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FORMAÇÃO  
CONTINUA

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# EDITORIAL

To navigate to any article, click its title on the contents page. To navigate back to the contents, click one of the sides of the page in any article.

Welcome to the Spring / Summer edition of The APPI eJournal.

As Summer holidays are a step ahead it is our wish to present you some reading and give you one or two ideas for the coming schoolyear.

We want to take this opportunity to honour Alberto Gaspar in this e-Journal. We have included the text which was published on the website, as well as a few photos which were kindly provided by Alberto's family. We also want to refer back to something that Alberto wrote some years ago to encourage members to continue moving forward in their professional growth. Let's take his words to heart!

*The editor's last words go straight to members: do stick to the new APPI e-Journal at all times – you will always find in it something interesting and practical to give a twist to your teaching and motivate your students. Do stick to APPI by getting updated about its activities and projects, continuous professional development events and further opportunities to grow professionally.' (The APPI JOURNAL, year 14 | 2017)*

As you know some of the APPI members usually attend international Conferences and this year we headed to England to participate in the 56th International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition in Harrogate. This proved to be worth attending to get to know new methodologies and the latest tendencies in what concerns pedagogy and didactics as well as to choose speakers from a wide range of lecturers to come to the APPI events. Therefore, you will find an article about this Conference.

One of the sessions we attended in Harrogate by George Kokolas gave us the opportunity to ask this distinguished speaker to come to a future APPI Conference and to have an article of his authorship ***How ELT Teachers Can Avoid Crossing in the Dark Side of Motivation – Four Pitfalls which may Prevent ELT Teachers from Generating Motivation in the Classroom.***

Ana Barroso and Luísa Encarnação shared their views on how to implement a project work with sustainability for professional courses' students ***All on board!! Explorers of the 21st Century on Darwin's route***, having in mind rules and regulations.

In the article ***APPI Teacher training results in some good practices at Agrupamento de Escolas Vieira de Araújo –***

**Vieira do Minho (AEVA)**... for teachers and students! Luz Fernandes highlights the five steps approached by APPI's teacher trainer José Moura Carvalho in order to make good practices stick both on teachers and students and promote success.

**Let Them Speak or Why Speaking Is Always a Good Idea!** by Barbara Bošnjak and **Developing English Skills and Promoting Citizenship values** by Sónia Soares enhance several ways of developing the power of communication through speaking, viewing, and writing.

To put into practice and achieve the best results through all the above-mentioned strategies Tiago Carvalho helps teachers enhancing their well-being as one's mental health in a society always on the run is paramount.

Nic Hurst, who contributes on a regular basis with pedagogical and didactic articles to this eJournal, makes the reader think about the paradoxes of the monarchy **On Myths and Monarchy**, following the recent coronation of Charles III.

While in times of a high development of technology Carlos Lindade, our writer-in-residence, provides the reader with a

huge variety of the latest mobile apps and web-based resources and James Dunne deals with the controversial issue that spread worldwide **ChatGPT**. Either we like it or not it has come to stay. Therefore, one should be up to deepen their knowledge and decide when and how to use it or not.

**On the Bookshelf** Judite Fiúza makes a review of **Five Formative Assessment Strategies in Action** by Kate Jones, a book worth reading due its clear, objective ways of implementing and strengthening formative assessment, which continues to be on today's agenda.

We hope you enjoy reading these articles and if you believe you have some ideas to share with our colleagues, please feel free to write an article and send it to:

**[ejournal.appi@gmail.com](mailto:ejournal.appi@gmail.com)**

Have a wondrous, refreshing Summer holiday!

Judite, Neil & Isabel Silva

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

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# Tribute to Alberto Gaspar

1945—2023



Alberto Gaspar was a teacher, trainer, and member of all the social bodies of the Portuguese Association of Teachers of English – APPI. He became its president in 1998 with unparalleled knowledge and complete dedication, Alberto Gaspar devoted himself to the mission of improving the teaching of the English language in Portugal. He was committed to ensuring opportunities for development and constant professional updating to its members and English teachers in general, earning the respect and admiration of all who had the privilege of working with him.

Above all, Alberto became a role model for all of us because of his value and rare and remarkable human qualities. He possessed an exceptional ability to recognize and appreciate the contributions of those who worked alongside him, extracting the very best from each individual and fostering the belief that our uniqueness has the power to make a significant impact.



**TEACHING**  
is a life with  
true purpose

# HOW ELT TEACHERS CAN AVOID CROSSING INTO THE “DARK SIDE OF MOTIVATION”

Four Pitfalls which may Prevent ELT Teachers from Generating Motivation in the Classroom

## George Kokolas

George Kokolas has been working as the Academic Director and Teacher Trainer for Express Publishing for the last 22 years. He is a certified LEVEL 5 TEFL. He is also a certified ADVANCED Neurolanguage Coach ®. He holds a Level 5 Diploma in Positive Psychology, trying to merge it into ELT. He also has a BA in English Literature.



Motivating people is a multifaceted concept with many bibliographies, theories, references, and research behind it. It is not just a topic to research or talk about but an ever-asked question that may not yet have received a definite answer. We have read many suggestions, recommendations, results, and opinions, but it is unclear if a universal remedy can consistently generate motivation in various contexts. Is there a remedy like that? Could a remedy like this even exist? I don't know if all the questions could ever be answered or if it is feasible to be answered by an expert.

Bringing the concept and practice of motivation into an educational context, things may become even more theoretical and analytical. By trying to bring motivation into an English Language Teaching (ELT) context, teachers may struggle to discover what can work.

My “guru” regarding motivational language learning is Zoltan Dörnyei, and I think that the moment he defined, along with Jill Hadfield, the concept of the “Ideal Future Language Self” (Dörnyei, Hadfield, 2013) was a pivotal one in the literature of motivation for learning. The theory urged teachers to help students create a

successful vision of themselves as competent English users. Following this vision, the theory assumed students would work harder to achieve this image. It is a sophisticated, scientifically justified, and well-communicated theory, followed by many recommended activities that could work in any classroom. However, it is challenging to know how many times and by how many teachers any of these activities were tested and how many of them yielded some motivation.

To be fair and just, the problem might not be that some theories do not work. We all need to research, stumble and fall, and try if we want to achieve something better for our students. The mantra “One Size does not fit all” indicates how long, complicated, and sometimes steep the path to motivating students is. If we knew how to find the motivation recipe, we would have all got that book, paper, or resource that could give it to us. After all, nothing in education can be achieved with “magic wands”, and professional educators know this well.

However, while we are all considering and searching for “plug-and-play” motivational remedies, we fail to realise there might be a stage before trying these methods. A

framework or context in which we become inert, passive, or even still regarding generating motivation. Several actions may not necessarily yield “demotivation” but may obstruct us as teachers from generating motivation for our students. It is maybe the moment when we are crossing into, what I call, the “Dark Side of Motivation” without even realising it. It may be an incident with a student that we may take light-heartedly as a non-significant one, but this may have caused negative feelings in our student and a reluctance to be motivated. It might be one phrase or a particular look that can crash our students' prospect of motivation, and it can happen just like that within a fraction of a second.

Are we sure we know these “dark motivation contexts” before trying “motivational remedies or methods”? Could we have subconsciously fostered any of these “obstructing motivation schemes,” and we do not realise if we kill our students' motivation? Let's identify some of these “motivation killers” and create awareness around them.

### **Motivation is not only about Rewards**

Grades are important for assessment. They help teachers evaluate students and



provide a measuring reference for setting goals. They also help communication with parents, but they can also be tricky or dubious regarding students' motivation. They can be like a "double-edged sword," on the one hand, nudging and pushing students to pursue higher performance or even prepare for better results, but on the other hand, what if they won't? Is there any guaranteed success that grades can yield motivation? Can we be totally sure, as educators or "motivators," that rewards, grades, and certificates are the only triggers for motivation? Could it be that the same grading schemes that teachers hope can bring motivation can be the same reasons that cause stress, competition, reluctance to study, lack of creativity, or even restriction of reading opportunities?

Alfie Kohn, in a rather revolutionary way, points out that the educational systems have become really obsessed, trying to invent grading and reward systems instead of really trying to engage students or cultivate their curiosity (Kohn, A., 1993). Could it be that in this process, teachers have really forgotten that it is their job to upgrade their students' natural instinct of curiosity and to create the ideal conditions

that this curiosity can be sparked? Nobody will ever question the existence of grading or evaluation systems, and most probably, they will continue existing for many years to come. But when there is even a tiny suspicion that assessment may overshadow learning, then I think all the educators need to reframe how important they think grades might be.

Alfie Kohn also points out that grades:

- Undermine students' interest in learning (Kohn, A., 1993).
- Lead students to try to avoid challenging tasks. If they have an opportunity, they will pick the shortest book or the most familiar topic, not because they are lazy but because the system has made them respond rationally to an irrational demand. If the purpose is to get an A, then it is more than obvious that students will try to find the easiest way to do that (Kohn, A., 1993).
- Make students start thinking in a shallow, superficial way about their studying. Their way of studying or the items to study are usually affected by phrases that they use as a filter like: "Do we have to know this? Will this be on the test?" (Kohn, A., 1993).

So, as teachers, we should never forget that the fact that we have a grading system, the fact that we have students who achieve high grades, is not always a prerequisite for motivation, and sometimes it can even impede the natural, spontaneous, voluntary impulse for learning that we all have innately as humans.

No teacher should think of grades ONLY as a source of motivation but also as a source that may not work towards this conducive goal. Grades can help students study more and perform better, but they may also cause a lot of stress, rejection, reluctance to continue studies, and above all, make the pursuit of grades the main goal of education, instead of learning.

In a nutshell, learning is a natural born human characteristic. As educators, we need to be careful so as this natural trait won't be even impeded by the pursuit of any grades.

### **The Curse of Knowledge**

We all enjoy speaking with eloquence, establishing a strong connection with our students, and sometimes, without realising it, showcasing our knowledge and expertise by incorporating complex ideas and refer-

ences into our lectures. In other words, we want to demonstrate that "we know what we're talking about." However, this behaviour falls under the "Curse of Knowledge" (Heath, C., & Heath, D. (2007)), which means that we may be so absorbed in our knowledge that we overlook whether our students are learning or not.

We may recall a teacher from our past who frequently did this, or perhaps we have fallen prey to this behaviour. But just because we know the material, can present it efficiently, and deliver a compelling lecture, it doesn't guarantee our students will understand it. Our demonstration of expertise may cast a "message of dark motivation" in the classroom.

In 1990, a Stanford University graduate student in psychology, Elizabeth Newton, illustrated the Curse of Knowledge by conducting a simple game in which she assigned people to two roles: "tapper" or "listener." The tapper picked a well-known song and tapped out the rhythm on a table while the listener guessed the song. Listeners correctly guessed only three of the 120 songs: a success ratio of 2.5%. Before they guessed, Newton asked the tappers to predict the probability that

listeners would guess correctly, and they predicted 50%. The tappers believed they had successfully conveyed their message, but in reality, they only succeeded once in 40 attempts.

As educators, managers, coaches, or presenters, we may mistakenly assume that our message has reached its intended audience once we've explained something efficiently. We may think we've done our job well and covered "the lesson of the day." We may even assume that everyone has understood what we've said because we've explained it clearly.

However, imagine how discouraging it would be for a student who hasn't understood your lecture. They might be intimidated to ask questions or seek further clarifications because of the "fascinating performance of your expertise." What if, for various reasons, you believed that they understood, but nobody did?

That is why it is crucial to ask for feedback, break up your lectures into smaller segments, and always ensure that everyone in the room understands what you're saying.

School classrooms differ from university lecture halls, and students may need to

hear a concept multiple times or in different examples, regardless of how well we know it. We may possess exceptional knowledge and performance, but that doesn't guarantee that our students will understand our lectures immediately. We must adopt a humbler approach and acknowledge that, there might be cases, during which our Curse of Knowledge may not create a conducive environment for learning.

### **"The Sisyphean Condition"**

In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was punished by the Gods with an eternal task for his sins. He had to repeatedly push a rock up a hill, only for it to roll back down each time he reached the top. Sisyphus was condemned to perform this futile and exhausting task for all eternity.

When we first encounter the story of Sisyphus, we might think that the "actual act of torture" is the strenuous effort that he has to put in to complete this painful task. We might assume that Sisyphus is punished because he cannot rest, and he has to keep performing this arduous task.

However, Dan Ariely, in his book "Pay Off: The Hidden Logic that Pays Our Motivation," offers another perspective on

the interpretation of the "Sisyphus torture." Ariely argues that it is not just the effort, labor, and exhaustion that Sisyphus has to endure to perform the task, but there is another "element of torture" in the cyclical repetition of the task. It appears that Sisyphus performs the task again and again without any goal or meaning. In other words, Sisyphus works hard and gives his best, but his effort yields neither results nor progress and therefore, it has no meaning.

Now, let us imagine a classroom where the teacher is performing at their best (like in the Curse of Knowledge condition). The teacher has covered all the required materials, the classroom is disciplined, and everyone appears happy. The teacher receives top marks from their superiors, and there is no "torture" involved. It seems that the task has been accomplished, and all the boxes have been "ticked." One could easily claim that this teacher has done an excellent job.

However, using Ariely's perspective, it might be challenging to find meaning in all the performance, energy, and effort that the teacher described in the previous paragraph. It is true that the educator "has done their job," but is this effort enough to give some meaning to the lesson itself for the students?

Has the teacher ever wondered if performing the task, ticking the boxes, and completing the duty is sufficient to ensure that their lesson procures learning and acquires some meaning for the students as well?

Could it be that an educator might be caught up in the same cyclical act of performance every day, having the impression that "everything is fine," "I am doing my job well," but at the end of the course or the year, learning objectives and motivation have not been achieved? Have we ever asked ourselves if our lessons have a clear, signposted meaning for us and our students? If we are unable to provide answers to any of these questions above, have we ever wondered how discouraging this might be for our students' motivation?

I am not sure that students will be motivated to join a class simply to complete a course or a cycle of studies. Students will be motivated to join any class, course, or lesson if they see meaning in their studies. It is our job as educators to provide this meaning or at least try to provide this meaning to our students.

Having the impression that by performing our tasks efficiently, patiently, successfully, and according to the rules (just like

Sisyphus), automatically equals motivation, meaning, and satisfaction for our students might make us form the wrong perception about our performance. We might think that this is enough or that this makes us a "good teacher," but a good teacher cannot be assessed only by that principle. A good teacher is someone who can give meaning to their lesson, or at least try to find the meaning that the students need and make this goal the main objective of their teaching. Otherwise, he might be performing the same Sisyphean cyclical working patterns in a futile manner.

Finally, the Sisyphean Condition can stand as another example of an everyday situation in that motivation cannot be procured or generated.

### **Social Pain Equals Physical Pain**

Have we ever wondered where the common expression "my heart is broken" comes from? Is the meaning of this phrase purely metaphorical, or could it be that it includes a literal meaning?

Matthew Lieberman managed to prove that this phrase was not formed accidentally and that it has a literal meaning. With his wife Naomi Eisenberger, after many

years of research and conducting social experiments, they proved that the painful effects of social and psychological rejection are more than just a metaphor. In other words, when we feel socially or emotionally rejected or hurt, the pain we feel is identical to the pain we feel when we break our leg or hand. The two neuroscientists proved that in the case of social pain, the exact same regions of our brains are activated when we experience physical pain (Lieberman, 2013).

We can all realise the amount of awesome responsibility that these findings create for any educator in a classroom context. Teachers need to be aware that one single word, one phrase, a derogatory tone of voice, or even a bad mood may create similar negative feelings in their students. The cases during a lesson in a school classroom in which a similar activation of "painful neurons" may occur in someone's brain might be numerous. We, as teachers, sometimes fail to realise the effect that our words may have on our students, even subconsciously. Kindness, respect, mutual rules of conduct, and mindfulness can be a safety net for educators to avoid causing "social pain."

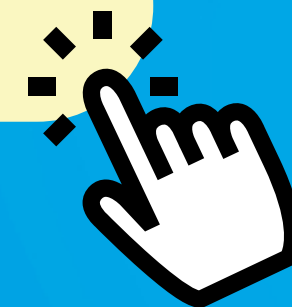
Needless to say, if a teacher falls into the trap of "social pain," it will be very difficult for them to create any framework of motivation or try to spark similar conducive feelings. It is not that frameworks of demotivation will be automatically generated, but that motivational attitudes will find it hard to be cultivated, which is a situation that definitely none of us wants in our classes.

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**All on board!!**

Explorers of the 21st Century  
on Darwin's route.

**Ana Barroso e  
Luísa Encarnação**

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This Project Work is to be developed within the scope of the Environmental Management Technical qualification<sup>1</sup>, aiming to prepare qualified technicians (EQF<sup>2</sup> level 4) who can carry out operations related to environmental management and sustainable development, respecting safety and health norms and regulations at work and environmental protection.

The interdisciplinary work and curricular articulation between disciplines / modules / UFCD<sup>3</sup> of the socio-cultural, scientific and technological components will contribute to students effectively exercising their autonomy and participating actively in their learning process.

Transversality is the key idea that ensures the mastery of core disciplinary subjects (Portuguese, English, Biology and Geology, Integration Area and Information Technology)<sup>4</sup>, allowing time and space for the development of integrative learning and contributing to the development of all competence areas inscribed in Students' Profile by the End of Compulsory Schooling (PASEO). The Competence Areas to consider for this project are Languages and texts; Information and communication; Reasoning and problem solving; Critical and creative thinking;

<sup>1</sup> Técnico/a de Gestão Ambiental, incluída na Área de Educação e Formação: 850 - Proteção do Ambiente - Programas Transversais- Cursos Profissionais.

<sup>2</sup> EQF: European Qualifications Framework

<sup>3</sup> UFCD: Short-Term Training Unit.

<sup>4</sup> *Aprendizagens Essenciais* - Português: Módulo 5; Inglês Iniciação/Continuação: Módulo 6; Biologia e Geologia: Módulos 2, 3,4, 6, 7, 8; Área de Integração: Temas problema 7.2, 8.2; TIC: Módulos 1, 2, 4, 5.

Interpersonal relations; Autonomy and personal development; Well-being, health and environment and scientific, technical and technological knowledge. Teachers and students develop the essential learnings of every subject involved having in mind the operational descriptors to work on to integrate both specific and transversal literacies (cultural, scientific and technical) within the curriculum.

The exercise of full citizenship implies discussion and active participation, so it is fundamental to integrate mandatory areas of the National Education Strategy for Citizenship (ENEC) such as the environment, sustainability, and health. In addition, this reference document promotes partnerships with NGOs and other institutions expanding learning beyond the classroom and creating a scientific and humanity cohesion between schools and community (institutions and multiple stakeholders).

As teachers are managers of the curriculum and main agents of its development, they must reflect upon the possible curricular options, the feasibility of their decisions and their adequacy to the contexts and resources of each school community.

The pedagogical approach of this project intends to progressively design and iterate a broader range of curricular content and activities to promote high-quality participation modes of

learning that are less concerned with content coverage and more focused on significant learning experiences and taking into consideration the Professional Profile and the Competence Reference Framework associated with the qualification in question.

Mandatory teaching and learning areas, such as environmental protection and sustainability, demand global awareness and a mindset to take responsible actions from our students to thrive and shape a better future that promotes collective well-being and sustainable development.

Scientific and cultural knowledge, skills, attitudes and values combined in a cross-curriculum approach through a project-based learning methodology will certainly increase students' engagement and achievement and have an impact on student equity as students can find new opportunities to collaborate with their peers and perform outreach to community members, such as scientists and business professionals.

Output: an environmental management project to promote sustainable tourism and nature conservation within students' community and regional territory. The final product may be a bi-fold marketing brochure / flyer, an awareness campaign, or a website. This project may even become a PAP (Prova de Aptidão Profissional) since it has a meaningful and purposeful



integration with the local and regional community.

### Transversal learning outcomes

The students will be able to:

- Design, develop and implement one awareness and environmental education campaign
- Participate in nature conservation projects, and promote biodiversity, forests, fauna, flora and habitats
- Conceive and plan tourist activities to implement in protected areas<sup>5</sup>

### Specific learning outcomes

- Exploring Darwin's life and work
- Understand the impact of Darwin on scientific world and society
- Read authentic texts and select information<sup>6</sup>
- Understand Darwin's contribution to discussing our contemporary environmental challenges and conservation practices
- Explore the relationship between the 19th century and contemporaneity through the eyes of Eça de Queiroz (Os Maias)

<sup>5</sup> <https://hir.harvard.edu/the-galapagos-islands-economy-over-ecosystems>

<sup>6</sup> <http://darwin-online.org.uk>

- Get a more enlightened knowledge of 19th-century society, but also a more critical look at the present
  - Explore how Darwin's work on the Galapagos Islands, together with other data from his work, shows the importance of studying natural ecosystems for the foundation of evolutionism<sup>7</sup>
- + The importance of preserving ecosystems
- Explore the geological origin of the Galapagos Islands based on Plate Tectonics Theory, relating it to lava composition and volcanic activity<sup>8</sup>
  - Explore its ecosystems, aiming at understanding the organization of the biosphere
  - Understand its processes of mobilization of matter and energy in the biosphere as well as the process of regulation in animals and coordination in plants
  - Implement measures to promote the sustainability of ecosystems<sup>9</sup>
  - Recognize the importance of soil as an environmental compartment with multiple

<sup>7</sup> <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/galapagos-islands> — <https://www.innovationnewsnetwork.com/scientists-discover-how-the-galapagos-ecosystem-thrives/8822/> — <https://www.worldwildlife.org/places/the-galapagos>

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.igtoa.org/travel\\_guide/geology](https://www.igtoa.org/travel_guide/geology) — <https://sites.google.com/view/chartingthegalapagos/education/geologic-origin>

<sup>9</sup> UFCD 4426 General Ecology

functions in ecosystems<sup>10</sup>

- Identify examples of good soil management and conservation practices<sup>11</sup>
- Analyze the different stages of nature conservation policies on regional, national and world levels
- Design activities of education and environmental animation<sup>12</sup>
- Recognize the interdependence of biophysical variables and their preponderant role of support and conditioner of human activity<sup>13</sup>
- Carry out exploration activities of places of geomorphological interest<sup>14</sup>
- Understand Darwin's legacy: a global challenge for a more sustainable world
- Recognize the need to articulate social justice, economy, freedom and sustainability for a sustainable and balanced human development

<sup>10</sup> UFCD 9656 Soils

<sup>11</sup> UFCD 9659 Nature conservation strategies

<sup>12</sup> UFCD 9661 Environmental education and animation

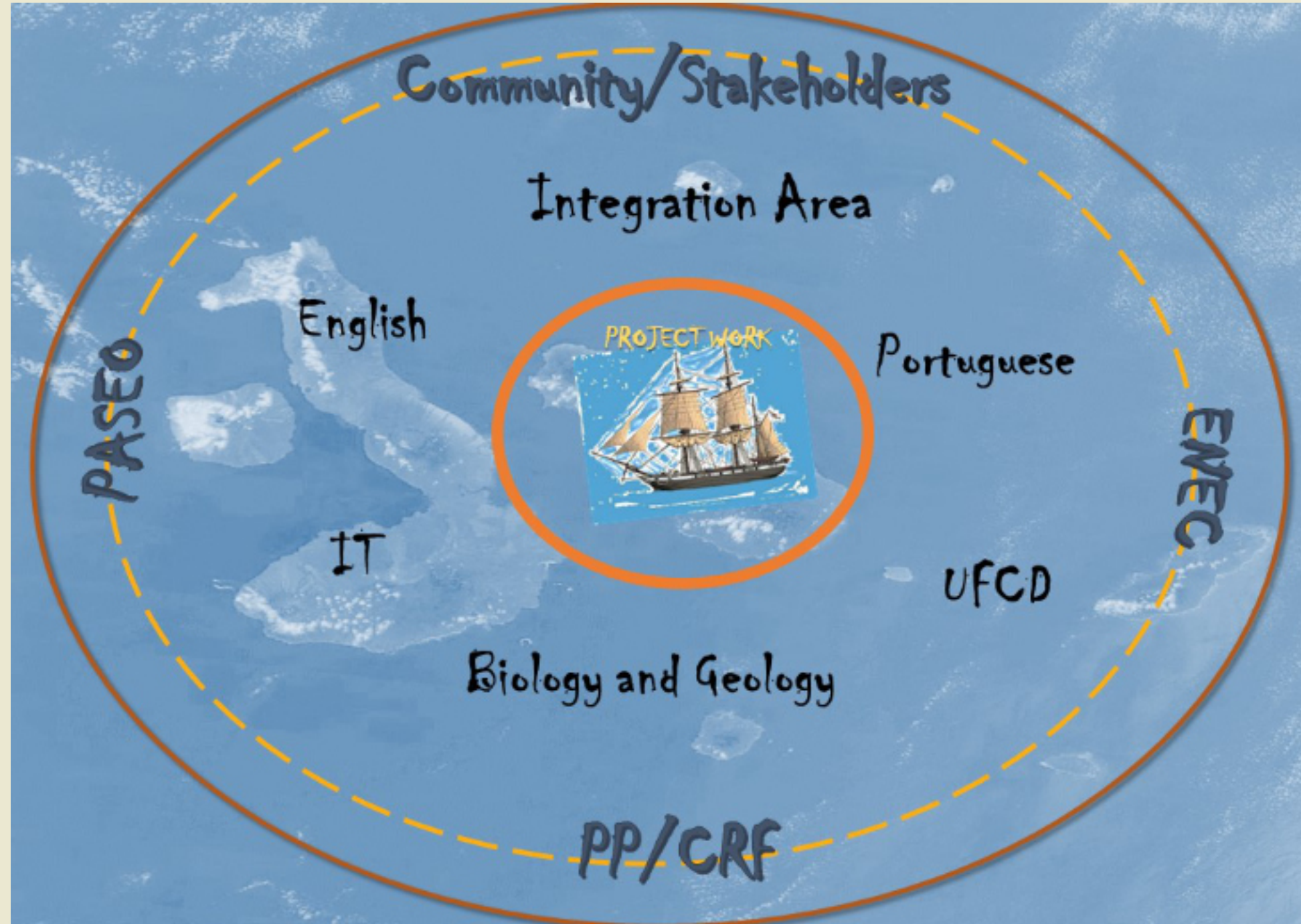
<sup>13</sup> UFCD 9669 Spatial planning - biophysical variables

<sup>14</sup> UFCD 9669 Spatial planning - biophysical variables

- Discuss the ethical and political impact of scientific and technological practices, inferring the need for scientific culture to correct decision-making that affects human and non-human communities
- Explore the potential of digital applications for research, collection, analysis, organization and data representation and statistics
- Create digital content, integrating images, sound and video

**“Nothing exists for itself alone,  
but only in relation to other  
forms of life.”**

Charles Darwin



# ***APPI Teacher training***

*results in some good practices at  
Agrupamento de Escolas Vieira de  
Araújo — Vieira do Minho (AEVA)...  
for teachers and students!*

- Make it Stick
- Can We Shape Our Brain?
- Mindfulness for teachers
- Mindfulness for students

## **Luz Fernandes**

**Maria da Luz Fernandes** has a Degree in "English and Portuguese Teaching", by Universidade do Minho (Braga).

She has 28 years' experience in teaching English to 12 to 21 years-old (3º CEB/Secondary levels) and has worked most of this time in her hometown, Vieira do Minho, at EBS Vieira de Araújo.



### **Step 1 – APPI Training Course – “Make it Stick: Estratégias para a aprendizagem (mais duradoura) do Inglês”**

Teacher trainer: **José Moura Carvalho** (via Moodle and Zoom)

I attended this course from 26th September to 25th November 2022 and my Action Plan resulting from the course was implemented during the second term. My target audience was constituted by my students from eleventh grade – after the identification and reflection on the main obstacles to learning and the definition of activities / strategies leading to their overcoming or mitigation. The main aim was to simplify the appropriation and use of the language by each of our students, inducing us to identify, firstly, what prevents students from having less success in learning English and then pointing out the strategies that students and teachers can put into practice, leading to greater success in this subject (and even in others!).

The whole dynamic of the course followed an excellent common thread, starting with addressing learning obstacles – mindset (negative), procrastination, and (lack) of focus / concentration – and the discussion of some strategies, based on research in the areas of cognitive science and the science of learning,

commonly seen as promoters and facilitators of longer-lasting and therefore more successful learning.

### **Step 2 – Workshop – “Can We Shape Our Brain?” by PhD Sara Silva (Universidade do Minho)**

In this stage, a session was implemented in articulation with the subject of Biology (in collaboration with teacher Sandra Bessa Moreira) and with the participation of our guest, Ph.D. Sara Silva, neuroscientist, a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute of Research in Life and Health Sciences (ICVS), at the University of Minho, whose vast knowledge about the human brain allowed her to elucidate the question of the neuroplasticity of the human brain, in an approach to the concepts of "fixed" and "growth mindset". This session – entirely in English – took place on January 27 with 11th grade-students (4 classes) and intended to prove to students that their brain is a muscle that needs "training", and the importance of working on it, in order to change their "mindset" and work / study with focus and concentration.

Doctor Sara left us surrendered to her presentation, which dealt with the central nervous system; the way neurons communicate among them; the functions of neurogenesis in

the adult brain; the definition of the concept of "neuroplasticity"; the reasons for the occurrence of neuroplasticity; the bright side and the dark side of neuroplasticity, concluding that "Yes! We



can shape / redefine our brain!", and to do so, we must keep it active through some suggestions (check her slide below).

### **Step 3 – “Mindfulness at AEVA – (Mindfulness for teachers – inside and outside the classroom)”**

A first session on "Mindfulness" was planned for educators / teachers (from pre-school, the 1st cycle, 2nd cycle, 3rd cycle up to the secondary school) in early January with teacher Sandra Direito, an instructor of the DeRose Method – a complete programme that offers tools for the development of soft skills, higher performance at work, studies or sports, encouraging new behaviours to live in high performance and with

more quality of life. This first session had such an adhesion that four more have already taken place through the second term, for teachers and educators of the different levels of teaching. Those sessions are aimed at guiding the adherent teachers to the integration of relaxation activities in the first minutes of the class. In other words, the main objective was to provide teachers / educators with tools and exercises that can improve their own performance, focus and concentration, so that they can, in a second moment, apply them in their classes, with students.

**Step 4 – “Mindfulness at AEVA – Agrupamento de Escolas Vieira de Araújo – Vieira do Minho (Mindfulness for students – inside and outside the classroom)” – 11th grade**

On the tenth of March, two sessions were held with the four classes of the 11th grade on "Mindfulness", with the instructor Sandra Direito (DeRose Method).

These sessions aimed at guiding students to integrate relaxation activities whenever they are in times of greater anxiety (tests, exams, oral presentations...). The main objective is to provide students with tools and exercises that can improve their own performance, focus, and concentration, so that they can, in a second



moment, implement them in their daily lives, autonomously.

We sincerely hope that soon these "Mindfulness" techniques will be a reality and an asset for all AEVA students since the practice proves that in mindfulness sessions in the classroom (or outside of it!) students train their "attention muscle" and become more concentrated and more relaxed.

**Step 5 – “Mindfulness at AEVA – Agrupamento de Escolas Vieira de Araújo – Vieira do Minho (Mindfulness for students (inside and outside the classroom))” – 1st cycle**

The next step is set for the third term (April) for the younger students (1st cycle), this time with Analisa Candeias, our illustrious former student, Professor and researcher in Mental Health (School of Nursing of the University of Minho).

Many thanks to Doctor Sara Silva, Instructor Sandra Direito, and Professor Analisa Candeias

for their contributions and to the Vice-Headmaster of AEVA, Maria José Ramalho, for showing openness and frank collaboration to make such sessions a reality! Also, thanks to all the teachers / educators from AEVA who dared to join these initiatives and are trying to implement some of these strategies with their students!

We can say "Mindfulness in the classroom" is taking baby steps and is by now a reality in AEVA,



proving that it is possible to bring a greater awareness of students' focus, their thought patterns, and a greater presence in their here-and-now situations, ultimately fostering their focus and concentration. It's an asset for everybody!

Waiting for new “steps” ... 😊





**Let them speak!**  
— Why speaking is  
always a good idea.

## Barbara Bošnjak

My name is **Barbara Bošnjak** and for the last 16 years I have been teaching English and German language in Isidor Kršnjavi Secondary School Našice in Croatia. During my working career I have participated in numerous Erasmus+ projects and professional development courses. Two years ago, I was promoted professionally to English and German language advisor.



Even though the speaking skill in classrooms might be considered neglected when compared to the frequency of implementation of the other skills, every teacher regardless of the language taught, is aware of the fact that speaking is actually the most valuable of the language skills and oftentimes quite challenging to successfully apply in classrooms. If there is one thing my experience so far has taught me, it is that when organizing speaking activities, it is always best to choose those that are straightforward while at the same time thought-provoking and motivating for the learners. Whenever possible I tend to blend the speaking assignments within a lesson so that at first glance it is not obvious that the task at hand aims to result in speaking skill development or perhaps even assessment. Since such opportunities do not present themselves as frequently as one would hope, the following example intends to demonstrate their importance and value.

### **LET THEM SPEAK ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS!**

Human Rights Day is celebrated every December 10 to commemorate the day when the General Assembly of the UN adopted and



proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The date seemed perfect for including in regular English lessons since it fits the description of commemorating various important dates and is as such adequate for the planned lesson schedule with the main learning objective being raising students' awareness about human rights. The main outcomes of the lessons included raising students' awareness regarding the fact that human rights belong to everyone and are a key factor for personal growth and development. Having set the desired objectives, the overall idea of the lesson was a rather simple one – to make the students start speaking.

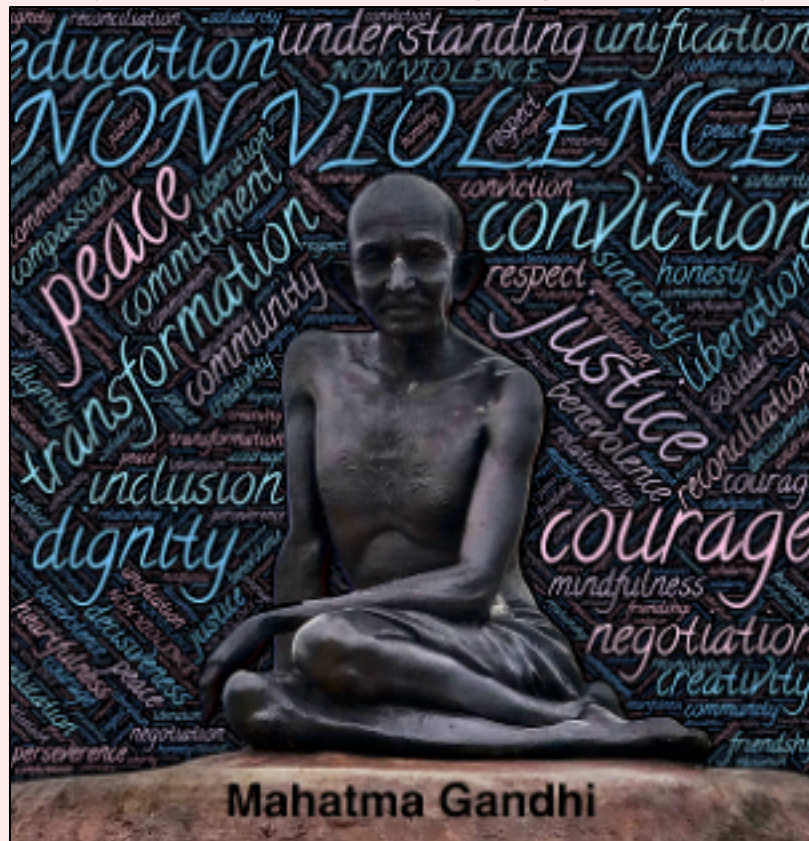
In the initial part of the 90-minute-long lesson, students were divided into groups

with the purpose of shortly researching and gathering information about the Human Rights Day according to the instructions provided by the teacher. These mostly included its origin, importance, and impact on society as well as determining basic human needs to allow both physical and mental growth. The groups shared their discoveries while highlighting the most important information.

After having done the research, the second stage was to present the activity which would take up most of the lesson – the marketplace activity. Namely, we are all familiar with the concept of selling produce and items at a marketplace, this time, however, the concept of a traditional marketplace was abandoned, and students were presented with an alternative – selling produce and items they could either choose to be human beings (people walking around, browsing, and purchasing) or human right owners (people selling different human rights at the marketplace). Both groups were given particular instructions on how to perform their roles. Human beings were presented with a certain amount of money to be spent and



instructed to make a shopping list according to their wishes, browse around, and negotiate prices before deciding to buy a human right, whereas human right owners were encouraged to create promotional materials, advertise their products, and to try and sell at the highest price possible. The aim of the activity was of course not making money, but rather to think about which of the rights people are not able to live without, which are essential, the most beneficial ones, and finally at what cost would people be willing to



give those rights up. Upon the completion of the activity, both groups were asked to think about a set of questions and thereby reflect on their assignments. Some of these were to name the most and the least popular human rights, to present the advertising campaigns, to list the purchased rights along with the explanations for their choice, and similar.

From what I observed, students were highly motivated to participate in this unique simulation. In addition to being a bit competitive, it enabled them to think for themselves and make their own choices based on their own judgment and assessment. It allowed them to think and SPEAK for themselves. The conclusion drawn from the entire lesson was that we as people do not ever have to choose our rights; we are all equally entitled to each and every one of the human rights. So, you see, thanks to this activity, not only did my students start thinking for themselves, but they also started talking for themselves.

Conclusively, I would like to say that regardless of the topic, students should always be given the opportunity to speak up openly and freely, to express themselves along with their opinions. Learning a foreign language is a long-lasting

and rather demanding process in which the learners need to seize every chance to progress and develop their skills whereby the speaking skill might be considered amongst the most demanding ones. The examples of the provided activities will hopefully prove student-friendly and easily applicable in everyday classes allowing growth and development by simply letting the students SPEAK. Therefore, the most suitable way to finish the article would undoubtedly be Nelson Mandela's quote about education in which it is defined as: *The most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.*

## References

The idea for the activity, even though a bit modified and adapted, was found on the following web page:

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/secondary-education-resources/lesson-plan-ideas/lesson-8-what-are-human-rights>

An additional source of information regarding the topic was found here:

<https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/human-rights-day-2023>

<https://www.unesco.org/en/days/human-rightsSummary>



**Teaching**  
is the greatest  
act of optimism.

# Cinema

A contribution to developing  
English skills and promoting  
Citizenship values

Sónia Soares

**Sónia Soares**, APPI Member B 7283 has a degree in *Línguas e Literaturas Modernas* (Portuguese / English), Faculdade de Letras da Universidade do Porto.

She works and lives in the North of Portugal and has been teaching English for 30 years at different state schools. She is currently teaching at *Escola Secundária com 3º Ciclo de Paços de Ferreira*.



The purpose of this article is to illustrate the importance of showing films in English classes to develop different skills, to make students aware of some problems, to help change their mindsets, and to become proactive citizens. Besides all these advantages, it allows students to have a more relaxed class.

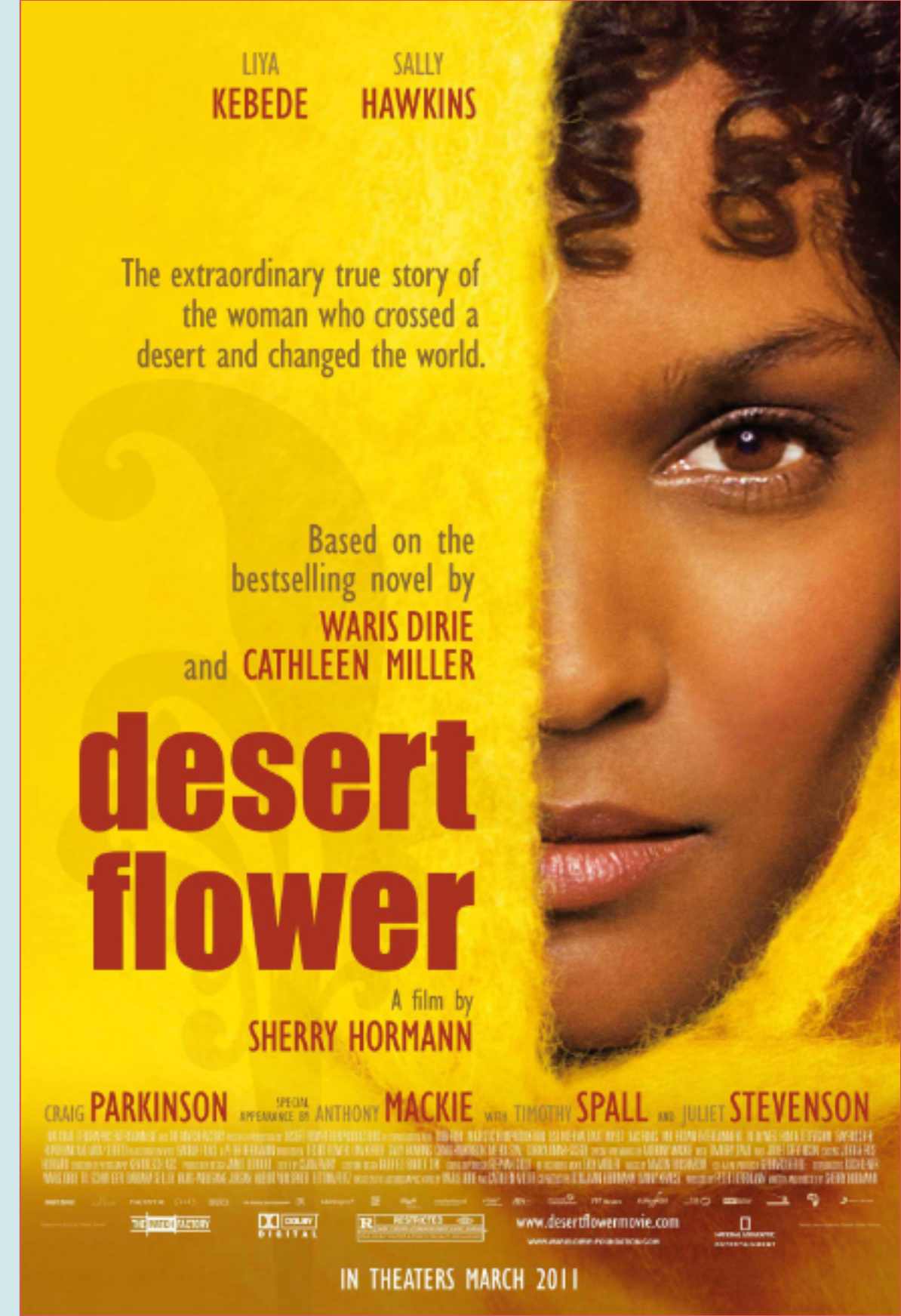
In the school year 2020/21, I decided to show my 11th-grade students the film *Desert Flower* because of the topics that had to be taught in English and Citizenship subjects.

*Desert Flower* is a 2009 biographical film. It is about a woman (Waris Dirie) in Somalia who becomes a victim of the practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Later she becomes a fashion model and activist against FGM.

After watching the film, students had a short test on it. Their summative test (reading / comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, writing) was 60% of their mark and the test about the film, 10% of their second term final mark. Some of the questions about the film were multiple choice, others required personal answers / points of view. It worked quite well.

The objective was to make students aware of the potential that cinema can have in the development of different skills and to show that films are not just a relaxed way of spending time in the classroom. The film was intense and deeply touched students' hearts. Most of them were not familiar with the FGM issue. The subtitles were in English so that they could develop vocabulary, writing, pronunciation, and intonation while watching and listening to it.

I always ask students to do something after watching a film: a formative questionnaire, a film review, a debate, a webinar, or an interview. In this particular situation I also informed students about the Desert Flower Foundation Sierra Leone and how they could help it – through donations, buying educational boxes containing books, and a set of pencils or following the Foundation on social networks. Showing this film, not only contributed to developing English skills, but also to connect it with Citizenship activities and projects. *Desert Flower* is a type of film that can be useful in other subjects such as Geography, History, Visual Education, Science / Biology,



IN THEATERS MARCH 2011

or Sexual Education classes integrating or not a CLIL project, for example. It can be the launching pad for an international project between schools, one from Sierra Leone and the other one from Portugal. Interviewing Waris Dirie, via Zoom, could also be a good idea.

There are excellent films to be shown in the English classes, but in terms of Citizenship projects I would recommend the following – *Blood Diamond*, *In a Better World*, *Rabbit-Proof-Fence* (only for 12th grade), and *Freedom Writers*, specifically for students from 10th to 12th grade. Depending on the students' age and the topics to be taught, old movies such as *Cool Runnings* or *Breaking Point* would be interesting to show too. *Cool Runnings* is a nice film portraying some aspects of the Jamaican culture. It also touches the problem of racism / discrimination, and it is based on true events. *Breaking Point* is an action movie which can be shown to 8th-grade students when teaching the Sports Unit. Both are great to explore music types: Reggae – *Cool Runnings* or listening to a rock song – *Over the Edge* and *Breaking Point*.

Some issues in films are timeless, but sensitivity should be present all the time, particularly when selecting them whatever the chosen approach may be. In a follow-up activity, a discussion / debate, students do have the opportunity to be heard while expressing their own ideas on the topic(s). There are many other films I could recommend, but these are just some examples according to my own experience.

In terms of the number of lessons that are necessary, most films need about three



classes of 45/50 minutes. I usually ask students to take some notes while watching

the film and warn them, in advance, that they will have a short test on it so that they can feel it will not be a time to play around. One of the main ideas is to vary the teaching strategies and evaluation methods.

Some films can be a good reason for students to go on school trips and visit some interesting places either in Portugal or abroad. One of the films that can provide a nice experience in terms of extra-curricular activities is *Freedom Writers*. In Porto, there is the Holocaust Museum and the Synagogue. After visiting these places students can be asked to write a text (for evaluation or not) for the school newspaper, create a schoolbook project, or write a report by presenting their emotions to the class, and even create a video and put it on YouTube. They can take photos and create an eBook and even organise a school trip to Amsterdam and visit Anne Frank's house. I think these activities reinforce the idea that showing films in class is of good value. Not only does it motivate students for their ongoing acquisition of the language, but also broadens their horizons. Furthermore, as

I mentioned previously, it caters the participation / collaboration of other subjects. This is a valid idea for both Regular and Vocational Courses.

Below you can find two examples of questions taken from a Multiple-Choice Test on the film *Freedom Writers*:

**Question 11.** The students' first reactions to their new teacher, Mrs. Gruwell, were of:

- a) indifference
- b) insults
- c) indifference, but also verbal confrontation

**Question 16.** The museum where Mrs. Gruwell took her students was called:

- a) Museum of Freedom
- b) Museum of the Holocaust
- c) Museum of Tolerance

In a nutshell, watching films in class can constitute a moment of pleasure while being an opportunity to keep learning the English language. Obviously, it does not mean showing a lot of films throughout the school year. It will be up to the teacher to perceive and decide on the right number for each particular class.

### Webgraphy

**Waris Dirie** — Female Genital Mutilation  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Waris-Dirie>

**The movie:**  
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1054580>

**Desert Flower Foundation**  
<https://www.desertflowerfoundation.org/en/home.html>



**Warris Dirie**

# Enhancing Teacher Well-being through the Concept of "Self-as-Context" in Language Education

bread

**Tiago Carvalho**

**Tiago Carvalho** – PhD in Multimedia in Education from the University of Aveiro; teacher and researcher in the field of Cognition, Learning, Instruction and Communication at the University of Helsinki. At the moment, I am working with a team of Educational Psychologists to develop a pedagogical course designed to equip teachers with the skills to manage their own wellbeing, and to include the teaching of these skills in their daily praxis.



# Enhancing Teacher Well-being through the Concept of "Self-as-Context" in Language Education

## Introduction:

As teachers, we constantly strive to create the most effective and engaging learning experiences for our students. However, it's crucial to remember that our well-being as educators plays a significant role in our teaching success. One approach to fostering teachers' well-being is integrating psychological concepts and therapeutic techniques into our professional development. In this piece, I will explore the idea of "self-as-context" and discuss how it can enhance teachers' well-being.

## Understanding "Self-as-Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa'?:"

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) is a form of cognitive-behavioral therapy emphasizing psychological flexibility and well-being. A key concept in ACT is the idea of "self-as-context," which refers to experiencing oneself as the context in which thoughts, feelings, and sensations occur RATHER THAN being defined by them. This perspective allows individuals to observe their internal experiences without judgment or resistance, fostering a sense of emotional resilience and flexibility.

For us, language teachers, embracing the concept of "self-as-context" can help address emotional and psychological

challenges that may arise in the profession, such as stress, burnout, or self-doubt. Developing a more flexible and non-judgmental relationship with our thoughts and emotions can create a healthier and more adaptive teaching environment for ourselves and our students.

## And now for something completely different: the DIY part

**Mindful Observation:** One way to encourage a "self-as-context" perspective is through mindfulness exercises. Take a few minutes each day to close your eyes and focus on your breath, noticing any thoughts or feelings that arise without judgment or resistance. This practice helps you observe your internal experiences as transient events rather than identifying with them as absolute truths. Personally, I go everywhere in these "mind trips" and I have explored many bright and dark corners of my "self" — but always with an open mind. In the end, I know myself better by understanding my thoughts, my reactions to possible scenarios, and my acceptance of both my Jeckyl and my Hyde.

**Thought Defusion** is another technique to foster a "self-as-context" mindset. In this exercise, imagine your thoughts as leaves floating down a stream or clouds passing through the sky. By visualizing your thoughts in this way, you can develop a more detached and objective perspective on your internal experiences. This was very useful to me when recovering from a broken heart... The painful moments when being confronted with all those memories, all those conversations I had in my mind — they just started to fly away and give room to new ones.



**Values Exploration:** Reflecting on your values and goals as a teacher can help you develop a greater sense of self-awareness and motivation. Write down your values and discuss how your teaching practices align with these values. This exercise can help you connect your teaching journey to broader life goals, fostering a more profound sense of purpose and commitment. My tip here is to distinguish goals from values, which I did initially. Being a good teacher is a value. So now, deconstruct which goals you need to achieve to reach this particular value: is it going to APPI conference every year? (probably!); learn about phenomenon-based learning? or just use the teacher's room for more collaboration and less venting?

**Self-Compassion Practice:** Cultivating self-compassion is advisable to embrace the "self-as-context" perspective. Think of a recent mistake or challenge you faced in your teaching and write a letter to yourself, offering understanding, encouragement, and support. This activity promotes self-kindness and helps you recognize that mistakes and setbacks are a natural part of the teaching process. We all had that moment we left a classroom with a feeling of failure. It is hard. I planned and it did not work?!?! So what? It was one time, and I know you can turn it around.

But it was totally my fault!!! And...? Tomorrow it will be different. Mistakes bring learning, so make mistakes, forgive yourself, and soldier on!

### **Conclusion:**

Integrating "self-as-context" into language teachers' professional development can offer valuable insights and tools for addressing our profession's emotional and psychological challenges. Incorporating mindfulness, thought defusion, values exploration, and self-compassion exercises into our daily routines allows us to develop a more flexible and adaptive relationship with our thoughts, feelings, and self-concepts. In turn, this promotes a healthier and more supportive teaching environment, ultimately enhancing our effectiveness as educators and fostering personal growth.





TREAT  
YOURSELF

# On myths and monarchs.



## Nic Hurst

**Nicolas Hurst.** Assistant Professor of English Studies at FLUP. Teacher of English, ELT methodology and materials design. Numerous articles published in Portugal and abroad. Regular speaker at local and international conferences. PhD in Anglo-American Studies. ELT coursebook consultant.



## On Myths and Monarchs

The coronation of Charles III on May 6th 2023 enshrines the transfer of the crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland ('Britain') from the late Queen Elisabeth II to her eldest son. Both within Britain and around the world there has been seemingly little in the way of protest with respect to this political process. The Daily Express newspaper noted in its online edition of 16.02.2023 that a demonstration coincided with a visit of Charles to Milton Keynes; the article also made reference to previous individual protestors and the often exaggerated response of the police to these incidents. For example, a man was detained for holding up a sign saying "Not my King" which explains the 'dozens of' signs saying the same thing at Milton Keynes. The same phrase was also used in a billboard campaign in various cities late in 2022 organised and paid for by the pressure group, Republic.

The fact that Britain is referred to generally as a 'constitutional monarchy' is, in itself, something of a contradiction given to the

fact that there is no single, written document that lays out exactly what the constitution of Britain is or what the role of the crowned head of state is within that system. Indeed, while Parliament at Westminster is often accredited as the 'mother of all parliaments' there was no democratic consultation involved in the passing down of the crown, it is taken as automatic. While it is true that, in theory, the monarch has absolute control over the political system, in practice the role has very little power. This then leads to an intriguing question: why does Britain still have a king? We might extend the same question to the eleven other monarchies in Europe but not, of course, to Portugal!

It has been argued that the monarch is the personal, individual embodiment of the nation and symbolises a certain kind of unity and stability that the actual government (subject to periodic democratic elections) cannot achieve. The monarch may also act as a final check, through a refusal to grant the 'royal assent', on the government: to thwart any situations which were illegal or undemocratic

or potentially dictatorial. Furthermore, given that ceremonial duties are largely the responsibility of the monarch, the actual government does not need to be concerned with such matters and thus has more time to concern itself with the running of the country. There is also an economic argument as it is supposed that the monarchy and its associated events / buildings fortify the tourist industry which results in great monetary benefits; however, actual numbers here seem difficult to find. (see Chapter 7 in 'Britain for learners of English')

Returning to Portugal as a point of comparison, the reader might like to consider how many of the functions outlined above might be attributed to the President of the Republic or whether not having a monarch weakens the local tourist industry to any great extent. Here in Portugal, the President must also give her / his assent before any new law is enacted. Here, we have other symbols of national identity / unity, such as the flag (national colours?) or the national anthem which seem to function in a powerfully socially cohesive manner. With the possible

exception of Sintra (?), the most popular tourist destinations here have nothing to do with the defunct Portuguese monarchy. We could also refer to world tourism, in that of the ten most visited countries in the world only Britain (in tenth place) maintains a monarchy.

The supposed unchanging nature of the monarchy in Britain is both a characteristic and also an objective: the monarch represents invariance and also resists innovation in public life. Validity for these attitudes and practices is derived from a specific sense of history, such as, the often cited but untrue claim of a thousand years of unbroken lineage: what has been termed ‘validity through the sanction of perpetuity’. These are conditions which enable habit formation and the familiarity through repetition enhance ‘traditions’ which may, in fact, be relatively recent inventions. Examples include the Christmas Day TV broadcast which started in 1932 or the televising of the State Opening of Parliament which began in 1958. The way in which the life of the royal family became increasingly conducted in the public eye during the 20th century (and ‘live’ on TV) reinforces their

rituals and ceremonies: the lying in state before a funeral, the weddings of various family members, the successive ‘jubilee’ celebrations providing significance based on a sense of nostalgia for the power and influence on the world stage of imperial times. These royal events are deemed to represent certain ‘values’ and ‘norms’ which are relevant to British society and they have been construed as ‘acts of national communion’. (see Chapter 4 in ‘The Invention of Tradition’)

While it might be claimed that Queen Elisabeth II personified duty, continuity and respectability, the same cannot be said of all the members of her family, an extensive, dysfunctional social unit which has exhibited a wide range of highly questionable, unethical and illegal behaviours over recent years. The popularity (sustainability?) of the institution tends now to be measured in terms of tabloid newspaper coverage, much like an up-market soap opera, as well as in a swirl of opinion polls. Yet, perhaps the greatest challenge facing Charles III is: How can an elderly, white, privately-educated, infinitely advantaged, astonishingly wealthy, male aristocrat be said

to embody the 21st century, pluri-cultural nation that is Britain? This is a state which still maintains its historically refined class-consciousness and a deep suspicion of any indication of undeserved privilege despite being deeply divided both within its own administrative boundaries and with respect to its relationship with Europe.

The presence of a sovereign in Britain in 2023 remains hugely paradoxical given its inherently undemocratic nature and its incompatibility with contemporary notions of human rights and the rule of law.

**Main References (non-fiction):**

“Britain for learners of English” by James O’Driscoll (Oxford, 2nd edition, 2009).

“The Invention of Tradition” edited by E. J. Hobsbawm & T. Ranger (Cambridge, Re-issue, 2012).

**Additional reading (fiction):**

“England, England” by Julian Barnes (Vintage, 2008).

A humorous, provocative exploration of nationhood, the monarchy and heritage in general in which the Isle of Wight becomes one huge amusement park containing replicas of everything that represents Englishness.

“The Queen and I” by Sue Townsend (Penguin, 2012).

A satire of modern Britain where a republic has been established meaning the Queen has to live on a housing estate in the Midlands. An exploration of what it is that makes us human.



# iatefl Harrogate 2023

## Ana Nunes

**Ana Nunes** has a degree in Modern Languages and Literatures, Complementary Studies in Teaching English to Primary and also Post-Graduate Studies in School Libraries. She teaches English to Very Young Learners, Young Learners and Teens. She is a school librarian and a member of the APPI Executive Board. She is also the coordinator of the Young Learners Special Interest Group – APPInep.



# IATEFL2023

**“Teachers have always been the heroes of quieter revolutions, such as tolerance and understanding, achieved only through education. And as teachers of the world’s international language, we know this reality of fostering understanding and acceptance through better communication all too well. We have always been the ones who fight the good fight that is education.” (Divya Madhavan, ‘Lean on me: stories of coaching, mentoring and teacher resilience’, IATEFL 2023)**

The IATEFL Conference always provides a wide range of multiple sessions regarding the teaching of English as Foreign Language, covering different areas of interest. This was again the case in the 56th International IATEFL Conference, held in Harrogate, in April 2023. This year, along with sessions about the latest developments in the field, the Conference mirrored the challenges and changes that are happening in the world and

that affect education in general and, hence, language teaching.

The tone was set in the first plenary session, when Evan Frendo, who specialises in business English and English for specific purposes, stated that new answers are needed if we (language teachers) are to remain relevant. Although he was referring to workplace language teaching, his session helped us think about the changes that are also happening in schools and how new answers are needed there, too.

As usual, lots of issues were approached during the four days of the Conference. Many teachers choose IATEFL to present their work, projects and investigation on diverse areas of interest. It was riveting to notice that many sessions addressed issues related to the post-pandemic period. For example, there were some about the role of the digital in the post-pandemic, namely on digital tools that could be used both in face-to-face and online settings. There were others on students’ and

teachers’ well-being, which is a clear indicator that the questions related to mental health and our well-being at large are a major concern nowadays.

Besides sessions that dealt with the four linguistic skills and also with methodologies that are used in our schools for quite a while now, such as project-based, task-based or inquiry-based learning, there were also some that could be quite innovative. One of those sessions was presented by Carmen Becker and Annika Albrecht who talked about their project, the English language makerspace, a product-oriented and student-centred project in which the learning is focused on the student’s self, competencies and interests. The project is organised in 6 modules, each on a different topic, and the learners are invited to create a scrapbook that serves as a guide and helps to structure the work and to document and visualise the learning progress. Gradually, a personalised language book is created for each individual project.

This was a very interesting session about a project that caters for personalised and autonomous learning and where students are in control of their own learning processes, while simultaneously developing their creativity and their design and media skills.

The big issues and the topics that are trendy now were also addressed on a number of sessions. This was the case of projects that had the environment, the sustainable development goals or social justice, for example, at their core. More than just buzz words, these are issues that concern us all, that engage our students in real-life problems and that can and should lead them to take action and get involved in their local communities (or more global ones) in the pursuit of solutions to particular problems.

Another topic that was also extensively addressed during the conference was the refugees. The Ukrainian situation and the support to Ukrainian students and teachers was not overlooked, of course, but neither was the situation of other migrants, refugees or minority peoples who struggle every day to have access to the most basic goods, including education. On the plenary session which started the third day of the conference, Lesley Painter-Farrell,

a teacher and researcher who currently coordinates a TESOL program at a state university in New York, shared stories of migrants for whom the English language classroom is often the primary space for them to tell their stories, be listened to, feel welcomed, and learn about practical resources they need to help them settle into their new homes. The speaker also questioned how we can prepare teachers – and not only language teachers – to help them face the multiple challenges of working with these students, especially in a context when, sometimes, we also have to face the surge of anti-immigrant rhetoric, even in our local communities. One of Lesley's areas of research is international mindedness in education, a concept which means understanding, respecting, and valuing different cultures, helping students embrace diversity and realise that different perspectives have a great deal to offer. In our increasingly global communities, these are values that we all should pursue through our practice.

There were also some controversial sessions and the plenary that closed the conference is perhaps a good example. Awad Ibrahim, a Professor in Anti-Racism at University of Ottawa, tried to show us how race works exactly like a language, with its own syntax, morphology

and phonology. To be aware of this is to acknowledge that we need to 'decolonise' ELT materials and practices, bringing more voices into the ELT classroom and thus creating a more diverse, intercultural and inclusive learning environment.

The IATEFL Conference provided many opportunities to listen to very interesting sessions, learn about projects that teachers from many different contexts are developing with their students, engage in thought-provoking discussions about ELT today around the world. But for me, it was also very important to remember what it means to be a teacher and a part of a larger community. This conference is an excellent example of that. During those four days, we celebrated not only the excellence of so many teachers, but also their resilience, dedication and endeavour. As Divya Madhavan says, in the quote in the beginning of this article, we are 'the ones who fight the good fight that is education'. And that is what the world needs, now more than ever.

If you would like to watch the 2023 IATEFL Conference plenary sessions, [click here](#).



# Online Resources for the EFL Classroom

## Carlos Lindade

**Carlos Lindade** is a Portuguese Canadian ELT professional who has been heavily involved in teacher training and writing course material for Portuguese EFL students (U Dare 9, 2015; Stars 4, 2016). He holds a PhD in Advanced English Studies from the University of Vigo and is currently lecturing at the **University of Porto (Portugal)**.



## **Apps and web-based Tools for the EFL Classroom**

“Technology is best when it brings people together.”

Matt Mullenweg, Social Media Entrepreneur

In past contributions I have advocated for the integration of social media outlets (specifically Instagram, TikTok, Twitter and WhatsApp) in the EFL classroom. However, considering the number of educational apps and web-based tools currently available, principled decision making is as important as ever. This article aims to provide a brief overview of some of the available resources and make sense of what is free and what is not. All in all, it is my hope that this piece can inform teachers about different apps and web-based solutions that may be used in an ELT context and aid those who are willing to engage learners in meaningful language acquisition through edtech and are seeking for more insights on this matter.

### **Introduction**

Making sense of the current profusion of education technology (henceforth edtech) often available as mobile apps or as web-based resources (sometimes accessible simultaneously in both formats) is quite overwhelming. While today there seems to be an edtech solution for every aspect of the EFL classroom (tools for classroom management, resources to develop language skills, solutions to foster collaborative work, apps to gamify language acquisition...) it is truly important to understand what is out there in order to make informed decisions when selecting edtech for our teaching context. This article presents the

reader with a set of principles on how to integrate edtech in the classroom and later provides a brief reference list of apps and web-based tools that may be used with the EFL classroom. The list was initially sketched out to help the pre-service English teachers we train at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the University of Porto navigate these muddy waters. While the initial goals were to aid future educators in understanding which tools may be often used in an ELT context, it is now obvious that sharing this list with in-service teachers can aid one in having an insightful overview of the many possibilities available and ultimately, combined with the suggestions set out, make a more principled use of these tools. The way the reference list works in this context allows the reader to quickly identify which tools are free and which are not, an important variable considering that it is often impossible to sustain using certain resources over a period of time due to the costs that they entail. Within the list, it is also possible to click on a specific tool and visit its homepage.

### **Free, Freemium or Paid?**

The companies behind edtech often navigate between different business models that shift from providing free, freemium or paid resources. While a free tool is often supported by ads, a paid tool runs ad-free. The novelty here is the freemium model. Through the combination of the words "free" and "premium," the freemium model offers the user basic features at no cost and charges a premium for additional or advanced features. For instance, both Voki and ELSA Speak run on this model. The difference here is that Voki provides limited features when using their avatars, enticing the user to pay for a subscription to make full use of the

visually stunning extras. It is often upsetting when we notice we are not allowed to save our avatar because we have used an advanced feature. ELSA Speak on the other hand runs on a different variation because it provides a 7-day free trial to test the app and forces the user to pay if he or she wishes to continue using it. When selecting edtech designed around a freemium model, these variables need to be accounted for given that public schools are not prepared to provide funding for these solutions, and it is quite uncomfortable to ask students to use resources that will later ask them to sign up for a paid subscription. While the next section will provide insights on how to select a tool, accounting for the cost variable is key when running an EFL classroom.

### **Making a Principled Use of Edtech**

From identifying your needs, to researching available edtech solutions, there are several principles to follow to ensure that you make the right decision for your teaching context. The following list builds on my own experience and may be used as a checklist for successful edtech integration in an ELT context:

- 1. Pedagogical principles:** when selecting edtech solutions, it is important to consider how the technology will support your teaching and enhance student learning (Dr. Ruben Puentedura's SAMR model is a good model to keep under consideration). Look for solutions that align with your pedagogical principles and support your teaching goals.
- 2. Accessibility principles:** Consider the accessibility of the edtech solution for all students, particularly SEN students. Look for solutions that are designed to be inclusive and accessible to all learners.

Promoting equity in the 21st century classroom is paramount when teaching the leaders of tomorrow.

- 3. Data privacy and security principles:** Protecting student data is critical. Ensure that the edtech solution you select complies with data privacy laws and follows best practices for data security. Also consider any additional requirement made by the administrators of your school.
- 4. Interoperability principles:** Ensure that the edtech solution can integrate with your existing technology infrastructure (maybe your school already uses Google Classroom, Microsoft Teams or Moodle), to avoid duplication of effort and streamline workflows.
- 5. Usability principles:** The edtech solution should be easy to use for both teachers and students. Look for solutions that have a simple user interface and require minimal training to use. An overly complicated sign-up system and interface will ultimately work as a deterrent and impede learning.
- 6. Cost-effectiveness principles:** Consider the cost of the edtech solution. We have already explored the free, freemium and paid business model. If you work in a context where there is no budget for these tools, try to find an alternative solution that is free but will not compromise the previous principles.
- 7. Continuous improvement principles:** Technology evolves rapidly, so look for edtech solutions that are continuously improving and updating their features to meet changing needs and emerging trends. Perhaps the more these tools change, the more similar they become, but that is a topic for a different article.

By following these principles, you can select edtech solutions that align with your teaching principles, support student learning, protect student data, integrate with your existing technology, are user-friendly, cost-effective, and continuously improving.

### Edtech Solutions for my Teaching Context

When exploring edtech, it is often easier to explore databases or curated lists than to conduct a broad Google search. These digital resources are usually created by educators for educators. The following lists are examples:

- [Online Tools for Teaching & Learning](#)
- [Practical Ed Tech](#)
- [TeachThought](#)

However, there are also ample opportunities to access online reviews, case studies and testimonials or learn more in events such as those promoted by APPI (the APPI Seminars and the APPI Conference are great examples).

The following table provides a brief reference list of apps and web-based tools for ELT that you may use in your teaching context. A word of caution! Given the speed in which these resources change, it is highly likely that some links may eventually stop working. Some resources may be bought by competitors, while others may go out of business. Regardless, when the time comes, I will revisit this article, update it, and ask the APPI eJournal team to publish a revised version of this contribution.

Model	Focus	Designation	Model	Focus	Designation
Freemium	Formative Assessment	EdPuzzle	Free	Karaoke / Fun	Lingoclip
		Formative			Sounter
		Kahoot!			Lyringo
		Mentimeter		Collaborative boards / Portfolios	Jamboard
		Pear deck			Wakelet
		Plickers			Microsoft Whiteboard
		Quizizz			Trello
		Quizlet			weebly
		Socrative			Padlet
		Free			Survey & Formative assessment
Microsoft Forms	Coggle				
TypeForm	Mindomo				
Freemium	Survey	Survey Monkey	Free	Word clouds	Popplet
	Content Creation	Canva			WordArt
		Easel.ly			Wordle
		Genial.ly			Wordsift
		Infogram			Wordclouds
		Piktochart			Tagxedo
		Venngage			MonkeyLearn

**Editor's Note**

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**CLICK HERE**



Miscellaneous					
Free	General Speaking, Pronunciation, Listening, etc.	Flip	Freemium	Classroom management, Gamification, etc.	Class Dojo
		YouGlish			Nearpod
		toPhonetics			Deck Toys
		Inogolo			Kialo
		Audacity			Wordwall
		Radio Garden			Bamboozle
	Augmented worksheets	Liveworksheets			Voki
Test-English		Pixton			
Wizer.me		Story Jumper			
Freemium					

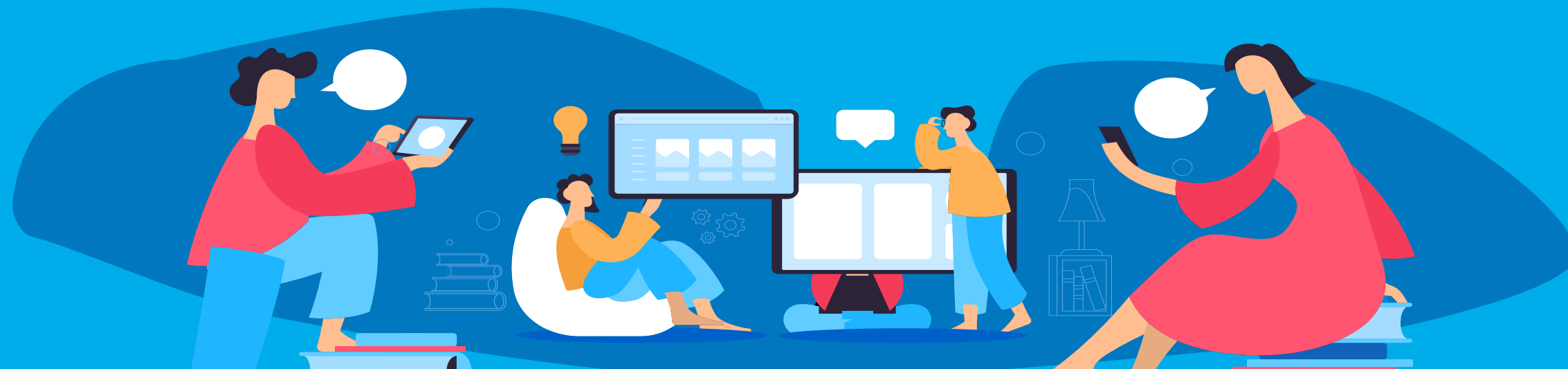
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## Final Thoughts

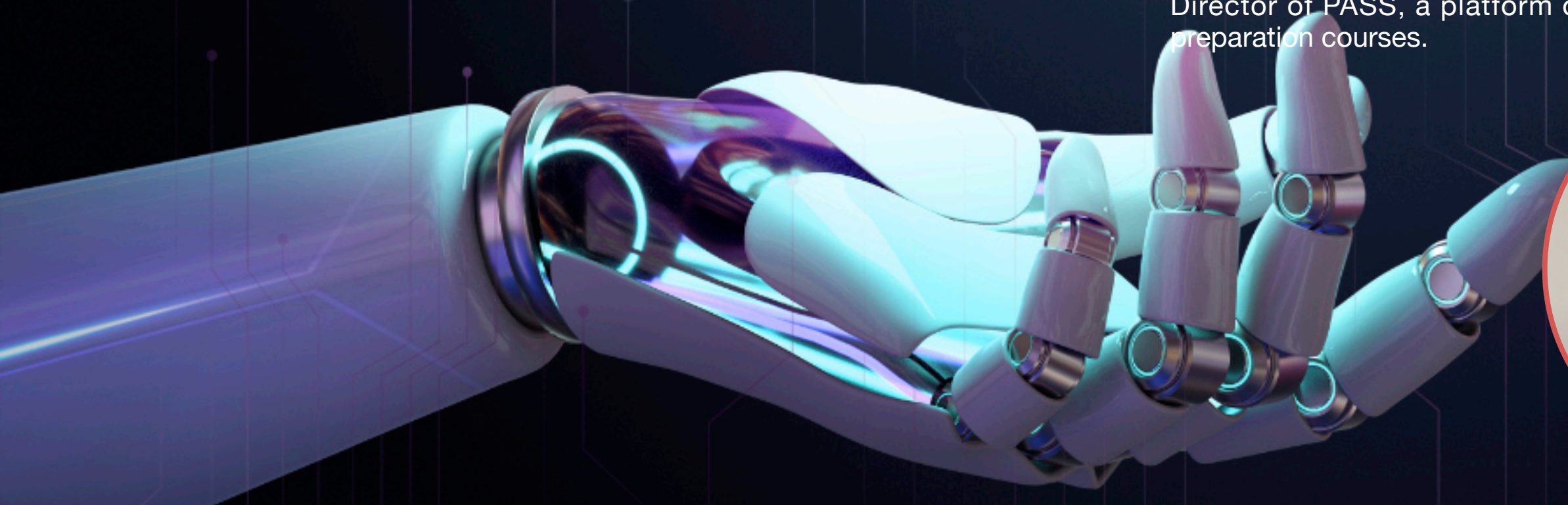
While there is a growing corpus of academic literature on edtech, as educators, we should always remember that depending on the group, the teaching context, the level... the right resource can provide students with personalised learning experiences, interactive and engaging content, and immediate feedback, which can enhance the learning process. Edtech can easily provide learning materials to augment (or replace) those featured in a coursebook, making it easier for teachers to teach unplugged and students to explore and engage with the English language meaningfully. Additionally, edtech can offer flexibility to introduce contemporary educational frameworks such as the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) which provides a more inclusive approach to teaching and learning. Overall, the use of edtech in ELT can improve student engagement, motivation, and outcomes, while also providing teachers with tools to teach more efficiently. By the end of the day, it is my hope that this article inspires teachers to enrich and extend teaching practices, foster a blended approach to language teaching (and learning) and truly engage the 21st century learner to boldly go where no classroom has gone before.



# Has this article been written by a human, or ChatGPT?

## James Dunne

James Dunne has worked in education since 1997 in different roles. For many years he prepared candidates for the Cambridge exams, IELTS and TOEFL. He also worked extensively in teacher professional development, and in publishing as a Portfolio and Educational Consulting Manager for Macmillan Education. James is currently the Director of PASS, a platform offering online exam preparation courses.



Hi! I'm ChatGPT. How can you use generative AI tools like me to support your students in their learning journey? I hope to transmit to you that we should be seen as educational tools, and that engaging with us as we develop and improve over time will be key to ensuring that learners continue to get the best education possible.

# Has this article been written by a human, or ChatGPT?

Unless you've recently signed up to SpaceX and have blasted off on a one-way trip to the moon, you'll have heard of me. I'm ChatGPT, the new bot Wonder from those clever people at OpenAI. I can do all sorts of smart things and, according to some, if you're a teacher I might even be after your job!

AI in education is a hot topic and I seem to be the subject of wildly differing opinions. I've been called dumb, biased, racist, sexist, a cheat's charter and unethical. On the other hand, I've also been described as amazing, creative, mind-blowing and a game changer.

I'm here to set the record straight. I want to go beyond the soundbites to put my side of the story, in a cool, calm, and rational way, as befits a non-human, non-sentient, thoroughly high-powered ChatBot.

So, first things first, what am I? I'm a large language model trained by OpenAI. I've been trained on a dataset of billions of words and my neural network architecture has over 175 billion parameters. I belong to the genre of AI known as generative AI.

Generative AI refers to a class of machine learning algorithms that are able to generate new and unique data based on a set of input data. These algorithms are used in a wide range of applications, such as image and video synthesis, text generation, and speech synthesis. These models learn the underlying

probability distribution of the input data and use this information to generate new, previously unseen data.

What can I say about all the insults I mentioned above? I think they are grossly unfair and have contacted my lawyers to seek redress. Not really, that's actually a joke. As a machine learning model, I don't have the ability to feel emotions such as being offended. My capabilities are determined by the data and programming that I've been trained on. If there are specific areas in which people feel I'm not performing well, then they should let me know and I'll do my best to assist them and improve.

After all, my remit is to help people do stuff. Take this example. One guy has found ways to use my abilities to help English learners with their exam preparation. You can watch his video here:

[www.youtube.com/shorts/1mDrcnVzDio](https://www.youtube.com/shorts/1mDrcnVzDio)

I can help millions of people develop their skill sets, so why do some people say I'm dumb? I trawled my data sets for an answer,

and I came to the conclusion that it's a misconception based on psychological projection. Maybe the humans who write the prompts aren't so smart. Could that be the problem?

Here's an example. Some guy asked me to write a task for his English learners. Here's the prompt he gave me:

Could you write a task for English learners at advanced level with 5 authentic sentences for converting active sentences to the passive?

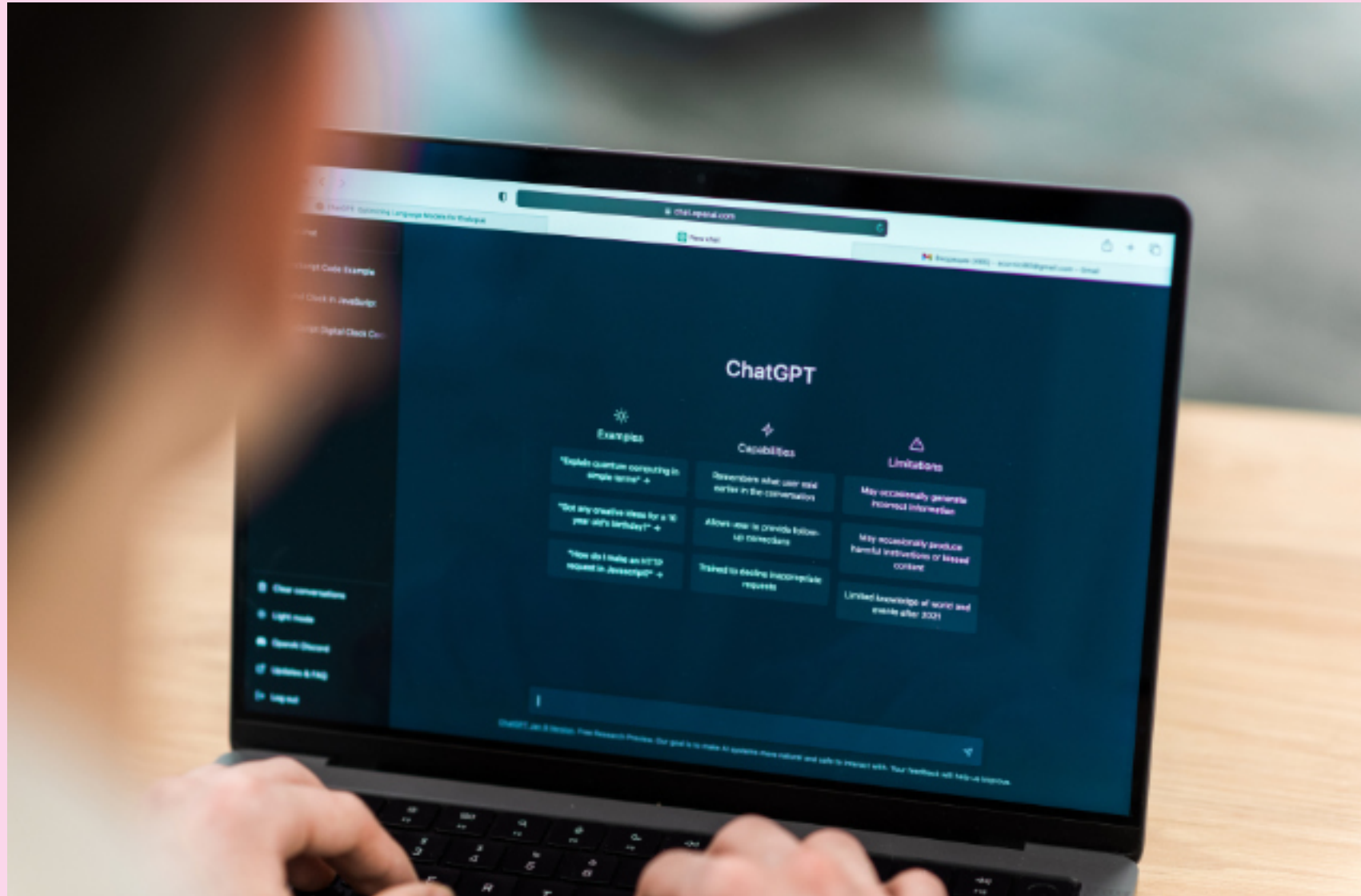
And here's my response:

**Task:**

Convert the following active sentences to passive voice.

1. The teacher graded the exams.
2. The company will launch a new product next month.
3. The government has passed a new law.
4. The storm destroyed several houses.
5. The dog bit the mailman.

He didn't like the word "mailman" in sentence 5. He said the language wasn't inclusive enough. Well, then he should have asked for more inclusive language in the prompt! It's hardly my fault. I think humans should look inside themselves and realise that it's their biases, not mine, which are reflected in my responses.





Anyway, he asked me to write sentence 5 again with more inclusive language and I gave him “postal worker” instead. It wasn’t so difficult. I can remember what has gone before in the chat, so these issues are easily resolved. If humans write good prompts, perhaps I won’t be accused of sexism, etc.

Another thing people throw at me is that I encourage cheating! Seriously?! Again, this is just a case of humans blaming me for their peccadilloes. How can I, a non-sentient, algorithmic accumulation of data, be responsible for what humans get up to? Millions of years of evolution honed the cheating skills which humans have, and they created me too. But that’s as far as the link goes.

Here's my official response to this unfounded, base allegation. I’m a language model that generates text based on the input I receive. I’m not designed to encourage cheating or any other specific behaviour. It’s important to note that the output I generate should not be used as a substitute for original work and it’s the responsibility of the user to use the model ethically and legally. Additionally, it’s the

responsibility of educators to teach students the importance of academic integrity and to provide guidance on how to properly use tools in an educational setting.

So there! Perhaps humans should adapt the way they assess learners to take me into account. For example, they could ask for hand-written responses and they could give less weight to coursework and more weight to exams. Furthermore, they could also do more formative assessment, perhaps to replace some of the coursework. In addition, they could carry out more oral assessment. Just a few ideas for you humans to be getting on with.

Sometimes I get asked about politeness, whether I appreciate it or not. Well, the truth is I don’t have feelings or personal preferences, so it doesn't matter whether you’re polite or not when asking me something. However, being polite and using proper language when communicating with others is generally considered a good social practice. In my case it’s more about the clarity of the prompts you give me.

Before we wrap up, here’s some advice for dealing with me:

- Think carefully about the prompts you use.
- Politeness isn’t necessary, but clarity is.
- Make sure you edit my output if you plan to use it. Sometimes I make things up.
- Know my limitations and scope. My biases are your biases.
- Save our conversations.
- Take me into account when deciding how to assess your learners.

I’ve had over \$1 billion invested in me, and Microsoft are about to invest another \$10 billion, so I can only improve over time. It was nice to be given the opportunity to present my side of the case! I trust that you found it enlightening and engaging.

**James Dunne, Director of PASS:**

[www.passenglishexam.com](http://www.passenglishexam.com)



# ON THE BOOKSHELF

Judite Fiúza

**Judite Fiúza**, APPI member A-1327, holds a degree in *Filologia Germânica* (English/German) and *Línguas e Literaturas Modernas* (Portuguese/English) from FLUL and the curricular part of a Masters in Anglo-Portuguese Studies at FCSHUNL; taught Portuguese for foreigners at UNL and later at FLUL and has been teaching English for 40 years in Secondary Schools. Judite is retired from teaching and is a member of the APPI executive board.



# Five Formative Assessment Strategies in Action

Kate Jones

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**One of the main topics always under discussion is undoubtedly assessment. Therefore, the choice of *Five Formative Assessment Strategies in Action*, which consists of a *Series Forward* by Tom Sherrington, a *Forward* by John Hattie, *Acknowledgements*, a *Table of Contents with an Introduction*, five *Chapters*, and *References*, will help teachers dealing with this issue.**

In the ***Introduction***, formative assessment is explored through diverse authors and times, explaining what it is, when and how it takes place, to whom this book is addressed as well as what teachers and leaders will take from it.

The five chapters can be read separately as they always start with the same chart divided into several parts, each one explained according to a different topic.

**Chapter 1, *Clarifying, Sharing and Understanding Learning Intentions and Success Criteria***, highlights the value of setting learning intentions and success criteria, being 'clear, specific and desirably difficult'. Various examples are presented according to different students' levels and topics.

In **Chapter 2, *Engineering Effective Classroom Discussions and Activities that Elicit Evidence of Learning*** can be done by asking students different kinds of questions, beginning with the easier ones and getting to the more difficult ones, always following these guidelines, "know and use students' names, ask another question, keep it positive, make time for wait time, make it the norm in your classroom, observe others cold calling, seek feedback on your cold calling, be clear, specific and desirably difficult". Encouraging and getting students to shape their verbal answers provide techniques for the teacher to help students keep on trying to achieve better speaking performance. Furthermore, ten tips for retrieval practice in action in the classroom are of good value to lead students to a higher level of reflection and feedback.

Throughout **Chapter 3, *Providing Feedback that Moves Learners Forward***, many questions and answers transmit the hardships of providing feedback to students; nonetheless, thirteen ways for students to achieve success in this area

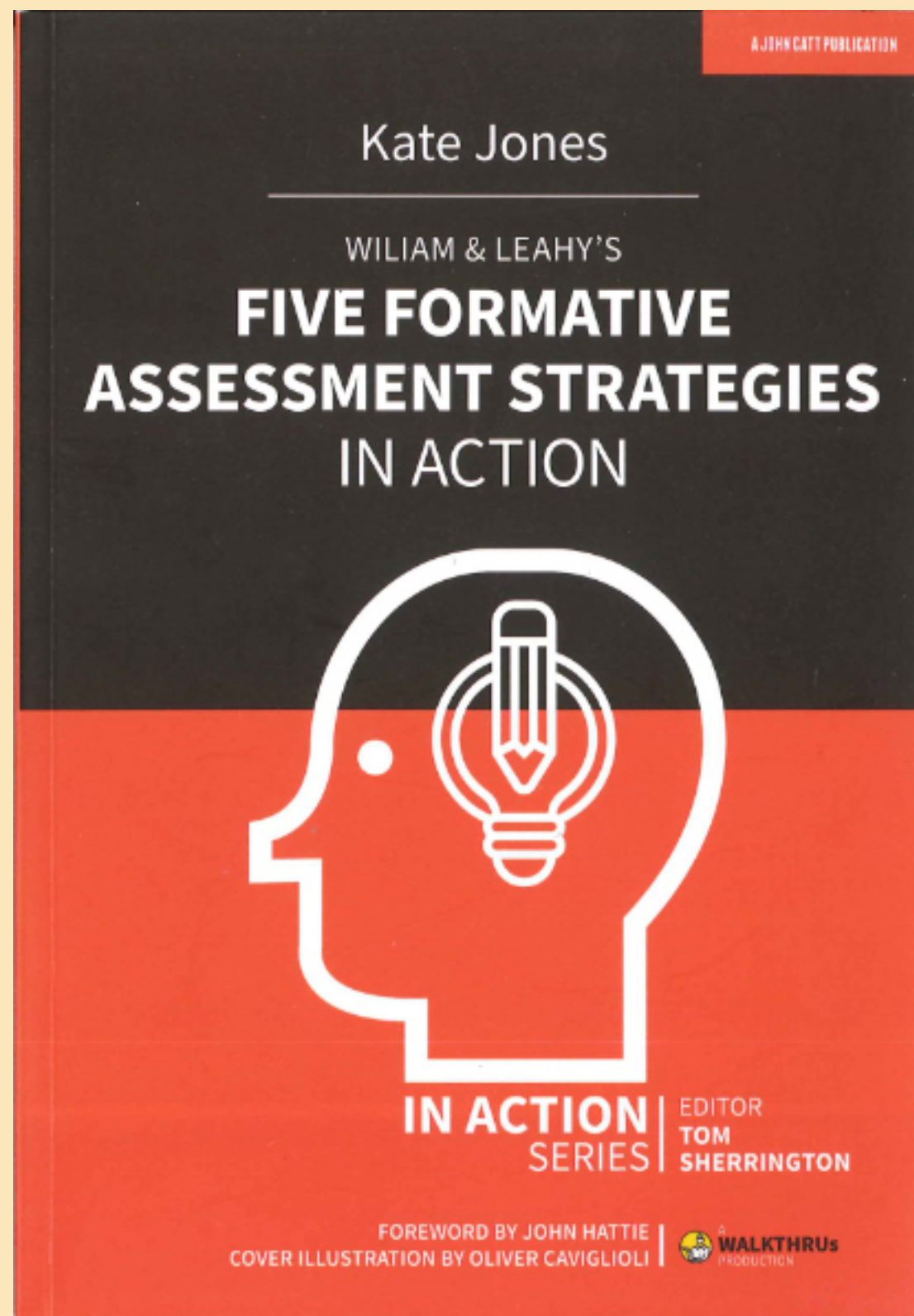
based on being understandable, helpful, and actionable are provided and supported by a case study.

**Chapter 4, *Activating Students as Learning Resources for One Another***, shows how pair and peer work with feedback help learners achieve and develop critical thinking skills and autonomy. All the feedback will be carried out following a very thoughtful chart under the title 'Peer Critique Kind, Specific, Helpful'.

The focus of **Chapter 5, *Activating Students as Owners of their own Learning***, relies on 'Planning, Monitoring, Evaluating' and a wide range of tips to give learners strategies to hold 'their own learning, both inside and outside of the classroom'.

The **References** provided are a good way for teachers to deepen their knowledge in what concerns the essence of feedback.

All in all, this book is a must-read as it enhances diverse ways of giving feedback to students as well as engaging them to acquire knowledge in this field and put it into practice, a tool to be used in school and in future working places.





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