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not a born teacher

lessons learned in time



Aiming engagement - Engaging students online and offline

by Paola Nogueira

Just another
teacher story

*by Julia Lima and
Talita Raulynaitis*

Telling stories to young
learners

by Marisa Cleff

I am not overqualified for
this! Lessons learned in time

by Carolina Cunha

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Letter From The President

Dear BRAZ-TESOLers,

The year 2020 is bound to be remembered as one of the most challenging for teachers all over the world. Therefore, we needed one another more than ever. Sharing was never so important to help us face the new scenario, fears and doubts we all had during these difficult times.

In the words of Maya Angelou, “You can’t use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have.” Proving Maya was absolutely right, teachers showed they have a purpose with their students, reinvented themselves, developed new skills and made their best.

That being said, I have the honor, as the president of BRAZ-TESOL São Paulo Chapter, to introduce you to our e-book NOT a born teacher. Back in June, when our board started planning the second event of the year, we couldn’t help but reflect on the importance of bringing as much professional development as we could for the teachers of our community. For this reason, we decided that, not only would we have talks presented on the day of the event, but we would also invite volunteers to contribute with these brilliant articles you’re about to read.

Since the more we are the stronger we become, Talking EFL has kindly accepted our proposal to work with us in this project. On behalf of BRAZ-TESOL SP Chapter, I’d like to thank this team who has put in such hard work as you’ll see on the next pages. As for me, I’d like to thank SP Chapter board for the beautiful work we’ve been doing during the year of 2020. I couldn’t be more honored to be working with such outstanding professionals. Clearly, our work would have never been possible if it weren’t for the opportunity BRAZ-TESOL National board gave us and the support of all of you BRAZ-TESOL members. Thank you!

After the work of such amazing volunteers, get ready to find very interesting and profitable articles.

Enjoy your reading and see you next time.



Priscila Vicente

has been an English teacher for 17 years now, having worked in regular schools and language schools as a director, course developer, teacher trainer and a teacher.

She holds the CPE, the Celta, has a degree in Languages, post-graduated in Educational Psychology and currently taking a post-graduation in Psychology of Learning and Development. In the past few years, she has been working with students with special needs, such as dyslexia, ADHD and

FROM THE EDITOR

by *Bruno Albuquerque*

Not a born teacher was an event that stemmed from the belief (fact?) that no one is born a teacher. In my opinion, no one is born anything and what we actually do, as the years go by, is slowly become more and more ourselves. People don't grow old because they were not born ready. Things are born ready and get old with time, whereas people are born unready and build themselves up with the coming of age. As Cortella says, we are our most updated version so far and we'll keep updating till the end of our journey.

On the day of the event, we wanted to bring this idea along and provide our community with a free, online opportunity of becoming more themselves. A wide array of live sessions was offered to teachers all over the country: professional development, young learners, PBL, affective needs, ELF, cultural stereotypes, digital literacy, lesson planning and others.

However, we felt that our contribution could not end at the closing plenary. Hence, this humble e-book was born. We invited teachers who have sent us proposals for the event, whom we knew would produce great articles, to spread their ideas. All we did was, in fact, compile these articles in this publication and share it with you. We would like to thank Talking EFL for their support in putting this publication together.

The first article, *Aiming Engagement*, by Paola Nogueira, aims at sharing with teachers factors that might influence students' motivation and engagement in the classroom. Nogueira suggests, among others, Literature circles to foster group work, collaboration, and literacy. She says, "making each member of the group responsible for one aspect tends to engage learners." I believe this sort of procedure will make each student feel like a valuable member of their micro-community, thus aiding

Nogueira's aim of fostering engagement.

In *Developing Yourself*, Amanda Lambert brilliantly encompasses the feeling of not being born a teacher. In this autobiographical article, Lambert shares her journey into becoming a more reflective teacher and suggests a clear, practical route towards professional development. She says "As teachers, we must be able to explore and seek means for constant updating to ensure that our training is continuous and uninterrupted, and this is only possible through constant reflective actions on our pedagogical practices." a statement that deeply resonated with my beliefs.

Adding his voice to Lambert's, Gustavo Fróes wrote in *From teaching to teacher*, "a man's journey of self-reconnaissance". Masterfully written, this is an article that describes his journey from intuitive teaching to becoming a professional, a path many know too well. I must admit that the sentence "His little paw is still etched on a page that has forever stayed with me." has brought me to tears. Thank you for the heartfelt report, Mr. Fróes.

In another brilliantly written autobiographical article, Just another teacher story, Julia Lima and Talita Raulynaitis share their journey of simultaneously becoming professional teachers. Personally, being a friend of Julia's and by being a small, tiny part of her journey has made me devour her article so much faster than I intended to. The article has great readability, heartwarming insights into two teachers' journeys and a perfect description of "Teacher Goggles, an accessory so indispensable that it is impossible to take them off once they are in place. The Goggles allow us to see things through a more humane and analytical perspective." Thank you, Julia, for always being there to help me uncloud my goggles.

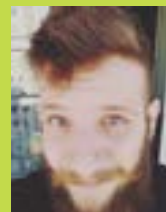
In *Telling stories to young learners*,

Marisa Cleff shares five activities to carry out with young learners and storytelling techniques that can easily be put into practice the next time you walk into your classroom. Aside from activities, Cleff selflessly shares her framework for coming up with these ideas and aims at equipping teachers to be autonomous when designing their own tasks. She writes "When we talk about young learners it seems we need to refresh our ideas all the time" to which I'd raise a toast. Cheers?

In *I am not overqualified for this!*, Carolina Cunha manages to analytically weave Dr. Dweck's theory of mindsets with her own experience and career. Cunha describes the comfort zone for what it really is: "a warm, cozy place where nothing really happens." The author skillfully wraps up the article by saying that "My 20 years of experience plus every single course I've taken [...] made me the professional I am today and will contribute to the professional I will be some years from now."

We hope you enjoy reading these articles as much as we did. Thank you for being part of this ever-growing community of education professionals who are constantly striving for growth, development, and professionalism. As Dr. Dweck puts it, as quoted by Cunha, "becoming is better than being".

My, is she right.



Bruno Albuquerque

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456
participants

17
speakers

1940
*hits to the
event rooms*

680
*minutes of
cpd*

*the event in
numbers*

AIMING ENGAGEMENT ENGAGING STUDENTS ONLINE AND OFFLINE

by Paola Nogueira

Introduction

The aim of this article is to briefly contextualize a specific perspective of engagement, pinpoint factors that may diverge or converge learners to the direction of engagement and suggest activities for offline and online contexts.

What's engagement?

The word engagement has been one of the buzz words of the moment and it can be approached by various aspects including social, psychological and behavioral as examples. On social media, we have seen teachers sharing ideas, materials and more in order to try engaging learners in these not-at-all easy times. Although a lot has been shared in order to reach it, not always do the perspectives and beliefs of what engagement means are made clear.

Here, a perspective that Learners' engagement is the output of a series of factors and strategies that when worked out together might result in it, will be adopted. The use of active learning, which may enhance student's involvement in the process, plus motivation, may result in the increase of participation and learners' engagement.

Why aren't students motivated in class?

Before mentioning the strategies to engage students, it is also important to reference some factors that most commonly influence learners not to engage in the process. Among others, we can mention that English is not their aim, despite the fact that they need

to learn and use it in a regular basis, the language can be a requirement for professional and academic contexts. Undoubtedly it is a great reason for them to study, but it seems not enough to assure their engagement. Lack of interest in the content, unsuccessful experiences in English in the past and having distractions in the screen when in online classes can be named as aspects that influence engagement as well.

Contextual Engagement

Dornyei (2020) has posed engagement not as an isolated concept, but as one element of a holistic ecosystem:

“Learner engagement in class is connected to attitudes and beliefs stemming from a host of contextual factors that affect both the learner and the school.”

Various settings influence each other since the school context to the language, the curriculum and materials, learning tasks and personal interests. Interpersonal relationships such as connection with peers and level of teacher's friendliness can be outlined as relevant aspects of the context.

Offline strategies

In this section, two hands-on activities will be presented. They could be perfectly adapted to be applied in online classes or to different contexts.

Literature Circles (lit circles) – In this activity, a text, article or book is

chosen. Students work in groups and each member of the group is assigned a specific role. Examples of roles are the illustrator that represents the reading in a drawing or sketch, the word wizard who is responsible to look up words considered difficult in the dictionary and clarify to the group, and the summarizer whose role is to do a summary of the text. Making each member of the group responsible for one aspect tends to engage learners.

Gallery Walk – This activity can be a complement to the Lit Circle. In the Gallery Walk, all the posters produced for a presentation will be displayed on the walls. One representative of the group will present at a time. Meanwhile, the other components of the group will walk in the gallery watching other groups' presentations. Teacher sets time for the presentations and students rotate in a way that all members of the groups present and watch the other presentations. Students can be asked to answer questions about the presentations they watch.

Online Strategies

One activity that really requires collaboration among students and is missed in online classes is Scavenger Hunt. The app Goose-Chase can play this role really well fostering the collaboration in the group.

In the app, the teacher sets the missions, which are done by students and they send the evidence the mission was accomplished. The evidences can be

a picture, check-in a place or an audio. It is a highly effective way of motivating and engaging students to work aiming at one objective for the group.

Conclusion

Fostering learners' engagement is a process and product comprised of many aspects and can be reached in different ways in different contexts. Making learning visible and putting motivation in action can trigger this continuous worth trying path.

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Paola Nogueira

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DEVELOPING YOURSELF! THE ROLE OF REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN CPD

by *Amanda Lambert*

Introduction

It all started on August 3rd, 2013. I was 15 and ready to take my first step into teaching - literally. I was standing in front of the classroom, waiting for the coordinator to introduce me to my first group: a class of eight 15-year-old teens. Needless to say, I was a nervous wreck, "How can I teach teenagers if I'm one of them? How can I cope with their insecurities while I am still trying to understand and overcome mine?", I thought.

Four years later, I was the one introducing a new teacher to a group of students. Being the coordinator at the age of 19 was indeed a dream come true. I was helping all teachers and students, creating new projects, attending workshops that focused on leadership and management, it was great.

But then, my mind was suddenly filled with questions: "Am I inspiring my colleagues? Do I have enough experience? Do I have enough certificates? Am I good enough to be here?" And just like that, after only a few months, I quit.

It was tough. I couldn't explain my decision, I just knew I needed more time. Time to learn, to become the best for me, for my students and my colleagues. Being the coordinator was the perfect experience, but it wasn't the right time.

So, I went back to teaching. And I'm going to be completely honest, it was a breath of fresh air.

It was right there that I knew that I was meant to be in the classroom and that I was a better professional than I was when I first started. It might seem obvious, but I was not aware that this had happened through the reflections I had made about my own pedagogical practices throughout the years.

Reflecting upon my practices was something I have always done unconsciously. I always tried to understand what went well and what didn't in each class. I was trying to improve to make my students learn better, so I thought I was doing it the right way. But the moment I started to take more courses and read more books and articles on teaching was when I realized I was dealing with something called: "The Sticker Theory".

Remember when you were a child, and your mom bought you many notebooks at the beginning of the school year and all you could think was: "Wow, I'm going to save these stickers for when I really need it."

That was me with my notes, books, videos, and articles. Of course, I was going to review those notes and reflect on my practices based on them. But when? Only God knows.

That's when I came across Gibbs' Reflective Cycle (1988). I would sit down after each class and ask myself the following questions:

1. What happened? -
DESCRIPTION

2. What was I feeling? -
FEELINGS

3. What was good and bad about the experience? -
EVALUATION

4. What else could I have done? What sense can I make out of this situation? -
ANALYSIS

5. What could I do next? -
ACTION PLAN

This completely changed my practice. Before that, if something went wrong during a class, I would simply throw that lesson plan in the trash and never use it again. Now, I reflect on every single moment and identify what went well and what didn't, I take notes of my students' feedback and adapt the plan to teach a better class next time.

I still have lesson plans I created seven years ago which I have adapted many times to make them more engaging and relevant to each of my students.

As teachers, we must be able to explore and seek means for constant updating to ensure that our training is continuous and uninterrupted, and this is only possible through constant reflective actions on our pedagogical practices.

According to Garcia (1999, p. 4), this reflective action in teaching practice requires that the teacher is not

limited to the investigations presented academically, but must produce practical knowledge, which is validated by the practice itself, based on reflection.

This way, we understand that teacher education goes far beyond what we see and learn in college and that it also happens inherently. Teachers can create autonomy that allows coherent reflection on their knowledge and the reality in which they find themselves, and how to put these two factors together to improve their performance and enhance students' experience.

In order to reflect upon our practices intentionally, Stephen Brookfield (1999) suggests we use some sources to make things more meaningful and our practices more effective. He says we can make this reflection through four lenses: our students' eyes, autobiographies as teachers and learners, colleagues' experiences, and the literature on teaching and learning. In other words, you can read as much as you want, you can listen to your students, you can learn new things every day, but if you don't sit down and reflect on the information and adapt it to your own reality as a teacher, all the information is useless.

To be a reflective teacher is indeed a double-edged sword. It's great to be able to get better after each experience, but taking a moment to think about your mistakes and everything that went bad during a class can be tough.

So my recommendation is that you start this journey of efficient and life-changing reflection upon your practice by asking yourself a few questions:

1. What are my beliefs as an educator?
2. What is my personal mission?
3. What is special about my teaching?
4. What are my weaknesses?
5. How do they affect my teaching?

From this, we can affirm that we are moving from a logic that punctuates

professional development at certain time and place, to another that perceives it as a process throughout the educator's life through reflective practice.

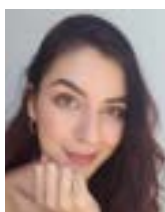
In conclusion, from the moment teachers identify reflection as a fundamental point for expanding knowledge and adapting content for fair learning for all students, they start to see themselves as a constant object of study that can always improve by taking each and every experience into account.

So, cherish each one of your experiences, share them with other teachers, listen to your students, take a break from courses and start spending more time going through everything you read and every information you come across online. This way, you will not be shaping yourself as the best educator in the world, but a better professional than you were yesterday. And that's the whole point, right?

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Amanda Lambert

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FROM TEACHING TO TEACHER: A MAN'S JOURNEY OF SELF-RECONNAISSANCE

by Gustavo Fróes

In retrospect, never would I have seen myself as a teacher – especially not a good one, as it seems to be the case. I am from Teresópolis, a small city in Rio de Janeiro, and I come from a background of private schools and a lot of everything I could want as a teenager. My mother would allow me to study and practice anything I set my mind to. She would also allow me to not do things, and what I dreaded the most as a teenager was very clear: English. The school I went to had a weak level of English being taught, as did many in the 90s, and classes would constantly not go further than the good old verb to be – a favorite in Brazil. The teacher we made the most fun of was the English teacher and it was inevitably the most boring subject. My colleagues and I never really did give our teacher a chance. However, that specific school is and has always been the model of everything I wanted to be the most different from. In that same time, when I was around fourteen years old, I underwent a vocational test which was far from being helpful: engineering, architecture, and Law. This trifecta led to the perfect storm: why would I ever need to study this language? What happened in the future years is what I like to call karma, and for better or worse, it is what it is.

Against all odds I ended up having a good level of English due to hours and hours of TV series, video games, and the internet. I went to an English course when I was sixteen and graduated in one year. When I was twenty-one, I had just moved to Campinas to study Journalism, and needed a job. Going through job ads I read about a position in the commercial sector of an English

school and decided to send my resumé. One or two days later they called me, and I went there for an interview in which they asked me about my fluent English and suggested I apply for a teaching position there. I can clearly remember asking “Is it a better pay?”, they said yes. I went through a week of training and tests and after twenty days in a new city I found myself teaching. I had been teaching there for a year when I decided to come back to Rio de Janeiro and continued working for their branches here for another year. I was not a teacher then; I was just teaching. I have already been asked how I could go on teaching for two years and not consider myself a teacher, and the answer will always be the same: I was doing it for the money, even though it was not much, until I realized I was doing it for my students. It is not easy being a teacher in Brazil. Countless times had I been asked “You teach English, cool, and what is your job?”, and I was okay with that. I did not care about improving or learning more, I was already studying something else that was going to be my career. However, just like many of the most important things tend to happen, reality hit me fast and bluntly. One day a student of mine came to me and asked why everyone treated the teaching position at that school as a McJob. I was shocked. I had only heard that expression a couple of times before – it happened over ten years ago –, and a student used it talking to me of all people, a person that was there just for the money. Afterwards I saw that student through his graduation and I never told him that during a five-minute talk in the hall, in a day as usual as any other, he made a teacher out of me.

What I learned through all these years in and out of classrooms is that the only way to really teach a student is by knowing two very basic things: do not do it for the money – if you want to get rich follow my vocational test –, and no teacher owns a classroom. The moment one is able to grasp the fragility of the ecosystem that is a classroom, and start to give in to the students’ needs instead of one’s own, that is the moment a teacher is ready to face anything. The two years I spent “just teaching” I now see as a period of myself being a student of my students. I did not care a lot about crossing the Ts and dotting the Is, I was just making good conversation based on a book, and students loved it. I learned how to make conversation go fluidly and teach English inconspicuously. There is no recipe, there is no certain course of action, each group is a group, each person is a person, and then there is the teacher, the only constant. I have worked alongside all kinds of professionals that taught English in their “free time”: lawyers, actors, a clown, tourist guides, telemarketing operators, college students, you name it. The clown was loved by everybody (and he was indeed an actual clown), the lawyers were liked by the adults, the college students mainly dealt with teens, the actors were widely known as actors among students, and there was me, the shy man from a small city that had finally and quietly understood that you do not have to be someone else to be a teacher, you can just plainly and simply be you. Just as I am writing here, I always make sure to tell all my students: there is nothing more interesting to us than ourselves. I ask them lots of questions about themselves, about preferences,



family, stories. I make sure I remember their birthdays and at least one other piece of information. Everyone likes to be remembered, to be heard, to have a friendly face to talk to, that is the ecosystem. Balance whatever grammar or topic you must teach and teach to people, not to numbers on a paper. I once had a student from a course thank me for telling her she needed not only to repeat the book she was in but also go back two books, which she did and continued to be my student.

Little did I know that this unexpected journey of becoming self-taught not only in English but also in English teaching would make me love what I do. I would say that experience brings more doubts than certainties, but it brings the good doubts, the questions that are worth being asked. Why are we in classrooms? Who are you as a teacher? I am still that same person that left a small city, but in so many ways I am not. I am still making conversations based on a book, but now I know where they lead to. I am as open to my students as they are to me and talking about myself in class is not only necessary

for that ecosystem, but it is teaching. “Storytelling is teaching”, wrote Frank McCourt, and teachers are the best storytellers there are. My students know my dog by name, they ask about him every other class. Never before has a Pug had such an adventurous life as mine: he has done everything possible from Past Simple to Future Perfect and still has so much to do (and teach). He is so special that once I was preparing for a lecture when he accidentally dropped one of my books on the floor and stepped on it. His little paw is still etched on a page that has forever stayed with me. A quote from Peter Strevens that goes “Language is not a sterile subject to be confined to the classroom. One of two things must be done: either life must be brought to the classroom or the class must be taken to life.” I take this one close to my heart, it goes with me in every classroom I enter. A lot can be done with words, that is why I am in ELT, but teaching goes further than any books or walls. Sometimes it is just a paw on a page.

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Gustavo Fróes

has been a teacher for over 14 years. He has vast experience in teaching ESP (Medical and Business), seniors, and exam preparation. Nowadays he works for Cultura Inglesa - RJ, and also with one-to-one classes, both online and face-to-face. He has been an active Braz-Tesol member for the past 2 years, and since then has worked as a volunteer and presented talks in Curitiba, Rio de Janeiro, and online for the Brasília Chapter. Gustavo is a Cambridge Speaking Examiner, holds a BA in Film, the CELTA, the TOEIC, and TESOL certifications in Designing Courses, Online Teaching, and Teaching Young Learners and Teenagers. He is currently preparing for the CPE, taking a BA in English, and working towards becoming a Teacher Trainer.

JUST ANOTHER TEACHER STORY

by Julia Lima and Talita Raulynaitis

A story of two teachers who become friends usually starts in the staff room. The one you are about to read is no different. We used to work at the same school and if you are a teacher too, you probably know that this means we would spend more time with one another than with our own families. On top of that, we used to take the same subway line on our way home. You would be surprised with the wide range of topics we would cover from Morumbi to Oscar Freire almost daily.

We have many, many things in common, and we would like to share one of them with you: we weren't born cut for the job; instead, we became teachers along the way. Even though our paths are diametrically opposed, they are somehow similar. We are sure you will find our experiences very relatable.

Our journeys began when we were both 17. Fresh out of the English course, Talita in São Paulo and Julia in Brasília were invited to teach at the same schools they had just graduated from. Of course, we would be lying to you, reader, if we told you that we fell in love with our profession right after stepping foot in a classroom for the first time. But let's not rush into things, you'll see it for yourself.

Talita can still remember quite vividly her first group. A group of 10-year-olds who had grown a strong bond with the previous teacher and had yet to hear she'd been transferred to another branch. She had had no training, didn't know how to go about instructions and came across as bossy and imposing. As we all know, kids this age don't like being told what to do, when to do it or how to do it. There's no sugar coating to it, it was terrible,

and Talita swore she'd never teach kids again - oh, the irony...

In contrast, Julia's first day went very well - or at least she thought so. She also taught kids, but, in her case, they were truly welcoming towards her. She shared the group with a younger-yet-more-experienced teacher, with whom she learned a lot. At that point, even with all the fun both teachers and the 6-year-olds were having, Julia wouldn't consider herself a teacher, she was actually aiming at a totally different profession. Looking back, we believe Julia was unable to spot her own mistakes because she was unconsciously incompetent - i.e., she didn't know that she knew nothing.

See? The experiences weren't perfect, but they were perfectly fine. It usually takes us some time before we finally put on our Teacher Goggles, an accessory so indispensable that it is impossible to take them off once they are in place. The Goggles allow us to see things through a more humane and analytical perspective. Holding a chalk and knowing the language is not enough. The first step to becoming a teacher - a real one, not one who just babbles about grammar and manners, mind you - is acknowledging that one needs to focus on both interpersonal skills and professional development.

As soon as we put the Goggles on, trivial things around us that could - and should - be brought to the classroom, one way or another, stop going unnoticed. For instance, we don't know a single teacher that has never pressed pause in the middle of a movie or an episode because that particular scene had sparked ideas. There are also those who

pay very close attention to kids playing around them, so as to incorporate the games in their practice. Above all, the greatest lesson the Goggles could teach us is that pretty much any interaction can help us build up our repertoire.

One experience that changed the way we teach was becoming students of a foreign language ourselves. For Julia, it was German, and for Talita, French. We both got to see how our teachers' behavior and techniques shaped the way we learned and how it affected the class's environment on the perspective of pupils. Our teachers were not necessarily following a TEFL coursebook, but that has only made the experience more enriching. As for us, making mistakes, struggling with pronouncing different sounds and having questions made us more humble.

But what really allowed us to raise awareness of all of this was our own continuous professional development, something that transformed those 17-year-olds into the teachers we are today. In fact, from that first job on our paths in the ESL career only grew further through courses, conferences, and self-study. Once again, you'll see there are some differences in our stories: Julia was introduced to TEFL courses early in her career and so she focused herself more on theory; while Talita's experience went the other way around, by learning through practice before moving on to the books. Nonetheless we have arrived at the same destination.

The second school where Julia worked offered a life-changing pre-service training course, during which she learned more than in the whole year before. Up until then, she considered

teaching English a gig, something anyone could do. She hadn't yet been introduced to the seriousness of ELT. But once she did, it was as though she could finally see things. And since she proved to be a very dedicated and enthusiastic student herself, she was granted scholarships to courses, sent to conferences, and even invited to train other teachers. Each one a unique and enriching experience, where she had the opportunity to meet amazing people and shape the professional she wished to become.

Talita's journey was a bit odd in a way. She taught for 3 years at a school with no connection to the EFL world whatsoever, she knew nothing about TEFL, or Cambridge exams or even that there were methodologies that differed so much from what she was used to. She then did what any rational person would do: she enrolled for CELTA! - why not jumping head-first, right? After the transforming experience, she went on to work at amazing schools where she put in practice what she had just learned. But for many years the only type of formal learning she got was during internal training. At that time, she focused more on trying to absorb all the knowledge her colleagues could share with her.

If you have read the past couple paragraphs carefully, you may have realized that we have at last a shared experience: our professional development happened mostly - and firstly - through the schools we worked at. Though being sponsored by your employers should be a common thing, we learned the hard way that it is not the case. We have to admit that chasing after CPD initiatives yourself has its bright side: you get to choose the topics which appeal the most to you. But we are also aware that paying for your own courses is not possible for the majority of teachers. Therefore, the only way is to go both ways. Schools must provide their staff with means to obtain qualifications, but we need to go beyond and look for paths to expand our horizons.

Here's a piece of advice for those who are lost and don't know where to start: talk to your peers. They will surely have great recommendations for you. Actually, you should see your colleagues as your accomplices. Being close to them will give you an opportunity to receive - and give - precious feedback and tips. For instance, they can provide you with insights on a particular issue you may be facing, or even share best practices and - why not? - lesson plans.

For us, this close contact has also been a constant reminder that we, as human beings, are subject to mistakes and flaws. It has also been a great source of support in times of need. Whether when we are beating ourselves up for something that went off plan or when we are facing a tough personal matter. Our colleagues are constantly helping us clean our sometimes cloudy Goggles, and for all these amazing things peers can do for each other we, Talita and Julia, are passionate supporters and active participants of any type of organization for teachers.

Now, reader, as we approach the end of our story, we couldn't leave you without sharing our last piece of wisdom. Ten years have passed since our first classes, and we are not the same people we used to be. We are a recollection of all the students we have had, all the great people we have met, all the courses we have taken and all the tears we have shed. And we are proud of who we have become. Hopefully, next time we meet, we won't be the same anymore. Because what makes us teachers is the fact that we are always making ourselves new.



Julia Lima

(She/Her) believes that the world can only be changed through education. This is what has been keeping her in the classroom for the past 10 years. CELTA and CPE holder, she is now pursuing a bachelor in Languages at USP. Julia has recently started calling herself a writer, having already published a couple of articles and stories related to the ELT world.



Talita Raulynaitis

has been a teacher for the past 10 years, focusing mainly on Young Learners and Teens. A holder of the CELTA and CAE, she aspires to go even beyond. Throughout her career, Talita has been very lucky for having the opportunity of working at some of the biggest language schools in São Paulo. But what she is really proud of are all the amazing people she met on the way, whether they were students or staff, they always had something to teach her.

TELLING STORIES TO YOUNG LEARNERS

by *Esp. Marisa Cleff*

Introduction

When we discuss about young learners it seems we need to refresh our ideas all the time, it is never enough. We always need to think about an appropriate resource to bring inside or outside our classes. The realia must be interesting to them and catch their attention. Kids love to listen to a good story and when they like it, they ask us to tell more than 5 times.

I am going to keep my focus on storytelling activities you can use with your students after telling them the stories. We are going to see two activities and one specific activity to be used in your CLIL classes for the two stories. I have created one 'driving questions chart' to help you with the questions and help your students to develop thought.

Storytelling - Brown Bear

I am a real Eric Carle fan. Brown Bear is a story that catches student attention, no doubt about it. I have been working with this author for years and I could see my students' engagement with it, including 10-year-old students. We know how difficult it is to catch their attention at this age.

Brown Bear activity 1: Who is missing?

Invite your students to come to the front of the classroom. All of them should sit in a row, and one should stand behind them and act as a controller. The students in a row will rise the animals' flashcards, while the controller is facing backwards. The controller will turn around, memorize the animals by using his binocular and say the animals' name together with the student's name who is rising the animal's flashcard. The controller will face backwards again and a friend will leave the room.

Controller will say by using his binocular: Brown bear brown bear who is missing? I can't see my friend lion, 'example' and so on... the teacher can choose another student to be the controller now or the student can do this again.

Brown Bear activity 2: Finding the intruder!

Give your students a set of cards, 5 right cards according to the brown bear story and 1 intruder card.

The students need to check which card is the intruder. For example, the intruder is going to be an animal that is not in the brown bear story. With all the intruders the students can create another brown bear story, just with them and the name could be: The intruders in the brown bear story, but you know, if you ask your students for the best title, I am totally sure it will be much more creative than mine.

Using CLIL: Animals around the world

Subject: Geography

You can explore their curiosity by studying the wild animals, pet animals, from the brown bear story and other animals the students would like to know better. They can cut the animals from magazines or create their own animals through puppets or other materials that you prefer.

Show the students on the map where the animals belong, explore more each place. For example: 'the bear' teacher can ask: In which places can we find a bear? Show me on the map?

Do polar bears live in Africa? Which animals can we find in Africa? Show me the African continent on the map.

Do panda bears live in Brazil? Which animals can we find in Brazil?

The teacher can play with the students an online memory game using the animals, place, and a piece of information about them. Such us: kangaroo – lives in Australia – like most marsupials, female kangaroos have a pouch.



You can follow these steps to help you during the ‘driving questions’ with your students:

Driving Questions Chart 1

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Introduction | E.g. Did you see the bears on TV yesterday? |
| Investigation | E.g. How can we protect the bears? |
| Consolidation | E.g. Now that you know the bears around the world, what could we do to keep them safe? |
| Creation | E.g. What about creating a fantastic place to let our bears feel protected? |

Storytelling Pete the cat

This story from Eric Litwin is terrific, I can say that it involves not only the students but also the teacher. I will be forever in love for Pete the cat. This smart cat really caught me.

Storytelling activity 1: A huge footprint board

Make some colorful tennis shoes footprints from construction paper and contact paper, this activity will get everyone grooving! The teacher and the other classmates will sing Pete the cat’s song while one by one student skips the huge footprint board. The student will jump and wait to change the tennis shoes footprint according to the song.

Storytelling activity 2:

Teach your students how to tie their shoes. Pete is all about his shoes, and this activity will help your students learn how to tie their own shoes. After you print the paper shoes, glue them to cardboard to make them more durable. You don’t need shoelaces for the activity; you can use yarn of any thickness or color.

Using CLIL: Making fashion sneakers

Subject: Arts

You can choose some painters like Salvador Dalí or Piet Mondrian. I am going to explain you why I chose these two artists.

Salvador Dalí was a Spanish surrealist artist renowned for his technical skill, precise draftsmanship, and the striking and bizarre images in his work.

Piet Mondrian was a Dutch painter. He is known for being one of the pioneers of 20th-century abstract art. His artistic vocabulary was reduced to simple geometric elements.

As you can see these two painters have a strong style. You can present them to your students and associate some of their work in the Pete sneakers.

The students, after knowing the painters, will decide what kind of sneakers they are going to make by using the painters’ technique, and bring some ideas from the artists in their fashion sneakers.

You can follow these steps to help you during the ‘driving questions’ with your students:

Driving Questions Chart 2

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Introduction | E.g. Have you visited an art exhibition? |
| Investigation | E.g. How can we use one of the techniques in Pete the cat’s sneakers? |
| Consolidation | E.g. Now that you know these two artists, what could we do to make our sneakers more creative? |
| Creation | E.g. What about creating stylish sneakers with an artist signature? |

Conclusion

Working with storytelling lets our students feeling part of the learning process, in the same way, we are working with critical thinking, allowing our pupils to think about what they are doing.

As says Robert Mckee “Storytelling is the most powerful way to put ideas into the world today”.

Working with CLIL in our storytelling classes, and promoting this interdisciplinarity with other subject areas, will help our students to develop language and content in a natural way.

CLIL principles are built on two key founding messages. First, CLIL requires teaching through —not in— the language. There is a fundamental difference. When we teach through a language, we have to build into our planning all the language functions which learners will need to operationalize their subject or thematic knowledge. This goes beyond teaching specific vocabulary and instead requires teaching the language of science or the language of geography. It also means that the starting point for language teachers is not grammar or vocabulary, but an analysis of the demands of the content to be taught and learned.

I really hope you have enjoyed! Have fun with these activities and I wish you good storytelling moment with your kids!

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Marisa Cleff

is graduated in 'letras' Portuguese, English, and Spanish. She has been teaching young learners for more than 20 years. She has around eight specializations in education area. She is always involved with researches about how the learning process occurs. The last one she is taking is in Bilingual Education Methodology. She is a language teacher and a teacher trainer.

I AM NOT OVERQUALIFIED FOR THIS! LESSONS LEARNED IN TIME

by *Carolina Cunha*

Introduction

Put simply, being overqualified means having a job that demands skills and abilities which are way below of what you are actually able to perform. It means carrying out dull tasks that do not challenge you and, hence, keep you from thriving in your career. After years of teaching experience, it's natural that we think like that. In this article I discuss the notion of being overqualified for a job that demands so much from the individual, i.e. the teacher, who ought to be up to date with teaching trends. Moreover, supported by Carol Dweck's growth mindset theory, I intend to deconstruct this mentality and prove that we are definitely not overqualified for the job.

Keeping up with the CV

As teachers, the one thing we know for sure is that our work is never complete. We never get to tick off the endless to-do list, as we constantly have something new to learn, an activity or a teaching tip to share with our peers, or a new strategy or resource to create. This is the true nature of our profession.

However, it takes a few years into the profession to better grasp that aspect. Twenty years ago, when I started my teaching career, I thought I had a linear path to follow, starting the journey at UFMG (where I got my BA in English), then teaching in a few language schools until I would finally become a coordinator. There it was! Becoming a coordinator was my ultimate goal and the proof of both

competence and years of hard work and dedication.

As the years went by, it dawned on me that the path was anything but linear. I discovered other passions and ended up taking the road less travelled. Along with the Applied Linguistics curriculum, I also studied French, German, Sociolinguistics and Literature in college. After graduating, I put my teaching career on hold to take a semester off in France, where I worked as an au pair.

I came back to Brazil eager to resume teaching. I started teaching English in a school that did not offer me enough opportunities to grow as a professional, so I decided to go back to university. I went on to pursue a masters in Sociolinguistics and I applied for a job in a better school (where I was able to improve my teaching skills and enhance my CV by taking the TKT and the CELTA). I finally felt like I was right where I belonged. Until I didn't... and it started feeling like I was overqualified to do what I was doing.

The comfort zone: a warm and cosy place where nothing really happens

We've all been there. Seasoned teachers, I mean. After years working at the same school, having to perform administrative tasks and eventually settling into a repetitive routine, we are overwhelmed with all sorts of feelings. Some teachers seem to adapt quite well to the situation by going into auto-pilot



mode. They prepare and teach their classes mechanically. In other words, they embrace the comfort zone. Let's face it, it's a warm and cosy place, but nothing really happens there. There's no room for growth or thinking outside the box. Every move is predictable and safe. Nobody loses. But nobody wins either.

Other teachers, though, see the comfort zone as an alarm bell. Rather than adapting to it, they become restless and look for ways to find a purpose and make sense of what they

do. It happened to me after working for 10 years at the same school. I started feeling underappreciated by my superiors and the job became menial, uninteresting and overshadowed by all the administrative work I had to perform. Although I've never allowed myself to set foot in the comfort zone, I realised I was getting sidetracked by the challenges I had been facing. That



was the moment I decided I couldn't let those negative feelings take over my teaching practice, after all they were steering me right towards the place I dreaded the most: the comfort zone!

It took me a lot of courage to admit I had to take action and I had to do it fast. My career depended on it and I couldn't let myself down. I started to draw up an action plan that would get me right to the next level.

“I must do something” will

always solve more problems than “something must be done”

There are essentially two mindsets that can guide our lives: growth and fixed. Having a growth mindset is fundamental for success, as psychologist Carol Dweck writes: “In a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work—brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment.” Dweck's words really motivated me to see my problems as challenges to be overcome and make me better.

As soon as I decided to do something about my situation, I was able to notice a significant change in my feelings towards success, happiness and the sense of accomplishment. I decided to quit my job and become a freelance teacher. Just thinking of it would give me butterflies in the stomach and made me question myself dozens of times. But I believed it was the right thing to do. And I did it.

After some time, I came across Sylvie Duckworth's “10 things that will happen when you start stepping out of your comfort zone” and realized that:

1. I started growing quickly;
2. I began to love challenging myself;
3. I realized all of my fears were fictional;
4. I replaced regret with excitement;
5. I laughed at my past self;
6. I found out more about my own strengths and weaknesses;
7. I boosted my self-confidence;
8. I created a new source of satisfaction;
9. I realized the only way to success leads through discomfort;
10. I began inspiring the people around me.

Discovering those things about myself helped me figure out my goals and organise my teaching business

according to my beliefs. I also discovered a very important thing about myself: I have grit. In Angela Duckworth's words, “Grit is passion and perseverance for very long-term goals. Grit is having stamina. Grit is sticking with your future, day in, day out, not just for the week, not just for the month, but for years, and working really hard to make that future a reality. Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint.” That's when I realized I was where I belonged... well, until the next stage that will trigger a new change!

Conclusion

Two years after this major change in my life, I came to the conclusion that I am definitely not overqualified to do what I do. And never will be. My 20 years of experience plus every single course I've taken—from “Drama” in high school and “German” in Munich, to the most recent ones, “Developing ESL Materials” in London and a Specialization in Education in PUC-RS—made me the professional I am today and will contribute to the professional I will be some years from now. After all, as Dweck says, “becoming is better than being.”

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