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Best wishes for a phenomenal 2023!





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Postcard from the President

Dear TESOL France Members and Friends,

A big hearty thank you goes out to all who helped make the 41st Annual Colloquium a success. It had been three years since the last in-person Colloquium and it was nice getting back together face to face this past November.

This Teaching Times issue is a result of us coming together, sharing, seeking inspiration and camaraderie. We are featuring four of the Colloquium speakers from the 2022 conference in this issue!

Our 2022 venue was a positive change and transition. Located within Paris in the 17th arrondissement, the Lycee Honoré de Balzac is well connected to several central hubs in Paris. All in all, we welcomed 140 delegates, 40+ Speakers and poster presenters this year.

A big thanks goes out to the delegates. You made the conference with your participation and support. Thanks also to the plenary speakers, Andy Curtis and Thomas Farrell, who inspired us and made us reflect on how we teach, how we manage and what influence and change we can potentially enact. We are teachers and we hold more influence and sway than we credit ourselves for. Thanks also goes out to the fourteen sponsors and exhibitors who came out to greet and network with all the delegates.

At this past Colloquium, the first major conference we have held in three years, we could see a shift in ELT needs and priorities. We knew we could no longer manage an organization like we did in pre-pandemic mode. But, somehow, being face-to-face made it more real and drove this point home. It is so important that our organization continues to include not only online

communities but in-person communities as well, to serve needs comprehensively.

As members and organizers we can't manage any of our work without your help and support. We are always looking for volunteers to help out with any kind of desktop publishing, design, administration and events organizing. Additionally, your feedback is enormously helpful and helps steer the direction of events planning for the future. If you see a survey published in the bi-weekly newsletter, please don't hesitate to take a few minutes to give us feedback. You could also drop us a line at tesolfrance@gmail.com, to myself (below) or to individual board members through the web site.

I hope to see you at the next event!



Dianne Chen
TESOL France President
president@tesol-france.org

(Graphic: BNP Design Studio via Canva)



Editorial

Welcome to issue 103

As you probably know, TESOL France is 100% volunteer run, everything we do is produced by volunteers, or other supporters, the Teaching Times is produced thanks to the wonderful production team, whose names you can see opposite, and also thanks to the generous contributors who give their time and energy to write articles we can use, without them it would be impossible to produce. On top of this, without the other volunteers who do so much to put on the Colloquium, Spring day, regional events, we would have a lot more difficulty getting the content we need, meeting people who might contribute articles, etc. so also a big thank you to them.

But it does not always necessarily work as smoothly as we would want it as all volunteers have other demands on their time and attention and in my case, I sometimes have difficulty in prioritising TESOL France work, and have unlimited admiration for my fellow volunteers who manage it so much better than I do.

This issue was originally intended as a quick follow-up to the

colloquium highlighting a few of the many wonderful presentations that we saw prior to a longer Teaching Times later in the year with more Colloquium articles. My apologies for how long it has taken to get this out, which I'd like to emphasise is entirely my fault.

That said, we have four stimulating articles for you, giving an idea of the breadth and depth of the presentations we had at the Colloquium in November. Teresa Bestwick, the editor of the TESOL-Spain newsletter, gives advice on how to encourage learners to personalise their language learning; Elena Soboleva has insights into designing course for young learners; Charles-Henri Discry, PhD wants you to bring doubt into your classrooms, and eloquently explains the benefits this will give; and Daphne Chisholm-Elie & Gabriell Benkő suggest you try agile teaching to really make learning stick.

Look out for many more articles based on Colloquium presentations in our next issue, which should be out in May. And, as always, if you would like to contribute to the Teaching Times, whether by submitting an article, helping on the production, reacting to an article or just giving your opinion, please do get in touch.

Colin Mackenzie
editor@tesol-france.org



(Graphic: IvanDesign via Canva)

Personalising our language learning journeys

Teresa Bestwick

Before I get cracking on the ideas I shared at the recent TESOL-France Colloquium, I'd like to say a huge thank you and congratulations to the organisers. It was my first experience speaking live at the event (I presented online last year) and it was wonderful to see so many dedicated ELT professionals coming together from around the globe to share their experiences.

I started my session by sharing the different names I have - Teresa, T, Tere, sis and Auntie T amongst them - and then asked participants to share who they are for different people. At the start of the year, we're often presented with a list of names for each class and it's worth taking the necessary time to find out what names our learners would like to use to make them feel a sense of belonging. This may be less of an issue in Spain, but I've heard of cases in China where learners often have an 'English' name because of previous teachers who have said their true names are 'too difficult to pronounce'. One thing which I have seen in Spain though is L2+ teachers being forced to adopt an 'English' name so their learners see them as less 'foreign'...but that's a whole other article, I feel!

To me, personalisation isn't only about learners talking about themselves, though this is obviously a key feature of the ELT classroom. I also feel that we can

personalise the lesson by giving learners the opportunity to be creative with the content and put their own personal twist on the material.

Another aspect of language learning which is key for me is that we include activities which have no wrong answers - activities which get learners communicating and using English but without the pressure of producing the one, correct, response.

With these two ideas in mind, here are a few activities I shared at the Colloquium.

8-Way Thinking

This is a fabulous idea I picked up from Anne Robinson at another conference years ago. It's based on Howard Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and enables us to get more from images in the coursebook. Here are eight types of questions we could ask about this photo:

People (interpersonal)

What's the relationship between the two people?

Feelings (intrapersonal)

What other things do they do to help them relax?

Words (linguistic)

What are they talking about whilst they're fishing?

Numbers (logical-mathematical)

How many fish do you think they'll catch today?

Sounds (musical)

What do you think they can hear nearby?

Sights (visual)

What would they see if they turned around?

Nature (naturalistic)

What animals might live in this area?

Actions (kinesthetic)

What are they going to do later?

Questions like this will also get learners to use their critical thinking skills especially if someone suggests something improbable, e.g. They can hear industrial metal from the German band, Rammstein (there are no wrong answers in this kind of activity). We can ask follow-up questions to find out more (Perhaps there's a metal festival happening nearby, or maybe whoever took the photo was playing it as they walked past).

Character builds - creating a life story and persona for



(Photo by Federico Giampieri on Unsplash)

the people in coursebook images - is a great way to practise everyday language and we can also use them to review particular structures with our learners. Look again at the man on the right in the photo above and think about these questions, which practise the past simple:

What did he have for breakfast this morning?

What did he watch on TV last night?

Where did he go on his last holiday?

Or, if you want learners to practise dependent prepositions:

What is he interested in?

What is he frightened of?

What is he fed up with?

Controlled practice activities

To be honest, I'm not a huge fan of controlled practice activities because they often involve no personalisation and have only one correct answer. When I write materials for coursebooks, I try to get around this by writing grammar gap fills containing 'I' and then having learners discuss afterwards if the sentences are true for them. For example, in my session, I shared an activity from Journeys, a series from Prime Press I was involved in, in which learners had to complete each sentence with past simple or past perfect and then say if the sentence was true for them.

I ____ to Greece on holiday last year (go)

I ____ to an English-speaking country on holiday. (never go)

I ____ a good time on my last holiday because I ____ ill. (not have, get)

However, as much as I can write activities with 'I' in them, I think learners are always much more engaged when they see their own names in an activity. So, a simple task you can do with learners which involves very little prep is to write sentences about the learners in your class, some of which have grammatical errors. In the first step, ask learners to correct any grammatical errors in the sentences. Then, ask them whether they think the sentence is true or false and ask the learner it's about to share. Remember to always ask follow-up questions to get learners using more English!

Definitely, maybe

This has got to be one of my all-time favourite activities as it's great for getting learners to speak about something personal to them, involves prediction to help

activate schemata and provides learners with a concrete reason to listen carefully. Here's how I give instructions for it:

Juanca is going to tell us about his pets. Before we listen to Juanca, I want you to write five words you think he's definitely going to say and five words you think he might say. You can write any words but not very easy words like I, the, my.

Definitely	Maybe
Food	Dog
Play	...

To be honest, learners generally automatically write content words, but it's always worth making it explicit in case you have any smarties in the class! Another thing I love about this activity is that Juanca has time to plan his ideas whilst everyone else is writing their predictions. After a few minutes, we go on to the next stage.

Juanca's going to talk about his pets. Listen and tick any words he says. You only have to tick once even if he repeats a word lots of times. If you wrote rabbit and he says rabbits, you can tick it. If you wrote buy and he says bought, you can tick it.

After Juanca's talked about his pets, there are two options. We can either go straight to the points, or you can encourage learners to ask Juanca a follow-up question to elicit one of their words that he hasn't said. Learners have to think carefully here as they often ask closed questions which contain their word, e.g. Does your rabbit like carrots?

To finish, learners count up their ticks and get two points for each tick in the definitely column and one point for each in the maybe column.

What do you do to bring personalisation into your lessons? Why not write to the teaching times to tell us about it.



Teresa is a teacher trainer, materials writer and also runs a Facebook group for ELT professionals, the TEFL Development Hub. In her free time, she enjoys craft beer and gardening.

Designing an Effective Course for Young Learners

Elena Soboleva

(Photo by CDC on Unsplash)



The topic of course design for young learners is huge and can be a bit challenging for newly qualified teachers. In this article, I will explore two main questions:

How should teachers approach course design for young learners?

What building blocks should be considered?

How should teachers approach course design for young learners?

First of all, we should remember that course design is work in progress and there isn't one way or "best way" to approach it. However, as teachers, we know that it always starts with identifying the course goals, which are then used as a basis for development of the course objectives (more specific and concrete descriptions of purposes of the course). Even though identifying goals and objectives is the first step, they are only a statement of intent and are subject to change once the course is under way (Graves 1996: 19).

Goals

If we take into account the key characteristics of young learners, we can establish two types of goals - proficiency and affective. As language teachers, it is true that we tend to focus more on developing the learners' linguistic competence, however, in the young learner classroom we should also aim to develop positive attitudes and feelings toward the target language.

Objectives

When it comes to the objectives, we will have to

decide what we really want to achieve in terms of smaller units of learning. Thus, for example, if our proficiency goal is to develop the learners' communicative and literacy skills, we can identify the following objectives:

- Lexis: to develop learners' vocabulary knowledge.
- Pronunciation: to develop a better phonological awareness.
- Speaking: to help to interact in a simple way asking and answering basic questions.
- Reading: to develop a better word recognition knowledge of common words when reading stories.
- Writing: to practise writing short phrases.

Syllabus

Finally, once we identify our goals and objectives, we have to decide on the syllabus. In my experience, a topic-based syllabus is one of the best ways to organise children's learning. This way we organise the language learning around topics of that interest children and linguistic forms become more meaningful. A topic-based syllabus also provides a framework for linking a variety of different syllabus strands together – meaning focused input, meaning focused output, language focused learning, and fluency development (Richards, 2001: 157). In addition, if we focus on topics, we can use a great variety of activities, which creates a positive atmosphere in class.

What building blocks should be considered?

Another important aspect of course design for young learners is the connection between Enjoyment, Engagement, and Enthusiasm. The idea of the Three

Es was developed by Renzulli (2014), who has done important research into designing educational programs for high-ability and gifted students. He suggests considering these building blocks when designing a course and putting them in a feeding relation when one feeds into another. Thus, enjoyment will lead to higher engagement which in turn will lead to greater enthusiasm for learning. According to Renzulli, when the Three Es are working well, learners show improvement in school achievement.

Let's look at these blocks in more detail and see what they really mean in the young learner context.

1. Enjoyment

Young learners really enjoy learning through stories, songs, games, and hands-on activities.

As teachers and course designers, we know that stories have an excellent thematic organisation for vocabulary and they introduce language in chunks. In addition, they shape a positive attitude to literacy and help to expand students' learning in a variety of ways and with different activities.

If you are looking for a story to use with your learners, these webpages might be helpful.

1. PEPELT21 (Picturebooks in European Primary English Language Teaching) <https://pepelt21.com>
2. ICEPELL (Intercultural Citizenship Education through Picturebooks in Early English Language Learning) <https://icepell.eu>
3. Savannah Kids TV (Musical Theatre in an Artistic Wonderland) <https://www.savannahkidstv.com/>
4. Storyline Online <https://storylineonline.net/library/>
5. Walker Books <https://www.walker.co.uk/>
6. Magic Keys <http://www.magickeys.com/books/>

While songs may be effective at promoting vocabulary acquisition and improving classroom motivation, they also improve learners' pronunciation of both individual speech sounds and support the acquisition of stress and intonation patterns.

The following pages have got a great variety of songs and chants.

1. English Singing <https://www.youtube.com/@EnglishSinging>
2. The Kiboomers <https://www.youtube.com/@thekiboomers>
3. Fun Kids English <https://www.youtube.com/@Funkidsenglish>
4. The Singing Walrus <https://www.youtube.com/@Thesingingwalrus>
5. Maple Leaf Learning <https://www.youtube.com/@Mapleleaflearning>
6. Super Simple Songs <https://www.youtube.com/@supersimplesongs>

When it comes to choosing games, the course should provide a good balance between stirring and settling activities, which places meaningful interaction at the core as children "develop and grow, and develop linguistically, through meaningful and purposeful interaction" (Hughes 2013: 185). It should also have a balance of collaborative and competitive tasks. I agree

with Pinter (2017: 16) that "competition is instinctive in young children and they will readily engage in competitive tasks, while collaboration is less natural to them" and requires some gradual development.

On top of that, young learners enjoy hands-on activities and they are always interested in using the resources that they create in class. By encouraging learners to make their own materials, e.g. flashcards, mini books, puppets, we build in opportunities for self-expression. This way children are invited to personalize the topic and share information about their lives, their opinions, and their favourite things.

2. Engagement

If we talk about engagement in the young learner classroom, we can identify the following aspects of their engagement.

Level. Young learners are engaged when activities are at the right level of cognitive complexity, so they are not too easy or too difficult.

Purpose. It is important for learners to see a purpose, so they understand why they're doing the activity. This means that the course should always place meaningful interaction at the core of activities.

Activities. Children are engaged when there is a variety of short, dynamic, and interactive activities. Also, their engagement is higher when they are moving from receptive to productive tasks, as this way they can show what they already know and can do in the target language.

3. Enthusiasm

Young learners do not fully understand the value of learning a foreign language and their motivation is controlled externally, e.g. by their parents, teachers and activities. As they are not motivated by longer-term goals (Richards 2015: 224), it is our responsibility to ensure using the right building blocks (Enjoyment and Engagement) which will lead to greater enthusiasm for learning.

(Cont'd on p. 9)



Elena is an English language teacher, based in Girona, Spain. She studied linguistics in Moscow, English philology in Barcelona, and alternative education in the Netherlands. She holds Cambridge CELTA, CELTYL, and DELTA. Elena also blogs about early childhood education and teaching English to children at <https://www.lensoboleva.com/blog>.

Productive Doubting: Benefits and Impacts

Charles-Henri Discry, PhD

Doubting has often been associated with negative feelings. In this article, I suggest we move away from this only partly true perception to first understand what positive doubting is and second see what its applications in your seminar/classroom could be.

1. Doubting

a. *There is such a thing as positive doubting*

The first step to take is to allow 2 types of doubting to co-exist with one another, one that is positive and another which is negative. Both can be renamed into 'productive doubting' and 'paralyzing doubting' respectively. This distinction is not new and is brilliantly detailed by developmental psychologist Platania-Maillot (2020:1).

Platania-Maillot links doubting with movement which is antinomic to rigidity which fixes humans into set intellectual and emotional positions. This idea of movement is of importance as she lays the emphasis on it on several occasions in her article. For instance, she writes that if too much doubting 'can paralyze us', the absence thereof is symptomatic of a certain 'inertia'. She adds on that doubting is *l'élan vital*, thereby suggesting, intentionally or not, a connection with the movement and life-driven concept found in the philosophy of Henri Bergson (1859-1941). Positive doubting then appears to be rooted in intense thinking and can be seen as a tool that enables to move forward.

b. *We shape but are being shaped as well*

The language we use in English to talk about doubting is negatively charged. In a very authoritative work on English grammar, Quirk *et al.* (1985:1182) have provided evidence that this assertion holds true. Indeed, they describe the verb 'doubt' as a verb of 'negative meaning'. As speakers of English, we shape the language. This means that we fuel into it our perceptions and thoughts. In return, the language is also shaping the way we think. This double dynamic is central, and pernicious in the case of doubting because it prevents us from having any unbiased attitude to it: we associate negative feelings with it, and language use reinforces them in our brains and thoughts. It is a two-direction process from which there is no way out unless it is consciously forced into the system.

2. How to turn into a practical ready-to-use tool?

The chief problem with doubting is that we have never been taught how to go about it. As a result, we have always been looking at it with a great deal of apprehension as if it were a wild and dangerous entity. The fact that the doubting process is often felt as unpleasant has been, obviously, of no help. The language problem, as has been shown, is another hindrance to any positive use of doubting.

The first step to move away from this negative feeling, and therefore to break away from this mould, consists in accepting that there is a good, positive type of doubting (see previous section). The second step will be to devise a method which can give the means to make the best out of this positive doubting process and this is what this second section is all about.

The importance of language use has been mentioned previously. Bearing this in mind, it might be opportune to use the concept in class either as 'productive doubting' or

even better as 'the reasonable degree of doubt'. The second phrase has the advantage of being very precise in its wording: it highlights that doubting is mitigated by the exercise of reason. It also invites to a certain gradation which is synonymous with careful and thoughtful progress. I can also tell from experience that students react very positively when the phrase 'the reasonable degree of doubt' is dropped in seminars. It seems to arouse their interest immediately.

The reasonable degree of doubt [henceforth RDD] can be used by teachers either in or after class. Here is some scenario: you are having doubts whether *childhood* is countable or uncountable. Ask somebody to check this information in the online version of *Cambridge Dictionary* (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/>). You can also look up the word once you are at home but the impression you will leave with your students will be stronger if you do it in class. Once you have heard that it can be both, your knowledge has augmented and has reached a level of absolute certainty on this particular point of knowledge. Then, explain to your students that you have been implementing a methodology called the RDD.

Do not forget that, even as native speakers, it is normal to have hesitations about English. The reason for this is simple: you teach in a non-anglophone milieu, you are therefore being constantly in touch with forms that are inaccurate both in sounds and use. These erroneous forms are massively flying into your brain when you hear students and read their work.

The *when*-implementation, that is the moment you use the concept, is much more effective in class than after as it will come across more powerfully whilst you are teaching because, if you pick that moment, you will accept to show students you are not an all-knowing figure. This attitude of allowing some time to check our knowledge is also driving us into greater humbleness, as Platania-Maillot (2021:1) wrote. It also matches what knowledge actually is: languages are paramount examples of knowledge as both are ever-evolving and ever-changing entities. It is only in schools, and sometimes even in higher education, that we are taught knowledge is set. It is impossible to know all the words and expressions in English, allowing yourself to doubt a few moments in class will then enable you to give an accurate answer to that student asking you about an American or South African expression you might not be familiar with. Your answer will then demonstrate that you do not exclude automatically students' answers because they do not match what is in your knowledge set. You allow them to complement your knowledge set and thereby also accept the existence of knowledge as a malleable entity and *shared* composite (this word is used intentionally). Grey areas exist in languages and the RDD is a tool to celebrate this.

This (at right) is a representation of the RDD. Please do not forget that you should feel free about when and how to use it: we are all different. My own teaching practice has led me to either use examples to illustrate the concept or to mention the concept first and then illustrate it with examples in the course. Opportunities to exemplify the concept have always come my way, so you should not be afraid of these not turning up: they will, if you let them to. This method can be used by teachers and learners, by anybody regardless of what they do. It is universal.

Notes.

¹ leads to greater confidence, which is the exact opposite of possible negative feelings

² Example: I've studied English for 10 years, and don't know the answer.

³ low self-esteem: How is it possible that, after 10 years of studying the language, I don't know the answer to that.

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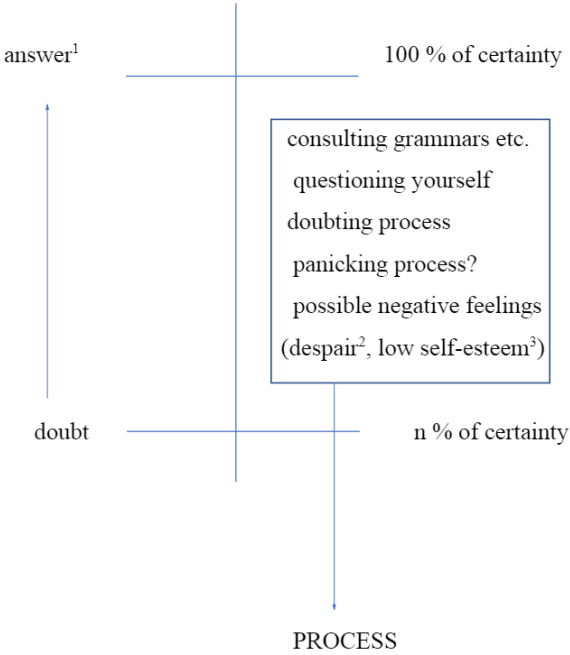
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Charles-Henri graduated with a Master's in teaching (2010) and did his PhD in Scotland (2013). He has travelled extensively. His research is in teaching and historical linguistics.

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(Cont'd from p. 7)

FINAL THOUGHTS AND TIPS

As all the components of the course are interrelated, planning for one component will contribute to others.

Consider Renzulli's Three Es (Enjoyment, Engagement, Enthusiasm) when designing a course.

Be realistic about what can be accomplished within a given amount of time.

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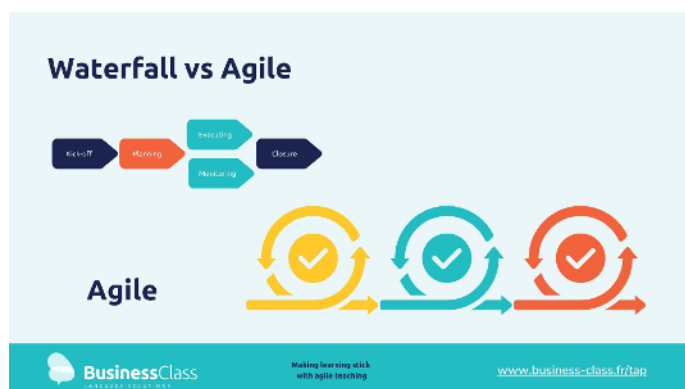
Daphne Chisholm-Elie & Gabriella Benkő

As Business English practitioners, we work with busy professionals with time constraints due to work and family commitments. Our learners can't always invest the time and energy they would like into language learning. They are often only with us for a short time, and are looking for fast results in order to be effective workplace communicators. A tall order, it would seem!

Enter agile teaching. Inspired by an agile project management mindset (*see references section*), agile teaching is also a co-created, dynamic framework. Like agile project management, it provides structure while allowing for the flexibility needed to complete a process – in our case, helping learners achieve their Business English learning goals optimally – within a given time frame.

In the world of software development, the agile method of managing projects means working with clients in a collaborative way, evaluating progress at regular intervals and always striving to stay consistent with client needs. Sprints, short delivery time frames with specific goals, are used to measure and monitor work achieved and decide next steps.

It's a circular process made up of 5 stages: kickoff, planning, execution and monitoring, and closure. By continually reviewing both evolving goals and progress status, misunderstandings are quickly nipped in the bud, and client satisfaction guaranteed.



We've discovered that this approach transfers well to language training.

Let's take a closer look

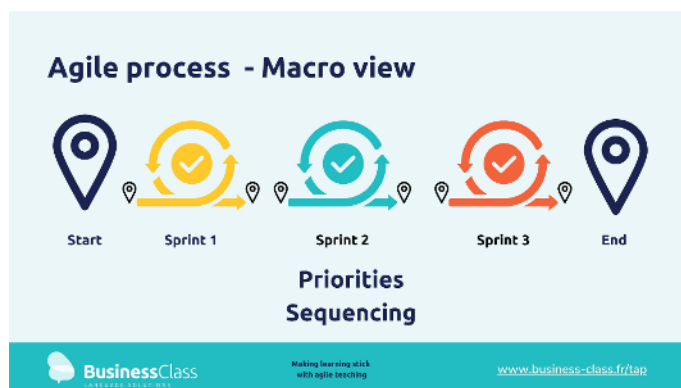
A teaching course is clearly a project: the learner is the client, the teacher the service provider, and the learner's goals are the desired "product" or outcome.

A typical 30-hour course delivered over 6 months could be broken down into 4 sprints, each focusing on a particular goal. That gives us a lot of flexibility and agility to deal with goal changes as they arise.

This is a highly collaborative process. We communicate continuously with our learners to ensure their involvement and engagement. Their buy-in is paramount.

What does it look like?

During the kickoff session we decide the general



direction. We acknowledge, however, that life can be volatile and unpredictable, and things happen. Our trainees' personal and/or professional situations can and do change at a moment's notice. Therefore, we remain poised to course correct as needed.

We prioritize and focus (and re-focus) on what will truly enable our learners to become effective communicators quickly. For example, let's say they express a need to revise grammar. Upon digging deeper with well-targeted questions,



we find out if this is a belief rather than a real need.

Once we've sifted through and uncovered the learner's true need, we can then plan together how we are going to achieve that goal as well as appraise the learning.

"Action!"

Now it's time for the roll out, setting in motion the first round of execution and monitoring – the sprint. At the close of the sprint, we take stock, analyze what worked and what could be improved and decide what to pursue next.

What makes agile teaching powerful and different? What's the 'secret sauce'?

While many theoretical frameworks sound great on paper it's only in practice that we see if they hold water. What sets agile teaching apart? - the human touch! It's the *human magic* that makes this process come to life.

Relationships are Key

From the start, we aim to build a working relationship

based on trust and common goals. Learning can mean taking risks, stepping out of one's comfort zone, perhaps losing self-confidence, too. *Psychological safety* is then indispensable as it creates the optimum conditions for learning. Learners need a supportive environment where they can express themselves without being judged, about their needs and expectations but also about their fears and their emotions. We want the learning journey to be a pleasant experience.

What does this mean for us? Trainer as Partner and Guide

Teachers, as project managers, we set the tone. We make sure the team is on board, and on track by facilitating communication and providing guidance. We help the team understand what is realistic to achieve; to provide space to experiment; to learn from mistakes; to implement effective learning strategies; to offer feedforward and to celebrate wins.

A Few Words on Psychological Safety

Thanks to recent research and applied neuroscience, we understand the workings of the brain much better and its influence on learning. The fundamental purpose of our brains is to classify the world around us into things that will help us survive and things that will damage or threaten us. We're constantly scanning our environment for threat.

Remember our ancestors had to pay a lot of attention to threats, for example, being attacked by a lion. This evolutionary carryover is why we are still very sensitive to threat in our environment though nowadays, we, as social beings, are more at risk from social threat than from the threat of lions. In contrast, we are attracted to social rewards: status, certainty, autonomy, relatedness, fairness (Dr David Rock's SCARF® model).

In our modern environment, social threats impact our work. It's pretty threatening to be criticized in front of your peer group. Being excluded from a group is really threatening. Feeling uncertain about the future creates anxiety and social pain.

Physical pain and social pain register in the same region of the brain. When we perceive a situation as threatening, our emotions become aroused and our thinking shuts down. That affects our cognition, our memory, our motivation and therefore our performance.

As teachers, our job is to help people be in a creative mode where they do not feel threatened and they're working to their optimal mental capacity.

Monitoring the Process

With agile teaching, we schedule regular check-ins which allow the team to review their goals: are they still the same, have they changed, and how do they want to proceed?

Just exactly how do we appraise learning? Sleuthing

We look for and collect evidence of learning. Can the learner do what they set out to do? Since observing evidence is easier when you know what you are looking for, we suggest agreeing on indicators that are simple, clear, and measurable.

The beauty of this practice is that the learner is fully engaged in the process. We are rendering the learning, the strategies and best practices visible.

A New Take on "Feedback"

When it comes to feedback, we suggest the more positive-sounding term 'feedforward' instead. For us, feedforward fits in well with an agile approach. We want to encourage a growth mindset which sparks the learner to continue their learning. Even though they may not be there YET, they have the capacity to get there.

Many learners tend to rely on the teacher to give them feedback. Our belief is that when we encourage them to engage in self feedforward, they develop a very useful skill (which can serve them elsewhere in their lives, too). We also encourage peer feedforward so that everyone in the team can grow together.

Bringing it all Home (alternative subtitle "That's a Wrap!" from the film industry)

The closing phase of a project, (we like to call wrapping up), is vital. It's a fantastic opportunity to make learning stick. Here, not only do we identify and celebrate successes, but we also take a detailed look back at what has been achieved, reflect on lessons learnt, see what might be done differently in future, and discuss the way forward.

The role of the teacher is pivotal

A teacher today wears many hats and is not simply a transmitter of knowledge. Developing yours skills through reflection in practice and reflection on practice will, in turn, enable your learners to become effective communicators of BELF.

For more information: <https://business-class.fr/tap/>

REFERENCES

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Reflect and Redefine Yourself: Thoughts and Perceptions of the 2022 TESOL France Colloquium

ILCA * members

ILCA* Board members and keen ILCA supporters would like to share their perceptions of the 41st International Annual TESOL France Colloquium titled *Making Time for Reflection* that we had attended in October 2022. We feel this conference is worth discussing in depth as it is an event that indicates how trends and traditions may support professional development journeys in the future.

Observations from the TESOL event in Paris, in no particular order...

One, the enduring passion and curiosity of language trainers for their topic is still alive and well! Despite fears and headaches caused by Qualiopi etc, language professionals still love playing their trade and learning more about it. Two, that curiosity was successfully curated by the speakers I saw at TESOL: all of them had designed interactive talks which got people talking and thinking together. Three, among the remarkable diversity of topics on offer, one recurrent theme in several talks was how better understanding of neuroscience impacts language learning. I found myself wondering how long that trend will last. One regret: a talk about mindfulness and language learning was cancelled, I would have liked to hear that one.

--Ian

It was the first in-person ELT conference that I had attended and I am happy to say that it met my hopes and expectations. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting up with people I had only previously seen online and to have this real-life experience, to chat and to exchange ideas and experiences. There was a wide range of different talks and I particularly appreciated attending two different talks on language coaching, and hearing different viewpoints and ways of coaching language learners but with the same aim of making a switch from purely teaching a language. Another talk I loved was the Pecha Kucha session. I had already read about Pecha Kucha presentations but had never seen them used in a teaching environment. It was fascinating and I have already used an adapted version for one of my learner's end-of-course oral evaluation, and it allowed him to be creative with his visual aids and prevented him from just reading notes. The other talk I found interesting was by lecturers from a Vietnamese University who described the implementation of a University course to explore and



Photo by Marcel Strauß on Unsplash

increase intercultural competence for Vietnamese students who are training to be English teachers. It was quite eye-opening for myself to glimpse an insight into Vietnamese culture and to see the western world from their eyes. All-in-all a very enjoyable and worthwhile conference.

--Vicki

Like Vicki, this was my first in-person Conference on English language teaching. I was delighted by the variety of talks available to watch over the three-day event. There were talks on different subjects and I felt that there was something for everyone. In my case, I was particularly drawn to the talks about teaching English to professionals. I was most excited to hear about the Agile method being used in language teaching. I was also fond of the talks on BELF and Language coaching. These are all themes that I believe are paving the way for change in language teaching. Like Ian, I was disappointed that the talk on mindfulness and language learning was cancelled. And like the subjects previously mentioned, I do think it is another subject to keep an eye on in the future of language learning. Despite the one hour time limit for each talk,

we were able to get a good understanding of each subject and the speakers were all gracious enough to share their slides at the end. Other highlights were the plenary talks: Andy Curtis on Leadership in Language education and Thomas S.C. Farrell on the Importance of Reflective Practice before, during and after COVID. They both had entertaining and thought provoking talks. Finally, having the opportunity to meet and network with like-minded Language professionals was enriching and much appreciated.

Overall, congratulations to the TESOL France team for organizing this event. I look forward to returning next year.

--Jessica

It was my first TESOL Colloquium. I felt welcome and very quickly became part of this new family community. As soon as I arrived, I realized that I could learn a lot in this conference, and I must say that my expectations were fully met.

On my arrival though, I was actually pretty upset as just the day before the French Government had announced that it was re-working its quality regulation "Qualiopi" for French training organizations (<https://www.cpformation.com/qualiopi/>). As you may know, since 2019, training organizations in France are required to pass this quality certification in order

to work with French companies and “CPF” personal training budgets. The Qualiopi audit is very expensive and time consuming. Anyway, up until now, I have managed to work as a subcontractor through a larger language institute, so haven’t needed to be Qualiopi accredited. But, now I don’t know if my little business is going to survive. Meeting other teachers facing the same situation helped me a lot. We exchanged email addresses and I left Paris full of hope for the future.

I also particularly liked Laura Edwards’ talk on “Reduce, reuse, recycle-improving efficiency” as paperwork is burdensome, time-consuming and expensive for small businesses.

Nouredine Asmi’s talk on “ Teaching Soft Skills in the ESP classroom” made me realize how passive I was sometimes when facing a conflicting situation.

I also had breakfast with Evan Frendo and attended his very fascinating talk about ELF.

Finally, I enjoyed listening to Gabriella Kovács’s session. I kept a slide that I am going to work on in 2023. It is the list of skills needed to shape the future.

I look forward to coming back next year.

--Florence

All in all, a delightful programme that achieved its goal to support teachers on a wide range of themes. The workshop led by Jon Hird shared ideas on the language of opinions with a riveting take on why we shouldn’t take words for granted and how we generalise what we teach learners in what words to use to express their ideas and thoughts and opinions (ie. move beyond in my opinion etc.) Corpora search shows us that what we use on a daily basis is far from the stale phrases we tend to hand out on lists in class...

Thomas S.C. Farrel’s talk on the intricacies and benefits of a reflective practice for teachers, was my personal favourite. Contemplating why you did what you did in class can have a number of benefits and we should definitely not try to save time by NOT reflecting... and providing time and space for silence to think. Evan Frendo’s talk on changes and new concepts in Business English as a Lingua Franca (BELF) was a true eye-opener and was thought-provoking in that it provided detailed case studies whilst also showing us the value of a wide-angle perspective on approaching BELF to adapt in various contexts.

Colin Mackenzie’s talk was an exciting splash into what to expect if we expect something different from learners in the classroom - I thoroughly enjoyed the crisp ideas to experiment with to build rapport in a wholesome, yet definitely unusual way.

I found the poster presentations particularly useful also - something that could be given stronger presence at conferences, in my view.

It was also worth visiting Paris to meet colleagues and network with a fresh set of faces: I am looking forward to writing to new publications as a spin-off of this event. Having been able to contribute to the TESOL organisation magazine Teaching Times this acted as an initial focus point that helped me gear up for the talk I gave. What each talk emphasised (and I am sure others did too), was the emerging role of working on and with learner autonomy and redefining the roles and responsibilities of teachers and being ambitious when setting aside time to reflect, learn and redefine what we are doing as teachers, trainers and coaches.

There is a noticeable shift in the dynamics at conferences seen lately: a move away from the “give me some tips and tricks I can use in class” to sharing more sensitising and evidence-based case studies that open up new ideas, question past practices and help us be the best possible professionals. Definitely planning to participate in 2023.

--Gabriella



Qualiopi is a French quality certification that authorises training organisations to deliver training courses that benefit from public or shared funding.

* ILCA

The International Language Coaching Association's aim is to advocate and represent general language coaching, corporate and communication coaching issues, and principles through an active and systematic network of practising language coaches and language professionals, practitioners. We share ideas and provide insights to each other to enable further growth and development in a non- competitive environment where all members support and value the contributions of others to encourage and enhance thought leadership in language coaching.





TESOL France

Spring Day 2023

At the Crossroads

May 27, 2023 : 8:30 am-6 pm

Association Adele Picot

39 Rue Notre Dame des Champs

75006 Paris

Speakers and interactive discussion groups

ChatGpt/AI and their effects on education

The brain in the learning process and impact of AI

Navigating the French work environment
for language teaching and training



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