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# EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 8th edition of The APPI eJournal.

It is our pleasure to present you with different kinds of articles written both by APPI members and international writers.

Reading, writing, speaking, listening are some skills you will find in this Journal with practical activities to implement when you are tired and seeking something diverse or that you have already used and totally forgotten. Either via Erasmus+ projects, such as Bookpackers Around Europe: Inspiring journeys through past and present cultures; platforms like Twitter to Promote Writing and Digital Literacies; YouTube, mobile phone, iPad, computer to promote Creative Writing; Visual Arts to enhance students' critical thinking and creativity; Project Zero at the Harvard Graduate School of Education to boost learners' thinking skills; the MentorART programme provides students with

equal opportunities and support, independently of social background; or some tips for teachers to get hold to facing disruptive behaviour.

Project works are meant to develop students' autonomy, collaborative, communicative skills in the classroom as well as in the outside world by being in touch with other European schools prove to be of good value so that Portuguese and foreign learners may have an interactive, understanding respectful approach to different cultures. If this is attained, we can but just motivate teenagers to become fully aware of a world where respect and understanding will be the guides to achieve peace in the European Union, and hopefully in the global world.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition — and we look forward to receiving your contribution to future Editions.

Have a fruitful healthy 2022!

Judite & Neil

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*The views expressed in the APPI e-Journal are the contributors' own, and not necessarily those of the Editors or the Publisher.*



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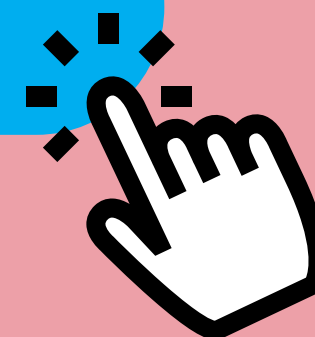
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# Collaborative Reading

ALEXANDRA DUARTE





**He who reads aloud exposes himself absolutely. If he doesn't understand what he's reading, he betrays himself out loud.  
(Pennac, 1992/1994)**

## Introduction

Reading skills are important. I know it. You know it. Our students know it.

But how can we make reading practice engaging in our EFL classes and for European projects?

As partners in the reading project entitled “Bookpackers Around Europe: Inspiring journeys through past and present cultures”, of the ERASMUS+ programme, and without the possibility of materialising the anticipated mobilities, the planned strategies and activities have been redesigned. For the school year of 2020-21, there were, as usual, contacts and video conferences, followed by debates or recordings of short stories.



## Reading Aloud in EFL

Many researchers (Haupt, 2015; Horwitz, 2008; Krashen, 2007; Nation, 2008) consider that assisting language learners in the development of their reading skills is a crucial step in leading them to refine and master other language skills.

When reading aloud in classes, students practise pronunciation and improve their oral English. They also get a deeper understanding of the texts, build their vocabulary and can strengthen what they have learned by listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading aloud allows for emotions and feelings to be present, and that, in turn, motivates students to read more and be engaged with the text. Paying close attention to their peers' reading is also a learning process, and can contribute to improving the classroom atmosphere. After all, reading can invite conversation, and offer an unmatched opportunity to talk together.

Reading aloud takes place repeatedly in my EFL classes but does not have to happen only in the classroom. For some time now, I have been requesting my students to send me their recorded readings for assessment: to avoid high anxiety levels and to give them the opportunity to prepare their reading in a non-threatening environment, they are allotted time to prepare a text of their choice so that they can send me their best recording. This confidence in their abilities has paid off as you may check at:

[https://padlet.com/teacheralex\\_dua/recordings2017\\_18](https://padlet.com/teacheralex_dua/recordings2017_18) [active link — audio recordings]

where I have been compiling some of the best recordings.

To foster a love of literature and reading, every month a new poem is shared, read aloud, and briefly discussed. Even though it is up to me to choose those poems, all the students contribute by researching info about the author.



In regards to the “Bookpackers project”, and amid the global pandemic, instead of longer narratives, the coordinators agreed on approaching short stories as they are versatile, accessible, and well, short, but with proper plots, providing relevant practice in understanding a situation and events. Simultaneously, students gain the needed exposure to the English language and, with confidence, may put language knowledge into practice in debates and, as in this case, in reading aloud.

So, following the work already started in the last school year with short stories, students from our school as well as partner schools have been challenged to engage in collaborative readings, taking advantage of the internet and their mobile devices. The outlined goals are simple: prepare the expressive reading of the selected text, use the available technology to promote contact between partners, keep the project and students active and record them reading the debated stories. Regardless of geographic locations, all the potential interested parties will have access to the audio recordings, particularly students who are partially sighted or visually impaired.

## Methodology & Recordings

Having selected the text, I inked each one with a different colour for each character. An email was then sent to the readers, in which I not only attached the text but also scheduled a video conference for prep work.

We all know it is difficult to read unfamiliar material and even more in a foreign language. In fact, Huang (2010) observes that comprehension is the foundation and prerequisite of reading, and only by understanding the material, can the reader convey what the author expressed. Huang (2010) therefore concludes that we need to fully prepare the students.

After that groundwork, whenever needed, the next step was to exchange our phone contacts as our remote collaborative recordings were created using [www.anchor.fm](https://www.anchor.fm), a free and very user-friendly app – just like any WhatsApp group call with up to five people total, anytime and anywhere. As easy as that!

Here are some illustrative examples of our growing collection:

– *The Last Command* by Arthur C. Clark – recorded during the COVID-19 confinement period, with two 9th graders:

<https://voca.ro/1eYooFpSYVUg>

– The same story, this time read by a Spanish and a Turkish student:

<https://voca.ro/1kDCSfbN32gN>

– *The Gift of The Magi* by O. Henry – recorded at school, with 9th graders:

<https://voca.ro/1iqxLgv2gSBo>



– *Eveline* by James Joyce – recorded while in quarantine, with 9th grade students:

<https://voca.ro/1bzCZ6li5KRw>

– *Tuesday Siesta* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, also recorded while in quarantine, with my 7th and 9th grade students, a Polish and a Turkish student.

<https://voca.ro/121FjbnERFjG>

Other examples still:

– Short story from the project, submitted for assessment, by a 9th grader, this time, *House Taken Over* by Julio Cortazar

<https://voca.ro/1dl6kavMLZmd>

– Collaborative reading of an excerpt of a work selected by 7th graders, from the collection *The College of the Four Towers* by Enid Blyton – this is an extra “Bookpackers project”, which illustrates the fact that readings can and should be chosen by students, more so, when they are used for assessment.

<https://voca.ro/16FKbNcTXtq4>

## Final Thoughts

Besides the cognitive functions, reading improves our mental health, beginning in early childhood when being read aloud to is a real treasure from an educational perspective, as well as the added bonus with quality family time. Within our project, while benefitting students academically, reading aloud has created a sense of community, building the group repertoire of short stories and a shared reading history.

Bearing in mind that these podcasts are another resource in English, not only for the aforementioned European project, but above all for sharing and appreciation, anytime, anywhere, this initiative will be continued aiming, ultimately, to further encourage the act of reading. We believe that these audio short stories are perfect examples of how technology can be used to provide memorable moments, unique exchanges, replicable, and can therefore be extended to any classroom. Moreover, while commuting, when driving our cars to and from our workplaces, when hiking... anyone may take advantage of that time wisely, listen to these recordings and be a little more knowledgeable. Your choice.

Last but not least... there are still two aspects of paramount importance worth highlighting: European projects develop student autonomy and operationalise curricular flexibility, providing excellent educational opportunities and tools for the learning to be carried out, as laid down in the structuring documents, namely in *Perfil dos Alunos à Saída da Escolaridade Obrigatória* (Martins & al., 2017). It should also be noted that the development of projects, preferably of

interdisciplinary nature, promotes Inclusive Education, respecting the diversity of needs and the potential of each and every student, and underlies the objectives set out in *Estratégia Nacional de Educação para a Cidadania* (Monteiro et al., 2017).

As for the “European Bookpackers project”, recording students reading aloud represents an asset not just for the project itself, but, above all, for the development of skills in the domains of orality and reading. These are included in the English curriculum and, therefore, subject to evaluation, since it requires, on the part of the student, prep work from semantics to prosody. As pointed out before, collaborative readings follow advance preparation, in videoconference meetings, in which doubts are clarified as to the meaning of words, pronunciation, intonation and correct rhythm. This way, the articulation between the project work and the curriculum of the subject becomes not only effective, but also has great relevance in favour of the students’ linguistic competence, contemplated in the “Common European Framework of Reference for Languages” (2001), and in different documents that guide the teaching of foreign languages in Portugal.

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A photograph of a conference event. In the foreground, the backs of several audience members' heads and their raised hands are visible, indicating they are clapping. In the background, a speaker stands on a stage with arms outstretched. A large screen to the left of the speaker displays the event's title and dates.

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# Using Twitter to Promote Writing and Digital Literacies in the 21st Century Classroom



Carlos Lindade



Twitter is among the most popular social networking apps globally. As of 2020, there were approximately 330 million monthly active users and 145 million daily users. In Portugal, however, Twitter only represents approximately 5% of the total market share, being heavily dominated by Facebook. In my previous articles, I have advocated for WhatsApp, Tik Tok and Instagram as mediums to involve students and augment learning scenarios in and out of the classroom. This article will provide some input on how Twitter can be used as an effective tool to promote writing and learning skills as well as digital literacies.

*"Tweeting is like sending out cool telegrams to your friends once a week." — @TomHanks*

## Introduction

Twitter is yet another social networking platform full of potential for ELT. On Twitter, "registered users may share brief messages called tweets, which fuel the social networking experience and promote a form of microblogging that may be extremely useful to enhance standard language skills such as writing, learning skills like critical thinking and a range of digital literacy skills (as in information, media, and technology literacy). Because Twitter is a multi-platform and multi-device platform that allows its use in a range of contexts. Sharing tweets, following your best friend, favourite singer, actor, or politician, a tweet (or a reply to a tweet) may be easily delivered through the Twitter app via smartphone, tablet, or a desktop browser. Given its user-friendly design and the fact that it is currently the most popular microblogging service in the world, Twitter may be used to supplement regular classroom activities since it offers continuous communication, generates alternate work, centres resources, and embeds information. Out of the box, Twitter also lets users share pictures, music, and video files allowing your students to continue their language learning experience well beyond the physical classroom.

## Using Twitter in ELT

Espinoza-Celi and Pintado (2020) in their case study: Using Twitter to enhance writing skills with senior high school students suggests that young learners spend a considerable amount of time writing on social networks, promoting

a need to foster intelligible writing. Within a platform such as Twitter, learners may acquire new chunks of language, advanced vocabulary, discover idioms, and be confronted with important grammatical structures. Additionally, on Twitter, it is easy to read about and share habits, beliefs, and customs providing a new significant window to promote intercultural awareness and promote online citizenship.

One of the characteristics of Twitter is that each tweet is restricted to 140 characters, which forces students to be very selective about what they want to share. Although a teacher might think that such a limit is not nearly enough to assess a learner's writing, the continuous use of Twitter (over a term or a semester) will provide a significant amount of input and allow one to mark their writing over time as opposed to a specific in-class task done once or twice throughout the school year. In fact, Twitter is a great platform to promote formative writing assessment which may be transformed into summative assessment when pre-arranged criteria are presented to the group. Additionally, having such a small window for writing requires users to show not only their originality but also intelligible writing skills to meet the criteria of microblogging. Educational tweeting is an excellent and natural method for students to learn new things about their peers and for teachers to learn about their students' ideas, making lesson planning more enjoyable, and effective, and studying more relevant, entertaining, and pleasant. Twitter also enables students to complete online writing tasks without the need for the teacher to specifically assign them weekly homework.

Each student's writing and ideas may easily be tracked through Twitter, allowing teachers to follow their students' development via a #hashtag and @tagging, enabling instructors to keep tabs on their pupils' grades. It allows students to practise using the language for situational communication, while simultaneously providing instructors with an opportunity to see their learners perform in a real-life situation, opposed to classic classroom tasks that often feel a bit artificial and not always meaningful. Furthermore, using Twitter in the classroom may make it easier for students to work together on collaborative writing assignments and generate new ideas and new content (Ahmed 2015). While being an excellent experience for language learners to practise the grammar and vocabulary covered throughout the school year, students can easily obtain feedback on their remarks and answers as well as write about what their peers have shared.



## Twitter activities for ELT

As teachers, we are in a constant endeavour to provide the best tasks for our learners. Since the Internet contains an infinite supply of information, the teacher and students can quickly highlight a tweet containing relevant content using the class hashtag or by tagging the teacher. Nevertheless, what activities could be completed within ELT? The following 5 suggestions are only the tip of the iceberg.

1. First things first, teach learners how to tweet. The ESL Library offers a framework to teach and learn about tweeting. It is safer to provide an informed outline before moving towards the app:  
<https://esllibrary.com/courses/74/lessons/2053>
2. Post a discussion or debate questions related to the contents being covered in class and guide your students to post responses using the class hashtag.
3. Follow one of many Twitter bots dedicated to providing writing prompts. There are picture writing prompts such as @pictureprompts or standard writing prompts like @MagicalRealismBot or @UnlikelyPowers. Use their input to foster creative writing either in class or at home. The amount of work assigned to learners will heavily depend on teaching context and time restraints. Here are some examples:



4. Use Twitter's polling feature to post a question for your class (or classes) to vote. It can be very useful to get feedback before moving forward.
5. Ask learners to share links, videos, songs, articles, podcasts, experiences, and examples of the contents you are covering. You do not have to do all the work! Learners should actively participate and suggest contents you can later use in class for language teaching.

Also, there is a growing number of Twitter profiles on promoting ELT and general learning. Some are institutional accounts, but many others are accounts of English teachers who share relevant content and with whom you can even build bridges for projects.

### Some concerns

Privacy issues are always a concern when using social media for educational purposes. It is very important to overview and present clear guidelines before using Twitter for writing tasks regardless if it is a short-term project or a yearlong activity.

### Final thoughts

Twitter can easily be considered a valuable and versatile tool for general language learning since it engages students to write in English, share and follow contents that are relevant for them and for language acquisition. It presents an easy interface, the possibility to track students' preferred topics and performance and follow different users. In addition, Twitter offers a variety of topics in different fields that exposes students to vocabulary as well as essential grammar structures that allows bridges between what is covered in the classroom and the use of English in the real world. It can be incorporated in assessment guidelines and allow teachers to formatively assess their learners and truly transform how writing is promoted in your lessons. It might seem strange, but I am confident that the results will surprise you.



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# Project work — The joys, the challenges, and the pitfalls

Charlotte Murphy



Project work is a common approach to language learning, encompassing a range of skills and systems that allow our learners to put what they've learnt into practice. This article will shine a light on both the positive and negative aspects of project work, and what to do to ensure its success!

My time in EFL has taken me to different parts of the world, but it wasn't until my return to the motherland, aka the UK, that I discovered project work in the language learning classroom. It was during this time that I taught many short-term groups of learners who typically came to the UK with their sights on one thing – improving their communication skills. They needed tasks to get them speaking English, topics to motivate them, and to finish their course with a sense of achievement. And so, I discovered the joys of project work.

Every language school I worked at had books of photocopiable lesson activities that supported project work and the communicative approach. Every teacher I met had a good project-based lesson up their sleeve. And with every new student group I taught, I could see the ease in recycling project lessons I'd conducted with a previous cohort of students. I'd seemingly found the remedy to surviving the summer burnout that was so common

among language teachers at this time of the year! All praise project work!

Alas, it wasn't long before cracks started to appear, and I realised that like all teaching approaches, project work requires some careful planning, consideration, and that all important moment for reflection. So, I want to share with you some areas to consider before you dive into the project-work pool so you can acknowledge the challenges, avoid the pitfalls, and allow yourself to bask in the joy of this communicative approach to language learning!

### **Personalisation**

One of the great things about project work is the ability to personalise it. But as the word suggests, it's personal to each individual learner. Just because one student likes dogs, doesn't mean they all will, so maybe that project on creating a care plan on looking after a dog for the day won't be so engaging. Whilst I agree that you won't necessarily find a topic that all learners will be interested in, you can certainly do some background research first to try and ascertain what the winning themes are. Conducting questionnaires with your learners is a great way to do this. Or why not get them to conduct the ques-

tionnaires as a group mingle activity, and present their findings to the class afterwards? How many students *do* like dogs?

### **Independence**

Projects can be a great way of giving learners independence to conduct their own research, organise their own schedules, and work with their peers, either in pairs or groups, with less interaction needed between student and teacher. But don't get too comfortable behind your desk! It's really important that learners are monitored throughout project work activities. Projects also involve deadlines, so make sure your learners are keeping on track. Any target language you've introduced for their communicative practice needs to be "quality controlled" to check it is being used correctly. And most importantly, you need to ensure that every learner is engaged with the project. Factor "check-in" moments into your lesson plans, especially if teaching online as it can be more challenging to monitor learners in this set-up. If your students are working in groups, why not get them to nominate a spokesperson to feedback on the progress of the tasks they're working on? This can help to support collaboration amongst peers – a powerful tool in successful project work production.



## Environment

Whilst it's difficult to influence the environment for any online learners, you can certainly adapt it when teaching face to face. Before conducting any project work activities, think about the layout of your classroom. Can students easily communicate with each other? Do you need to move the desks around to allow for group work? Do you need to move to a different room altogether to access more space? Project lessons can sometimes be louder and more animated than other lessons, so if you have thin walls, you might also want to consider giving the teacher next-door some notice! And on the subject of preparation, what facilities do you need? Will learners be using computers or pen and paper? Will they need internet access? Could phones serve a purpose here, and if so, what will your class rules be regarding their use? You need to put some thought into how the lesson will operate in order to effectively prepare for it.

## Clear communication

What is the purpose of the project, how long will it take, and what is the intended result? It's important to clearly communicate these aspects of project work so that students feel like there is learning behind all the fun that project work can bring. After all, purpose feeds into motivation, and motivation leads to success! When intended learning outcomes are defined at the start of a lesson, it provides a learning goal and a benchmark for achievement, which can be reflected on through students' production at the end of lesson presentations, media creations (e.g., video or audio recordings), or portfolios. The CEFR descriptor scales for Communicative Language Competences can be used by teachers to grade learners across their mastery of skills and systems as well as their socio-linguistic competence, e.g., use of polite forms, sociocultural cues, and appropriate register, although the preparation of this can

be time consuming. *Solutions'* third edition by Oxford University Press is an example of a course book that already has this content prepared for its project lessons, making it easier for the teacher to provide structured feedback and give students something they can take away and reflect on.

**Charlotte Murphy** worked as an EFL teacher for over 7 years, teaching primary, secondary and adult learners in South Korea, Japan and the UK. She has taught general and business English, as well as exam preparation classes.

She currently lives in Brighton, UK, and works for Oxford University Press as a Professional Development Manager in ELT.











# Creative writing in the classroom

Conceição Duarte



Last year I attended a course online named “Leitura e Escrita Criativa na Sala de Aula”. As a final work for evaluation, the course attendants needed to present three writing projects to apply in class. Here are two of the three I created.

## PROJECT 1

**Target:** 10th form students link to DGE\* 🔗

**Situation:** As a Diagnostic Test (written part)

### Aims:

- To engage students in an activity that involves creativity and originality as a substitute for the traditional diagnostic test.
- To diagnose the level of pragmatic and linguistic competences of each student as “user/writer” capable to produce “creative writing” in order to place her/him in the CEFR – preferably as a B1 student.
- To familiarise the students with CEFR and its application (namely *Europass*) so that they may self-evaluate and self-regulate competences as “user-writers” in English.
- To collect information to propose remedial activities to those students placed below level B1.

### Strategies:

- Set the task as a Diagnostic Test, presenting its aims.
- Give students the resource, a sheet with instructions (Annex)

About the use of the mother tongue in the written activity (see *Observation 1*), I will quote Dr Miranda Hamilton, teacher and teacher’s supervisor, from Cambridge University, who said that “the development of the writing skills is a messy process that improves with practice, in terms of accuracy, fluency and learner confidence”. As such, she advocates “that one allows the learner to use her/his own language, neither restraining the flux of ideas nor undermining the student’s self-confidence as a producer of a personal, creative written text.” (Quote from a Seminar delivered in the online event “**Cambridge Live Experience**” on 10/09/2020”). My experience shows that a student who has a good knowledge of the codes of another language, English in this case, will make little to no use of the mother tongue.

## PROJECT 2

**Target:** 12th form students – level B2, “independent user” 🔗

**Topic Areas:** “Culture, Arts and Society” linked to the other areas of the curriculum

### Aims:

- To foster students’ creativity in the writing of an individual original text (a short story, a reflection, a film script, a piece of news...) based on a given resource.
- To mobilise different types of emotional intelligence: verbal-linguistic, visual-spatial, musical, intrapersonal, interpersonal.
- To approach the curriculum transversely, by connecting the given resource and the produced text to studied topic areas, such as migration phenomena, wealth/poverty paradoxes and international conflicts.
- To make a formative evaluation of each student’s work.
- To allow students to publicly present the texts in class or later on, in the School Open Day (optional);

**Time:** 30 minutes for the making/revision of the text (+ 60 minutes to share the produced text with the whole class – see *Observation 2*)

**Resource:** Video called *Faded* –  
Youtube: <https://youtu.be/60ItHLz5WEA>

### Strategies:

- To watch the video in the classroom or in their mobile phone/ iPad/ computer, after getting the link sent to them in the moment.
- To register ideas/impressions after watching the video.
- To decide the type of text to be written using those notes.
- To write the text and to revise/correct it.



## Observation 1

1. If there is more than a one-type text, I suggest the class would listen to and compare them, deciding which best fits in the category, eventually suggesting tips for improvement. The time span would be of 60 minutes.
2. The next creative texts should be subject to summative evaluation.

### Annex

#### Creative Writing Exercise

“Once I had a dream. I dreamed I was flying in the skies taken by a cloud.”

Write about your dream, beginning with the above sentences.

Who were you? Where were you going? Was someone or something with you?

Decide whether the dream was scary, funny, or just curious.

“When we are asleep in this world, we are awake in another.” Salvador Dali

## Observation 2

1. You should write 1 or 2 pages, no more.
2. You are allowed to use an online translator from your cell phone/tablet for word confirmation and not chunk text translation.
3. You are allowed to write a few sentences in your mother tongue (Portuguese) if you can't express yourself in English.

## References:

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<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages>


Common European Framework of Competences: Learning, Teaching, Assessment – Structured Overview of all CEFR scales – page 23, Creative Writing scale (downloaded booklet from the Council of Europe webpage)

Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture.

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/reference-framework-of-competences-for-democratic-culture/descriptors-of-competences#Key>

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/common-european-framework-reference-languages/the-cefr-descriptors>

The Cambridge Live Experience, 08-10 September 2020 – Quote from Ms Miranda Hamilton's talk “Dear Diary: Journals as a safe space for learners to write in the post-Covid 19 classroom”.

\* Aprendizagens Essenciais - Secundário I Inglês Continuação 10.º ano e 11.º ano de escolaridade — Em vigor de acordo com o previsto no artigo 38.º do Decreto-Lei n.º 55/2018, de 6 de julho. 

I am from Barcelos and teach English to Secondary level students in my hometown, at Escola Secundária Alcaides de Faria.

I love a good cup of coffee and many forms of Art, being Dance, Music and Cinema my favourites. I also enjoy travelling.







# Fostering skills through the Arts

Cristina Pereira

BOTERO



Art is a wonderful way to teach English or any other foreign language. Students are naturally creative. They respond to visual images and have a most active imagination. Art can assist a teacher with many aspects of teaching English. How can you combine Art with the fostering of the four skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking) and design lessons accordingly, or at least make it more creative? It is also about empowering the students to act in an intercultural and linguistic way. Portraits can be used in both beginners and advanced classes. On the basis of various tasks, students learn to use the language skills and skills they have already acquired in class and to actively develop them further. The presented tasks are designed for year 7.

The first task is visual dictation. The teacher gives the instructions:

What can you do with a piece of paper and a pen (write, draw, paint...). I will describe a picture to you, and you will try to draw the picture.

- It is a woman.
- She has got an oval face.
- Her hair is long and brown.
- Her nose is big and her mouth is small.
- She is wearing a brown dress and she is crossing her hands.

Students show their drawings.

Then, the teacher shows the picture of **Mona Lisa** and asks students if they know who that is and by whom it was painted (some background information might be necessary).



The teacher asks for a second drawing.

- It is a woman.
- She has got a roly-poly face.
- She has got big round cheeks.
- She has got long, brown, curly hair.
- Her nose is tiny and small and her mouth, too. She has got small round eyes.
- She is wearing a brown dress and she is crossing her hands.

Students show their drawings.

Then, the teacher shows the picture of Mona Lisa and asks students if it is the same portrait. (Eventually students will say that in the second portrait the body is inflated).

The teacher introduces Fernando Botero (a Colombian figurative artist and sculptor) to students.

Fernando Botero's Art has a very special characteristic. All of his figures are oversized. In terms of aesthetics, fat

people are beautiful. Thus, his pictures depict fat people. In 1977, for example, he created a variation of Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa with a round face. His theme is the human being, human life with all its facets. The representation of the figure experiences a special expression in his work, because he shows the human body as well as all other forms in exaggerated proportions.

Back to the drawing task, we introduced Botero to the students using a straightforward methodical approach. We guided the students from the "known" (Leonardo da Vinci's Mona Lisa) to the "unknown" (Botero's Mona Lisa). We can thereby state that language is used as a means for conveying Art and vice versa, that is, Art as a means for conveying language. The visual dictation task is always a good chance to revise, deepen and enlarge vocabulary.

What other task types are there well suited for creative language teaching?

Now, we invite students to look at more of Botero's Art.

Pictures show people in certain sociocultural contexts, people who in certain work situations stimulate statements about the special everyday culture (getting to know, eating, family, leisure time...) and thus Art images can trigger speech acts and generate a need for communication (spoken and written form). Image processing is an effective strategy of verbalisation. If images are named or described, then the retention performance improves.

At this stage, a possible task type would be a questionnaire. Thus, key questions are asked and answered together. The teacher scrolls through the portraits one by one, and might write, simultaneously, all the vocabulary on the board (adjectives, verbs, phrases) to characterise the represented figures, the surrounding environment, the actions, etc., paving the way for forthcoming speaking and writing tasks.



- What can you see in the pictures?
- (There is / There are ...)
- Describe the woman / the man.
- What are they doing?
- What kind of food do you see?
- What is his hobby / her hobby?

After carrying out the questionnaire, one might consider a picture composition task. The class can be divided into groups and the task would be: arrange the pictures in such a way that you see them as a story. Write the story and tell it. The students can be given a framework with sentence beginnings for a short story.

**Example**

**On a beautiful sunny day...** I met two women. I introduced myself to one of them. The other, I saw coming into a house.

**I thought I...** should invite them to go out for a dance.

**At the beginning I...** liked the blonde one and we went for a picnic.

**But my mind...** was set on the dark haired woman.

**I had an idea...** I delivered a serenade and she agreed to go out on a date with me.

**Some time later...** we got in love and had our own family.

If you leave an open end, you can perform the task ***kamishibai*** (Japanese paper theatre intended to train free and improvised speaking) as students tend to have low confidence to do storytelling in English. The teacher asks the students to draw the end picture. The students hold then the drawing and deliver the presentation.

A work of Art can be greeted the way we greet people. Let's call this task type ***The welcoming ceremony***. The main character in these pictures seems to be the man.

This task could be called ***Almost Everything About Mike***

(or any other name). We assume that the figures in a work of Art are actually alive and that they can be questioned. The teacher asks students to think about questions related to the different characters and conduct a fictitious interview. In small groups, the students can formulate questions about the different characters (and then possibly discuss the answers together).

- What's your name?
- How old are you?
- What do you like to wear?
- What musical instrument do you like to play?
- What is your daily routine like?
- Who are your friends?
- Do you have any hobbies, pets, etc.?

With the help of the images, the teacher and the students develop a networked basis that forms the groundwork for language production, strengthening students' speaking and listening skills.

Other written tasks can also be carried out with the help of Botero's images.

**Writing an Elfchen**

An Elfchen (also called an elevenie) is similar to a Haiku (a form of Japanese poetry made of short, unrhymed lines that evoke natural imagery) in that it has a set form. It is an eleven-word poem written across five lines. However, it is unique in that it has 11 words, the lines having 1-2-3-4-1 words, respectively. Elf means eleven in German, and -chen at the end of a German word makes the word wee or enduring. Summing up, an Elfchen is a little poem.

This task should stimulate spontaneous, pleasurable writing. The focus of this variant is on the writing process itself. Composing a little elf offers the possibility of producing small, meaningful texts with little vocabulary and simple syntactic patterns, thus helping to motivate students to write.

**Here's how it works:**

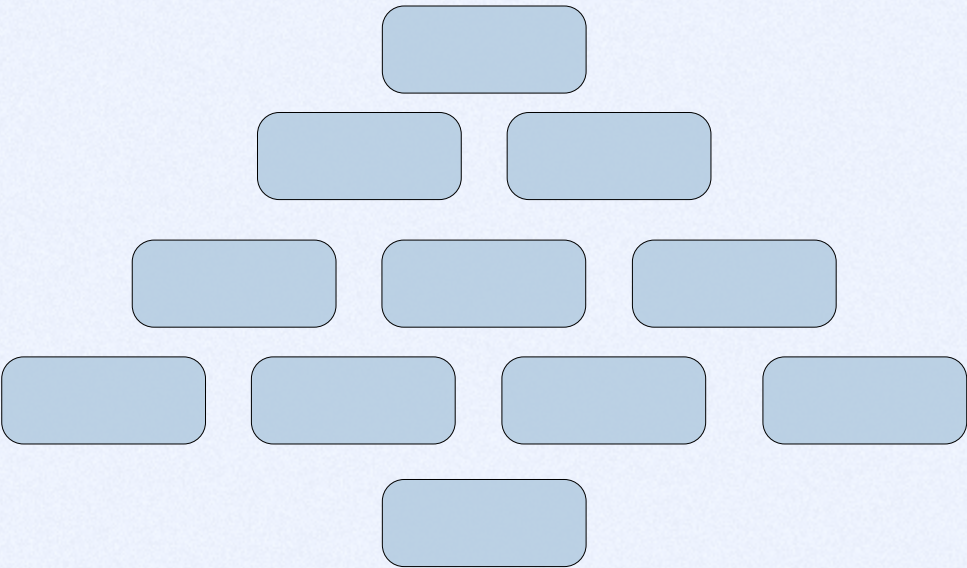
One word for line one

Two words for line two

Three words for line three

Four words for line four

One word for line five



Examples of Elfchen poetry (Botero's portraits)

- 1**

Love  
First sight  
At the party  
Dancing eating chatting fun  
Match
- 2**

Trying  
Big mess  
House nature party  
Express feelings with music  
Love



The students develop confidence in their own expressiveness. They can concentrate on the content-related aspects while the linguistic framework automatically comes to light.

To conclude, today, knowledge is no longer a canon, but a constantly changing process of understanding this world we live in. Perceiving it has become one of the most important skills in our lives. The human perception and the processing of sensory impressions cause learning. This is an ability that is endangered in our superficial media world.

Art creates a perfect starting point for language teaching, as it stimulates the imagination, empathy, and creativity of students, enabling them to understand with others, through language, what they see and the way they see it, and the way they understand it.

By reacting to pictures in a very personal way, students discover not only something about works of Art but also something about themselves, about their own way of thinking and their own cultural background.

## Portraits

<https://www.pariscityvision.com/pt/paris/museus-de-paris/museu-do-louvre/mona-lisa-historia-misterios>

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# Towards embedding video art in the curriculum: Exploring *Migration (Empire)* in the classroom.



Ana Barroso



**“It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant  
from ourselves. There is none such.”**

Henry David Thoreau, Journal IX, 1856

Our purpose is to explore video art as a pedagogical resource in English lessons (secondary level). Video art is a resource still largely underused by teachers of English in Portugal and the scope of our text is to explore the installation *Migration (Empire)*, by Doug Aitken in English lessons in order to motivate students and help them to develop critical and creative skills. Furthermore, this approach gives way to effective interdisciplinary work and takes students out of the classroom.

Being video art a resource still largely underused by teachers of English in Portugal, it is my contention that the installation *Migration (Empire)* illustrates the possibility of developing critical and creative skills on the one hand, while it gives students the opportunity to live an experience that most of them can't in daily lives, on the other.

Doug Aitken is an American artist whose practice defies definitions of genre through its exploration of every medium, from film and installations to architectural interventions. His projects challenge the boundaries of knowledge and experience to create interactive and transformative situations to offer a meaningful and imaginative account of the world. His work has been featured in numerous exhibitions around the world and he is the recipient of several important international prizes.

Although our students are bombarded with visual images through billboards, TV advertisements, and flashing ads on the computer, rarely do they foster deeper and critical thinking. *Migration (Empire)* is a twenty-four-minute video whose visual richness captures both the wilderness of the American landscape and the sprawling modern human environment, raising important and complex questions about progress and sustainability. Images of vast landscapes, roadside motels,

and industrial cityscapes move across the screen, evoking the migration of settlers across the great West expansion. However, the protagonists of the film are not humans, but wild animals. They are not roaming free around the prairies or the forests, but they are strangely confined in motel rooms, an artificial and unfamiliar habitat for them. As the work shows the sublime beauty of a landscape, it also exposes the contradictions of progress that not only threatens nature, but also human beings, as the apparently abandoned motel rooms suggest: the only alive beings to be found are the wild animals who cautiously inspect the places. Interestingly, we may recall the Sublime as the aesthetic concept established during the Romantic period and drawn from Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) to refer to the thrill and danger of confronting untamed Nature and its overwhelming forces. Animals such as a dark brown horse, a racoon, a bison, a beaver, a hawk, an owl, a mountain lion and two white peacocks are curious and confused about their surroundings, and the viewers cannot help feeling heartrending by the delicacy and beauty of the scenes.

### **The viewer wonders: what has happened?**

The meditative tone of the video absorbs the viewers and encourages them to look for some kind of narrative but it also engages them into a contemplative state: migrations and its consequences in our contemporary society. The final sequence of the video is as powerful as enigmatic: It is night-time and the garish lights of the hotel sign glow outside. Inside, a horned owl sits upon a bed, staring back at the audience, while the telephone's message light blinks red. Is there a message waiting to be heard? From whom? The owl's beak opens but makes no sound and its claws clutch the bedding. As a soundtrack of strings and human voices rises, feathers begin to fall, surround, covering everything, and finally the owl flies off and the feathers rise and rise as the screen turns to the same white in the opening sequence.

First and foremost, this art work can serve as “a scaffold to building background knowledge” (Jordan and DiCicco: 27), as most students are unfamiliar with video art (it is mostly shown in museums and art galleries and is not commonly used as a pedagogical tool). The building



and reinforcing of background knowledge combined with activities such as listening, speaking, reading and writing challenge students to explore themselves and their surroundings to find pathways for deeper and sophisticated comprehension and communication. Video art allows the teacher to implement a different pedagogical approach to knowing and learning. Instead of developing unrelated knowledge and skills in isolation, video art allows students to develop deeper connections between disciplines and thus develop transversal competences. Furthermore, as Farokhi and Hashemi argue “Familiarizing learners with arts is an enjoyable part of authentic learning.” (Farokhi and Hashemi: 923).

Learning a foreign language implies so much more than learning the content of the subject: it is an opportunity to transfer information to other relevant contexts and make deep, meaningful connections through the curriculum. As a starting point, we suggest the following topics in *Aprendizagens Essenciais: O Mundo à Nossa Volta: Ameaças ao ambiente; Questões demográficas; Questões de bioética; Intervenção cívica e solidária – 11.º ano (Cursos Científico Humanísticos / Cursos Artísticos Especializados) and Módulo 6 – O Mundo à nossa volta (Cursos Profissionais)*.

When watching a video art work such as *Migration (Empire)*, the teacher can ask students to complete different tasks such as reporting facts, describing places or critiquing ideas and situations in order to expand their communication skills in a foreign language. In addition to that, it will help students to develop a sense of evaluating, choosing, and asserting their ideas. Moving images are windows on the world and help us to describe and understand it. Thus, learning a foreign language becomes an opportunity to enrich the curriculum through interdisciplinarity: art, languages and science are intricately intertwined as the motivation and goals are fundamentally the same: understand and describe the world around us.

With a wide range of activities and resources available online, teachers and students can become co-agents in the teaching and learning process while bringing high-quality video art in the classroom.

Doug Aitken - migration 303 Walkthrough 2008  
*Migration* (installation selection)

© Doug Aitken,  
303 Gallery, Galerie Eva Presenhuber,  
Victoria Mollo Gallery & Regen Project

<https://vimeo.com/21055884>

(you may need to create a vimeo account in order to access the video).

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I think, therefore  
I am learning:

Teaching  
Secondary  
students  
thinking  
skills

David Spencer



**T**his article will briefly suggest why thinking skills are so important for our Secondary students, and what types of thinking we should be encouraging. I will suggest two simple activities to promote thinking in the classroom, both of which come from the work done at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

### **Why are thinking skills so important for Secondary students?**

What is the goal of education? Is it to fill students with the knowledge we or education authorities have decided they need to know (either to understand the world better or simply to pass a particular exam)? Or is it to give students the tools to come up with, and evaluate ideas and information on their own? Personally, I would argue that it is a mixture of both. But for many years, the emphasis has been on students simply memorising and regurgitating knowledge and facts they have been taught, sometimes without even understanding them. Recently though there has been more attention paid to encouraging students to think creatively and critically. One possible reason for this is that in today's world, where things change so rapidly, it is becoming increasingly difficult to decide what knowledge it is exactly that students will need to succeed. And whilst we would probably generally agree that transmitting knowledge is still an incredibly useful and valuable part of education today, so too is encouraging students to think independently, in order to deal with the new problems that life throws at them. Meanwhile, the internet has changed the ways students access knowledge and information,

making it much trickier to sort fake from real. And as the level of English increases amongst teenagers around the world, today's English exams tend to place a certain emphasis not just on the language that students use, but also on the ideas they express, and on backing up these ideas and justifying opinions. Without some kind of explicit attention to generating ideas and thinking critically, students would seem to be at a disadvantage in today's world.

### **What types of thinking are useful to encourage in our students?**

Working for *Project Zero* at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Ritchart, Church and Morrison (2011) created a map of thinking 'moves' integral to understanding. They are as follows.

1. Observing closely and describing what's there
2. Building explanations and interpretations
3. Reasoning with evidence
4. Making connections
5. Considering different viewpoints
6. Capturing the heart [i.e., key points] and forming conclusions
7. Wondering and asking questions
8. Uncovering complexity and going below the surface of things



The authors go on to argue that thinking skills are also an integral part of problem-solving, decision-making, and the ability to form judgements, adding six more thinking ‘moves’ to achieve these goals.

1. Identifying patterns and making generalisations
2. Generating possibilities and alternatives
3. Evaluating evidence, arguments, and actions
4. Formulating plans and monitoring actions
5. Identifying claims, assumptions, and bias
6. Clarifying priorities, conditions, and what is known

These two lists immediately resonate with me as an ELT teacher because they coincide to a large degree with the type of thinking that I want to encourage in my Secondary ELT students. Amongst other things, they all help to truly involve students in the learning process, getting them to investigate, question, and evaluate. What is more, they are useful in a wide variety of situations – in the classroom, in exams, at university, and as life skills outside the classroom.

### How can we get students thinking in our lessons?

The aforementioned *Project Zero* at Harvard Graduate School of Education has put forward a number of carefully-structured thinking routines that aim to ‘make thinking visible’ by naming it and noticing. You can explore these thinking routines in the work

cited, and at their website, <http://pz.harvard.edu/projects/visible-thinking>. Here are just two examples for you to try out with your students. I have added some brief notes of my own after each activity.

### 1 SENTENCE-PHRASE-WORD

1. Ask students to choose one **SENTENCE** from whichever text they have just read, a sentence that they think talks about a key concept in the text.
2. Now ask them to choose one **PHRASE** from the text that moved them, interested them, or provoked them.
3. Finally, get them to choose one **WORD** from the text that they think is central to the idea(s) in the text.
4. Students then share their sentence, word, and phrase with other students. Are they similar or different? What important ideas or themes come out of their discussions?

*Notes: This exercise is a great alternative to more traditional reading comprehension activities, and one that gets them to the ‘heart’ of a text. Notice that Step 2 encourages a more emotional response to the text too.*

### 2 THE 4 Cs: CONNECTIONS, CHALLENGES, CONCEPTS, CHANGES

1. After reading, listening, or watching a video, ask students to make CONNECTIONS between what they learned from the text/video and their own lives/the lives of people they know.



2. Students then think about ideas or opinions in the text/video that they would like to CHALLENGE or argue with.
3. Next, they decide which key CONCEPTS or ideas they think are important and useful to remember.
4. Finally, they consider what CHANGES they and/or others could make based on what they have just learned from the text/video. They can share their ideas and conclusions in small groups.

**Notes:** Today we use more and more real-world topics and texts with teenage students. Therefore, it seems logical to me that we should encourage students to make connections between texts and the actual world around them. At the same time, if we truly want to develop critical thinking with our students, it is vital to include stage 2, where students are able to challenge in a rational way ideas or opinions they do not necessarily agree with.

### To sum up

I believe thinking skills are something that teenage students need to succeed at school, in exams, at university, and in life in general. Like study skills and life skills before them, until recently we have usually expected students to simply pick up thinking skills without any explicit guidance or teaching from us. However, by teaching thinking routines in a systematic way in our secondary classes I would suggest that not only can we make our lessons more interesting and challenging but we can also empower our students at school and beyond.

(Adapted from an article originally published in TEYLT Worldwide Issue 2, 2021)

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**David Spencer** is a practising secondary school teacher working in Spain. He is the author of the best-selling 'Gateway' series, the latest edition of which is 'Gateway to the World'. Dave has given talks in over 28 countries and is active on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/teachwithdave>.







# Secondary school Activities with No Planning

Luke Tiley

**Luke** has been a teacher for 35 years and has worked with all age groups, both for the state and in private institutions. He has run the British Isles English language school for the past 15 years. He has taught around the world but most of his teaching has been in Portugal.





This article hopes to give teachers a few ideas of activities that can be incorporated into their lessons. These activities require little or no planning, will stretch the students, and should be fun. These are ideally aimed for the tenth grade and above. However, the second activity can be used for all levels.

Introduction

At the lower levels, there are numerous impromptu games and activities that need no preparation and can be used to make the class more fun. Once you get to the higher levels, 10th grade or B2 up, having these sorts of activities is more difficult without forever repeating the same one. Also, the teacher needs to feel the students are not just having fun but actively using the language.

Here are a few activities that encourage students at the secondary school level to think and play with the language. The final one even helps correct a common problem many Portuguese have.

Body Verbs

This activity seems easy but is harder than the students expect. I recently did it with a class of 11th grade students:

Put your students in pairs and ask them, without writing, to count how many parts of the body they can name. Expect comments about how they learnt body parts at primary school.

Ask how many they managed to name. Above 25 is good.

Then ask how many of them can be verbs. Put the example on the board:

- To head – to lead – She has been chosen to head the team
- to go in the direction of – He is heading to the station

There are more possibilities for head but this is only for them to understand the gist of the activity.

Hand out the worksheet and tell them to start at the top of the body and work down. Writing a body verb, the meaning, and an example sentence. Either give them a time limit or the first pair to six verbs.

Do a whole class feedback so that they can continue filling out the table with ones they didn't think of. Below is a list I made, by no means a complete list and also avoiding any that could have sexual connotations.

BODY PART VERBS		
BODY PART VERB	MEANING	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
To head	To lead	She has been chosen to head the team.
	To go in the direction of ...	Mike is heading to the station.



BODY PART VERBS

BODY PART VERB	MEANING	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
To head	To lead	She has been chosen to head the team.
	To go in the direction of ...	Mike is heading to the station.
To mouth	To say without speaking	I mouthed my order for drinks at the bar in the disco.
To shoulder	To accept responsibility	Women shoulder the responsibility of full-time work and child care.
To arm <i>(usually passive)</i>	To have weapons	The rebels were armed with machine guns.
To elbow	To use your elbows to push past people	In Lisbon, at rush hour, everybody elbows out of the metro.
To thumb	To ask for a lift	When I was younger I thumbed rides all the time.
To stomach <i>(normally in the negative)</i>	In the negative, to not like something	I can't stomach violent films.
To hand	To give	Hand me your pen.
To leg it	To run away	He took her mobile phone and legged it.
To back	To support To reverse	I have always backed the Labour party. I backed my car into a wall!
To knee	Often a self-defense mechanism for women against men	She kneed the man who tried to steal her bag.
To toe the line	To do as you are told	My students are expected to toe the line.

Longest words competition

This needs no preparation and makes your students really think in English:

1. Write any piece of vocabulary vertically on the board and have the students work in pairs. I have chosen teacher for my example. Again,
2. Tell them they have three minutes to think of the longest word that starts with the first letter of TEACHER. They cannot repeat the word, teacher has two **Es**.
3. Ask how many letters their word has. Write the longest one on the board.





Here are some I came up with:

**T**astelessness  
**E**ducationalists  
**A**ccomplishments  
**C**auliflowers  
**H**ardheartedness  
**E**gocentricities  
**R**ationalisation

### Solving the “Use/Wear” confusion

This came up recently and it reminded me that it can be a problem for Portuguese students. One of my students commented on a photo in the course book saying “she is using a uniform”. Fortunately for me, it was at the end of the lesson so I could go home and think about it. “Teaching” the difference hadn’t worked so I had to tackle it from another angle.

The next lesson went as follows:

1. Write “**glasses**” on the board next to the words **WEAR** and **USE**. Ask them which is the appropriate verb. I usually write the following two sentences on the board:

*I wear glasses.*

*Last weekend I used my glasses to light a fire as I had no matches.*

2. I wrote the word **SHOE** on the board and said “shoes can be used for many things beyond wearing”, and showed the following photos:



E.g. *Shoes can be used as a hammer.*

3. Put the students in small groups and get them to think of as many uses for shoes as they could in 5 minutes. Remind them that the shoes cannot be on your feet.
4. General feedback. You will always have one group that says something like “**I use shoes for running**”. Point out that this implies that the rest of the time they don’t wear shoes.
5. Show pictures of any other shoe uses you may have googled.

Here are a few examples. Some very simple, practical ideas that need no planning. I really hope you enjoy them.



A hand is using a yellow utility knife to cut a piece of white paper with the word "mis" printed on it. A ruler is placed next to the paper for measurement. The background is a solid teal color.

mis

behave

# Disruptive Classroom Behaviour

Sandra Luna



**P**roblems dealing with unwanted behaviour in your class? Classroom Management is the secret ally you didn't know you had. This article will look at some simple tips to help teachers better manage their classes and turn their “monster” students into “learnsters”.

### **“Or what?!?” – Disruptive behaviour in class.**

It's an issue as old as time, or at least since there have been those who teach and those who learn. Sometimes there's one student. Sometimes three... or four... Sometimes it's a whole class, and with a pandemic still shadowing our everyday life, going back to classroom routines can feel stressful for some of us. That's where Classroom Management comes to the rescue, and yes, in case you're wondering: it can help turn your “monsters” into “learnsters”.

“Good teaching is more like playing lead jazz trumpet with other less schooled musicians: you play and have to improvise from your heart and head with the others, on the spot, reacting to them as you give/ play your “notes.” [...] Thus, teaching is an interactive performance art because the most valuable “instrument” in the classroom is not the computer or Smart Board; it is: you, the person inside the teacher! The best way to be an effective teacher is for this person-teacher to make an interactive ally relationship with his/her students.” (Seeman, 2014)

Classroom Management works with the teacher to help students achieve their goals, and it does so by equipping the teacher with a set of “instruments” that will make managing the class and therefore the students better. Here are my top tips.

#### **Greet students at the door**

You wouldn't greet most guests from your living room while sitting down and looking at your TV, would you? Some guests might feel a bit awkward, thinking maybe they're not important to you, while others might just go ahead and make themselves too much at home.

Just like students when they come in unattended. Your classroom is your living room, YOUR space. Greet them at the door, be nice, and welcoming and set the tone for the lesson. That initial contact will make them calmer when coming in and less prone to disruptions. Quite different from what you get when you turn your back to them, go straight to your desk, and start your computer.

#### **Set expectations and rules early on**

It's always easier to establish a connection with a student when rules are clear. You may think some things are obvious, but trust me: they're not. Set rules, boundaries with clear and logical consequences for different situations. However, keep it real. No one will remember an A4 page of rules, not even you. Better to have just a few that can be easily remembered and make you reflect on what is important for you.

#### **Here's my list:**

- Be polite and respectful at all times.
- Listen carefully when I ask you to.
- Make notes (grammar, vocabulary, expressions, etc.) every lesson.
- Use your mobile only when allowed.
- If at first you don't succeed: try again.

#### **Focus on positive behaviour**

In my list of rules, I tend to use positive language because I'm focusing on what I want students to do and not the opposite. If you want students to pay attention, say “Listen” rather than “Stop talking”. If you say the latter, your focus is on the talking, which is the behaviour you don't want. It will take some practice, but it will pay off in the end, as you'll be using a lot more positive language in your lesson. If your class has a lot of behaviour issues, don't try to tackle them all at the same time. It just won't work. Better to deal with one behaviour at a time and only move on when you've achieved what you want.



Let's imagine your students are constantly using their phones and nagging each other when you're explaining something. Also, there's this student who never brings his book and another two who constantly defy you by not putting their headphones away, insisting they're off, so it makes no difference if they're in their ears. You'll have to prioritise and fix one thing at a time.

### **Move around and KISS**

Staying at the front of the class, not walking around, and interacting with students, is one way to invite trouble. Make them pay attention to where you are so you keep them focused, redirect attention if you need to and engage with your students. And if you do have to reprimand them, then KISS – Keep It Short and Simple and private. If you do it privately, it's less likely you'll be challenged. Keep it short because it's more effective; otherwise, it's just in one ear out the other. Simple because you want to go straight to the point, you don't want the negative behaviour to be given too much attention, but instead you want to focus on what you want the student to do.

### **Model behaviour**

It's ok to feel overwhelmed. It's ok to feel frustrated. It's ok to feel angry. What is not ok is to lose it. To yell, to get into an argument, or a power struggle. You're the adult so don't treat your students in a way you wouldn't allow someone to treat you. If it gets to a point where you feel you're about to lose control, just say *"I can't speak to you right now. I'm too angry and so are you. We need to calm down."* Ask the student to go outside for 5 minutes or remove yourself from the room and calm down. Trust me, it's a lot more effective than yelling and you're teaching the student that you respect them and demand respect in return. That you acknowledge that emotions exist and that they need to be dealt with and that you are a person too.

### **Start over, fresh**

And here's my last tip. If you walk into a class thinking it will be difficult, then it probably will. Leave your expectations at the door. Forgive and forget. Remember that most often it's not you that a student is challenging, but the authority you stand for. Remember that the most important tools at your disposal are you and empathy. You can make a difference in their life, choice of career, or even who they grow up to be. The relationship you build with your students has the power to make learning easier or more difficult. What's it gonna be?

### **Reference:**

Seeman, H. (2014). Preventing Discipline Problems, K-12 (4th ed.). ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD.

**SANDRA LUNA** has been teaching for over 20 years to a wide range of ages, levels, and contexts. She's currently teaching at Politécnico do Porto and at Second Language, where she is also the DoS. She's interested in classroom management, technology, teacher training, and working with other teachers on strategies to promote better learning environments.







Ricardo Vieira

Co-founder & Executive Director

<https://mentorart.org>

Aprovado por *Portugal Inovação Social*, *Parcerias para o Impacto*,  
programa **POISE**

Protocols with **14 schools**,  
**5 municipalities** — Porto

64 mentors

74 mentees



**M**entorship is, potentially, a way of guiding, training, and inspiring. The word Mentoring comes back as far as ancient Greek, in Homer's Odyssey (~ 3000 years ago).

Today, mentoring receives almost unanimous consensus as an exceptional approach of enhancing one's abilities and competencies, boosting individual talent and potential — if done well and systematically.

It is not hard to address a hiding element that very often is behind an influencer, a social change-maker, an innovative politician, a great doctor or teacher, a hiding element behind an architect or a cook, or yourself. Stop, and think for a moment. Who made a positive impact on you? Who were your mentors? Who walked with you through life? Probably, someone at some point in all our lives lights up and inspires our way.

However, there is the problem: not everyone has the chance of having a mentor, a role model, a positive reference that helps them make better choices and take better decisions, to have higher expectations, for themselves and for the world, develop a growth mindset, reach big goals, do great things, and thrive in school and life. Especially those who need it the most.

In Portugal, children in disadvantaged contexts are 5 times more likely to fail in school compared to their counterparts. Low academic scores mean 3 times more chance of risky behaviours, poverty, unemployment, and bad health. Unfortunately, we can still predict the probability of academic success, with quite a high degree of precision, using only the level of the mother's education. Social status at birth is still the biggest predictor of a person's future outcome.

Studies point out that having just one caring adult, a positive reference, can be the difference between whether a child will thrive or not (Ahrens, Dubois, Richardson, Fan, & Lozano, 2008; DuBois & Silverthorn, 2005). This is the core of the MentorART program.

### **How do we do that?**

**MentorART** is built on 3 main axioms:

1. Every human being has a unique set of talent and potential, regardless of his or her home address.
2. This unique talent and potential can be available to society, through positive, assertive contributions, and significant actions in the social ecosystem.
3. This unique potential and talent flourishes through quality relationships — developed, nurtured and boosted by the intentionality and regularity of those encounters.

And for that, we search for the best of the best in order to be a life-changer for K12 students who need more. There is a gap in today's "performance" of these K12 students and their true potential. Young people need the proper conditions and opportunities to flourish.

The best of the best, in our case, are university students from all fields of expertise. We recruit, train, and support them. Then, we facilitate the matching between the mentors and mentees. They will act as a "big" brother or a "close" friend, supporting, inspiring, and empowering the lives of their mentees.

### **The mentorship covers 4 main fundamental processes:**

#### **CONNECT · BE · LEARN · ACT**

These processes shelter 10 dimensions including assertive and non-violent communication (NVC), growth mindset, emotional intelligence, time management, metacognition, community intervention projects. Mentors have intense and continuous training and follow-up meetings with specialists. Furthermore, all the mentors have a coordinator and an adviser who give constant support in every needed aspect. This enhances time efficiency and boosts impact (Fresko & Wertheim, 2006).





The biweekly mentorship is held in the mentees' schools for at least one year. The activities are varied, based on non-formal education and playful learning tasks where both have a good time together. The ultimate goal is for mentors and mentees to form a strong close relationship. This means that mentees can be positively impacted by this positive reference, advancing their self-esteem, motivation, and ultimately, their academic results.

In order to reinforce systemic and long-term results, there are co-created intervention projects in schools which aim to overcome some of the challenges in the local community by involving mentors, mentees, families, and the educational community through each step of the way.

## Impact

The main beneficiaries of this program are both mentees and mentors. On one hand, mentees can enjoy contact with someone that will support, inspire and empower that life. A positive role model that will bring to this child new perspectives, lifestyles, and ambitions. A personalised learning experience that will contribute to improved self-esteem, motivation, and academic results.

On the other hand, mentors, the future leaders of the country, will increase their sensitivity toward children's social needs, improve their communication skills, and enhance professional confidence as leaders. Besides, that mentor will have a real and clear awareness of social challenges that need everyone's attention, being themselves a true example of proactivity and citizenship.

## Our origin and ambition

The MentorART program is founded on two main pillars (i.e., partnerships). In first place the **GAP project**, an initiative from the *Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation* — the project was implemented last year in 42 schools by Teach for Portugal. We are using this experiment learning project. On the other hand, the **Perach International project**, which is probably the largest mentoring project in the world, was implemented in more than 25 countries, and today has more than 25 000 mentors impacting more than 50 000 youth from disadvantaged communities, per year, just in Israel (the birth place of the project).

Together we are building a robust and sustainable system which aims, in 10 years, to place 25 000 mentors in schools, in order to significantly impact the Portuguese education system and society.

Progress means changing. And the latter will be hand-in-hand with sustainable social justice and equity. In the long run, the **MentorART** program aims to, significantly contribute to changing social paradigms and, through education, help to build a more robust system, with equal opportunities, regardless of social “background”; allowing that potential to flourish as the norm, rather than the exception.

**Ricardo Vieira** has a Master's Degree in Chemical Engineering, from FEUP, and worked for 10 years in **research and business development** in multinational contexts.

In parallel to this, Ricardo has worked in **lifestyle consulting** since 2014, sharing methods and techniques for high performance and quality of life. For the past 2 years he was a mentor for **Teach for Portugal**, working both inside and outside the classroom with children from fragile communities. Ricardo is currently the **CEO** of the **MentorART** programme.







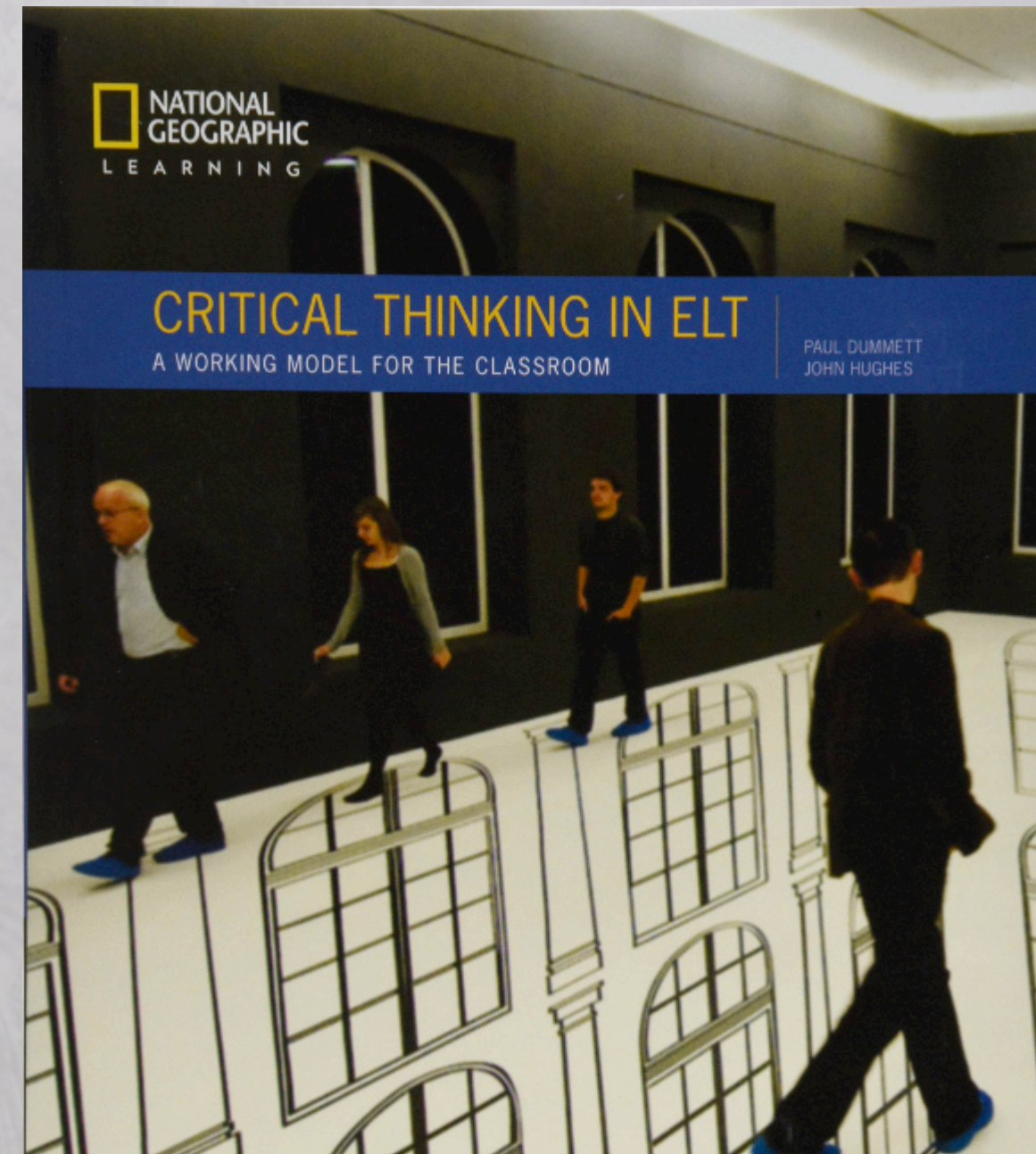


# On the Bookshelf

Judite Fiúza

## Critical Thinking in ELT: A Working Model for the Classroom

Paul Dummett  
& John Hughes





***Critical Thinking In ELT, A Working Model For The Classroom***

is divided into Acknowledgments, Introduction, References, Credits, seven chapters, Appendices, and Index.

In the Introduction, Paul Dummett and John Hughes highlight the importance of critical thinking in ELT. They refer that back in 1910, Dewey; 1940, Summer; and 1941, Glaser ‘(...) identified critical thinking as an educational skill upon which more emphasis should be placed (...)’. However, only in 1998 did it appear explicitly in Northstar. Nevertheless, it has been used without making a reference to it. Nowadays, it is studied and put into practice. ‘With so much current emphasis on critical thinking as a key component of effective learning, we have set out in this book to explain the What, Why, and How of critical thinking in ELT (...)’.

All the chapters, *A Working Model of Critical Thinking in ELT*; Reasons for Promoting Critical Thinking to Language Learners; Critical Thinking in Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation; Critical Thinking in the Receptive Skills: Reading and Listening; Critical Thinking in Productive Skills: Writing and Speaking; Critical Thinking and Twenty-First Century Skills and Literacies; and Integrating Critical Thinking into Your Lessons, abide by a similar pattern.

First, a brief explanation of the goals to achieve is presented, then a critical thinking definition, reasons for its promotion, generating ideas, how to develop critical thinking, always followed by a wide range of practical ideas and activities for teachers to use with their students finishing with an Ask Yourself section whose objective consists of reflection activities to promote critical thinking in sundry areas.

In **APPENDIX A**, a very useful ***Glossary of Terms*** can be found to help teachers get to know the right terminology to deal with the concepts that underlie the practice.

**APPENDIX B, *Ask Yourself Commentary***, proves to be of great value as possible answers and comments are shown so as to guide and support the teacher.

Summa summarum, ***Critical Thinking In ELT*** establishes *A Working Model for the Classroom* once it enhances the great value of the afore-mentioned skill as a way of helping out teachers and consequently students to distinguish what is true from what is fake information, to discuss several issues, to have opinions based on verified facts, to become fully active, engaged citizens ready to be part of a sustainable society. A book every teacher should read, digest, and put into practice with their students.



**Judite Fiúza**, APPI member A-1327, has taken a degree in Filologia Germânica (English/German) and Línguas e Literaturas Modernas (Portuguese/English) at Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa and the curricular part of a Masters in Anglo-Portuguese Studies at Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas da Universidade Nova de Lisboa; taught Portuguese for foreigners at Universidade de Lisboa and later at Universidade Nova de Lisboa and has been teaching English for about 40 years in Secondary Schools. She currently integrates the APPI executive board.



