle and talk, or could perhaps be set up as 'speed researching' (a bit like 'speed dating') where people circulate; another way would be for people to post up their ideas together on a wall or poster so that similar interests get collated, and then have a group discussion. The IATEFL RESIG events you mentioned and the Research Mentoring Workshops at TESOL are good steps in this direction, since teachers can network across a particular region, like Turkey, or internationally. Again, some of the Australian teachers I've worked with have met others they've since been in touch with, at these kinds of international sessions. Of course, social media now offer many other ways for networks to grow virtually. Sometimes groups I've worked with have had their own Wiki, Facebook or WhatsApp groups (and I'm sure there are lots of others!) where they share ideas among themselves. I'm not a great Twitterer but I can see the potential of Twitter to provide great networking too. Teachers can also look out for blogs that

focus on and support language teachers who want to do practitioner research. Two I came across recently are: <https://oupeltglobalblog.com/tag/action-research-project/> and <https://blog.reallyenglish.com/2016/05/30/15-paths-to-professional-development-for-educators/>.

I do think building networks takes time, so anyone who wants to make links with others may have to keep up the 'indefatigable energy' you mentioned earlier, and also be creative. But it's definitely worth it. When I think back over my years of involvement with action research, when I began it was a fairly solitary experience (and there was little technology available). Although more and more scholars were gradually suggesting that practitioner research was 'a good thing', it wasn't happening in many places and where it was, there was not much opportunity to join up with others who were keen. Now I think, practitioner research (in all its many guises) is beginning to come of age, or at least, the idea that it's beneficial for teachers to have a reflective or inquiring disposition and a curious attitude to their work is much more common. If there's one thing we know, it's that what teachers think, believe, know, feel about, and do in classrooms is crucial if our learners are to be successful. A teacher I worked with recently wrote this to me about his action research: 'What is absolutely imperative is making a start. Our learners are ready and waiting!'

My very best wishes to everyone who wants to 'make a start' and thank you, Mark, for inviting me to answer questions that are so close to my own interests.

MW: *Many thanks, Anne. I think that's a beautifully expressed thought: 'Our learners are ready and waiting'. Learners really value being asked to get involved, in my experience, and it's so rewarding to subsequently hear from them how they have benefited. And you suggest some excellent ways of sharing research, for example 'the speed researching'. It's great when the sharing process is genuinely interactive and dynamic. Briefly, for readers outside Australia looking forward to meeting you, will you be attending the TESOL or IATEFL conferences in 2017?*

AB: TESOL and IATEFL are two conferences I've attended regularly since the early 1990s and are two of my favourites. Over the years I've been able to meet and catch up with so many people in our field, and there's always something new and stimulating to learn about. But they are held a long way from Australia and so I don't manage to get to both every year. Next year I'll be at the TESOL Convention in Seattle, but sadly I won't make the IATEFL Conference in Glasgow, although I'm likely to be at the Research SIG Conference in Turkey again, and will be going to the AILA Congress in Rio de Janeiro. I'd love to meet any readers who'd like to catch up as I really enjoy talking about action research in different parts of the world. So if you see me there, please come and say hello!

MW: *Thanks, Anne. And enjoy the English Australia conference in Tasmania you are just going to!*

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## Biodata

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# Reflections on 'Teachers Research! Chile 2016'

**Laura Aza, Débora Izé Balsemão Oss and Richard Smith**

*Laura Aza from Argentina and Débora Oss from Brazil, who both won scholarships from IATEFL Research SIG to attend the Teachers Research! conference on 18 March 2016 in Santiago de Chile, reflect here on their*

*experiences. Their reflections are introduced by Richard Smith, the originator and lead organizer of the event.*



## Introduction (Richard Smith)

Teacher-research – that is, research initiated and carried out by teachers into issues of importance to them in their own work – is increasingly seen as a powerful means of continuing professional development (CPD) for English language teachers. As part of its overall support for teacher-research over the last five years or so, IATEFL Research SIG has been organizing events which place teacher-research – and teachers themselves – at centre stage (see the book [Teachers Research!](#) (eds. Bullock and Smith, 2015) for more on the concept, and spirit, of

these events). Following a successful conference in Turkey last year, the 'Teachers Research!' conference concept was tried out in Chile in March 2016, for what, it was hoped, would be the First Annual Latin American Conference for Teacher-research in ELT. This time the conference was supported, though not organized, by the Research SIG.

The '[Teachers Research! Chile 2016](#)' event, held at the Universidad San Sebastian in Santiago on 19 March 2016, was co-organized by the British Council Chile and the [Red de Investigadores Chilenos en ELT](#) (RICELT), an emerging network of Chilean ELT researchers which IATEFL Research SIG helped get off the ground a few years ago.

IATEFL Research SIG showed its support by publicising the call for papers via social media, organising an [online pre-conference discussion](#), and offering two scholarships to help teachers from outside Chile to attend. British Council Aptis was the main sponsor of the event, enabling participation by two special guests (see below) and six teachers under its Latin American Action Research Award Scheme, set up in 2014 (see <https://www.britishcouncil.cl/en/programmes/education/aptis-teachers>).

Under the slogan, 'Presentations of research *by* teachers across Latin America *for* other teachers' the conference attracted around 120 participants, with presenters coming from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay. The event programme placed teachers at centre-stage from the beginning to the last. The first plenary session was by four teachers on the British Council Chile / Ministry of Education Chile Champion Teachers project, two of whom were represented in the book [Champion Teachers: stories of exploratory action research](#) published just the previous day, when a workshop was held to launch the fourth year of the programme. The second plenary session, after lunch, showcased five Aptis Action Research Award projects in Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, ranging in topic from blended learning in secondary schools to curriculum redesign at tertiary level. The reports of these projects are currently being edited for publication by the British Council. Between plenary sessions there were two sets of parallel sessions in four rooms, featuring four to five projects in each room. Each presenter talked in front of their poster for up to five minutes and this was followed by interaction around posters ('gallery-style') and a round-up discussion.

The day was rounded off by a general discussion which saw teachers invited to the front to share their impressions and visions, following brief comments by two special guests: Melba Libia Cárdenas, well-known for her work editing the [Profile](#) journal in Colombia and Inés K. Miller, equally well-known for her work with [Exploratory Practice](#) in Brazil. Feedback was extremely positive overall – participants reported finding the event friendly, stimulating and an excellent learning opportunity. There are currently

plans to organise a similar conference every year, in a different Latin American country each time. The next conference, it has been confirmed, will be in Buenos Aires in late April or early May 2017, again to be organized primarily by the British Council in cooperation with a local association. Further details will appear on the ARAS website (<http://bit.ly/2dgvVgR>), along with photographs and video of the Santiago conference. Many thanks are due to British Council Chile, especially Deborah Sepulveda, and RICELT, in particular Paula Rebolledo, for their work co-organizing Teachers Research! Chile 2016 (!)



### Reflective report (Laura Aza)

When I first heard about *Teachers Research!* I was immediately drawn to it because I felt it was somehow different to other conferences I had attended. To begin with, its seemingly oxymoronic name (yes, in some places, the concept of teaching runs contrary to the idea of doing research) suggested innovation. I saw this as a great opportunity to learn more about Action Research in the hope that I could share this knowledge with my colleagues on my return. The fact that the conference was being held in a Latin American country and that I would have the chance to meet colleagues from other countries also appealed to me. Needless to say, when I learnt I had been granted a scholarship by the IATEFL Research SIG to share my work and learn more about teacher-research, I was absolutely thrilled.

On the evening before the event, I met some of the other presenters coming from abroad outside the conference venue and we went for dinner together. While we received recommendations to try some of the delicious local food, the friendly small talk slowly flowed into a more stimulating discussion about teacher-research. I had the honour to sit near well-known professionals in the field like Melba Cárdenas, Richard Smith and Inés Miller. We explored a wide range of topics, such as the relevance of teacher research, the reasons why teachers do not carry out action research in many Latin American countries, what can be done to encourage action research among teachers, and so on.

These topics were further developed the following day in an equally friendly and relaxed fashion. While in more

traditional conferences the keynote speakers clearly stand out from the rest, in this case, speakers mingled freely with the audience, because, after all, in most cases, speakers *were* the audience and vice versa. There was no doubt that the conference was 'by teachers for teachers'. This was further emphasized in the plenaries, delivered by Chilean Champion Teachers and Aptis Action Research Award recipients, where teachers played the leading role. These teachers were highly *motivated* because they had done research on issues that were of direct concern to them and that they thought were worth researching. Their talks were *inspirational* because they showed fellow teachers that research is not only limited to academia. Their research decisions were *informed* because they were not based on stories but on information that had been systematically collected and analysed in a professional way, and which therefore had a direct impact on their teaching and on their professional development.



As a presenter, I felt relaxed and at ease with my co-presenters and audience. We were expected to explain briefly what our action research project was about, standing in front of our posters. My presentation, titled 'Implementing a Recreational Reading Project in the Secondary School Classroom' was about a project I carried out in a multi-cultural secondary school in Buenos Aires. I encouraged students to select their own books and gave them some guidance, as well as introducing discussion activities relating to the books, to help them acquire the habit of reading for pleasure. On the basis of students' journals, a small-scale survey, and my field notes, it was apparent that motivation to read and greater autonomy were developed.

I felt confident talking about my project – was it because I was comfortable with a topic which had been self-selected? Was it because I had conducted the research myself, in my own classroom, with my own students? Was it the informal structure of the presentation? Once our five minute account was over, our colleagues approached us and asked us questions, which was, to my mind, the most enriching part. It was at this point that you learnt that your project was interesting to other colleagues too, that you had inspired other teachers to try your project out with their own students, or that your research could be improved on, for example by incorporating peer observation into the project. By the end of the presentation, the poster seemed to be too small for all the ideas that had come up during the presentation.

The discussion panel at the end revealed the hard work behind the organization of the event and the effort of those who had travelled long distances to attend the conference without any type of financial help. Some of the ideas highlighted at this closing session were the importance of viewing teachers as agents of change, and teacher research as the engine of a change coming from within rather than imposed on teachers. Finally, there was general agreement that there should be follow-up work done to keep encouraging teacher research. Teacher Associations, research journals, research networks and certainly conferences like this one play a key role in this respect.

The conference came to an end, but it was only the beginning for new connections – exchanging of contact details with colleagues, sharing the findings of our projects via e-mail, future arrangements to meet in our home towns, and the hope that the conference could be held yearly in other Latin American countries.

It was now time to go back home and as my plane flew across the Andes mountains, my thoughts were somewhere up in the clouds. I was thinking about the endless topics that could be researched in the classroom and the boundless potential for teacher-research. I was still miles away from Buenos Aires, but, at that point, I felt the sky was the limit.

### Reflective report (Débora Izé Balsemão Oss)

Teachers Research! Chile 2016 first called my attention for its exclamation mark as part of the title of the conference. Exclamation marks usually convey strong feelings and enthusiasm – and I am fond of that. As I learned about the Red de Investigadores Chilenos en ELT (RICELT), joint organizers of the conference, I became curious about the concept behind the name – "What's in a name?". A network of Chilean English language teachers researching their practices was definitely a venture I would like to learn more about.

Believing I might have missed the deadline for registering made most of my hopes vanish and the chance of perhaps sharing what my students had been guiding me

through fade away. Nonetheless, as strong feelings and enthusiasm are not that feeble, it turned out that my work was granted with one of the IATEFL Research SIG scholarships.

Once I was selected as the only Brazilian English language teacher to present a paper, I felt the responsibility had become even greater. Although there are some (like the teachers working with Inés Miller in Rio de Janeiro), not many practitioners are ready to take on all the challenges that ELT in Brazil imposes, and that includes sharing findings we practitioners unveil by investigating our classrooms.

There are many aspects of the conference that could be mentioned. Particularly impressive for me were the four Chilean Champion Teachers who gave the first plenary, Daniela Gajardo, María Elena Gutiérrez, Leyla Nuñez and Rosa Rodríguez, faithful as they were to the voices of many English language teachers in Latin America who struggle to find ways of prioritising their students, every day. Paula Rebolledo not only introduced these practitioners' research stories, she also presented us with her own genuine personal practical knowledge. And that was how our day started.

Right after a fruitful coffee break, when participants were still eager to learn more about the reports we had just applauded, the first presentation session started. I was a participant in the room where Tom Connelly introduced research on ICT, citizenship and literacy in secondary education. We heard from and interacted around posters by July Rincon Ortega on Community Based Pedagogy in Colombia, by Yanilis Romero and Milton Pájaro on Citizenship Competence and English Language Learning, also from Colombia, as well as by my new Argentinian friend Laura Giacomini on ['A creative writing lesson which combines art, social network and fun!'](#) (with an exclamation mark).

After we came back from lunch, Richard Smith chaired a plenary of research stories from ARAS teachers. Argentina was represented by Mariana Serra and Silvia Maria Severino, while Chile brought Natacha Pardo Contreras. Maria Ines Barasain (by video), Cecilia Prieto Outerelo, Laura Flores and Serrana Echenagusia also shared their research, conducted in Uruguay.

Right after that, in the room of parallel sessions moderated by Tom Connelly there were presentations from Argentina, Brazil and Chile which covered reading, vocabulary and curriculum at secondary levels. Laura Aza, my fellow IATEFL Research SIG scholarship winner reported on her work in Argentina (see her own report above), while Gabriel Morales and Erick Aravena's 'Second Language Acquisition Theory and Analysis of the English Curriculum' and Aydelina Medina Gajardo's 'Encouraging Knowledge and Uses of Everyday Classroom Commands and Everyday Language' represented the quality of research that is

being developed in Chile **these** days. Finally, this was the session where I also presented my poster, on 'Learning to Read: a Collaborative Endeavour'. For this teacher-research project I instructed learners in reading strategies and encouraged them to take an active part in deciding on what we would learn in class, helping weaker learners, and contributing to the research report, among other collaborative tasks. As I reported at the conference, the outcomes were very positive, both for English language learning as well as collaboration among and with my students.



Needless to say, Inés K. Miller's and Melba Libia Cárdenas's closing words touched our hearts. Inés praised the way teachers had been the 'stars of the event', due to the way it was organised, and in our presentations we had come across as the real agents of what we were doing (she noted that 'bigger authors' weren't really present in most of what we were saying, and also that we had learned to listen to our learners more). Melba called it a 'wonderful and inspiring day' and highlighted what we could gain through continued networking and development of a culture of sharing. Melba's and Inés' own commitment and achievements in Latin America are the proof that research *by* teachers *for* teachers is a way to develop and to eventually reach recognition of practitioners' knowledge.

# A report on 'Teachers Research!' Istanbul 2016

Yasmin Dar

'Teachers Research', an IATEFL-ReSIG-supported conference that was held at Bahcesehir University in Istanbul on 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> June 2016, provided a platform for recognising and celebrating practitioner research carried out by teachers on issues that were important to them. 'Giving positive feedback to motivate young learners in a classroom' by İpek Genis (Çağ University) and 'Training teachers for writing assessment: online or face to face?' by Canan Saban, (BAU) were some of the many examples of presented teacher research. The conference started on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> June 2016 at 13:00 with an opening speech from Sinem Vatanartiran (Director of BAU Graduate School of Educational Sciences), who warmly welcomed the audience. This was followed by an inspiring introduction to the conference by Richard Smith and Kenan Dikilitas, before the first plenary talk thoughtfully delivered by Judith Hanks on the topic 'Exploratory Practice: Practitioners Researching Practice / Practising Research'.

In her plenary, Judith gave an overview of Exploratory Practice (EP) that included examples of classroom research that had taken place in Turkey the year before (2015). Judith briefly talked about 'understanding *from* practice' and 'understanding *for* practice', as the purpose of teacher-research and teacher-researcher activities. As she defined Practitioner Research as 'research carried out by teachers, teacher educators and learners', I could see people in the audience nodding in agreement. It was useful to hear that Action Research (AR) and Exploratory Practice sit alongside each other under the umbrella term Practitioner Research (PR).

After the plenary and a coffee break, there were 6 concurrent workshops on the following topics: How to carry out meaningful classroom research with students by using 'normal classroom activities' (Judith Hanks and Yasmin Dar); 'Developing awareness in writing up reflection for Teacher Research' (Kenan Dikilitas & Simon Mumford); 'Helping teachers do research' (Mark Wyatt & Seden Eraldemir Tuyan); 'Designing an online teacher research training' (Richard Smith); and 'Video Enhanced Observation (VEO) for teacher research in ELT' (Olçay Sert).

In the workshop that Judith and I carried out, first, Judith defined Exploratory Practice and its principles and encouraged the delegates to create a link between EP

and their contexts, and secondly, I gave examples of how I have used EP as the framework to investigate my classroom puzzles, one of which was why my EAP students were not doing their homework, which they had requested at the beginning of their pre-session programme. I gave examples of how I used my normal classroom activities, namely pairwork, roleplay and classroom feedback, to carry out my investigation. After our presentation, a teacher told me that he liked the idea of using a normal classroom activity to carry out classroom research.

In Kenan Dikilitas and Simon Mumford's workshop, Chris Banister (Regent's University) said afterwards that he had personally found the session useful because 'the idea that reflecting is researching is an interesting one and the notion that it is actually the reflecting stage where learning takes place was a useful insight. The workshop focused very effectively on linguistic and reflective aspects of writing up teacher research'. After the six workshops had finished there were thirty-two concurrent poster presentations.

On the second day of the conference, Anne Burns delivered a plenary entitled 'Looking for the future of action research' via Skype, which provided me with some food for thought. She asked the audience to consider four questions. The first one was how to extend Practitioner Research (PR) for teachers who do not have a lot of time. She said that using methods and strategies that are economical but allow teachers to do research that is robust and good enough to be called research is a way of addressing this issue. The second question was what kind of evidence or activities can be collected from our classrooms to show impact, in terms of improved learning. Thirdly, she raised the question of what kind of relationships and networks, namely one-off projects or sustainable research, need to be created. Lastly, she asked the audience to consider how to report PR and whether it needs to be reported in order to be taken seriously.

The second plenary presentation entitled 'Collaborative Action Research: A way of closing the gap between research and practice' was given by Derin Atay. This was followed by thirty-three concurrent poster presentation sessions that finished promptly at 12.45pm. One of the presentations I attended concerned 'the role of teachers' knowledge about grammar in grammar instruction and implications for professional development' by Rhian Webb (University of South Wales). Noticing a lack of grammar awareness, of meta-language for example, by native teachers of English especially when they first started their English language teaching careers, she reported including explicit teaching about grammar on TESOL undergraduate courses. After her talk, I spoke to Rhian and we both shared experiences of not having had explicit grammar awareness at the start of our English language teaching careers despite being native English speakers. Rhian's research study suggests that the

weakness in knowledge about grammar is ‘especially highlighted when a comparison is made with native Turkish pre-service TESOL teachers’. I was relieved to discover that I was not the only one who had struggled in the past with getting to grips with meta-language and teaching grammar.



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Since I am interested in the idea of AR as a tool for carrying out classroom research, I also went to Hatime Ciftci, Enisa Mede and Derin Atay’s (BAU) poster presentation about ‘Action Research as a tool for professional development for pre-service EFL teachers’, in other words, about mentoring teachers as researchers. They started off by providing a definition of AR, highlighting the cyclical approach where a problem is identified, a plan is devised to solve it, action is taken to implement the plan, followed by the reflection stage where the data are analysed and shared. They were enthusiastic about their research study and said that everyone involved in the process had given positive feedback about their experience too. They suggested that collaborative AR is the way forward as teachers usually have a heavy workload and collaboration reduces isolation.



Since I am also interested in learning about finding out other teachers’ experience of using the principles of EP, I went to another striking poster presentation by two educators from opposite sides of the world (Rhian Webb

from Northern Cyprus [no relation to Rhian Webb from Wales] and Troy Sarina from Australia) who teach very different disciplines, English as a Foreign Language and Human Resources Management. They had experimented with EP to better understand what teachers need to do in their classrooms to encourage students’ uptake of democratic principles into their own learning. Rhian says this concept is part of a bigger movement known as Education for Democratic Citizenship, which the Council of Europe has recently been developing through the pilot project of Competences for Democratic Cultures. Rhian found Exploratory Practice to be ‘a refreshing and liberating way to conduct teacher research’ and to enhance their collaborative approach; and adds that the impact of EP was that it is a ‘flatter, less authoritarian space where teachers can interact with their learners to explore aspects of their teaching and learning which are relevant to them in their specific educational setting’.



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Kenan Dikilitas and Mark Wyatt presented the 4th plenary session on Saturday (after lunch). They outlined examples of empowerment in the Turkey context, ‘Teacher-Research Mentoring: Stories from Turkey.’ They pointed out that teachers need psychological support; and that the role of a mentor is different from a trainer. There were 24 concurrent poster presentations after the plenary.

Richard Smith’s closing talk on Saturday focused on ‘recent developments in Teacher-Research.’ He suggests that the number of articles that mention action research has increased dramatically, for example, in the *ELT Journal*. He stressed that ‘recognising teachers’ priorities’ is important. In addition, Richard Smith mentioned the launch of a new Exploratory Action Research project in Uruguay in the following month (July 2016), where local teachers become mentors.

In the closing plenary, Richard interacted with the audience by asking them to reflect and give feedback on the conference by thinking about good points, concerns and suggestions. He was impressed with the wide variety of posters and enthusiastic teachers. His concerns were about support by management for teachers to carry out research and agreed with Dr Atay’s suggestions from her plenary session that there should be collaboration

between stakeholders on a local as well as global level. Individuals from the audience commented that the conference allowed lots of discussion from teachers' perspectives rather than just academics. Another teacher said they weren't aware of practitioner research until this conference and that sharing ideas in a relaxing environment was a useful experience.

Richard announced that the date of the next 'Teacher Researchers' conference would be at the end of May 2017 at BAU in Istanbul, which is an amazing venue. The location of the conference, right by the Bosphorus Strait, enabled delegates to take advantage of the tourist attractions, such as visiting the Blue Mosque or taking a Bosphorus tour by sea after the conference.

### Biodata

**Yasmin Dar** is a member of the Teachers Research! Committee and is an EAP (English for Academic Purposes) tutor at the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU), University of Leicester, UK. She is particularly interested in carrying out and supporting others in Exploratory Practice (EP) classroom research. Email: [yd19@le.ac.uk](mailto:yd19@le.ac.uk)

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## IATEFL MA ELT Pecha Kucha Event 2016: a brief report

### Mariana Roccia

The Centre for Applied Linguistics at The University of Warwick in Coventry and IATEFL hosted the IATEFL MA ELT Pecha Kucha Event on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2016. A Pecha Kucha Event is one that requires presenters to carry out a 5-minute presentation using a maximum of 15 Power Point Slides, which automatically transition every 20 seconds. Speakers need to pace themselves to be both intelligible and consistent with the slide transition. Challenging? Yes. Impossible? Not at all.

The presenters had recently completed their MA course and were Mohammed Bashir (University of Warwick), Misnariah Idrus (University of Birmingham), Halima Neva (University of Coventry), Priska Pramastiwi (University of Warwick), Jocelyn Spencer (University College of London) and Rasman Aryasatya (University of Birmingham). Along with the speakers, students from the hosting university who were in the final stages of their MA also attended the event. The relaxed and friendly environment encouraged students to feel comfortable

discussing their research methods, procedures and findings as well as reflecting on the overall postgraduate process. Since one of the main aims was to encourage interaction, sufficient time was allocated after each presentation for the attendees to ask questions and provide the speakers with written feedback. The feedback was provided in the form of attendee comments on cue cards which were then handed over to each speaker.

The engaging presentations and follow up discussions offered further understanding of the current ELT and EFL situation in those parts of the world from where the speakers come including Europe, Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa. **Mohammed Bashir** presented on teachers' confidence in using Information Communication Technology (ICT) in class. **Misnariah Idrus** shared research about the effect of speaking anxiety perceived by Indonesian students and provided some insights into cultural factors affecting speaking production. Next, **Halima Neva** offered an analysis of the structure followed by PhD theses in hard sciences. After a short break for coffee and networking, **Priska Pramastiwi** presented a comparative study on learner- learner interaction using Synchronous-Computer Mediated Communication and face-to-face interaction. **Jocelyn Spencer** reported on a study focused on 'the growth of mandarin Chinese as a taught foreign language in the UK' and provided some evidence of the main motivations to learn Chinese. To conclude the morning session, **Rasman Aryasatya** discussed the effects of 'creating motivational currents among pre service teachers through teaching abroad programmes'.

Guest speaker **Dr Chris Lima** (University of Leicester) opened the afternoon session with a workshop on networking. In her talk, 'Weaving your Web - Creating your professional and academic networks', Dr Lima emphasised the importance of building and maintaining connections that will later on contribute to professional and academic career prospects. She highlighted how networking can make a difference in professional development, sharing resources and broadening opportunities. Dr Lima concluded her presentation with some recommendations for expanding participants' networks. Joining associations such as IATEFL is a great starting point for building strong and fruitful connections that will empower professional and career development.

Principal Teaching Fellow and organiser of this exciting one-day event, **Tilly Harrison** (University of Warwick) wrapped up the afternoon with a very powerful and inspiring statement: "You are now an academic, you are now a member of the community". Events like this certainly contribute in boosting the students' presentation skills and help them obtain feedback from their peers before submitting their dissertations. As Tilly adds, this is also a great opportunity for presenting research in a small and friendly forum before doing it in a larger event, such as the IATEFL Annual Conference.

Although the prospect of giving a 5-minute presentation sounds daunting at first, it provides a platform for sharing information quickly and concisely, while still conveying the message. Presenters left the event with a greater sense of accomplishment and confidence, as well as full of ideas for further research. They were also provided with an insight as to post-MA opportunities and career paths. For those who are close to completing their MA, attending the 2017 IATEFL MA ELT Pecha Kucha Event would be a good start for identifying your next steps.

### **Biodata**

**Mariana Roccia** is an EFL teacher and a qualified English-Spanish translator (INPI, Argentina). She holds an MA in Linguistics in Theories of English Language Learning (Universidad de Santiago de Chile) and is currently completing an MA in Environmental Humanities (Bath Spa University). Her research interests include L2 reading comprehension, discourse analysis, and materials assessment.

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## **Reflections on ‘The state of English in higher education in Turkey’**

### **Kenan Dikilitaş**

There are currently major concerns about English in higher education in Turkey, a country where English is generally taught through formal school curricula rather than practised as a communicative language. Consequently, though students have a long period of exposure to language instruction starting from primary school to university level, there is still a widely-perceived lack of communicative competence in students (British Council, 2015). The British Council has conducted a research project to evaluate Turkish foreign language teaching in higher education, and, in mid-November 2015, launched a publication documenting this project at an event in Ankara. I attended the event as a lecturer-researcher in English language teaching in Turkey and as a ReSIG member with the intention to share it within the Research SIG.

### **Research project**

The research project in question (British Council, 2015) was conducted by the British Council Turkey and the Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkey

(TEPAV) upon the request of the Higher Education Council, and was led by Richard West.

The major purpose of the research was to investigate the classroom teaching in pre- and in-session English language courses in higher education and document successful practices. The two central research questions were: (1) What are the conditions in which English pre- and in-session courses are offered in public and foundation universities in Turkey and (2) how can these conditions be enhanced?”

The research, which followed a mixed method paradigm, was carried out at 38 universities in March and April 2015. The sampling was arranged according to the following criteria: the cities the universities were in, whether they were new or established institutions, whether English was the sole medium of instruction or whether some teaching was in Turkish. The data collection tools included questionnaires (n=414 teachers and 4320 students), classroom observations (n=65), structured interviews (n=45) and focus group discussions (n=15). So it was quite a large-scale study.

### **Findings of the report**

The report generated a number of specific conclusions:

1. that the increasing ‘quantity’ of universities in Turkey since 2009 has not generated the corresponding ‘quality’.
2. that the issue of quality of teaching and learning English needs to be seriously taken into consideration by decision makers.
3. that the low proficiency of language learners was thought to block learning a subject matter through English medium instruction (EMI).
4. that students had low motivation to learn English particularly on preparatory programmes
5. that opportunities for teacher training were limited
6. that the role of classroom interaction was not adequately understood by teachers
7. that there is a need for EMI academics with high levels of English.

### **Discussions at the event**

After the presentation of the findings, there were panel sessions focused on “quality assurance”, which allowed for greater reflection among the participants, with comments and questions revealing experiences in schools and universities. The Turkish academics, as well as the panellists from different cities, elaborated on the current practices in language teaching and the efforts of their universities to identify possible strategies by which to develop good quality of language teaching. Three basic needs were highlighted:

1. the need for accreditation in language teaching programs

2. the need for ESP language teachers' professional development
3. the need to address students' needs for content of learning and motivational support

Overall, the event yielded a positive atmosphere where different stakeholders from multiple layers of education exchanged ideas on long-standing language teaching and learning issues particular to the Turkish context. The event provided Turkish academics with an opportunity to express their opinions on the issue, particularly to decision-makers and those who could hold power to influence the field. The British Council Turkey staff seemed open to any dialogue that could develop solutions to the critical issues introduced in the publication. They were active mediators between the academics and language teachers, and policy-makers and decision-makers from the higher education council. They seemed to be acting objectively in the identification and dissemination of specific problems in higher education.

The research identified several gaps in quality in language teaching practices, highlighting that these are more teacher-fronted rather than interactive. The research also pinpointed the limited opportunities for teachers to develop professionally as well as the increasing need for more proficient academics who can use English as a medium of instruction. This could require language teachers to have greater opportunities to work with more experienced mentors who can provide sustained instructional support. It could also require academics working at universities where English is a medium of instruction to have strong language skills, including fluent and appropriate use of English

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## Designing Grounded Theory research: challenges and possible solutions

Züleyha Ünlü

### Introduction

Grounded Theory (GT) is an inductive method aiming at reaching either a *substantive* or *formal* theory through systematic or concurrent data collection and analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). However, while this tradition of inquiry is potentially very useful, there is limited literature on *how this is actually carried out*

One remedy, which was not mentioned at the event, is that more bottom-up practitioner research could be supported in this national context. Teachers need to be encouraged to develop local understandings and insights into pedagogical issues in their own contexts. This could empower them to address the varying needs of their students. This could in turn help cultivate learners who are able to regulate their own learning and development. Another point that was not highlighted was how language and pedagogical skills of academics working in EMI contexts could be developed. My suggestion is that such academics need to be sustainably supported regarding linguistic and instructional issues, with clear emphasis on how to instruct and assess students as well as how to give feedback on students' works provided.

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### Biodata

Kenan Dikilitaş is an ELT teacher educator and researcher at Bahçeşehir University, particularly interested in teacher research for professional development. He has organized international conferences for the IATEFL Research SIG and conducted teacher research projects in Turkey. He has also published a series of edited books in collaboration with IATEFL ReSIG and papers in ELT journals.

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*and what* kind of research is conducted. On 28-30 June 2016, the Centre of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick hosted its annual postgraduate conference in which I gave a workshop on the challenges and possible solutions of designing grounded theory research. In particular I attempted to address four main aspects of GT: (1) the iterative and rigorous mechanics of GT, (2) the constant comparison nature of GT, (3) the simultaneous data collection and data analysis processes, and (4) coding procedures, as introduced by Glaser (1978) (e.g., open coding, selective coding, and theoretical coding). I designed the workshop in three main sections: a) background of GT, b) analytical principles of GT and c) a practical example of GT, and in each section I raised questions which one may ask on a first encounter with GT. This report will thus summarise the workshop as well as my reflections on participants' questions.

### Background on Grounded Theory

When starting to work with GT, there is likely confusion over what 'Grounded Theory' means, why and when it is utilised, and what GT tradition the novice researcher should choose. Regarding what Grounded Theory is, for

some the name signals that researchers must generate a grand or formal theory. I define GT as an inductive method aiming at reaching either a substantive or formal theory through a systematic or concurrent data collection and analysis process (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1978). Regarding when and why Grounded Theory is used, two features of GT emerge as particularly useful. Firstly, due to procedures employed, GT facilitates focusing on under-researched areas. This is because GT requires open coding until a core category is established and asks for a limited engagement with the literature until a core category is reached. Secondly, GT provides systematised and clear analysis stages, namely open coding, selective coding, and thematic coding, which keep researchers engaged with the data throughout the analysis process (Hoda, Noble & Marshall, 2011; Charmaz, 2006). These will be detailed further in this report. Finally, regarding how to decide which GT tradition to follow, one of the most challenging aspects of working with GT for me was to choose among different styles of GT. Once a researcher starts reading about GT, four different GT scholars emerge with their GT versions: Classic Grounded Theory, also known as Glaserian GT (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Straussian Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), Constructivist Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006) and Critical Grounded Theory (Hadley, 2015). It is worth noting that there is not sufficient space in this article to go into the details of the main differences between different schools of GT, and this is not the main purpose of this report. A simple but useful recommendation for novice researchers at the onset about using GT would be to evaluate their specific research needs and individual skills against these schools of GT. In my case, at different stages of my PhD, I benefited from different GT traditions. Glaser's (1978) GT informed my coding procedures (this is expanded further on in this report) while Charmaz's (2006) GT helped me evaluate a GT study.

### Analytical principles of Grounded Theory

Regarding the defining features of GT, the first is "absence of a clear research problem or hypothesis upfront" (Hoda et al., 2011). This means that GT encourages researchers to initiate research with a broad area of interest at the beginning instead of having specific research questions or pre-determined research problems. Secondly, no extensive literature review is necessary prior to analysis (Glaser, 1978). However, even though this is true of Classic GT, Charmaz (2006) and Strauss and Corbin (2008) do not hold such strict attitudes. Indeed, these approaches encourage research students to present background readings during their studies, since entering the field without having done any past reading would not be a realistic expectation (Heath & Cowley, 2004). A third important feature of GT is that data collection and data analysis are conducted concurrently. This principle of GT requires researchers to simultaneously go through steps of data collection and analysis (Glaser, 1978). A fourth GT feature is the utilization of a constant comparison method (Charmaz,

2006). Researchers are required to compare and contrast emerging codes throughout the whole analysis process (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), and memos are written to keep track of this development of ideas (Bryman, 2012).

### A practical example of analysis in Grounded Theory

To illustrate GT procedures in the workshop, I first introduced the analysis steps in Classic (Glaserian) GT and then I showed two interview extracts from my PhD data.

The analysis stages in Classic GT are (1) *substantial coding* and (2) *theoretical coding*. Substantial coding is further divided into open coding and selective coding, and open coding starts with the first data researchers collect; in this stage the researcher "explores the data in all directions which seem relevant" (Glaser, 1978). The abstraction process in this stage is as shown below (Hoda, 2011):

Raw data   Codes    $\longrightarrow$    Concept    $\longrightarrow$    Category

After the open coding is finished, the researcher starts the selective coding, which involves refining the elements of the core category (Glaser, 1978; Charmaz, 2011). The second analysis stage constitutes the theoretical coding. This stage asks the researcher to 'connect and explore the relationship between categories and their properties to develop hypotheses that will lead to a theory' (Shannak & Aldhmour, 2009, p.47).

After providing participants with this theoretical background, I shared two short interview samples and asked them to practise doing open, selective, and theoretical coding before sharing their insights on the experience.

For the first sample (a Master's student at a British university explaining why she joined English for Academic Purposes classes – Appendix 1), participants started doing open coding following the Classic GT method. They analysed the data in all possible directions to generate codes, concepts and categories.

As recommended by Böhm (2004), the following guiding questions were also provided: What is at issue here? What phenomenon is being addressed? What persons or actors are involved? What roles do they play? How do they interact? More general questions regarding what aspects of the phenomenon are (or are not) being addressed, when, how long, where, how much, and how strongly, were also suggested.

After finishing their initial analysis, they shared their findings. For example, two participants named 'being an international student' as a code, 'feedback needs' as a concept, and 'EAP guidance' as a category. They

reported that the data could indicate that ‘being an international student’ influences the students’ ‘feedback needs’, and these in turn influence the ‘EAP guidance’ they receive. It is worth noting that participants’ practice was on a small extract, which would obviously influence the depth of their findings.

For the second sample (a Chemistry PhD student who regularly attended EAP classes with peers from other disciplines sharing his experiences in an EAP writing class as well as his overall academic writing experiences – Appendix 2), participants practiced selective coding. Here, some realised that they should do open coding stage extensively before proceeding with this stage, while other participants added new dimensions to the categories they had found in the previous stage, such as the concept of ‘disciplinary diversity’ as another influencing factor on ‘EAP guidance’. Finally, participants established theoretical relationships among their open and selective coding findings and tried to generate hypotheses based upon these findings. Glaser’s (1978) theoretical coding families were also shared to help participants establish meaningful relationships between their categories.

### Conclusion and reflections on the workshop

At this workshop, participants were genuinely interested and sounded enthusiastic to learn more about how to implement GT in their research. Some questions they shared during and at the end of the presentation included: *At what point in my research can I use GT?; How flexible are GT coding procedures? Can I skip certain steps?; How can we make a formal theory in GT?; How to code in Grounded Theory?*. These questions were useful to notice how important the details of GT are to comprehend its generalities, and indicated the need to provide more systematic and clear research methods guidance to research students. The literature on GT focuses more on *why* using GT could be beneficial while neglecting *how to do this and what kind of research could benefit from this methodology*. This limitation taught me to take responsibility for making decisions and justifying them in my research. My main purpose in this workshop was to convey this message to participants. Each section on GT in this paper would benefit from more exhaustive guidelines and samples. Therefore, I recommend that a series of hands-on sessions about GT be designed to allow novice researchers to work closely with it in a flexible environment.

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### Appendix 1

Z: The researcher

M: Miriam, the student

Z: What is the main reason for you to join the EAP classes?

M: Yeah, academic writing because for me, it's not clear enough academic writing in UK

Z: Why?

M: Because the tutor has been, for me, a bit threatening us... Yeah, talking about plagiarism, and then talking about academic writing should be this and that. Then for me, it's unclear... that's why I come for the academic writing, then I found it very useful thing.

Z: Do you receive feedback in your department from your tutors? Do you have any chance to talk to them about these?

M: Well, I can receive maybe only tutorial. Not with specially feedback or especially on my writing. But my departmental tutor is looking at my content and... The outline... And... that's the tutorial, only thirty minutes. And then we just e-mail if we have any problems.

Z: What do you think about this?

M: talking about writing, actually I need more feedback. Especially as an international student. I think we need more direction, more guidance.

Z: How about your EAP classes?

M: For my writing structure, my EAP tutor has been very helpful in terms of identifying which part is missing, like a topic sentence, and then very detailed about grammar writing... But actually I need also from my tutor in the department because she understands the context, my topic... so she can link also...um giving more feedback into the content... The structure...

# Research SIG Pre-Conference Event 'Conversations with a purpose: Reflecting on interviewing in EFL research'

A report by Siân Etherington and Christina Gkonou

Our PCE last year in Birmingham was led by Steve Mann from the University of Warwick and focused on reflexivity in interviewing in EFL research. The interactive day offered participants the opportunity to raise and discuss issues relating to the use of interviews in data collection and responded to questions about managing interview interactions, the variety of approaches to EFL research interviews, appropriate number of interviews and data transcription. Assisted by Steve, participants also had the opportunity to develop an interview approach and set of questions which were then use for a live interview with Graham Hall (acting as a mock research participant) about his experience of the EFL research field. Overall, the main aim of the day was to give participants a stronger understanding of the use of interviews in the EFL context and hands-on experience of different interview approaches, which a researcher might take. The interactive workshop also demonstrated the value of reflective practice and reflexivity in the analysis and representation of data.

The event was organized by Sian Etherington (SE) and Christina Gkonou (CG) who reflect here, on the experience, prompted by each other's interview questions.

## Interview questions from Christina for Siân

**CG:** How and why did you get involved in the organization of the PCE?

**SE:** After the wonderful 2015 Manchester PCE I wanted to be more involved in organisation of the event. As a member of the RESIG committee I was involved in trying to brainstorm ideas for how to celebrate IATEFL's 50th birthday and things went from there. We had some rather 'out there' ideas on the theme of 50 (50 shades of research anyone?) - but ended up going with something a little less risqué.

## Appendix 2

Z: The researcher

S: Surinder, the student

Z: what made you come to EAP classes?

S: you could realize that I am not a native English, so what I found difficult here is to do my writing, my supervisor told me to improve it as early as I can, and I got an email that there is an option to attend a class in the scientific writing, so I thought that it could be a great opportunity for me to attend that class and I registered. It's been very good, but it could have been better

Z: Why?

S: I found for the first two lecture, there was the conversation was going well, but later I found that it is some sort of hurry in the class, there is somethings just the group discussions but as you know that when you go for a group discussion, you should have something to discuss about, people who have different groups, different departments, first few or five minutes, they give, he give us and it was introductory things, I'm from this department and you are from that department, and that from, these things, and what was exactly for the writing..

Z: How about one to one feedback with your EAP tutor?

S: : it's not related to science, but only a (general) problem, so it's not related to my subject, how to write the chemistry, it could be rude that but it's not his business to comment on my science because he maybe not know about my work, it's my responsibility to write and to let him know that this is the things I was told, want to write, then maybe he will give suggestions, but I have to let him know about it

## Biodata

Züleyha Ünlü is an assistant professor at the Department of English Language and Literature at Gaziosmanpaşa University. Her research interest is centred in the analysis of academic context and the investigation of how linguistic, social and institutional components shape academic discourse. She can be contacted at [zuleyha.unlu@gop.edu.tr](mailto:zuleyha.unlu@gop.edu.tr).

**CG:** What was your favourite part of organizing the PCE?

**SE:** I loved meeting everyone on the day and then reading the delegate feedback which said how much people had appreciated the event. Watching people interact in and obviously enjoy an event that you've brought together is a real buzz!

**CG:** What was the most difficult part?

**SE:** The most difficult part for me was probably liaising with all the different people involved and in particular having discussions about the timings of the day. It was hard to fit together our speaker's needs for the day and the constraints of the lunch and coffee break times which came from the venue. Where we wanted to have a break in proceedings did not always coincide with when coffee could be served!

**CG:** What advice would you pass onto future organisers?

**SE:** Keep calm! Talk to IATEFL central office about things if you have any questions. They are really good at knowing how things usually work - and in particular on advising about the venue/ catering etc. Don't be afraid to question some things though. One year I did suggest that the price of lunch was quite high - and we got a reduction!

**CG:** What was your favourite memory from the day?

**SE:** I've got a few! One was listening to Graham Hall being interviewed by Mark Wyatt about his editorship of ELTJ. There was a lot of laughter, but the experience gave me some really insightful thoughts about what editorship entails. Another was having lunch with delegates whom I hadn't met before and learning about their interest and engagement with the SIG. A further one was drawing pictures for our poster on research interviewing at the end of the day. I enjoyed exercising my (limited) artistic talents.

**CG:** Would you do it again?

**SE:** Yes I definitely would! It was quite a bit of work, but to be closely involved in such a successful coming together of like-minded people from truly international backgrounds is a real privilege. In the current times I think we can't underestimate the benefits that building communities of this sort brings.

**CG:** If you could change one thing about the day, what would it be?

**SE:** I would have changed the room if I could. We asked for a larger venue so that we could have space to move around. Unfortunately this meant that we were assigned a room without any external windows. This made for a particular kind of mood - and the day would have been better in a lighter, brighter room. In the future I'd try to

weigh up the advantages of a generous space against not having natural light.

## Interview questions from Siân for Christina

**SE:** How and why did you get involved in the organization of the PCE?

**CG:** I was fascinated by the suggested topics for the 2016 PCE. Initially, we had thought of organising an event on mixed-methods research (50/50 in research) as that would be a nice match with IATEFL's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2016. This topic was then narrowed down to just qualitative research which is the main research paradigm I work with and which I find extremely exciting and rewarding.

**SE:** What was your favourite part of organizing the PCE?

**CG:** I enjoyed all aspects and stages of the organisation of the PCE: drafting the summary of the event, deciding on what text could go on the website and our promotion materials, liaising with our speaker, Dr Steve Mann, working on the schedule for the day, welcoming attendees and videoing the entire event.

**SE:** What was the most difficult part?

**CG:** The most difficult part was perhaps deciding on what text could go on our promotion materials (e.g. poster for postgraduate students, invitation emails to local universities) and how this text could be made as attractive and catchy as possible. I know I am not good at that!

**SE:** What advice would you pass onto future organisers?

**CG:** Always liaise with the SIG coordinators, other committee members and previous PCE organisers to avoid confusion, find relevant resources more easily and save time. After last year's PCE, my co-organiser Siân and I created a list of actions that need to be taken at different stages throughout the PCE organisation process. We thought this might be helpful for future organisers.

**SE:** What was your favourite memory from the day?

**CG:** Steve's sessions were stimulating and I particularly enjoyed him taking on the role of different types of interviewers (e.g. the interviewer who would constantly interrupt the interviewee, the polite interviewer etc.). I also particularly enjoyed our group work especially because I had the chance to meet attendees from all over the world, discuss teaching- and research-related issues and find out more about their involvement with the SIG and why they decided to attend this specific PCE.

**SE:** Would you do it again?

**CG:** Definitely! For all the reasons I mentioned above but also because I feel teachers and researchers alike need a space where they could share concerns about their practice, exchange ideas, find solutions to different problems and feel a sense of community and coherence in the field.

**SE:** If you could change one thing about the day, what would it be?

**CG:** I am still not convinced about my videoing abilities/skills so I would like to have practised more prior to the event! With regard to the PCE organisation as such, I would probably change the timing of different activities and include a task (preferably at the start of the event) where attendees get the chance to talk to as many other attendees as possible about their teacher researcher profiles.

## Biodata

**Christina Gkonou** is Lecturer in TESOL and MA TESOL Programme Leader at the Department of Language and Linguistics, University of Essex, UK. Her main research interests are in all areas of the psychology of learners and teachers. She is the co-editor of *New Directions in Language Learning Psychology* (2015) and *New Insights into Language Anxiety: Theory, Research and Educational Implications* (2017), and co-author of the *MYE (Managing Your Emotions) Questionnaire*.  
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**Sian Etherington** is a lecturer in TESOL at the University of Salford and also the Treasurer of IATEFL RESIG. She has been involved in the teaching and learning of EFL in one way or another for over 20 years. She is particularly interested in individual differences in L2 learning and the role of positive emotions.  
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# TESOLacademic.org - our ever-changing story

**Huw Jarvis**

This article describes the development and growth of the website [www.TESOLacademic.org](http://www.TESOLacademic.org) and related YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn channels. It discusses:

our ethos and the need for such a research-based TESOL web initiative; types of talks available; our growth and our move beyond dissemination; going forward with Web2 and social media.

## Our ethos and the need for a web-based initiative

We set up in 2008 with an original remit of knowledge dissemination. Our contributors provide free at source YouTube talks where they discuss their work. With the arrival of Web2 technologies we have moved beyond the original dissemination remit to include discussion and interaction via our YouTube channel, our closed Facebook group and our @tesolacademic Twitter feed. We are also on LinkedIn, which acts as a virtual space to exchange contact details. Whilst our original remit remains core, maintaining these social media outlets has been key to our ever changing story.

All our speakers are asked to link theory and practice in English Language Teaching (ELT) in their talks. Our basic premise behind this request lies in the notion of “Praxis” which has been defined as “the mutually constitutive roles of theory grounded in practice and practice grounded in theory. It is a way of thinking about critical work that does not dichotomise theory and practice but rather sees them as always dependent on each other” (Pennycook, 1999, p. 342). However, whilst we ask contributors to make talks relevant to teachers it entirely is up to them how they interpret this request. We do not exercise editorial control and our speakers are invariably also practising language practitioners. Many draw on data sets gathered from their EFL/ESL students. Some focus on classroom practices, whilst others allude to education policy, for others still such links between theory and practice are far more nuanced and implicit.

The need for such a site in 2008 arose for several reasons which are related to the importance of praxis. As founder of the site, until October 2016, I worked as a TESOL lecturer for 18 years at a British university, where I supported hundreds of postgraduate (MA in TESOL and Applied Linguistics) students. Wishing to go beyond “the how” of teaching (procedures and practices) and to learn more about “the why” of teaching i.e. the rationale behind what they do, these students have often reported that “scholarship” in general and “research” in particular are too dry, too difficult to understand, at times of little relevance and often inaccessible. Many have said that it would be easier if they could listen to and watch authors. This was a key driver in setting up the website. A second driver came from negative perceptions I detected within the university sector towards educational, TESOL-based research. By setting up the site, I aimed to promote the research that many of us do as part of our professional practice. We counter dichotomised theory and practice notions, and in this sense the site has an advocacy role; it is not neutral, it advocates and celebrates teacher

research. We believe such research is valuable and should be encouraged.

A further justification for the site is that it is unfortunately not uncommon to hear teachers bemoan the lack of access to scholarship once their university studies are over. Many journals come with paywalls, the published books cease to be available once access to a university library ends, and attending the conferences or special interest group events comes with a price tag. We sympathise with such views, and free dissemination of credible peer-reviewed academic scholarship was a goal. Consequently, I started this web-based initiative with video recordings from researchers and keynote global leaders in our field eight years ago.

### Types of talk

Our talks are divided into the following: *Keynotes* from global leaders in the field and *Research papers* from authors whose work has been published in leading TESOL-based peer-reviewed journals. We also include *Featured Publications* with talks about TESOL teacher education texts or course books; these talks are far fewer and are promotional with a small cost to the publisher.

Decisions on who to approach to deliver talks can be a hit and miss affair. For the Keynotes we ask well-known speakers if they are able and willing to provide a dedicated 20-40 minute talk, which we then upload to our YouTube channel, with any minor edits, as required. In keeping with our academic focus we only approach speakers who undertake and publish primary academic research, which gives our site a unique research-based niche and arguably adds academic credibility to what we do. As of November 2016, we have 20 Keynote talks in our collection with our most recent contributors being: John Swales, Diane Larsen-Freeman, Rod Ellis and Stephen Krashen.

Getting copy for our Research papers talks is also somewhat haphazard. All talks are based on specific research papers published in well-regarded peer-reviewed journals, e.g. *TESOL Quarterly*, *ELT Journal*, *System*. Increasingly, the academic community is aware of our presence and whilst we still approach individuals we now get offers as well. Generally, when academics publish research they want it to go into the most highly ranked relevant journals and to be widely read, critiqued and cited. Our YouTube channel disseminates, our social media outlets further facilitate dissemination, but additionally allow for some critique and discussion. Little wonder researchers now turn to us to help them get their ideas shared. As of November 2016, we have hosted 43 talks on numerous topics.

### Our growth

The website typically attracts approximately one thousand hits per month worldwide, with busy periods including

September and October, when many MA TESOL students start their courses. As and when a new Keynote is posted we publicize it via our extensive social media outreach and we typically see a surge in traffic following this. A mention of the site by a speaker at a well-attended conference session invariably leads to an increase in interest as well.

Our talks were originally uploaded as video (.wmv) files to the website, but in 2013 everything was transferred to YouTube, embracing Web2 and allowing opportunities for greater interaction through social media. This means that our YouTube data do not necessarily reflect how widely viewed many pre-2013 talks really were, as our early contributors are now on YouTube but they were watched by many as .wmv files when originally posted. Nevertheless our YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn statistics provide ample evidence of interest in TESOL-based research. For the 12 month period October 2015 to October 2016 we received 38,432 YouTube views. As of November 25th 2016 our Facebook group comprised 11,124 members; our Twitter feed had 2,648 followers; and our LinkedIn account recorded 1,691 connections. We have clearly established a unique niche and our statistics point to year on year growth.

### Beyond dissemination

Our growth took a significant step forward in 2013 when we moved to being Web2-based. Firstly, as mentioned above, all talks were transferred to YouTube, which provides easy viewing on a range of devices, and for our 1,648 channel subscribers it allows them to add comments and share with others, as well as to get alerts when a new talk is posted. Secondly, we developed a social media presence which allowed for more discussion and interaction.

We have also become smart phone users, shifting from being digital visitors to digital residents (White and Cornu, 2011). Personally, my access to TESOL-based research is now all in my pocket and available 24/7. Twitter has become my filter with Tweets to # tags such as #TESOL, allowing for networking and sharing of talks on an unprecedented scale, some of which allow for ongoing live conversations e.g. during a conference (#IATEFL), or at a weekly online meetings (#ELTchat). Our closed Facebook group has grown bigger, and our growth overall has soared as TESOLacademic has begun building networks through our social media channels, while also engaging in other outlets such as blog sites and webinars.

Embracing social media has also resulted in a broadening of our remit in that we no longer restrict ourselves to discussion of content from our own YouTube talks, although, we do direct people to our content. If, for example, #ELTchat were discussing task-based teaching and learning, we would link to the Keynote by Rod Ellis; if the ReSIG were hosting a webinar on action research we would draw attention, via the chat stream, to our Keynote by Anne Burns. A feature of broadening of our remit is

that it has enabled me to take a stance on professional issues. Recently, for example, our Tweets have been part of an ever growing body that challenges native-speakerism in TESOL, on more than one occasion we have questioned the commodification of education with its neoliberal ideology and our stance on what Brexit meant for language education was emphatic. In short, our social media outreach provides unprecedented opportunities for dissemination, but also allows for practitioners and researchers to actively engage with our talks, and to post and discuss relevant material beyond the resources that we provide and this we see is key to going forward.

### Going forward

Finally, let us briefly consider ongoing initiatives with particular reference to TESOL-based research. We have recently extended our remit to actively support new researchers. To do this we offer to Tweet links to online surveys that MA or PhD students might be using as part of their data collection. We also include such links on our Facebook group page, where there are opportunities to post comments and discuss. This is a free service; all we ask in return is that our role in the data gathering process is acknowledged.

In 2008, our website encompassed everything that we did and teachers interested in research simply accessed the talks. Today many do this via free subscription to the YouTube channel, Twitter and Facebook links. These sources provide opportunities for interaction, and encouraging such interaction is a new challenge going forward. Accordingly, we have added a task sheet on our homepage which encourages users to work through some of the keynotes and to critique content via our social media outlets. Interestingly, when we started in 2008, it was never envisaged that our talks would be used as source material in academic discourse, but there is some indication that this is now happening.

Setting up the site and watching it evolve has been extremely rewarding. It has also been a labour of love, although we did generate some income from sponsors in our early years which was spent on purchasing domain names and web hosting fees. We have been approached by several companies to explicitly promote products and services with banners on our homepage, but to date we have resisted such overtures which we feel run counter to our academic research-based ethos. As we move forward, however, with ever increasing content and managing social media outlets, it has become clear that we need to explore ways of generating income and we have recently begun to do this with sponsored Tweets and Facebook posts.

Continuing professional development and ways of accessing and interacting with research are in a state of flux. Digital literacy skills “needed to operate efficiently, effectively and appropriately in an online environment” (Jarvis, 2014, p.29) are as significant for teachers and researchers as they are for our students. Whereas our

remit was once exclusively about disseminating research through the website and encouraging a linking of theory and practice in TESOL via a Web1-based transmission, today this has changed. In addressing our basic remit we have gathered a massive following and become a significant part of a digitally connected professional discourse community who share and discuss a wide range of issues. Join us on our journey.

### References

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Pennycook, A. 1999. Introduction: Critical Approaches to TESOL. *TESOL Quarterly* 33/3: 328-348.

White, D. and Cornu, A. 2011. Visitors and residents: A new typology for on-line engagement. *First Monday*. 16/9. <http://firstmonday.org/article/view/3171/3049>

### Biodata

Huw is a language education consultant, and founder and editor of [www.TESOLacademic.org](http://www.TESOLacademic.org). He has 34 years of experience in language education. He has published widely and delivered many plenary talks. He has recently taken early retirement as a Senior Lecturer, but his work continues with a wider variety of organisations both within and beyond academic institutions. For more information see <http://www.tesolacademic.org/huwjarviseditor.htm> [tesolacademic@hotmail.com](mailto:tesolacademic@hotmail.com)

## For contributors

If you would like to contribute to the next issue of *ELT Research*, our guidelines include the following:

### Content

We welcome reports of research, including practitioner research; we are particularly interested in descriptions and discussions of the use of specific research methods; reflections and opinion pieces on issues in the world of ELT research; indications of useful resources for other researchers; relevant interviews, book reviews, and so on. We encourage creative expression of research experience.

### Length

Your article should be up to 2000 words long [not including appendices but including references]. Footnotes and appendices should be included only where absolutely necessary and should be kept as brief as possible. If something is important put it in the main body of the text. There is no need to include an abstract. <http://resig.weebly.com/guidelines-for-contributors.html>

# Teachers Research! Istanbul 2017 Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul 2–3 June 2017

## Call for proposals

This will be IATEFL Research SIG's third annual conference in Turkey for practitioner researchers and those mentoring teacher-research. The primary goal of the conference is to bring together teacher-researchers across Turkey and beyond to support the growing international movement of teachers as researchers and knowledge creators for themselves, their students and their schools.

For the second year in a row, the event will be held at [Bahçeşehir University](#), whose mission is to contribute to teacher development in Turkey. The university offers undergraduate, graduate and in-service teacher education programs and is considered one of the leaders in the education field.

This year the plenary speakers are:

**Gary Barkhuizen**, University of Auckland, New Zealand - *Teacher identities, short stories, and teacher research: Tangled up in blue*

**Anne Burns**, University of New South Wales, Australia - Title to be confirmed

**Flávia Vieira**, Universidade do Minho, Portugal - *Pedagogical inquiry in initial teacher education: transformative potential and critical issues*

There will also be workshops on the first day, led by:

- Gary Barkhuizen - *Narrative inquiry for language teaching research*
- Anne Burns - Topic to be confirmed
- Cem Can and Kenan Dikilitaş - *Developing corpus of our students: evidence for understanding and action*
- Richard Smith - *How to publish your teacher-research*
- Flávia Vieira - *Pedagogical inquiry in initial teacher education: setting an agenda for reflection and action*

- Mark Wyatt - *Getting to understand our students better through qualitative research*

This conference is participant-centred, with teachers being viewed as at the centre of knowledge construction rather than the 'receivers' of expert knowledge. The format of the conference promotes interaction among presenters and listeners by allowing ample discussion time after brief presentations of studies. In this way, teachers are encouraged to communicate their ideas, and to get and give feedback freely.

If you think this conference may be for you, please do submit a proposal. We welcome titles and abstracts (of 150-200 words) at this stage. Please try to include in the abstract:

- what your main issue, question or puzzle is
- how you explored it
- what evidence you collected
- how you analyzed it
- a reflection on your development through the research

The deadline is: 1st April 2017. Send your abstracts to [resig.bau.istanbul@gmail.com](mailto:resig.bau.istanbul@gmail.com)

Details will be shared later about publication opportunities arising from the conference.

Please contact [kenan.dikilitas@bau.edu.tr](mailto:kenan.dikilitas@bau.edu.tr) if you have any questions.

Register for the conference here:

[https://secure.iatefl.org/events/step1.php?event\\_id=116](https://secure.iatefl.org/events/step1.php?event_id=116)

## ELTED

For the latest issue of *ELTED*, which is edited by Darío Banegas and Richard Smith, and dedicated to **Innovative Writing in English Language Teacher Education and Development**, and includes a focus on research, see here: <http://www.elted.net/latest-issue.html>

The special issue set out to "help break the mould of conventional research report writing and explore new ways through which teachers and teacher educators can exercise their voices and selves." The editors argue: "Engaging with innovative and less conventional writing may help us expand our understanding of both the object under scrutiny and the writer."

# Teachers Research! Buenos Aires 2017

Instituto de Educación Superior en  
Lenguas Vivas “Juan Ramón  
Fernández”, Buenos Aires  
6 May 2017

## Call for proposals

This will be the Second Annual Latin American  
Conference for Teacher-research\* in ELT

(\*Teacher-research = ‘research initiated and carried out  
by teachers into issues of importance to them in their  
own work’)

It will be co-organized by the British Council Argentina,  
FAAPI (Federación Argentina de Asociaciones de  
Profesores de Inglés) and APIBA (Asociación de  
Profesores de Inglés de Buenos Aires)

Featuring:

- British Council Aptis Action Research Award Scheme  
Winners
- Presentations of research by teachers across Latin  
America for other teachers

Teacher-researchers in schools and other educational  
institutions across Latin America are warmly invited to  
this second annual conference. If you have been doing  
teacher-research and would like to share what you’ve  
done by means of a poster and a short presentation,  
please register here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSebMN9DIKx9--uPsRoso5vvLjaS5vSaMPXDF6qc3wPX1Ril9g/viewform>

REGISTRATION TO PRESENT AT THE  
CONFERENCE IS FREE

Important dates:

- Deadline for proposal submissions: 15 March 2017
- Notifications of acceptance: 31 March 2017

Further details:

<http://www.britishcouncil.org.ar/en/programmes/educacion/aptis-teachers/overview>

Any enquiries, please contact  
[dariobanegas@hotmail.com](mailto:dariobanegas@hotmail.com)



### Find out more about the 16 IATEFL SIGs!

If you would like more information about  
IATEFL’s Special Interest Groups, please go to  
<http://www.iatefl.org/special-interest-groups/list-of-sigs>.

Alternatively contact the coordinators of each  
group at the relevant email address for details:

Business English – [besig@iatefl.org](mailto:besig@iatefl.org)

English for Specific Purposes – [espsig@iatefl.org](mailto:espsig@iatefl.org)

English for Speakers of Other Languages –  
[esolsig@iatefl.org](mailto:esolsig@iatefl.org)

[Inclusive Practices & SEN – ipsensig@iatefl.org](mailto:ipsensig@iatefl.org)

Global Issues – [gisig@iatefl.org](mailto:gisig@iatefl.org)

Learner Autonomy – [lasig@iatefl.org](mailto:lasig@iatefl.org)

Leadership & Management – [lamsig@iatefl.org](mailto:lamsig@iatefl.org)

Literature – [litsig@iatefl.org](mailto:litsig@iatefl.org)

Learning Technologies – [ltsig@iatefl.org](mailto:ltsig@iatefl.org)

Materials Writing – [mawsig@iatefl.org](mailto:mawsig@iatefl.org)

Pronunciation – [pronsig@iatefl.org](mailto:pronsig@iatefl.org)

Research – [resig@iatefl.org](mailto:resig@iatefl.org)

Testing, Evaluation & Assessment –  
[teasig@iatefl.org](mailto:teasig@iatefl.org)

Teacher Development – [tdsig@iatefl.org](mailto:tdsig@iatefl.org)

Teacher Training & Education – [ttedsig@iatefl.org](mailto:ttedsig@iatefl.org)

Young Learners & Teenagers – [yltsig@iatefl.org](mailto:yltsig@iatefl.org)

We now have a **FAQ’s section for our SIG’s** –  
find out more here:

<http://www.iatefl.org/special-interest-groups/special-interest-group-faqs>

## IATEFL SIG DAY - GLASGOW 2017

### DAY 1 – TUESDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL

**SIG:** RES      **COORDINATOR(S):** Sarah Mercer & Daniel Xerri

**EMAIL:** [resig@iatefl.org](mailto:resig@iatefl.org)

Session	Time	Mins	Proposer's Name	Title of session	Proposal number
1.1	1040-1125	45 Workshop	Judith Hanks	Exploratory practice: intercultural issues of trust in language teacher education	313
	1125-1200		<i>Coffee Break</i>		
1.2	1200-1305	65 **	Robert Cooper	Genre features of published language teacher research	512
			Clare Furneaux	Postgraduate students developing academic writing skills in English	706
	1305-1410		<i>Lunch break</i>		
1.3	1410-1420		<i>Poster presentations</i>		
1.4	1435-1505	30 Talk	Stephanie Aldred	Is seeing always believing? An approach to classroom observation	126
1.5	1520-1550	30 Talk	Ella Ait-Zaouit	A portrait of a novice English teacher's sense of identity	
1.6	1605-1650	45	Sig Open Forum		272
	1650-1725		<i>Coffee Break</i>		
1.7	1725-1830	**	Loreto Aliaga	Teachers and students' tales: living through change in teacher education	232
			Chris Edgoose	The experimental teacher: from experience to expertise	395

# Researching ELT History: A Hands-on Workshop

***For IATEFL's 50th birthday in 2017***  
**IATEFL Research SIG Pre-Conference Event in  
Glasgow on 3 April 2017**

This one-day event aims to show how uncovering ELT history can provide useful new perspectives, both for our own professional practice and for the field more generally.

From an initial focus on participants' language learning and professional histories, we will consider broader historical findings in order to better situate ourselves as individuals and as a profession. On this basis, we will consider historiographical issues relating to the fallibility of memory and 'folk memory' and the reliability or otherwise of different kinds of secondary and primary sources.

There will be input on and practice in historical methods, with a particular focus on hands-on activities relating to oral history, textbook history and use of documents. The day-long workshop (led by Richard Smith and Friederike Klippel) will be of interest and use to practising teachers and teacher educators as well as to students currently researching their own topics, historical or otherwise.

## About the workshop leaders:



**Richard Smith** is a Reader in ELT & Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick, where he teaches and supervises MA and PhD students. He founded the [Warwick ELT Archive](#) in 2002 and has published widely in the field of history of language learning and teaching, besides other areas. He was the coordinator of IATEFL Research SIG from 2011 to 2015 and is a founder and co-convenor of the AILA Research Network on History of Language Learning and Teaching (<http://holit.net>). His recent articles include 'Building applied linguistic historiography' (*Applied Linguistics*) and, with A.P.R. Howatt, 'The history of teaching English as a foreign language, from a British and European perspective' (*Language and History*). He recently completed a history of IATEFL with Shelagh Rixon (to be published in 2017 to mark IATEFL's 50th anniversary) and he is currently working on a history of the 19th century Reform Movement with Friederike Klippel.



**Friederike Klippel** held the Chair of English Language Education (ELT/TESOL) at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich from 1994 to 2015 after her PhD (1979) and her postdoc degree (1992) at Dortmund University (Germany). In the academic year 2016-17 she is guest professor for TEFL at the University of Vienna. She has published on a wide range of aspects concerning English language teaching and language teacher education. Her research areas comprise the history of language teaching and learning, language teaching methodology, classroom research, intercultural education, teacher education and professional development. Her many publications include *Keep Talking* (CUP) and a comprehensive historical study of learning and teaching English in 18th and 19th century Germany (*Englischlernen im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert. Die Geschichte der Lehrbücher und Unterrichtsmethoden*. Münster: Nodus, 1994).

IATEFL Research SIG Pre-conference Event, Glasgow, 3 April 2017

## Researching ELT History: A Hands-on Workshop

Richard Smith and Friederike Klippel

**Timetable and other information for participants**

[http://conference.iatefl.org/sig\\_pce\\_re.html](http://conference.iatefl.org/sig_pce_re.html)

10.00	Introductions
10.15	Warm-up activity (your own language learning history) & establishing the academic framework
11.15	Coffee break
11.45	Memories, myths & primary sources
12.45	Lunch
14.00	Oral history, textbook history & uses of documents
15.10	Tea break
15.40	Putting it all together: formulating a mini-research project
16.40	Questions and conclusions

We would like you to bring (if possible):

- 1) Something (e.g. a textbook, exercise book or document) related to and, if possible, significant in your or your parents' (or grand-parents'!) language learning experience.
- 2) Something (e.g. a conference handbook, training notes, certificate, official letter, textbook, lesson plan, teacher resource book) related to and, if possible, significant in your history/development as an ELT professional.
- 3) Any ideas for histories you would like to investigate further, perhaps with examples of artefacts / sources associated with them. Feel free to consult us via email in advance in relation to your ideas: Richard Smith (R.C.Smith@warwick.ac.uk) & Friederike Klippel (klippel@lmu.de), so that we can make the workshop as useful as possible to you. However, you do not *need* to come with any specific ideas for a historical research project.

We look forward to working with you! Richard Smith and Friederike Klippel



# GLASGOW

The Scottish Event Campus

4 - 7 APRIL 2017

# 51<sup>ST</sup>

ANNUAL  
INTERNATIONAL  
IATEFL  
CONFERENCE  
AND  
EXHIBITION

## 5 PLENARY SESSIONS BY

Sarah Mercer



Jane Setter



JJ Wilson



Imdaz Dharner



Photo credit: Ayesha Dharner

Gabriel Diaz Maggioni



## 51st ANNUAL CONFERENCE

We are delighted to be returning to the lovely city of Glasgow. There have been many changes to the area since our last visit in 2012 so make sure you join us in this wonderful venue.

## PRE-CONFERENCE EVENTS

**Monday 3rd April 2017** - There will be 14 PCEs organised by our 16 Special Interest Groups the day before the 4 day conference. Book early to avoid disappointment!

## AN ENGAGING ELT RESOURCES EXHIBITION

Showcasing the latest in ELT - publications, products, software, games and much more - the exhibition will provide a vibrant atmosphere in which to network and explore fantastic resources. Entry to the exhibition is free for all.

## OVER 500 STIMULATING SESSIONS

Over the four days of the conference, delegates have the choice of over 500 sessions, including talks, workshops, poster presentations, forums, symposiums, panel discussions and interactive language fairs.

## THE IATEFL JOBS MARKET FAIR

A valuable forum for connecting employers with ELT professionals from around the world. Jobseekers can preview and apply for jobs pre-conference, and recruiters can view package information on participating in the fair on the IATEFL website.

### SPEAKER PROPOSAL DEADLINE

9th September 2016

### SPEAKER PAYMENT DEADLINE

15th December 2016

### EARLY BIRD PAYMENT DEADLINE

12th January 2017

### ONLINE BOOKING CLOSES

15th March 2017



51<sup>st</sup> iatefl  
CONFERENCE 2017  
GLASGOW

For more information visit <http://conference.iatefl.org>