



The Irish Research Scheme for Teaching

Sponsored by Trinity College London

Chris Farrell

IRST 17/18

[Course title]

TRINITY
COLLEGE LONDON

Introduction



It is my pleasure to present the final research papers from the Irish Research Project 2017/18 sponsored by Trinity College London. This has been the second full year of the project and the quality of research has exceeded even my most optimistic of expectations, as is evidenced in the body of work contained within this document.

The IRST 2017/18 was launched at the ELT Ireland Annual Conference 2017 on the back of our successful pilot project from 2016/17. Trinity College London, personified in this context by Ben Beaumont, had agreed to come on board before the conference in order to ensure a degree of academic rigour in the structure of the project. The uptake following the conference was excellent, with nine projects proposed

tentatively in the run up to our 2017/18 IRST Day. On June 10th 2017 we held a full day's session in Centre of English Studies on Dame Court where the researchers had the opportunity to present their proposals and get feedback from the group. Ben Beaumont also did some basic training on action research techniques and considerations. The whole day served as a fantastic springboard for the project and allowed us to create, within the project, a community of sharing and learning which I hope will be of immense benefit to the participants going forward.

Of the nine projects which begun that day, only six made it to the finish line, unfortunately. I want to take the opportunity here to thanks Peter Lahiff, Gavin Reddin, and Anna Morris for their participation and wish them all the best in their ongoing research projects.

I wish also to thank Ben Beaumont and Trinity College London for the faith they have shown in this scheme from the very beginning. The essential being of this whole enterprise is to provide an opportunity for those engaged in teaching in Ireland to be able to conduct and share research from their own context, and to be able to have a community of like-minded individuals for support and guidance. Trinity College London have shown their willingness to share their own expertise and allow us time here to create a community of best practice in action research from the ground up.

I want to thank Centre of English Studies for allowing me the time and premises to be able to run the IRST. Your continued support is very much appreciated.

Finally, I want to thank all of the researchers who took part this year. So far, it has been a massive learning curve for me in many aspects of this process and I have really appreciated your enthusiastic participation and dedication to your profession.

For those of you interested in participating please do not hesitate to get in touch. Don't feel that your idea isn't sufficient enough, or that you lack the skills in researching in the classroom. This project is not for experts, it is for development. Take a chance, get in touch and let's start sharing some ideas.

Regards,

Chris Farrell

Project Supervisor, IRST

Table of Contents

Title and Author	Page
<i>Attitudes towards professional development in ELT in Ireland</i> by Liam Tyrrell (English Studio Dublin)	3
<i>Facebook, Edmodo or your own personal blog.</i> by Keith Murdiffe (IBAT)	16
<i>Project Based Learning: Benefits, Constraints and Reflection</i> by Christina Barni, Ankie Janssen, Margaret McCarthy, David Moran, Adam O'Regan, Aileen Slattery, Matthew Watson (CEC)	34
<i>Teaching nuclear stress: an investigation into the effect on student comprehensibility</i> by Stephen Bruce, Isobel Burke and Stephen Easley-Walsh (DIFC)	69
The efficacy of note-taking instruction for learners of English as a second language by David Wolfe (English Studio Dublin)	82
After word by Ben Beaumont	88

Contact details:

Get in touch with the IRST at irstprojects@gmail.com

Follow our blog: <https://irishresearchschemeformeeting.wordpress.com/blog/>

Follow us on Twitter: @IrishIRST

Full biographies for all of the researchers available on blog.

Details of the Trinity IRST 2018/19 will be shared on the blog and on Twitter.

Attitudes towards professional development in ELT in IRELAND

By Liam Tyrrell (English Studio Dublin)

Introduction:

Part of my role as an Academic Co-ordinator at a large Dublin language school is responsibility for running the school's continuous professional development (CPD) programme. This involves organising and providing in-service training, organising teacher-led knowledge sharing sessions, ensuring an updated library of resources related to current practice are available, co-ordinating and facilitating guided peer observations, and identifying other opportunities for development for teachers, e.g. conferences, research schemes.

Providing a development programme is mandatory in QQI/ACELS accredited schools in Ireland (ACELS 2017), it is therefore worthwhile considering the kinds of programmes are running elsewhere. This would clearly benefit not just me personally in my current role but also my institution as we would be able to benchmark our own performance against that of others operating in the sector. By discovering which aspects of programmes teachers perceive positively, it should be possible to offer suggestions around standardised provision across the industry, or at least to draw concrete conclusions surrounding best practice.

In addition to being mandatory from a regulatory point of view, the need for teachers and institutions to engage in and/or provide continuous professional development is paramount - as expressed eloquently by Richards and Farrell (2005) when they say:

"The need for ongoing renewal of professional skills and knowledge is not a reflection of inadequate training but simply a response to the fact that not everything teachers need to know can be provided at preservice level, as well as the fact that the knowledge base of teaching constantly changes."

In my own experience, I have found that institutions either have a limited interest in providing development opportunities, or that the opportunities available do not address the needs and/or interests of the teaching staff. In some cases, the regulatory requirement was satisfied simply by purchasing institutional membership of an organisation such as ELT Ireland or IATEFL, along with a subscription to a professional magazine or two. This kind of practice clearly fails to recognise the crucial nature of professional development in assisting the provision of quality language education.

I am very interested in the process by which large institutions can fulfil their obligations so as to provide development for staff without it becoming something “done” to teachers, much in the same way that teachers try to avoid teaching being something done to learners in our classrooms. I am also interested in whether my own strongly held belief of development being a teacher’s obligation, is common across the sector.

This research therefore, was undertaken to discover why teachers may or may not participate in development programmes as well as to try and understand what may influence their decision to participate in such activities in future. In short, to understand the teacher’s perspective on these kinds of programmes as well as developing a picture of how they operate in the Irish context.

In the following sections I will outline the rationale behind this research, provide information on the methods used as well as the ethical considerations taken into account, and finally, display the results of the study so as to present my conclusions.

Rationale:

In my current role, the school for whom I work has a wide variety of development options available (e.g in-service training; teacher-led knowledge sharing sessions; conferences; research schemes; article reading groups). Despite the opportunities available the highest average engagement in any of these options is constantly hovering around 45%. We have a permanent staff of around 35 teachers working year-round. The majority of those have been with the school for over 1 year, so considerations around the transitory nature of the work as a reason for non-participation in development do not seem to explain this low rate. Interestingly, in a survey performed by ELT Advocacy (2016) on teacher’s working conditions around 60% of teachers surveyed said that they viewed teaching English as a career; this would seemingly suggest that in any staffroom roughly this number would be interested in professional development.

A recent survey (Cambridge 2017) on the topic of teacher development found that 97% of respondents felt it was important, but 34% felt they had little or no support when looking for development. Rather surprisingly, the same survey found that a considerable majority of teachers, preferred to study alone for development, which raises strong questions related to the provision of workshops and training sessions on a school-wide basis. As this survey was conducted internationally, it would be interesting to compare its results with the opinions of teachers working in the Irish context.

A broader survey on working conditions among English-language teachers working in France (Cagnol 2014) asked about the number of days respondents had spent at development or training events excluding conferences. 57% of the 789 people who answered the question said they had not spent a single day attending a formal professional development event in the previous 2 years.

Curiously, the number who attended 1 day and the number who attended more than 10 days were very similar, 7% and 8% respectively, implying that there may be a famine or feast relationship in terms of participation.

This research aims to build on those mentioned above to provide a more detailed overview of the kinds of development available in Ireland and the attitudes of teachers working in Ireland towards them. It is hoped that this will lay a foundation whereby institutions providing professional development will be better informed regarding the available possibilities and the preferences of teachers towards them.

Research Questions:

The purpose of this research is to identify:

1. What continuous professional development opportunities are available to English-language teachers working in Ireland?
2. How do English-language teachers in Ireland feel about these continuous professional development opportunities?

Procedure:

Method

I collected 25 survey responses online using Google Forms. Respondents were sourced via email and social media, with support from groups such as ELT Ireland, ELT Advocacy, Unite the Union and fellow Trinity IRST participants. The survey was opened for 3 weeks and reminders were sent from my own email, the ELT Ireland newsletter as well as on my personal Twitter and Facebook accounts.

Research Instrument

I chose to develop a survey (Appendix 1) that focussed on the provision and availability of CPD programmes in institutions as well as respondents' participation or otherwise in aspects of these. Follow-up questions covered issues surrounding reasons for non-participation, rewards available for participation, perceptions of ideal development programmes as well as allowing space for comments on development on institutional, local and national levels. Questions on availability and provision of aspects of programmes as well as participation and rewards were set as closed questions with options

available to be chosen by respondents. Questions surrounding reasons for non-participation, ideal programmes and general comments on the CPD in the industry were set as open so as to allow for respondents to express their ideas as they wished. To allow for demographic analysis, I also included additional questions on level of experience and level of qualification as I felt there may be a correlation between less-experienced/qualified and more-experienced/qualified teachers in terms of the type of activity they engaged with. I also included questions on current working hours so as to investigate whether a higher/lower workload had an effect on levels of engagement in continuous professional development.

Ethical considerations

It was important to consider that speaking out about the provision or otherwise of development within a company could be a risk for some workers, particularly those in precarious employment. As such it was necessary to ensure anonymity of contributions. Participants gave informed consent by reading a paragraph at the top of the survey assuring them that any information or data obtained during this research would be treated confidentially. This was done by downloading all data from the online form to an encrypted excel file, followed by removing the online data from the internet. The data was stored securely on a password protected hard drive for the lifetime of the research and deleted entirely once the research had been completed. Participants were also informed that data from this research project may be published and used in presentations in the future.

Analysis of data

Correlations in the data were analysed using charts and graphs for the closed questions. Responses from teachers working outside of Ireland were excluded for the purpose of establishing the types of development available and the rewards available for same. Levels of participation in events were calculated including all respondents. The open questions were analysed for common themes or interesting comments.

Conclusions:

Survey results

The survey had 25 respondents, of whom 22 were based in Ireland. Of those who responded, 12 have been teaching English for over 10 years. 60% of respondents hold an M.A. or Level 9 Diploma while 10 hold a pre-service Certificate. 21 of the 25 respondents work full-time (more than 15 hours per week).

Following the exclusion of respondents who work outside of Ireland, 19 work in institutions that offer a professional development programme, while 3 work in schools without such an option. By far the most common components of CPD programmes were workshops (18), meetings (15), attending conferences (15) and peer observations (14). Further certification (6), action research (3) and reading groups (2) were less commonly available. Additional components suggested by respondents included membership of teaching associations (IATEFL, ELT Ireland etc.), webinars and online activity, and publishing in a school newsletter.

Of the available components, meetings and workshops were consistently rewarded and also showed the highest level of reported participation. The options with the next-highest reported participation were attending conferences and peer observations, although interestingly more respondents reported being rewarded for attending conferences than for doing peer observations, which is surprising given the expense involved in sending teachers to conferences as compared to the expense involved in running an in-house peer observation programme. Perhaps the salient detail here is that conferences generally take place at weekends. Very few respondents reported being involved in reading groups or action research and unsurprisingly it was also clear that there were no rewards available for these activities.

When asked to provide reasons for non-participation the majority of comments indicated non-attendance due to lack of availability. However, one interesting comment did note that *"I already had the Dip when I started,"* implying that beyond Level 9 qualifications no further development is deemed necessary by this respondent. One other respondent reported that they were *"too busy"* to participate.

In terms rewards provided by schools for participation, where available they mostly included payment for workshops and meetings, although in some cases, this was reported at a lower rate than the regular teaching rate. In addition, one respondent reported receiving payment for attending conferences, another indicated that they received time off in lieu for weekend conferences, and one respondent indicated that the school would fund/part-fund attendance at conferences. Peer observations were paid at a normal teaching rate in all cases where a reward was reported, likely because they occur during the normal working day.

Finally, one last comment noted that *"it's part of your contract, rewards are related to your pay rise the next year and promotions e.g do a course, get a higher job."*

When asked to describe their ideal CPD programme 8 of the 25 respondents mentioned payment, in combination with career pathway, as being important. 6 respondents were interested in programmes that included elements of peer cooperation or observation. Smaller numbers of respondents mentioned external certification or external workshop providers as being ideal components for them, whereas others mentioned training at a higher level than pre-service (Cert TESOL/CELTA/CELT) and training for English for Specific Purposes (in particular ESOL for refugees).

The tone of comments related to development opportunities in schools, both locally and nationally was surprisingly negative, although only 9 respondents left a comment for this question. These responses have been published in full in Appendix 2. From them a picture emerges of a cohort of teachers who are interested in development but feel lacking in support or a coherent professional pathway. It also appears that access to and reward for professional development is very much determined by which school a teacher happens to be working in.

Implications

Despite the small sample size relative to the number of English language teachers working in Ireland, it does seem to be possible to draw some clear conclusions from the data. The first and most obvious trend is that of a clear correlation between the provision of rewards for participation and rates of participation. Results also indicate that the main vehicles provided by schools for

professional development are workshops and meetings with options like peer observation or attending conferences being far less frequent. Interestingly, self-directed development modes like action research and/or reading groups are practically non-existent. This implies that CPD in Ireland is seen as an institution-led process and not one where teacher autonomy is encouraged.

These conclusions are further supported by the number of responses in the open questions that referenced payment and peer-cooperation, thus implying that institutions would better meet their teacher's development needs by operating teacher-led or peer-led development programmes. Obviously such an action would raise issues for schools in terms of oversight and value-for-money measurements but it would seem prudent for institutions to investigate the possibilities of running such schemes particularly if diversity of component types were to lead to greater engagement with development from staff. It seems from these results that teachers would like to have more autonomy in deciding how and when to develop, but that they also see it as the institution's responsibility to support them in their development.

In my own context, it seems that there is a need to redesign our development programme to better meet these values. It's clear that while the school provides a variety of options, we need to offer far more transparency in terms of how each component is supported and rewarded. We also need to look to develop more peer-led development opportunities.

Finally, the comments relating to external provision and the need for certification would suggest that opportunities exist for the development of accredited teacher training/development courses bridging the gap between Cert. and Dip. level and beyond.

Further research

Perhaps a more personal approach with face-to-face interviews and/or focus groups would yield a higher level of participation at the level of the teacher and the investigation of attitudes towards development and/or reasons for non-participation. This might allow for greater clarity in describing teachers' developmental needs and preferences.

Further research could focus at a higher level than that of the teacher in order to gather an overview of development programmes in place at schools. Perhaps engaging bodies like QQI or MEI and encouraging Directors of Studies or School Managers to share their programmes for staff development would lead to a more fully-formed picture of the opportunities available in different centres, as well as providing opportunities for inter-institutional cooperation and knowledge-sharing.

Finally, if the information gathered from the two proposals above could be compared internationally, this could lead to a truly global picture regarding the state of development from both institutional and teacher perspectives.

References:

- ACELS (2017) *Regulations governing the recognition of English Language Education Organisations 2017*. <http://www.acels.ie/api/documents/GetSchoolRegulationsDocById/14> (accessed 24/11/2017)
- Cagnol, B. et al. (2014) English Teaching Survey - France. <http://www.linguid.net/pdf/My-teacher-is-not-rich.pdf> (accessed 24/11/2017)
- Cambridge 2017, The State of Teacher Development. <http://www.cambridge.org/elt/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/State-of-Teacher-Development-2017-full-report-Cambridge-University-Press-ELT.pdf> (accessed 24/11/2017)
- ELT Advocacy (2016) *ELT Working Conditions Survey Report*, available via email eltadvocacy@gmail.com
- Richards, J.C. and Farrell, T.S. (2005) *Professional Development for Language Teachers*, CUP.

Appendix 1:

Survey examining professional development opportunities in Ireland.

Professional Development Opportunities in Ireland

Part of a research project on Attitudes Towards and Availability of Continuous Professional Development in Ireland being undertaken by Liam Tyrrell of The English Studio Dublin as part of the Irish Research Scheme for Teachers (<https://irishresearchschemeformeeting.wordpress.com/>). The survey has two parts - the first asks for demographic information and the second considers the availability or otherwise of Professional Development where you work.

Consent to Participate:

Your participation in this project is voluntary. Even if you agree to participate now, you can withdraw at any time without any consequences of any kind. If you agree to participate, this will involve you completing this survey.

Any information or data which is obtained from you during this research which can be identified with you will be treated confidentially. This will be done by downloading all data from the online form to an encrypted excel file and a removal of the online data from the internet. The data will be stored securely on a passworded hard drive for the lifetime of the research and deleted entirely once the research has been completed. Data from this research project may be published and used in presentations in the future.

By completing this survey you are giving informed consent to your participation in this research.

If you have any further questions about this research or would like to receive a report on the results you can contact Liam Tyrrell - liam.edu.ecm@gmail.com .

***Required**

1. Where are you from? *

2. What country are you currently working in? *

3. How long have you been teaching English? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ < 1 year
- ☐ 1-2 years
- ☐ 2-5 years
- ☐ 5-10 years
- ☐ >10 years
- ☐ Rather not say

4. What is the highest level of teaching or ESL related qualification you hold? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Pre-service Certificate (CELTA, CELTA, Cert. TESOL or equivalent)
- ☐ Level 9 Diploma (DELTA, Dip. TESOL or equivalent)
- ☐ Master's (M.A. in TESOL, M.A. in Linguistics or other relevant Master's)
- ☐ PhD
- ☐ Rather not say
- ☐ Other: _____

5. Do you currently work.. *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Part-time (up to 15 hours per week)
- ☐ Full-time (more than 15 hours per week)
- ☐ Freelance (some hours here and there but nothing fixed)
- ☐ Not working at present
- ☐ Rather not say

Development in Your School

6. Does your school offer a professional development programme? *

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

7. What activities are part of your school's professional development programme? *

Tick all that apply.

- ☐ Workshops
- ☐ Meetings
- ☐ Attending Conferences
- ☐ Reading Groups
- ☐ Peer Observations
- ☐ Action Research
- ☐ Further Certification (DELTA, Dip TESOL, MA etc.)
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other: _____

8. Which of the components of your school's development programme have you participated in? *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Yes	No	Rather not say
Workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending Conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading Groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer Observations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Action Research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Further Certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (as mentioned above)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

9. If you do not participate in any of the components, why not?

10. Which of the components of your school's development programme are there rewards for? (e.g. payment, time-in-lieu etc.) *

Mark only one oval per row.

	Rewarded	Unrewarded	Rather not say
Workshops	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meetings	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Attending Conferences	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Reading Groups	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Peer Observations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Action Research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Further Certification	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (as mentioned above)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. What rewards are available in your school? List them - (workshops = xx, meetings = yy etc.) *

12. Overall, how satisfied are you with the professional development opportunities available to you in your school? *

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at All	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very

13. In your opinion, what does the ideal CPD programme consist of? *

Appendix 2:

Responses to the question “Any further comments on development opportunities in your school? Locally? Nationally?”

The teachers' associations offer CPD but schools do not subsidise their joining fees.

I've been teaching in Dublin for over 12 years and worked for some of the biggest, well-resourced schools. CPD was either non-existent or a rare occurrence. When schools did offer, it was often out of hours and unpaid. Only when a number of t's complained would the course be rescheduled during school hours or an admin rate be offered to t's to attend. Employers rarely offered it and definitely didn't want to pay for it if possible.

I don't feel like the ELT sector is treated as a profession in Ireland. Even if you there were more opportunities to develop locally or nationally, there is little benefit to the teacher after many years. If you are fully qualified with 10+ years service and have attended many conferences, webinars, training days over the years in your free time and on your own accord, there is no monetary difference to a NQT.

In most schools, this is a box-ticking exercise that teachers attend because they are forced to.

Much better geographical spread since ELT-Ireland set up. Social media is great opportunity to be more pro-active in one's CPD.

It would be nice to see a seminar about what teachers can do to address their working conditions from ELT Ireland or Oxford, but this is sadly ignored and it feels like the onus is on teachers to swim or sink and this doesn't feel respectful towards them. The whole goal of professional development overall feels like the equivalent of a sand mandala because teachers can put so much effort into their professional development and job, but in the end it's not worth it as they have about as much value as a kitchen mop and are not paid well for it, but if you say this to anyone in management or someone who has had it easy in ELT. They always hum along to the same tune of teaching being a vocation and not for money.

I live in rural Ireland and it is not always possible to attend courses in the large urban centres. I would love more short-term online courses (3-6 months) and perhaps face-to-face on a couple of occasions. Also, while I understand that action research is possible on my own, I would love an opportunity to meet others who would be more experienced undertaking such a task.

Some schools are great for cpd, while others it is non existent. EAP has a serious lack of opportunities!

Paid lesson planning should be a reality given that we can't walk into a class without preparing in advance. Or team teaching with lesson planning, even if it's only an hour per week.

Facebook, Edmodo or your own personal blog

Keith Murdoff (IBAT)

Background

As a teacher, I have always been interested in integrating technology into the classroom. I started teaching in 2003, and PowerPoint was the height of technological advancement. Blogging came along shortly after that and I was keen to experiment and learn how to use this as a teaching tool. I have kept my current blog on blogger since 2015, and I have enjoyed developing it. I have become better at knowing what works and tailoring the blog entries to my student's needs. However, there is a trend of students only using Facebook and YouTube to study online, and the place of the humble blog now has to vie for space amongst Vloggers and YouTubers and their dynamic, fast paced visual style. The page hits for the blog were always modest and as time went on I found it more difficult to encourage students to go and engage with the materials I had created there. A student suggested I open a Facebook account purely for teaching purposes. I found that students immediately engaged and were more likely to click, share and like the materials I posted there, including links to my blog. I discovered Edmodo shortly after that and decided to integrate these three social media platforms into my research project. I am undertaking this action research to see if my students benefit (or feel they benefit) from the extracurricular work I do on social media, and which types of activity they enjoy most and engages them most.

Introduction

The school where I teach, IBAT College, is a large third level institution with an integrated English school. There is internet access, a computer terminal, a networked projector, speakers and WIFI in each room. The teaching staff are encouraged to integrate technology and these facilities into their lessons. As a result, students are comfortable and familiar engaging with technology in a learning environment. Both in our daily interactions in the staff room, and through our regular CPD sessions, teachers are encouraged to share technology based lessons content. It was in this environment I began to experiment with Facebook and my blog as tool to consolidate lesson objectives, as revision and reference guides, and as public forums for further debate and discussion. This experimentation formed the core of my research project.

Although the idea of integrating social media platforms as a tool to consolidate learning is a relatively new one, Yunus , Salehi & Chenzi (2012) pointed out in their research into social network services (SNSs) "most students now are digital natives, so SNSs engage them by presenting material in a way that is familiar and comfortable for them." My own experience in IBAT confirmed this. In their

research, which was based on writing skills, Yunus , Salehi & Chenzi suggested setting up a Facebook group. It was here I began to formulate my own research aims.

Research Aims

The aims of my research were as follows-

- to see which, if any, social networks and online learning sites my students engaged with, and to find out the types of online activity they genuinely enjoyed and which engaged them in the learning process.
- to examine the feasibility of creating a simple, low maintenance group network where active interaction between students and teacher could be facilitated as part of the consolidation process.
- to develop a system of using social media as an extra teaching resource to be used to consolidate and revise my lesson objectives.

Student and class profile

The students are mainly professional adults, ranging in age from 18-50. The majority are in their 20's, and all are computer, Internet and technology literate. The school operates a rolling enrolment policy, although generally the intake tends to come in blocks so factoring this in was not a major concern in my research method.

The demographic is mainly South American, with the majority from Brazil and Mexico, and in the case of my research project, two Koreans, two students from Spain, one from Italy and two from Morocco. The teaching timetable in the school means that, in my own case, I am assigned three distinct classes each week- Elementary (A1-A1+), First Certificate preparation (B1+ - B2) and Advanced (B2+ - C1)

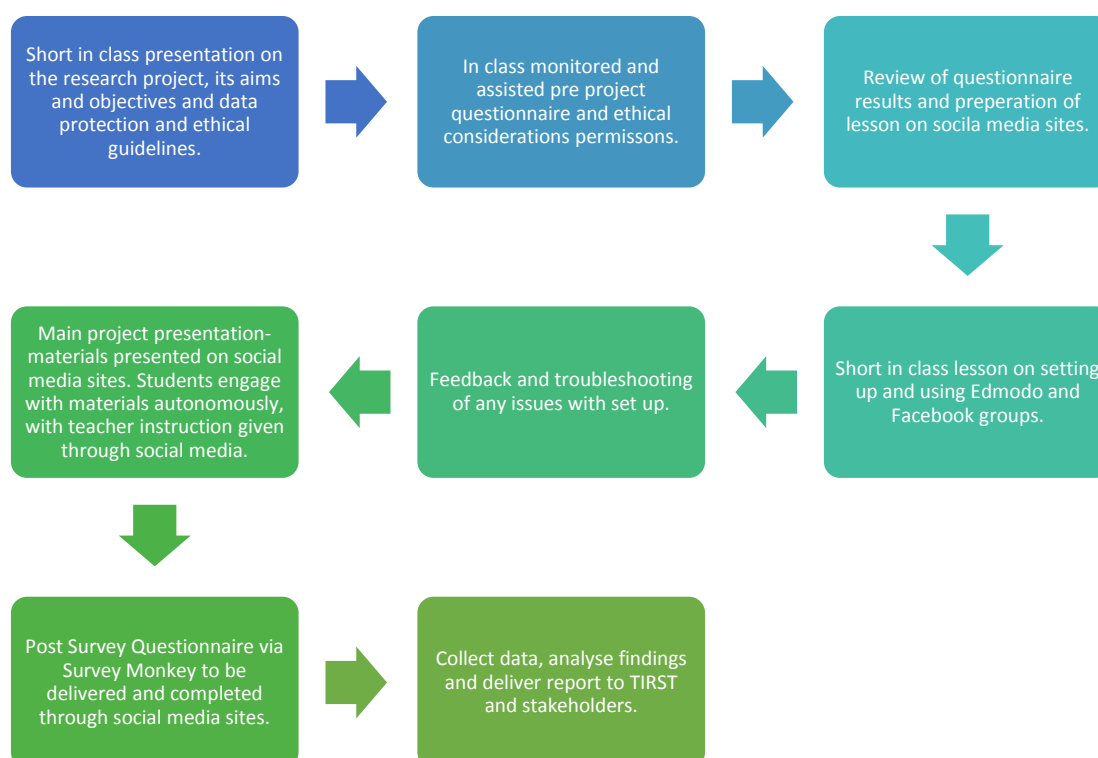
After consideration and consultation with my project mentor, it was decided I would carry out the projects in each of my three distinct classes. It was decided that including three different levels would provide a broader range of implications for my own practice. Every 6 weeks there is a level test week in the school, during which there are fewer classes as tests are administered on three of the five days of the school week. There were two issues to be addressed at the outset which could potentially affect the smooth running of the project: avoiding implementing it between level test weeks and developing clear, simple ways to explain the project rationale with students from three different levels of English.

Planning

Hopkins (2008) presents four main definitions of action research. Mills' (2003) definition that action research is "conducted by teacher researchers to gather information about how they teach and how students learn" reflected most closely the objectives of my project. Mills went on to say that "The information is gathered with the goals of gaining insight, developing reflective practice, effecting positive change in the school environment and on educational practices in general, and improving student outcomes" (Mills 2003/ Hopkins 2008)

Given that the project would be taking place on social media platforms, the 'school environment' of the research would by and large be the social media groups which would be created for the project and the improved student outcomes would be visible, through engaging interaction in L2 in an environment in which students felt comfortable and familiar.

Method



Pre-Project Questionnaire and Ethics

After familiarisation with the Trinity College Research ethics protocol (University of Dublin, 2018), I decided to create a pre project questionnaire and Data protection and Ethical considerations disclaimer. (**Appendix figure 1**) As part of the preparation stage, a short presentation detailing the research project, its aims and objectives and the ethical and data protection considerations was designed. The purpose of the pre-project questionnaire was two-fold. Firstly, to make students aware

of the purpose of the project and to engage them from the start in the potential benefits should they become involved. The second was to fulfil the ethical obligations of the project and ensure that students understood that their contributions were anonymous and wouldn't form part of their assessment or affect their progress in the school or in regard to their visa status. The wording of the Pre Project questionnaire and disclaimer (**Appendix Figure 1 & 2**) were discussed and revised with the help of project mentor Gosia Walczak.

Questionnaire Feedback

32 students agreed to take part in the project and submitted completed questionnaires and disclaimers. The results of the questionnaires revealed that all 32 students regularly engaged with Facebook, with no students being aware of blog sites such as Blogger (where I host my own blog) or WordPress. Some teaching websites were mentioned (Duo Lingo, ESL Lounge) but these were outweighed by traditional media sites such as CNN, the Irish Times and NY Times, and streaming sites such as YouTube and Netflix. One interesting finding was that 8 students mentioned Instagram as a site they used to learn English. Netflix was also mentioned by 11 students, YouTube by 15 students and Google Translate was mentioned by 4 students. (**Appendix Figure 3**) The most interesting finding for the research project purposes was that none of those surveyed were aware of Edmodo.

Students also felt that no matter how much time they spent online, which varied from 1- 4 hours daily, they all found time to study or actively learn English.

The majority (15 students) spent 1-2 hours per day on social media sites, with 5 students spending an hour more and another 5 spending an hour less. 7 students reported spending between 3 and 5 hours per day on social media. (**Appendix Figure 4**)

13 students spent an hour studying English online, with 15 spending 1-2 hours. A further 8 students spent between 2-5 hours a day studying English online. (**Appendix figure 5**)

The majority of students surfing (20) and studying (22) on social media sites for between 1-2 hours per day felt this was just enough time online. (**61%- Appendix figure 6**)

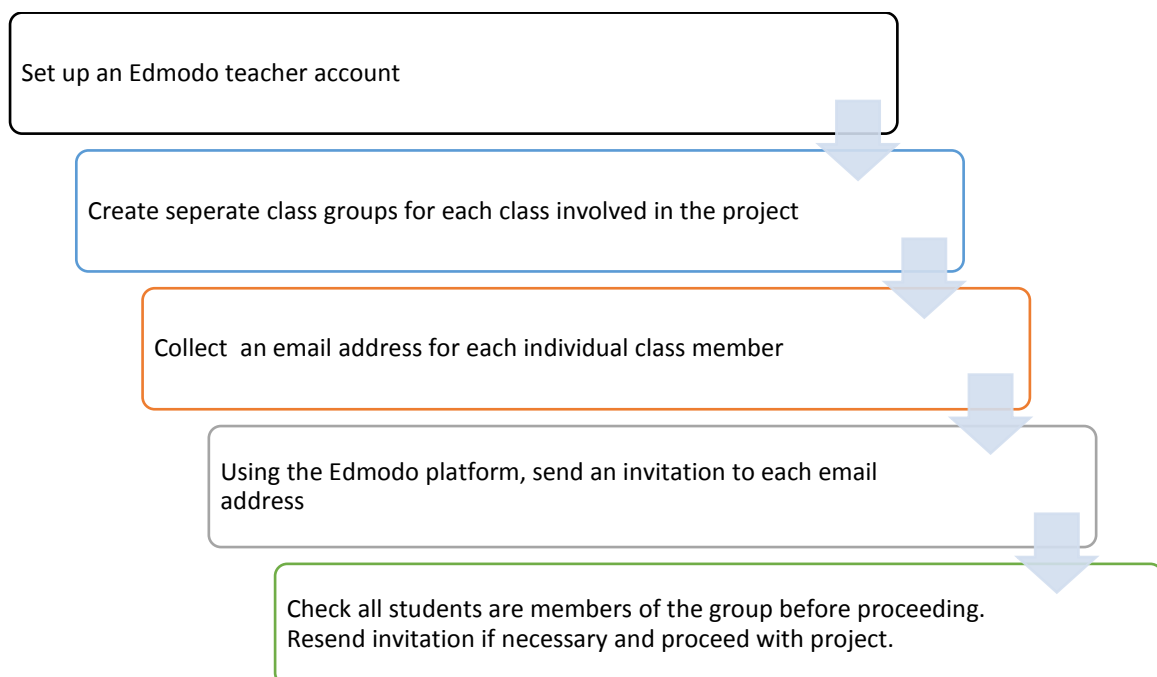
The questionnaire results pointed to an overuse of receptive skills when it came to online study. Although all respondents reported that listening, reading and learning vocabulary were the skills they practiced most, none of the students listed writing, speaking or grammar as skills they practiced most.

One of the main objectives of the project was to engage students and facilitate different online resources where interaction could occur as a continuation and consolidation of the in-class

coursework. Therefore, the feedback demonstrated a clear need for modified authentic materials, focused on the skills students ranked least, presented in a forum where the teacher could offer correction and interact with the students. Though all three platforms offered this kind of feedback loop, students were unaware of Edmodo or Blogger. As a result of these discoveries and the overall questionnaire findings, a lesson explaining Edmodo and what it was used for was planned and taught. Once this was explained, the process of setting up each class was implemented step by step.

Edmodo set up

It became apparent almost immediately that this process would be time consuming and potentially confusing to the students from the elementary group. However, with careful explanation and instruction in class, including a demonstration using the OHP and the Edmodo programme, each class had 80-100% membership registered and joined. The remainder of students had issues receiving the Edmodo invitation through their outlook account, and even into the project timetable some students had not yet joined the group. This was eventually solved by sending the invitations to alternative email addresses. During that time, student were encouraged to use the alternative options for the project, the teacher's blog or Facebook group.



Task planning

It was decided to design a lesson for each group using a specific dominant skill for each task, suited to class level and online platform. This meant creating a Reading, Writing, Listening, Grammar Awareness and Speaking lesson for each class. The platform used for each would depend on the task and class and suitability of platform for assessment and feedback. All tasks would be available on at least 2 of the three platforms. Tasks were designed and planned around existing syllabus and course book demands, and were integrated into lessons where appropriate.



Materials Design

Chomsky (1988, p 181) noted that “99% of teaching is making students feel interested in the material. 1% is about your methods” and as a teacher experience has taught me to generally concur with this statement, although the percentages fluctuate once the teacher becomes materials designer. Given my experience with the group of students involved in the project, the need to create “engaging content, meaningful practice and repeated exposure” (Vaughan Jones, 2008) was going to be fundamental to eliciting engagement outside the classroom.

To this end, a reading activity for the FCE class, an online thread based discussion activity for the Elementary class, and an authentic listening activity for the advanced class were designed. Each activity was based on problem areas noted through field notes and observations in class. The rationale for the topics and themes of the activities was connected directly to the topics being covered that particular week in their core course book. The source material for FCE was the BBC news website. The text was modified to remove superfluous text and transformed into a FCE Reading gapped text activity. **(Appendix figure 7)**

The listening activity was based on an authentic interview found on YouTube, again based on the relevant course book topic of that particular week. The process meant downloading the entire interview, then using a programme to convert it into a sound file, creating questions with multiple choice options (4 options per question) and embedding the activity and the question paper onto the teacher's blog, making a post on Facebook and creating an assignment for homework in Edmodo.

(Appendix figure 8 and 9)

The writing tasks for the advanced and FCE groups were reproduced from tasks in the coursebooks as part of the course syllabus, and were corrected via the platform they appeared on. This was due to the fact that the tasks were based on exam programmes the students were studying at the time. The writing task for elementary was based on a conversation thread that involved the teacher monitoring in the group.

Unexpected Difficulties

The project timetable was designed to run from the week after a level test, which would ensure that students who had agreed to take part in the project would have filled in the questionnaire, completed the disclaimer and been briefed and set up in the relevant Edmodo group. It would also minimise the disruption caused by students moving levels after the level test. However, the A1 class scored highly in the level tests and a decision was made to move the majority of the class to an A2 level, with the teacher remaining with the class. As a result, some of the materials were no longer part of the new syllabus, and so new authentic materials had to be created at short notice.

Post Project survey

It was discussed and agreed upon that student should be surveyed about their experience of the project. To that end, a small survey was made and posted across the three platforms. The purpose of the survey was to examine student's attitudes to learning online through social media websites. The survey was created with the help of Gosia Walczak and was deliberately designed to be brief but also allow for comment. This survey was posted on all social networks, to maximise engagement and possibility of completion.

Survey results and Student feedback.

The post project survey was hosted via Survey Monkey and consisted of three ranking questions and one open question. The three gradable questions were based on the student's experience of the three separate platforms, and the inclusion of an open question was decided on after consultation with my mentor. Overall, there were 16 respondents to the survey.

Out of the three social media platforms, students preferred *Facebook* to all other social media sites. The majority of students rated *the teacher's blog* as very good to excellent, which *Edmodo* was the platform which students were least likely to use at all or engage with. Through field notes taken in class, a proportion of students in class found *Edmodo* too difficult to navigate. The result for this group was that they engaged more with the material through Facebook. Not one of the students used the comment feature on the *Blogger* blog to respond, which was in stark contrast to *Facebook*, where thread based commentary, likes and seen notices were strong throughout the project.

Teacher's Observations

The engagement with Edmodo was the most disappointing aspect of this research project. Despite being the most difficult to set up and organise, and in spite of having the greatest potential as a platform that combines the functionality of Facebook with the added advantage of hosting assignments and a messaging system, students failed to engage with any of the materials I posted. There were some technical issues with the initial set up but these didn't effect functionality once everything was dealt with and up and running. Personally, the blog scored higher than expected and was a real vindication for me as a teacher. From my own perspective I found the setting up of groups on Facebook to be much easier and less time consuming than on Edmodo. Creating authentic engaging materials was both difficult and rewarding, as were the conversations via social media. This kind of interaction online is also a perfect way for weaker students to go back and check, and for shyer students to interact without the pressure of classroom factors.

Conclusion

The nature of rolling enrolment in a school means that establishing and nurturing an online presence on a social network specifically for teaching, such as Edmodo, is difficult to achieve. This site in particular seems more suited for written assignments and test based Q&A activities than interactive communicative activities. The ubiquity of Facebook means that students generally 'get it' and will be far less resistant to joining a group or posting a response, writing homework or a video presentation. Facebook, however, falls down when it comes to academic based assessment. This is where having a blog to host presentations and set homework on writing comes in. Facebook is probably the best at adding detail and 'conversing' while still having an educational outcome. The most substantial surprise was the popularity of the teacher's blog. Of all the students surveyed, and interviewed afterward, 100% said they like or really like reading teaching blogs. What this seems to suggest is that the simplest and most familiar ways of implementing extracurricular consolidation into your teaching methods are those which have the most potential to engage students in the short term. Using social media outside class to assist, encourage and engage learners is a time-consuming, unpaid, difficult

balancing act, but with time to integrate into your personal methodology, can be an extremely useful and enjoyable tool to informally monitor your student's real world interactions with L2 and consolidate more than one skill at a time in a non-threatening, comfortable environment.

References

- Richards, J and Farrell, T (2005) *Professional Development for Language Teachers* Strategies for Teacher learning, Cambridge University Press pp171-191
- Hopkins, D, (2008) *A Teacher's Guide to Classroom Research*, Open University Press
- University of Dublin Trinity College (2017) *Research Ethics in the school of Education*, Trinity College Dublin, Available from <https://www.tcd.ie/Education/research/ethics/>
- Yunus,M, Salehi,H and Chenzi C (2012), *Integrating Social Networking Tools into ESL Writing Classroom: Strengths and Weaknesses*, English Language Teaching; Vol. 5, No. 8; 2012 Available from <http://www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/elt/article/view/18613/12330>
- Chomsky, N. (1988). *Language and problems of knowledge*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. P.188
- Brown, S (2006) *Teaching Listening*, Cambridge University Press pp.1-10
- Jones, V (2008) *ACELS CPD Workshop*, April 2008, Teachers Club, Dublin
- Hird, J,(2008) *Move-ACELS CPD Workshop*, 7 June 2008, Teachers Club, Dublin
- Lightbown,P and Spada,(2010) *How Languages are Learned*, Oxford University Press,
- Dundalk Institute of Technology Library (2017) *Guide to Harvard Referencing*, Dundalk Institute of Technology Available from https://www.dkit.ie/system/files/dkit_guide_to_harvard_referencing_0.pdf
-

Appendix-

Figure 1 – Pre-Project Questionnaire

Social Media Research Project – Pre Project Questionnaire					
Which of these social media sites do you <u>regularly</u> use to learn English? (<u>Circle</u> the ones you use)					
Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Edmodo	Blogger	Wordpress
YouTube	bbc.co.uk	The Guardian	The Irish Times		
Other (please write name below)					

How much time do you spend on these sites per day?					
0-1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4-5 hours	more than 5 hours
Do you think you spend					
Not enough time online	just enough time online			too much time online	
How much time do you spend studying or actively learning English on these sites?					
0-1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	4-5 hours	more than 5 hours
Do you think learning English through social media sites is a good thing?					
Yes	No	Don't know/Have no opinion			
What skills do you practice most when studying English on these sites?					
Order them 1-6 (1 is the most, 6 is the least)					
Speaking	Reading	Writing	Listening		
Learning Grammar	Learning Vocabulary				
The Social Media research project you are doing with your teacher, Keith Murdiffe, is about using social media to improve your English. What would you like to achieve in this 2 week project?					

Figure 2 – Ethical Considerations Disclaimer

Data protection and Ethical considerations of the research project-

Please read the following carefully. If you have any queries about this please ask your teacher, Keith Murdiffe.

Project title-

Facebook, Edmodo or a teacher's own personal blog? Which do students find most engaging, and what activities engage them most online?

1. Any recordings, e.g. audio/video/photographs, will not be identifiable unless prior written permission has been given. I will obtain permission for specific reuse (in papers, talks, etc.)
2. Your participation in this research project is voluntary.
3. You can omit answering questions you do not wish to answer if a questionnaire is used.
4. Your data will be treated with full confidentiality and that, if published, it will not be identified as yours.
5. Keith Murdiffe, the researcher in this project and your teacher, can debrief you at the end of your participation (i.e. give you a brief explanation of the study)
6. Please verify by signing below that you are 18 years or older and competent to supply consent.

I, _____ (print name) have read and understood the 6 points above, and I give my consent to be part of this research project.

Signed

Date

Figure 3 –Social media sites used to learn English

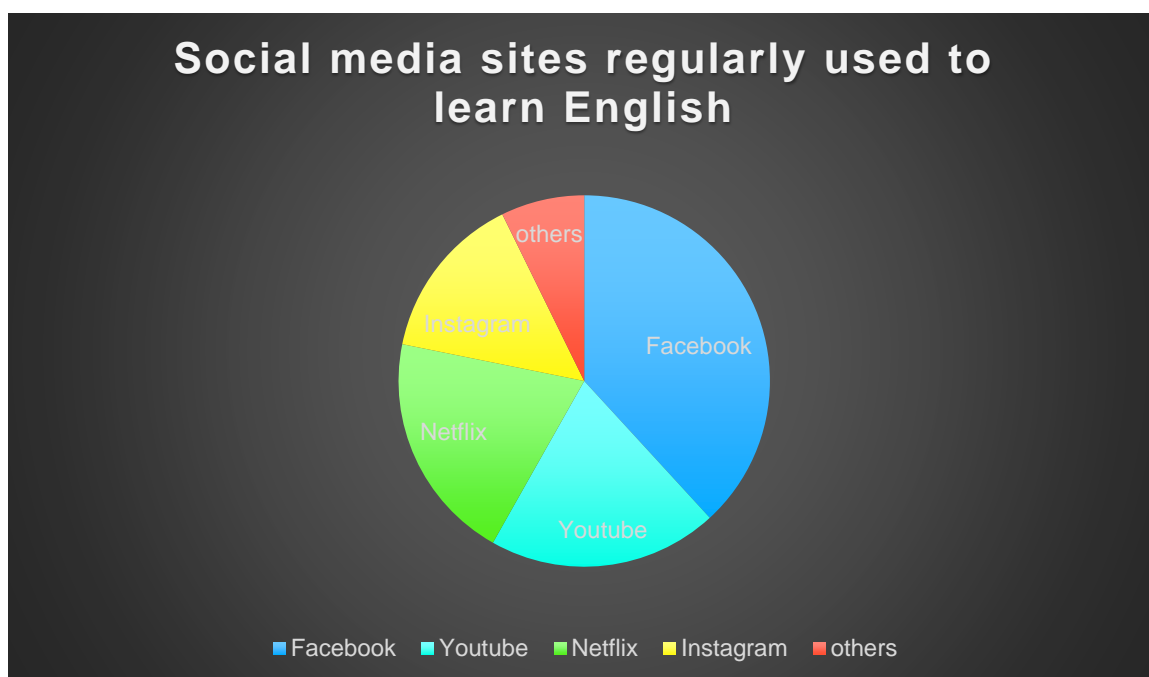


Figure 4- Time Spent on social media

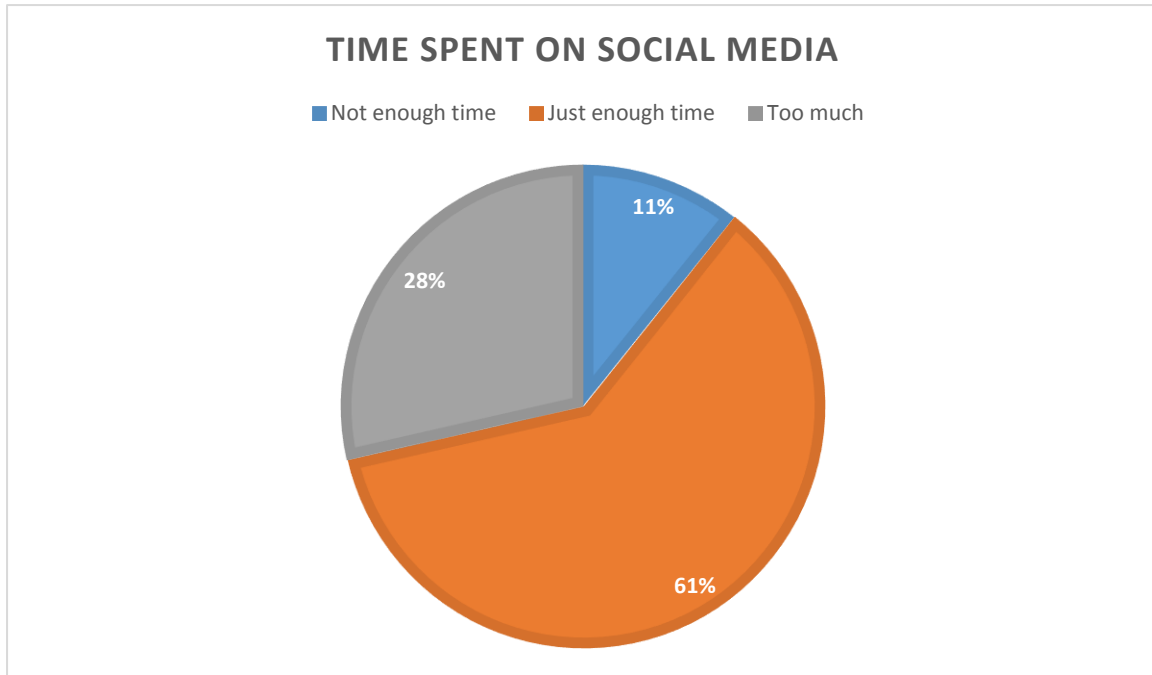


Figure 5 –Time spent on social media per day

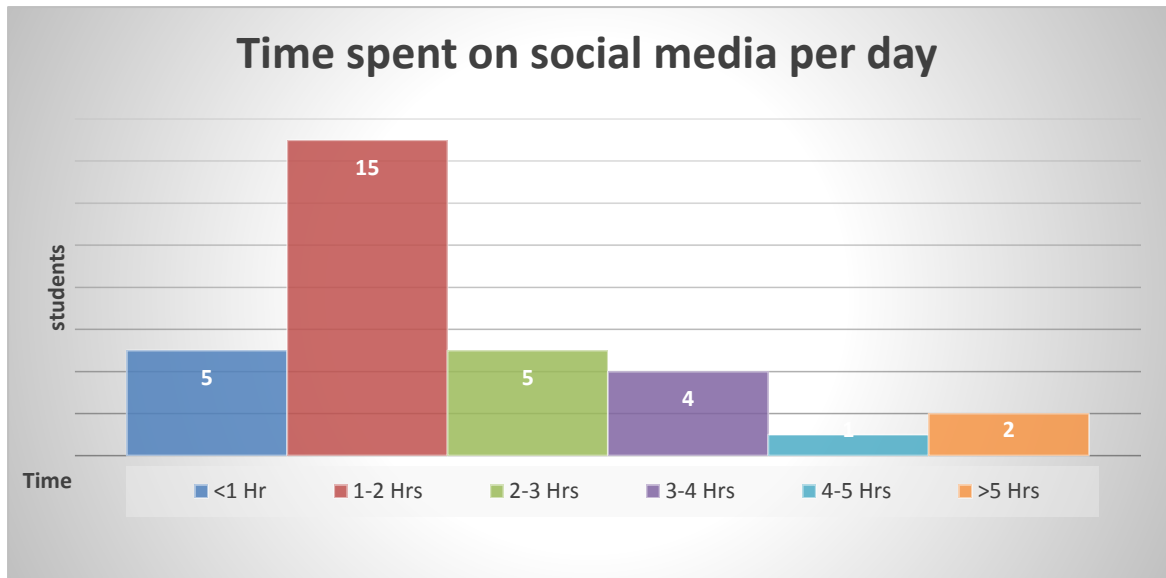


Figure 6- Time spent studying English on social media sites per day

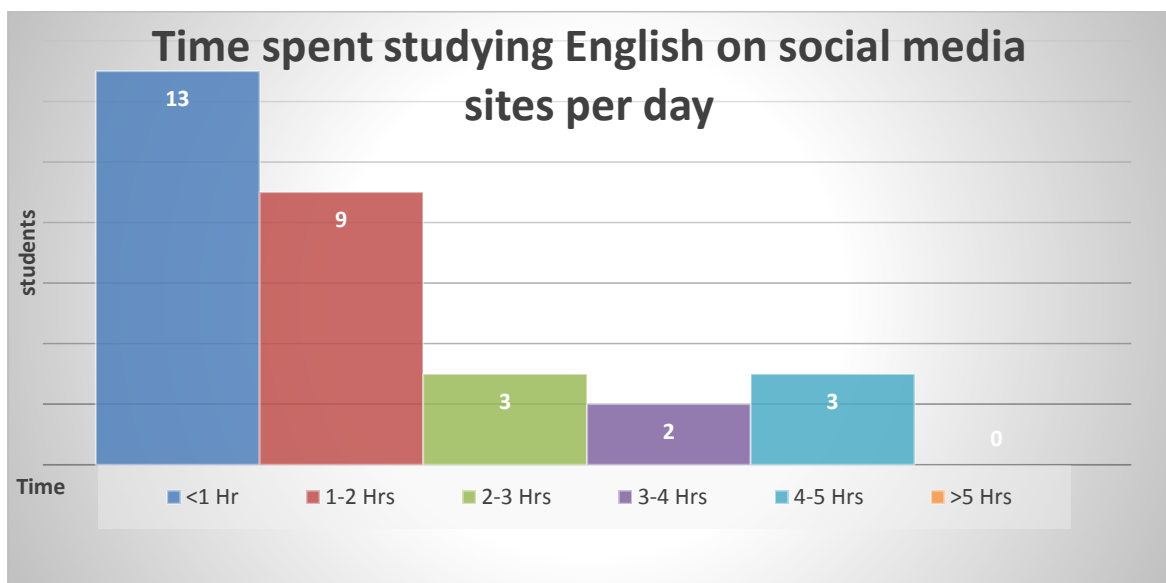


Figure 7 – FCE Reading gapped text activity

Trying the Hadza hunter-gatherer berry and porcupine diet

The Hadza are one of the last remaining hunter-gatherer tribes in the world. It's thought they've lived on the same land in northern Tanzania, eating berries, tubers and 30 different mammals for 40,000 years. The BBC's Dan Saladino went to watch them foraging and hunting, and to ask if their diet holds lessons for everyone.

As I lay flat on my stomach, I put my head inside the dark tunnel and sniffed.

Animal...

But I couldn't believe someone was actually going to slide inside and flush the animal out. That someone was Zigwadzee. And the animal? Well, that was a porcupine.

After handing his bow and arrow and axe to another Hadza hunter, Zigwadzee stripped off, took hold of a short, sharp stick and disappeared down the hole. Perhaps, I thought, he was the smallest of the group and so the obvious choice. But the more I watched, the more I realised it was because Zigwadzee was the one with the least fear of what he might find there - snakes, reptiles, fleas and biting insects, and the porcupine with its 35cm spiky quills.

Up to this point, my Hadza diet had been strictly vegetarian, as it is much of the time for these people. Handfuls of berries picked from bushes as we wandered the dry woodland savannah. There were also lots and lots of baobab fruit. 1) _____

Anthropologists noted decades ago that the Hadza are always hungry but never starving. Their enthusiasm for eating is matched by an abundance of ingredients around them, and the tracking and foraging skills needed to find them. All around us were foodstuffs I couldn't spot, but that Hadza children, even those as young as four, are adept at finding.

Soon all I could hear of Zigwadzee was a distant, muffled voice. 2) _____

As he mapped out the animal's subterranean world, he shouted instructions to his fellow hunters above ground to close off any escape routes. After 40 minutes, he re-emerged, covered in dust and a few fleas, ready to dig down further at the exact spot where the porcupine was located.

Although the Hadza number around 1,000 men, women and children, there are now thought to be only 200-300 pure hunter-gatherers, who grow no food and practise no form of agriculture. 3) _____

One asked me: "Why stand in a field all day and wait for weeks or months for food when you can eat berries from a bush, find as much honey as you can eat or spend an hour inside a porcupine den and feed an entire camp?"

This is how our ancient ancestors sourced their food and nourished themselves. The meals Zigwadzee and his fellow Hadza eat are our last remaining link to the diets on which humans evolved and through which our digestive system developed - including the complex community of gut bacteria we all have.

There is now a growing consensus in the medical world that our gut microbiomes play a major role in the operation of our immune system, and that the more rich and diverse our microbiomes are, the lower our risk of disease. 4) _____

For many years, farmers have been extending their reach into Hadza land. In the last decade they've cleared 160 hectares of woodland each year, woodland that was the Hadza's wild food 'market'. Farmers and their hungry

cattle have also been arriving in large numbers, scaring off many of the 30 different wild mammals the Hadza have hunted and eaten for tens of thousands of years.

5) _____ A 30-minute drive from the porcupine hunt was a mud hut at a crossroads - and inside, shelves filled with cans of sugary soft drinks and packets of biscuits. It had taken me nine hours by Land Rover over tough terrain to get here, only to find the biggest brands in the world had made it before me.

Zigwadzee, however, was keeping the Hadza hunting culture alive by killing the porcupine. Face-to-face with the animal, Zigwadzee nudged it with a stick and called to it: "Come out porcupine... come to me... come here porcupine!" Then, not one but two of them emerged.

The most striking thing wasn't the long black and white quills on their bodies - which at 30kg each were bigger than you might think - it was the noise. 6) _____

It filled the air and intensified as Zigwadzee delivered a few hard blows to the porcupines' heads. And then it was all over.

Hadza hunters share everything. Theirs is an egalitarian society. They have no leadership structures and with meat, especially, there's an obligation to divide what is caught equally. The offal, the heart, liver and lungs were cooked on the spot and eaten immediately, the butchered carcasses taken back to the camps and distributed.

As I watched, and nervously nibbled on a piece of porcupine liver, I realised I'd watched something special. A hunt, and a meal, that had allowed me a connection to the ancient past.

a) And it so happens that the Hadza, because of their diet, have the most diverse human gut microbiomes on the planet.

b)) A wall of sound, of quills rattled in warning.

c) After just three days, the diversity of bacteria in his already healthy microbiome had increased by 20%.

d) He was 2m (6ft) underground inside a hot network of tunnels and chambers, where a porcupine was hiding.

e) The baobab tree's rattling pods of fatty beans, packed with a white, zesty chalk-like dust, are made into a drink of pure fibre and vitamin C.

f) These Hadza people think farmers are curious and amusing.

g) For me, though, the biggest surprise was an invasion of a different kind.

Figure 8 – – Listening Homework as hosted on Edmodo

Home
 Assignments
 Progress
 Library

Me to IBAT First Certificate Am class

Listening Practice 1

Turned In (2) Due: August 18, 2017 9:00 pm

Play the audio file, open the questions paper, listen and answer the questions, choosing options 1-4. Listen only twice.

irst listening practice pdf .pdf
221.6KB

susanah harker pride and prejudice interview.mp3
0:00 / 3:36

Like • 1 Reply • Following Aug 15, 2017, 12:47 AM

Piero d.
Hi Keith! it was a bit difficult for me, as you can see, i'll try to give it another shot

Like • Reply • Aug 22, 2017 2:35 PM

Figure 9 – Question paper for Advanced Listening

Listening Practice

You will hear an interview with Susanah Harker, an actress who starred in a BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. For answers 1-6, choose the best option a-d. You now have 30 seconds to read questions 1-6.

- 1) Susanah thinks that people love the BBC version because
 - a. The merged the film with the book.
 - b. People were hooked on the director's vision.
 - c. It is written by Jane Austen.
 - d. People loved the character of Darcy.
- 2) Susanah says she thinks Colin Firth had such an impact of people
 - a. Because he has an electric personality.
 - b. As he realised he was a Jane Austen actor.
 - c. Because she considers him to be a wonderful actor.
 - d. Due to his closeness to Jane Austen.
- 3) Susanah talks about shooting the film being
 - a. Similar to her experience when she went to school.
 - b. A strange experience because everyone was lying around.
 - c. Different because she was a young woman.
 - d. Made inside a convent.
- 4) Susanah costumes consisted of
 - a. A dress shaped like a basket.
 - b. A very comfortable dress.
 - c. Very uncomfortable clothes and hair.
 - d. A costume that took hours to put on.
- 5) Susanah thinks that British people are interested in period drama because
 - a. It's a free style of performance.
 - b. They are reenactments.
 - c. They are full of love
 - d. People like the control and formality of them.
- 6) According to Susanah,
 - a. Jane Austen's work bears no resemblance to modern life.
 - b. The themes in Jane Austen's works are universally appealing even nowadays.
 - c. Jane Austen's books are all very stuffy.
 - d. Jane Austen is too formal and structured.

Write your answers in the box provided below.

1	2	3	4	5	6

Project Based Learning: Benefits, Constraints and Reflection

By Christina Barni, Ankie Janssen, Margaret McCarthy, David Moran, Adam O'Regan, Aileen Slattery, Matthew Watson (CEC)

Acknowledgements

The CEC Research Team would like to thank the following for all their help: CEC Academic Department, Lidia Biskup, Mike Daly, Ferghal Dineen, Naomi Faris, Eimear Fitzgerald, Gary Hanrahan, Emily Hart, Emer Holland and Catherina McClintock. With special thanks to the Shelbourne Bar in Cork for providing 'tea' and sympathy, and to Sam Ryan for the technical assistance.

Contents	34
Content and Rationale	35
Key terms as used in this paper	35
Procedures and Methods	37
Data collection and reflection	38
Project case studies	39
Conclusions	40
Benefits to Students	40
Cooperative Learning	40
Learner Autonomy	40
Learner Preferences	40
Other	40
Benefits to Teachers	41
Motivation	41
Running Sessions	41
Reflection and Teacher Development	41
Other	41
Constraints	42

Time	42
Learner Perception of Project and Group Work	42
Level of English and Learning Outcomes	42
Evolution	43
Summary	44
Further Research	44
References and Appendices	45
Appendices	46

Content and Rationale

We sought to implement Project Based Learning (PBL), incorporating reflective practice, in our school. We planned to investigate whether PBL could be successfully integrated into our open enrolment context, with the aim of improving learner autonomy while still addressing the recommended learning outcomes for each week of the syllabus.

The focus of this action research project was inspired, in part, by a recent paper by Laura Breen (2017). It also owes much to previous research in the area of Project-Based Learning in the EFL context (Stoller 2002, Lave 2011, Larmer & Mergendoller 2010, Heick 2012).

Additionally, we hoped to create a collaborative environment to foster our own and other colleagues' continuing professional development, and extend our teaching practice beyond its usual scope.

Lave (2011) supports the contention that teaching in itself does not produce learning. In her view, learning is something that only learners can do and they do it while immersed in authentic challenges. We can connect this to the opportunities PBL gives the students to solve tangible problems during the process of formulating, researching and publishing their work (Larmer & Mergendoller 2010, Lave 2009).

Key terms as used in this paper

Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR) levels: an international framework describing language abilities across levels, from A1 Elementary to C2 Proficiency. For our purposes, we consider A1, A2 and B1 lower levels, and B2, C1 and C2 higher.

Constraints: Conditions which determine the parameters of projects and need to be anticipated so as to pre-empt and manage issues that might hinder or limit the success of project work.

Open enrolment: An educational context in which learners enrol at a school on different dates and for indeterminate durations. While the school has a 12-week syllabus for each of the CEFR levels, open enrolment means it is not possible to run full courses with closed groups since learners arrive and depart at different stages during each cycle of the syllabus.

Project-based learning (PBL) There are an ever increasing number of ways to define this practice, but some key elements appear in many resources which outline how to approach projects in the classroom. Initially, teachers acting as facilitators guide learners in selecting a focus for their project. This is followed by research and preparation stages, which are as student-centred as possible. The **published product** that the students create is designed to be shared with an audience outside of the immediate classroom (Heick 2012, Moss & Van Duzer 1998, & Larmer & Mergendoller 2010).

Reflective practice: This term has been defined in numerous ways and in some cases, the various iterations conflict. Rodgers (2002) argues for a systematic approach to reflection based on Dewey's work (Dewey 1910, cited in Rodgers 2002). The purpose of the reflective instruments, used at various stages of each project, was for both students and teachers to evaluate their own actions and progress as part of ongoing learning and development. Dewey holds up curiosity as a powerful motivating factor for acquiring knowledge and skills, and connects the process of reflection to a process of enquiry that builds critical thinking skills (1910). The variety of reflective tools chosen for this project (Appendices 1a - 1e) incorporated aspects of the four criteria for reflection defined by Dewey (1910) and interpreted by Rodgers (2002) in the hope that this would raise awareness of teaching and learning processes over the course of each project and help to make the learning objectives more transparent for all participants.

Procedures and Methods

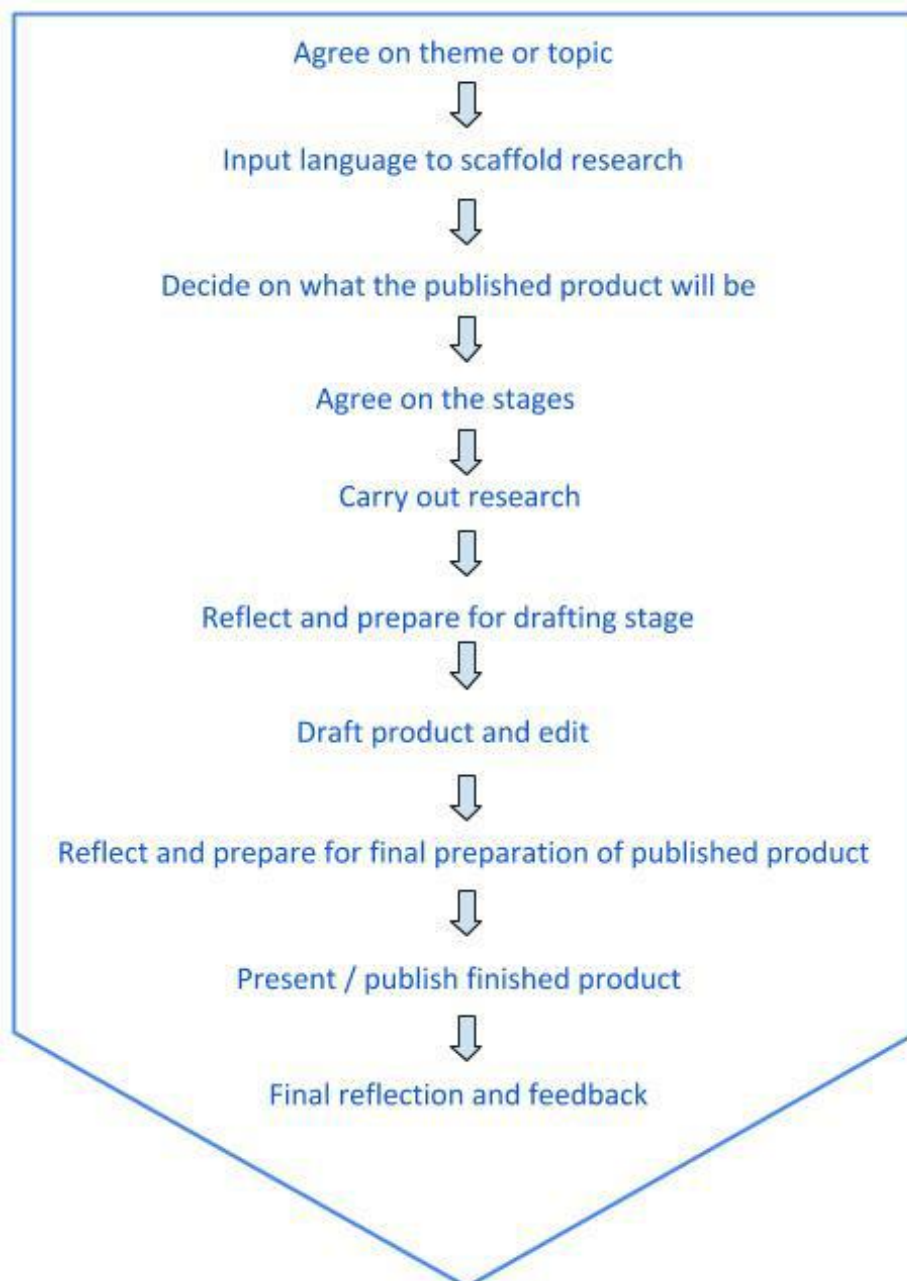
Throughout our research, we took care to ensure that our students were aware of and consented to participating in the lessons and project work that were related to our action research. All students were given the option to choose whether or not to participate in all reflective activities that we used to gather data. All such data is confidential in that it is only available to the research team members.

To prepare for doing project work with our students, we began by reviewing our syllabus for CEFR levels A2 - C1 and mapping possible project types to the learning outcomes for each week within the research period. Once we had a general outline, we decided that we would be able to run 6 - 8 projects during our busy summer period from the end of June to the end of August. We were able to complete 7 projects with 7 groups of students in the following levels: A2, A2+, B1+ (3 different classes), B2+ and C1. Scheduling constraints and the concentration of students at the lower levels meant that our opportunity to do projects with higher level classes was limited.

Due to open enrolment, projects needed to be limited to a duration of one week to ensure that students would be able to see their efforts published. At least 1-2 hours out of a 4-hour class day were allocated to project work. Each project was broken into stages (see chart 1). The finished product was published on Fridays.

Our procedure for running projects in classes was adapted and shortened from those suggested by Stoller (2002) and Moss and van Duzer (1998), with added student and teacher reflection as discussed in Richards (1995) and Larmer & Mergendoller (2010). Cooperation between students and teachers occurs at each stage. See chart on *page 5*.

Chart 1: Project Stages



Data collection and reflection

Reflective instruments were used to gauge how learners were responding to the PBL sessions. We used two types of questionnaires to gather students' responses to the preparatory stages. These included both open and closed prompts (Appendices 1a&1c). As mentioned above (Key terms), the choice of prompts was based on the criteria from Rodgers (2002). We wanted to gauge the students'

and teachers' attitude toward the project at several stages, to aid the transition from one stage to the next, and to highlight the language and skills areas that the project was designed to further (Rodgers 2002). Additionally, we hoped to encourage interaction among groups of students, and among teachers, using the collaborative instruments we chose as a way to further motivate and engage all participants and develop a sense of community (Dewey 1910 and Rodgers 2002).

After the students had completed the bulk of their research and started working on their product, they had small group discussions based on a list of prompts (Appendices 1b&1d). These were recorded and transcribed for later analysis (Appendices 2a-2f).

Survey Monkey, an online survey platform, was used to record students' post-project impressions of their experience throughout the week. It also guided them in assessing how successful the project was in improving their English (Janssen 2017).

Teachers had similarly scheduled reflection tasks to do in tandem with the students (Appendices 1e) and also completed a post-project survey (Barni 2017a).

Project case studies

A2/A2+ Games Project

Students designed and made a board game, incorporating the grammar and vocabulary from the syllabus. Having researched different countries, students created world trivia questions practising question, comparative and superlative forms.

Each group was responsible for assigning tasks within their group and designing their own board game to accompany the questions. Publication took the form of a cross-class exchange of games and questions (Appendix 4a).

B1+ Blog Project

Students researched what Ireland has to offer to weekend travellers, writing blogs about those on different budgets. This fitted in with the learning outcomes of the syllabus for that week; lexis about journeys and travel problems. These blogs were then published on the school's blog and Facebook page (Appendix 4b). For a detailed look at the stages in this project, see appendix 4c.

Conclusions

Benefits to Students

Unexpectedly, transcripts and feedback all pointed to more realisation of project value and self-awareness as regards benefits for the participants at lower levels (A2-B1+) rather than at the higher levels (B2-C1) as we had initially anticipated.

Cooperative Learning

The most evident benefit was the development of community. Communicating and using cooperative learning skills engaged the students at all levels. This had a tremendous impact on establishing rapport: 100% of students at the two lowest levels agreed or strongly agreed that they had enjoyed working with classmates (Slattery 2017, Janssen 2017), while 100% of B2+ students and 75% of C1 students indicated that the project improved their ability to collaborate effectively in English (Barni 2017b, Barni 2017c).

Learner Autonomy

Lower level students who had weaknesses with pronunciation (Appendix 2a) and spelling (Appendix 2b) mentioned this at the midweek reflection stage. The C1 class also recognised the opportunity their projects created to focus on pronunciation in more depth, specifically within areas such as connected speech, natural pauses, pace and intonation (Barni 2017b, Appendix 2c). They identified these weaknesses as they occurred, without the teacher needing to call attention to errors.

Learner Preferences

Strategies and learning preferences that would not necessarily be supported in a more traditional class setting came to the fore naturally as learners were encouraged to guide themselves through project stages. One student mentioned independently researching question formation in video form (Appendix 2b). Another commented that acting in a short commercial had a particularly positive impact on them (Appendix 2d). In addition, a group of students discussed possible presentation techniques (Appendix 2d). At the C1 level, there was a clear realisation that their project lent itself to putting all the previously learned vocabulary into context (Appendix 2e).

Other

Establishing rapport and building confidence also featured quite strongly throughout survey responses, with 84% of students at lower levels and 92% at higher levels agreeing or strongly agreeing that the projects had tested their abilities in a positive way. Additionally, 70% of total respondents said they would like to be included in more projects in the future (Slattery 2017).

Benefits to Teachers

Reflection surveys reported 100% of teachers had very positive feelings about running projects, and all felt that their learners were either positive or very positive about the experience (Barni 2017a).

Motivation

One thing that appeared frequently in teacher reflection was that it seemed a lot easier to motivate and engage learners over the whole week compared to traditional task-based lessons. Learners seemed to participate more than usual when given challenges and the opportunity to plan and work with greater autonomy (Barni 2017a). Furthermore, there was far less onus on the teachers to involve the students who tend to be more reticent. Instead, they were noticeably more communicative in authentic group work and reflection (Barni 2017a).

Running Sessions

Teachers reported feeling impressed with their students' hard work and technical knowledge, as well as the quality of language produced (Barni 2017a). Teachers benefited from being able to facilitate rather than lead, encouraging more learner autonomy. This in turn provided much more time for monitoring and personalising error-correction. For example, during the A2 board game project, students asked their teacher to correct their individual pronunciation and use of comparatives (Appendix 3d). Students seemed to treat their teacher less as a gatekeeper of language and more as an aid to their own self-discovery (Appendix 3a).

Reflection and Teacher Development

In the mid- and post-project reflection forms, teachers identified a number of potential benefits to their future practice. While teachers were happy that their instructions were clear and effective, some found the experience highlighted the importance of pre-teaching vocabulary and giving clear explanations of what skills were expected at different stages (Barni 2017a). Moreover, PBL helped overcome difficulties ordinarily experienced when sourcing and executing multi-skill lessons at lower levels.

Other

Several teachers gained technical skills they might not have otherwise developed, such as setting up a Wi-Fi hotspot or using online survey platforms. Working with colleagues allowed teachers to exchange ideas and support each other, making the implementation of PBL less daunting (Barni

2017a). Although there was some preparation required before a project began, the teacher's workload outside the class was significantly reduced as the week progressed.

Constraints

Time

In order to complete and publish projects within five days, teachers needed to set realistic and specific goals for each stage. Within these parameters, students were encouraged to manage their own time. In some cases, stages needed to be extended, shortened or jettisoned. For example, a change had to be made during the A2+ board game project. The teacher had planned for the class to create questions for a grammar-based game and design a board for it. When the research and editing stages took longer than expected, it was decided to use an existing board, rather than have students create their own (Slattery 2017).

Across the lower level projects (A2 - B1+), the majority of students felt they were given enough time to complete all stages, with 26 out of 31 students agreeing and 5 being neutral (Janssen 2017, Janssen & McCarthy 2017 & Slattery 2017).

Learner Perception of Project and Group Work

We had anticipated that students might respond to PBL as not meeting their expectations of what a lesson should include. At most, one or two students per class reported that they would have preferred to continue with more coursebook-centred material rather than being involved in project work.

Some projects allowed students more freedom in selecting their own groups based around common interests, such as the presentation projects at B2+ and C1. However, personality clashes did occur in one instance where some learners were unwilling to work together.

Across all of the lower levels, there was only one student who completely disengaged from both their team and the project in general. The teacher felt this was due to affective factors, and the student reported not liking the project (Appendix 3b).

Level of English and Learning Outcomes

At the start of each project week, some of the lower-level students were understandably anxious about their level of English and how this would affect their ability to finish the task (Appendix 3d). By week's end, 27 out of 31 felt their level had indeed been high enough to complete the project

successfully (Janssen, McCarthy 2017, Janssen 2017 & Slattery 2017). The teachers also noted in their final reflections that by the Friday the students had a sense of achievement and pride (Barni 2017a).

With the higher level learners, we found that it was critical to be transparent about the specific learning outcomes the project could help them achieve. Midweek in the C1 cultural presentations project, a group of four students were equally divided as to whether the tasks they were doing were helping them to improve their English in any measurable way (Appendix 2f). A second group were more unified in agreeing that they saw clear improvements in their vocabulary, fluency and use of some grammar structures (Appendix 2e).

Evolution

Over the course of our research project, we have made the following observations:

The teachers were able to work together closely, often reflecting organically, which meant exchanging positive experiences and helping each other to adapt projects to meet learners' needs as they arose. In addition, sharing tasks and responsibilities made the projects run more smoothly, with teachers aiding each other by creating and editing reflective questions, grading language, and sourcing equipment such as dictaphones for mid-week student reflection. It is clear that collaboration between teachers was vital to the success of the projects, with every teacher who ran one acknowledging the support they received from their allotted partner and others (Barni 2017a, Appendix 3d, Appendix 3c).

Project-driven requirements evolved constantly, adjusting to changing needs. As student reflection from early projects had indicated a lack of focus on pronunciation and listening skills, we decided to make students more aware of the link between the language skills on the syllabus and the projects (Barni 2017a). Furthermore, in mid-week reflections of later projects, students commented on what support they needed in order to publish successfully, e.g. signposting language (Appendix 2c) and more pronunciation feedback (Appendix 2a). One group became aware of their need to make more notes to organise ideas and use a wider range of lexis in their presentations (Appendix 2e). A student from this group reflected that projects allowed her to use a large amount of language in context with a natural flow rather than just memorising her notes (Appendix 2e). Moving away from a vertically structured approach resulted in more student-led development of language, encouraging thought-changing processes and facilitating real world learning, as opposed to simulating an artificial framework.

Throughout the projects we saw how important cooperation and reflection were for both students and teachers.

Summary

Overall, we have found that integrating Project Based Learning into our existing syllabus, within the constraints we outlined, does not need to place additional time and preparation demands on teachers. In fact, it can lead to a more rewarding classroom experience. We also feel that the reflection activities supported both the teachers and learners in the way they promoted awareness of learning outcomes and helped measure how well they were met. Doing the research project was beneficial for our team in that it challenged and motivated us, and allowed us to take more agency in furthering our own professional development.

Further Research

Following positive feedback from students and teachers, fully integrating PBL into both morning and afternoon syllabi is being considered. We are also looking at extending the contexts in which PBL can be applied. A CLIL course was run in the school at the end of 2017 and those participants were engaged in a mini project which received very positive feedback. Furthermore, the college runs a summer school for young learners, which successfully implemented PBL in summer 2017. We anticipate further developments in these areas as well as more opportunities for action research.

References and Appendices

- Barni, C. (2017a) *Reflection for Teachers: Post-Project*. SurveyMonkey Inc. San Mateo, California, USA. Created using <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-XFWPGZWJ8/> on 28 July 2017.
- Barni, C. (2017b) *C1 July 17th Student Reflection: After Publication of Project*. SurveyMonkey Inc. San Mateo, California, USA. Created using <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-RPS3Y6BJ8/> on 20 July 2017.
- Barni, C. (2017c) *B2+ Student Reflection: After Publication of Project B2+ June 28th*. SurveyMonkey Inc. San Mateo, California, USA. Created using <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-BS9N7ZBJ8/> on 27 June 2017
- Breen, L. (2017) Rolling Projects into an Open Enrollment. *Irish Research Scheme for Teaching*. Retrieved from <https://irishresearchschemeforteaching.wordpress.com/2017/02/16/research-article-4-b-rolling-projects-into-an-open-enrollment/> on 12 May 2017.
- Dewey, J. (1910) *How We think*. D. C. Heath and Co. Publishers, Lexington. Retrieved from <https://archive.org/details/howwethink000838mbp> on 15 September 2017.
- Heick, T. (2012) Three Types of Project-Based Learning Symbolize its Evolution. *Teach Thought*. Retrieved from <http://www.teachthought.com/project-based-learning/5-types-of-project-based-learning-symbolize-its-evolution> on 4 September 2017
- Janssen, A. (2017) *August 28th A2: Student Reflection: After Completion of Board Game*. SurveyMonkey Inc. San Mateo, California, USA. Created using <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-R5L38LSJ8/> on 28 August 2017.
- Janssen, A. & McCarthy, M. (2017) *July 14th B1+ Student Reflection: After Publication of Advertising Project*. SurveyMonkey Inc. San Mateo, California, USA. Created using <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-2RG2SKSJ8/> on 6th July 2017.
- Larmer, J. & Mergendoller, J. R. (2010). The Main Course, Not Dessert: How are Students Reaching 21st Century Goals? With 21st Century Project Based Learning. *BIE*. Retrieved from http://www.bie.org/object/document/main_course_not_dessert on 4th September 2017.
- Lave, J. (2009) The Practice of Learning. In *Contemporary Theories of Learning: Learning Theorists in their own Words*. (Illeris, K., ed), Routledge, London, pp. 200-208.
- Lave, J. (2011) *Address to the How Students Learn Working Group*. GSI Training and Resource Center, University of California Berkeley. Video retrieved from <http://gsi.berkeley.edu/programs-services/hsl-project/hsl-speakers/lave/> on 20 October 2017.
- Moss, D. & Van Duzer, C. (1998) Project Based Learning for Adult English Language Learners. *CAELA Digest*. Retrieved from www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/ProjBase.html on 7 August 2017.
- Richards, J. C. (1995) Towards Reflective Teaching. *The Teacher Trainer*. Retrieved from https://www.tttjournal.co.uk/uploads/File/back_articles/Towards_Reflective_Teaching.pdf on 15 September 2017.

Rodgers, C. (2002) Defining Reflection: Another Look at John Dewey and Reflective Thinking. *Teachers College record*. Teachers College, Columbia University. Volume 104, No. 4. pp. 842 - 866. Retrieved from https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/33963457/Rodgers_C._%282002%29._Defining_Reflection_Another_Look_at_John_Dewey_and_Reflective_Thinking_Teachers_College_Record_104%284%29_842-866..pdf?AWSAccessKeyId=AKIAIWOWYYGZ2Y53UL3A&Expires=1516291062&Signature=RqOva1Wnku8KVI81zAu6XI9adJk%3D&response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DDefining_Reflection_Another_Look_at_John.pdf on 15 September 2017.

Slattery, A. (2017) *August 28th A2+, Room 13: Student Reflection: After Completion of Board Game*. SurveyMonkey Inc. San Mateo, California, USA. Created using <https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-HYGQWLSJ8/> on 1st September 2017.

Stoller, F. L. (2002) The Practice of Learning. In *Methodology in Language Teaching: an Anthology of Current Practice*. (Richards, J.C., & Renandya, W. A., eds), Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp.107-120.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Master reflections

- 1a** Higher Student reflection 1
- 1b** Higher Student reflection 2
- 1c** Lower Student reflection 1
- 1d** Lower Student reflection 2
- 1e** Teacher reflection

Appendix 2

Completed student reflections

- 2a** Lower student reflection 2 - B1+ Advertising project - Transcript M Group 3
- 2b** Lower student reflection 2 - A2+ Board game project - Transcript 2
- 2c** Higher student reflection 2 - B2+ Presentation project - Transcript 1
- 2d** Lower student reflection 2 - B1+ Advertising project - Transcript A Group 2
- 2e** Higher student reflection 2 - C1 Presentation project - Transcript 1
- 2f** Higher student reflection 2 - C1 Presentation project - Transcript 2
- 2g** Lower student reflection 1 - B1+ Advertising project

Appendix 3

Completed Teacher Reflections

- 3a** B1+ Blog project
- 3b** B1+ Advertising project A
- 3c** A2+ Board game project
- 3d** A2 Board game project

Appendix 4

Sample published projects

- 4a** A2 Board game project
- 4b** B1+ Blog project
- 4c** B1+ Blog project stages

Appendix 1a
Higher Student reflection 1

Reflection 1

1. During this project I would like to improve: (specific language? Accuracy? Presentation Skills? Other?)
2. What do you think will be the most challenging part of this project?
3. How can you connect the skills and language you are practising during this project to your life/job?
4. What language or skills do you need for this project that you would like help with?

Appendix 1b
Higher Student reflection 2

Reflection 2

1. What do you find frustrating about preparing your presentation, if anything? Why?
2. What about your thinking, learning, or work this week has given you the most satisfaction? Why?
3. How has the teacher helped or hindered you this week? What can the teacher do tomorrow to contribute positively to your presentation preparation?
4. What can you do now to make your presentation as good as possible?

Appendix 1c
Lower Student reflection 1

Reflection 1

1. In this project I want to improve: (using vocabulary? - using grammar without too many mistakes? - making presentations? - other?)
2. What was the most difficult part of this project?
3. How can you use what you have learned this week in everyday life ?
4. What help do you need to finish this project?

Appendix 1d
Lower Student reflection 2

Reflection 2

1. What do you find difficult about preparing your project? Why?
2. What were you happiest about your thinking, learning, or work this week? Why?
3. How has the teacher helped or hindered you this week? What can the teacher do tomorrow to contribute positively to your presentation preparation?
4. What can you do now to make your presentation as good as possible?

Appendix 1e
Teacher reflection

Master Teacher Reflection

1. What do I need to change?
2. What is student buy-in like right now?
3. What do students need based on their reflection?
4. What do I need? (Resources, support, etc.)

Appendix 2a

Lower student reflection 2 - B1+ Advertising project - Transcript M Group 3

S1 Hello!

S2 What was difficult about preparing your presentation....why?

S1 Being mistake

S2 For me when you are preparing, for me...it's more...eh...the idea, for example the image...the imagination about...

S1...ah okay....

S2 about what we are speaking

S1 The product and the things to do in the correctly

S3 ...and prepare the...prepare our presentation the part that we have to say

French S2...yes, and don't do mistake...because...

S1 and write all okay....the correct

S2 next question

S3 What did you enjoy most this week? Thinking, learning or working?

S1 Working...eh...working I think....when we have to talk with us...

S3....with another person, in English

S2...yes, yes, I like as well thinking about for example, when you have to thinking about presentation...I like it yes....it's funny.

S2/S1 How was the teacher helping?

S1 She print us the photos

S3 Yes, she printed our, she printed our photos. She emmm...helped to write all words with the correct form

S2 She was checking all the time

S1..actually yes

S2..we said that yes....and we can call her when we want...

S1 If we want some ideas

S2 Yes, found some ideas, yes...help a lot..yes

S2 How can the teachertomorrow for the presentation

S1 How can the teacher help tomorrow?

S3 Ah, tomorrow, yes.

S1 I don't know...hmmm

S2....she can check another time

S1 tomorrow I suppose she, she, before the speaking...she...she...

S3...she review our pronunciation...

S2 Look what our group has say...it's better the third time

S3 What can you do now to make your presentation better?

S3 Prepare! Prepare our speaking!

S2 The poster is fine now, we just have to

S3 We have to be careful with our pronunciation

S2 Yes, we need to write not all because we have to speak and if you write something and just read, it's boring! You have to...

S1 Yes, yes...

S2....you understand me?

S1 I don't know that we can do it..

S2 That's all, I think

Appendix 2b

Lower student reflection 2 - A2+ Board game project - Transcript 2

S1: What was difficult about making your board game? Why?

S2: For me, it was very difficult because I have a problem with the present perfect...

S1: Yeah

S2: And I need practise more.

S1: In my case, I think the same, I have a problem because sometimes I don't know what is the difference between past simple and present perfect-

S2: -Yeah

S1: -but.., or I have some problems with the verbs because I don't remember what is the correct form for write...

S2: Yeah, exactly...

S1: Or say the verbs.

S3: For me, I think the most difficult thing it was the spelling and the writing.., when you write, you..,if it's purple but I don't put s, and I make some word, and I make some letter not incorrect.., so that is make the question in another way.., from that is correct...

S1: Yeah sometimes was difficult to make the questions.

S2: Yes, yesterday I search in the youtube a video about this-

S1: -really?

S2: Yeah I found, but it is Brazilian teacher, this is the problem.., but he explain very good, and is a little more clear for me, but I need practise more...

S1: But I think it sometimes was difficult to make the.., the questions

S2: -the sentences...

S1: And in present perfect.., but...

S2: Yeah, is very hard.

S1 and S2: OK.

S2: What did you enjoy most this week?

S1: Well: thinking, learning, working...

(both laugh)

S2: Yeah.., this weekend I working just two days yet – because yesterday I was off, and I try study.., a little – but I think is learning because I come back to studying, I need improve.

S1: I think the activity, the games, was very.., very...

S2 and S3: Yeah...

S2: very interesting...

S1: Very interesting, with.., how can you say.., bus? When you bus?

S2: In the bus, yeah...

S1: In the bus? For know the answers, I think was very.., very good activity.., and.., we learning about the present perfect in practice.

S3: Yeah

S2: Is a fun activity.., I think learn more.., if is better for fix in the memory...

S1: Yeah

S3: I think when we make the question, we know where is the wrong and we correct it, that's improve our, our grammar.., our vocabulary and our grammar

S1: That was very good. Yeah.

S3: And question 3 – how was the teacher help this week? ... I think the teacher was very helpful-

S2: -I agree

S3: -when someone say a wrong.., a wrong sentence, she put in a paper and give it to me

S1: I think it was very good because.., she give us a feedback about.., with speaking or writing.., and when make mistakes she say that is wrong and you need to.., is better for improve your grammar, your speaking, your listening.

S2: I agree, and she gave for us., I don't know exactly how explain., I don't know in English., attention special., attention for each person

S1: Yeah., particular person.

S2: Exactly, and help this, and this help us a lot.

S1 and S3: Yes.

Appendix 2c

Higher student reflection 2 - B2+ Presentation project - Transcript 1

Teacher and S1, S2,S3, S4

Teacher: (gives instructions)

So, this is recording, OK? You guys answer these questions – yeah it's a discussion. Answer these questions by discussing them together, as honestly as possible, OK? You won't offend me, so say whatever you like. It's a group discussion - so [student 1], you can ask question one, and the four of you discuss.

S1: (reads question, and repeats)

So, what did you find frustrating about preparing your presentation, if anything?

S2: Hmm, no.

S3: In my case, no.

S2: I'm not frustrated.

S3: Me too.

S1: No.

S4: It's interesting, yeah.

S1: So, the second... (reads question)

What about your thinking, learning, or work this week has given you the most satisfaction?

S4: Yeah for me, it's new, so it's interesting to prepare a presentation in English, with specific language, it's good, I think.

S3: I think it's very useful do a presentation in English, for us, you can learn how do it., I mean, it's my second presentation in English., so..

S1: Do you like?

S3: I like a lot presentations., in English, it's difficult - but, it's better.

S2: Yeah, it's difficult but it's useful, because you need to develop fluency and accuracy, so presentations help us to do this.

S1: I like to prepare, but., difficult pronunciation.

S3: Even for another class...

S1: Yeah, if it's just for us I think it's easier...

S2: Yeah, because you know each other...

S1: Yeah, it's not so big.

S3: Yeah, and we are working together.

S2: Yeah, the B2.., in B2 class, we made presentations, but just in class.

S1: Yeah, I think this one is better...[indecipherable], so (reads question)

How has the teacher helped or hindered you this week? What can the teacher do tomorrow to contribute to your presentation preparation?

S3: She helped a lot.

S4: Yeah.

S2: [She] helped a lot, with the research, and...

S4: And she gave us many advices...

S1: Yeah.., she did a research, and she brought us some websites for us.., it was very good...

S2: Yeah.., what can the teacher do *tomorrow* to contribute?

S3: Help us with the pronunciation, could be, about some words..

[indecipherable]

S4: Connection words? Connection words.., linking words

S3: Some expressions.., like the expressions who.., that, she learn us today.., teach us.

S4: Yeah.

S1: But I think you should to say by heart, because it's neither common phrase or sentence, so the grammar is not so good... [others agree], because you can make a mistake, make a mistakes when you start use them, so..

S2: (reads question)

What can you do now to make your presentation as good as possible?

Study!

S1: The most important, you know what are you talking about..

S2: Yeah.

S1: [indecipherable] It's not very good, but you can do your best...

S2: That's it, I think...

S3: We need to stop it?

S2: Yeah, just press here...?

S3: I dunno...

Appendix 2d

Lower student reflection 2 - B1+ Advertising project - Transcript A Group 2

S1: What was difficult about preparing our presentation and why?

S2: Em, for me, it's difficult hmm... about describe the products, mmm, cos I have to think about the correct sentence so it was difficult for me. (laugh)

S1: For me, eh, I think eh it is it is kind of project was really good because I have a good team and eh we worked together and help each other. No, I think it's, don't have a specific point, was really difficult for me.

S3: For me, a little bit difficult is the choice the product because is difficult explain this, this product for other, other countries and other nationalities and the most difficult for me is the presentation tomorrow because I am, I'm always afraid to talk in front of the people.

S4: For me, it is kind of difficult to choose _____ for presentation cos presentation is not general conversation so, yeah.

S1: Second question. What did you enjoy most this week? Thinking, learning or working?

S2: Hmmmmmmm, I enjoyed making a video... because... um..I act, I acted in the video so it's so funny, it was so amazing experience for me and eh, second, working with classmate... it was perfect... for... umm my classmate...(laughing) yeah, working together is, it was perfect.

S1: I... I enjoy everything this project... eh... it was really excited we could speak and create a commercial together.

S4: Ummm, it was... I'm enjoying to work with.. I'm enjoying working with best classmates . I don't know whether I could help them but I appreciate them to make my week.

S3: I enjoyed all those things, each detail, discussion to decide everything. We could, we could use our creativity, work in a good group and learning with one another. I think it's, I enjoyed all the, all the week.

S2: The third. How has the teacher helped this week?How can the teacher help tomorrow?

S1: Ok, she help us for decorate everything and she provide eh, material for recreate eh, slog and she help with, with printer as well. I think she's a excellent teacher, she help, she help us every time.

S4: Emmm... at first, I needed... I needed to understand what classmate did from Monday to Wednesday and she, she explained a lot for me and she makes our work smooth.

S3: Ehhhhh... She helped with all details... ehh... the, she provide material for us eh and she was very helpful the group, the class.

S2: She's like an angel for me _____ (laughter) Sheee... che-check the correct grammar and she will, ah... tomorrow, I think she will give us about confident

S4: Yes, yeah it's true. She give for us a lot of confidence in my presentation tomorrow.

S2: I will need her.

S4: Four. What can you do now to make your presentation better?

S2: Hmm, I think it's better to memorise the speaking sentence because it's important to think about the sentence in your brain.

S3: Yes

S1: And I think we can try relax today and eh, don't feel... nervous. Try don't feel nervous, but I think it's not possible but we can try study the, how we can presentation tomorrow. We can be fine, I think.

S3: And I think for relax, we can drink milkshake. (laughter)

S4: Yeah, or we can do rehearsal rehearsal, rehearsal (the?) rehearsal

S?: *Whisper:* (It's not English) Oh no....

S4: Rehearsal.

S1: You can look.. try try try.....

Appendix 2e

Higher student reflection 2 - C1 Presentation project - Transcript 1

S1, S2, S3, Teacher

Teacher: All yours. Get nice and close to the device.

Teacher: Discuss in as much depth as you can, ok?

S1: Ok.

S2: So, what was difficult about preparing the presentation?

S1: For me, I think, to have the idea about what we are going to speak about, because we have chosen the topic but the topic was food, so there was a lot of things to talk about food, so to choose ok we are going the.. these countries I am going to speak the food of these countries and...

S2: And how to sort out..

S1: How to sort out.

S2: The information was difficult for me.

S2: For me was to summarise everything.

S1: Yeah..

S3: And as well to put it on the slide in a way that it would be easy for the reader to understand.

S1: Yeah.

S3: So it goes beyond the English case you know, when it comes to talk, eh... when it comes to show a presentation you also need to think, not only about English but also how to sort out all the things in the slide.

S1/S2: Yeah.

S2: What did you enjoy most this week? Thinking, learning or working?

S1: For me was very good to work together.

S2: Yeah, maybe thinking.

S2: The presentation..

S1: And thinking what are you going to do?

S3: Yeah, for me it was a good opportunity to put in practice all the language that we have been learning, sometimes we learned a lot of vocabulary at this level and we don't know how to put it into context, so this project is ok, the idea is pretty clear for me.

S1: Tomorrow I try to put, to find, to use the vocabulary that we have learned for this week and use in the presentation.

S2: Yes, that's useful.

S1: That would be very useful to do.

S3: And easy, sometimes you go through your notes and just start to learn by heart whereas if you do it in a presentation is more flow, things flows.

S1: yeah it is a good idea.

S2: And I think it helps you with your fluency.

S3: Yeah and also you develop skills, like presenting your ideas in front of others.

S1: We need these skills.

S3: We need outside.

S2: and confidence.

S3: Absolutely.

S2/S3: How has the teacher helped this week? How can the teacher help tomorrow?

S2: The teacher has been one who is helpful, has been..

S1/S3: Yeah.

S3: She has always helped out all the things.

S3: When the thing we brought with the grammar, how to structure..

S1: How to structure, find ideas, improve our presentation.

S2: Correcting some mistakes.

S3: Exactly how to make things clear, because sometimes we want to express the whole idea but it is going to be going to be too large so it can.. she can shorten the ideas.

S1: Sometimes I think we were anxious I don't know how to explain.. because..no because the first day we didn't know what we are were going to do so it was really "ok now we have to do a presentation ok when where so how much time so".

S3: Was a bit confusing.

S1: A bit confusing yeah.

S3: I think we were all taken aback a little bit because ok have to do a project. Everybody was like oh what kind of project what are you talking about. Now we understand.

S1: Yeah.

S3: But at the beginning we weren't.

S1: What can you do now to make your presentation better?

S3: Uh... pff prepare and relax, I think.

S2: I think the most important thing is be relaxed.

S3: Be relaxed and prepare and practise.

S2: And practise.

S1: Practise and also trying to use the most vocabulary as we can because it's a good opportunity for us.

S2: Maybe make some notes.

S1: Notes?

S3: Some bullet points?

S2: Yeah to help you to remind..

S1: Hmm

S2: Only some words.. important words just to remember what we've written, what we have to say.

S1: When I have time to (inaudible words) before I have to think about the things I have not planned and I have to think about it.

S2: You better write it down.

S1: I have to write it down and summarise the main ideas.

S3: I think the idea of the project was quite nice in terms of putting all the vocab that we have been learning into context in an easier way. I like that kind of things. The way that it's done it's a bit confusing for me but the idea was nice.

S2: Yeah, I like the project the thing that I don't like is the presentation.

S3: Yeah and on top of that in front of the others which can pressure you more.

S1: But you have to think of the presentation as an opportunity to speak with an audience.

And you don't have is not like a job you don't have..

S2: Yeah but I have to do a presentation. Is not a thing that I like.

S1: Yeah but you mean is not if you are doing a presentation in the real life or in a job I think is more stressful.

S3: Yeah much more stressful.

S1: Because maybe you have your boss here or a client Oh my God. Now there is no problem, is another class ok, what happens.

S3: And the teacher has help you to do so so. You'll be fine. Try to relax. I think it is important and prepare.

S1/S2: Yeah, yeah.

S1: We have discussed all the things? Yeah?

S2/S3: Yeah I think also.

Appendix 2f

Higher student reflection 2 - C1 Presentation project - Transcript 2

Project week 17th-21st July. Group 2 (Emily)

Students: S1, S2, S3, S4 and Teacher

Teacher: Are you ready? ... Try and get as close to the recorder as you can

S1: What was difficult about preparing your presentation....and why? For me, maybe the time.

S2: the time

S3: How do you mean about the time?

S1: You know, we didn't have that much time, we are four and you guys are struggling to finish, you know, the powerpoint

S2: yeah,

S1: So

S4: Well no, okay...okay

S1: You don't think we're struggling for time?

S4: For me, personally not. I think we are getting along, yes, so...

S2: But for me, the most complicated thing was to find the appropriate material, because, to be honest, I don't know so much about the culture of, Russian folk music

S1: Yeah....Maybe the topic

S2: It was quite complicated for me to create the text and find the pictures

S3: My only point, is em, for example, build up a powerpoint presentation, or redoing some research on the internet, I can see that it somehow help us to....improve our English skills you know? I guess we are not... wasting, but using a lot at time in class to do this kind of things... and I don't think that these kind of things develop our English.

S2: I see so, yes,

S3: That's the point for me

S2: I agree,

S3: The purpose is really interesting, I totally agree it's for me, especially I've been studying here for four months and a half, so it's interesting have some...to have some changes, but on the other hand, I feel that you could use all this time to do some complex reading, or a lot of complex listening in English and we are using the time to do that powerpoint or research and I can do that at home not in class, you know? That's my point of view. The purpose it's okay, but, the way that you are doing that, I guess somehow, should be different.

S1: Yeah.

S2:...but, I wouldn't go so far because this still can improve our skills by doing this activity because we just have discussions all the time we can share different points of view and even arguing sometimes also can help. I think because of this.

S4: Personally, I agree with her, I would of course it's uh....a matter of personal preference but me personally, I like to have complex conversations and to concentrate more on complex listening as she said, then...eh... where it feels for me as if I am sticking my head into the paperwork all the time...well we do have some conversations here and there, but the focus is not on the conversation...having debates, I love to improve my English skills during the lesson in the manner that I could, that I can use it directly in real life situations. So, that's just my personal

S3: Yeah, for example, we spent almost two hours to try to figure out how to put all the links and...

S4: Yes.

S3: ...and the powerpoint and I can see that how it help us to improve our English..

S4: Absolutely...

S3: ...that's my point

S1: Shall we go to the next question?

S4: Oh, do we have to there

S1: What did you enjoy most this week?

S3: From the point of view of cultural things, it's really like to exchange some information

S1: Yeah, that's what I like about this...

S3: Yeah...

S1: ...coz I said that I get to know more about your countries and your music and traditions that's what I think that our learning purposes are maybe not, English... as in... language skills and yeah, what I enjoyed most this week was, getting to know things that I didn't know

S3: yeah, for sure

S1: about culture and about language...working with a team that I get along with, that's what I like.

S3: What was the most enjoyable part? (pause) The next one?

S2: Yeah, you can put the next one.

S3: How has the teacher helped? The teacher helped or any...

S1: She has given us good advice about pacing the speech, you know? And...how fluency is affected by quarters and things like that and continuation and I guess tomorrow as well, when we...are rehearsing our presentation, she will, you know...give us feedback about what we have to change, or... anything that we have to do better but you know that she has, you know, made an effort. In fluency and giving us, giving each of us what we have to change

S2: Yeah

S4: ...nothing to add...

S2: as for me, I consider this satisfying this teacher's help because I can ask different questions, sometimes I can face with some complicated moments and I can ask the teacher, she can always, she's always ready to help me. I think it's very important because

S4: You're true, you're right...

S2: You don't have to be alone with your problems

S1: Yeah...ready to help

S2: Things that you don't understand because sometimes you cannot understand yourself, just how to explain a word, or explain a phrase, or how to use some kind of vocabulary.

S1: What can you do now, to make your presentation better? I think, when we get to do the speaking part of the presentation, we have to, eh,

S3: Present?

S1: em, the fluency you know? The pacing, making pauses, when I wouldn't usually do that because I think...yeah... we were talking about earlier, I don't think it looks or sounds natural, but a native speaker said it does, so I guess, it does! Yeah, to make it better, I should take into consideration and actually do what I am advised to do! Like pacing my speech and taking into account pauses and sentences and chunks of language

S2: As for me to begin with I should complete the last part of my presentation because I haven't done it yet.

S1: You haven't finished

S2: Because I dedicated all my time to thinking not my speech and now the presentation

S1: Yeah

S2: I think it's very important

S1: What about you?

S4: I've got nothing to add

S3: Good.

Appendix 3a

B1+ Blog project

1. What do I need to change?

One group didn't gel as there were 3 strong personalities and 2 of them were having difficulty communicating as they would try and talk over each other, I spoke to both students individually and suggested they each give the other one more of a chance to speak. It seemed to work, for that 1st class. (However, one of the students didn't come to the remaining classes. I don't think this was due to the project as he had said he was planning in visiting as many places as possible during his last week in Ireland before, but it definitely helped the atmosphere in the classroom.)

2. What is student buy-in right now?

The students seem to be enjoying the change of pace from a regular class and are working well together (with the exception of the student mentioned above).

I was worried about one student who was involved in a previous project; however this was unfounded as she seemed to be enjoying this new project and was relieved there was no presentation element.

3. What do students need based on their reflection?

Students seem happy enough to work on their own and have only requested continued error correction particularly with writing.

4. What do I need? (resources, support etc)

Christina changed the Thursday reflection questions and the Survey monkey questions to reflect that this project is based on a blog post rather than a presentation. Ellie provided recorders for the Thursday recorded discussion reflection. Ellie also liaised with Gary about getting the finished project onto the school blog.

I also discussed the personality conflict from the first day with Ankie, Christina and Ellie, who seemed to think I handled it correctly and that changing groups wasn't an option as this is a short project and part of life is learning to cooperate with people you might not want to work with.

Appendix 3b

B1+ Advertising project A

1. What do I need to change?

I need to address the fact that in one of the groups a student has completely disengaged from her team and the project in general.

As a teacher, I will speak with her, to encourage her to participate. I will reiterate the importance of teamwork and the benefits of doing a project like this with regards to improving the various English language skills and practising real life situations.

2. What is the student buy-in like right now?

The majority of the students are enthusiastic about this project and are very engaged. There is one student who is slightly hesitant about having to present her project in front of a group of peers on Friday and one student who shows no interest in the project.

3. What do students need based on their reflection?

Students want help with their pronunciation in preparation for their presentation on Friday. They also seem to need reassurance and a calm, confident atmosphere for their presentations.

4. What do I need? (resources, support etc.)

I need various materials for this project such as, A3 paper, coloured markers, glue, scissors, memory sticks, access to the internet and a computer and TV for Friday's presentations.

As teacher, it is great to compare and discuss what is happening during class with another teacher who is conducting the same project at the same level in her class.

In addition, I need the same peer support as I would with regular classes and with this project it is advice on how to deal with the one student who does not like this project.

Appendix 3c

A2+ Board game project

1) What do I need to change?

I had originally decided to design both a board and questions, but now I realise with the inquisitive nature of the majority of the students in the class, as regards grammar and vocabulary, the research to formulate the questions is taking far longer than expected. As a result, designing a board will not be possible. (Margaret has suggested using an existing board.)

One student, who was not in attendance on Monday, seemed a bit overwhelmed by the idea of researching different topics, followed by the added difficulty of then formulating a question around said topic. This particular student was not working well in a larger group, (this student is also prone to being on her phone at every possible moment and lacks focus) so I have divided the 7 students into 3 groups. Originally there were only two.

2) What is the student buy-in now?

Judging by the atmosphere in the classroom at present, all students seem to be focused, organised and working well in groups. Using real facts and figures seems to be motivating them well. I am still unsure about the pair with the student who was not present on Monday. However, although this group are certainly working at a slower pace, they are still managing to get the work done. Personally, I think this is the most focused I have seen this particular student. Attempting to answer the trial run questions in a game format was extremely engaging for every one of the students on Tuesday.

3) What do students need based on their reflection?

Quite a few of the students are new to the classroom/college and aren't used to using grammar terminology. Although they are beginning to produce the question forms correctly, they now seem to realise that there are a number of tenses that exist, that they haven't heard of before. At this level, it is necessary for them to realise that is impossible to learn all

the tenses in one week and focus on the information they are researching about past events. The students will need a lot of examples and support throughout the week. Spelling is also an issue for one particular student. He will need to work closely with his group. Peer correction is going to be a valuable tool.

4) What do I need?

I need to organise recorders for reflection 2. I need to print copies of the questions for the students to keep and others to cut up for use in the game on Friday. Ankie and Mathew will help to simplify a survey monkey questionnaire on Thursday.

Ankie and I will discuss an exchange of material at a later stage.

Margaret has provided me with a board from Cutting Edge that I can use on Friday.

Appendix 3d

A2 Board game project

1. What do I need to change?

At the moment, I don't need to change anything. Initially the students were a bit taken aback when they heard they were going to do a project as they were afraid that their level of English wasn't high enough.

However, with a lot of positive encouragement from my side they over won most of their insecurities and they have really settled into their groups and work.

2. What is the student buy-in right now?

They are enjoying the project even though creating all the questions needed for the game was hard work. They seem to be able to link the grammar and vocabulary aims of the syllabus very well into the project.

They realise that they are broadening their vocabulary and practising their grammar and writing and are happy with this.

They are very pleased that they all will be able to bring a self-made board game home at the end of this week.

The fact that their games will be played on Friday by another class with a slightly higher level doesn't seem to intimidate them at all, it only seems to motivate them more.

3. What do students need based on their reflection?

They want me to check the accuracy of their grammar and vocabulary which I have been doing and will continue to do.

They would also like their pronunciation corrected.

As there are only two small groups (one group of 3 students and one group of 4 students) it is easier for me to continuously monitor and apply corrections where needed.

4. What do I need? (resources, support etc.)

I was able to use my printer at home to print the students' questions and pictures for their games. Ellie will arrange the recording devices for me for Thursday.

I will have to speak with Ellie to organise the playing of the games between both classes on Friday. I am slightly apprehension about the recording of the students' reflection tomorrow (Thursday) as the students' level is quite low and their speaking may not be understandable. I will ask other teacher for suggestions with regards to this tomorrow.

Appendix 2g

Lower student reflection 1 - B1+ Advertising project

Reflection 1

1. By doing this project I think I can improve my:

- grammar
- writing
- vocabulary ✓ learn more about advertising
- speaking ✓ presentation
- pronunciation ✓

2. How can this project help you improve the skills you choose in question 1?

Vocabulary: learn more about advertising

speaking: In the presentation I have to speak well

pronunciation: I have to pronounce well the words for the audience

3. What do you think the most difficult part of this project will be for you?

~~be most difficult part will be the construction of the poster and speak with other people about my idea~~

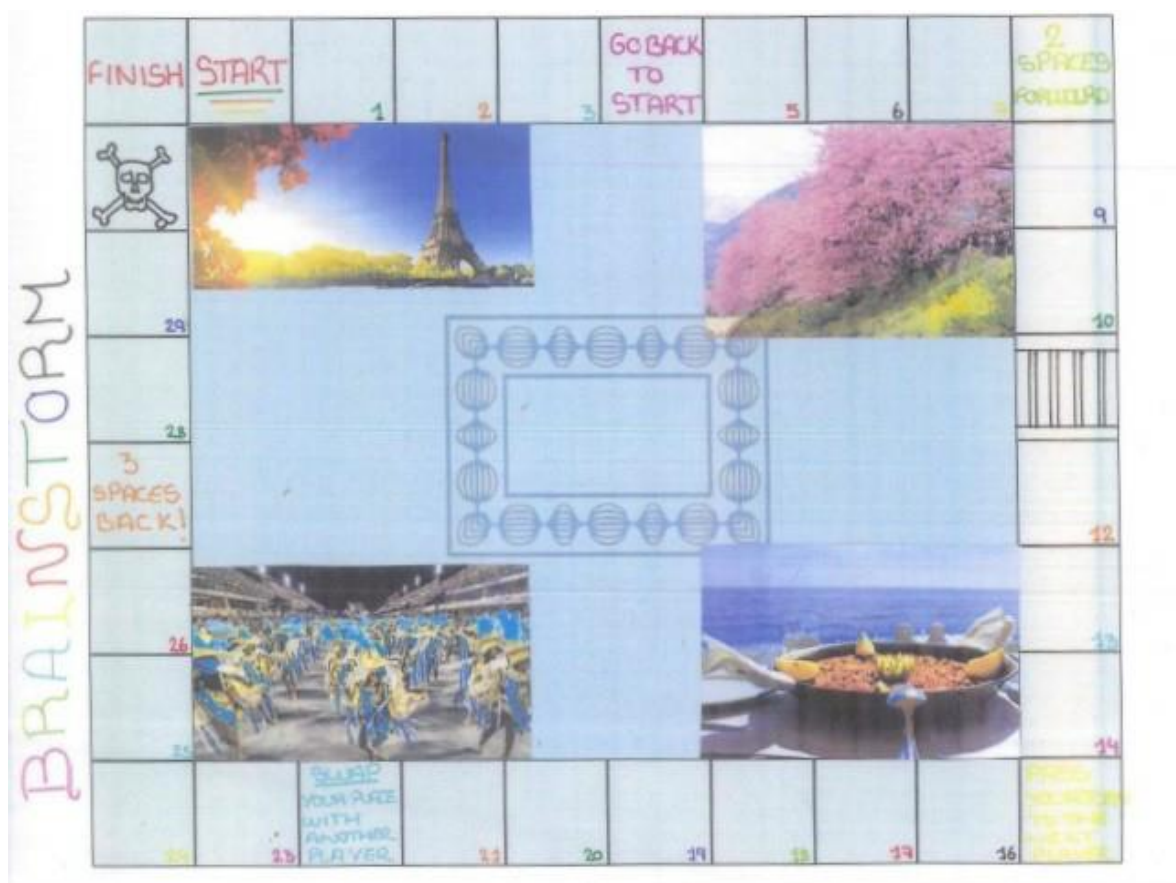
The most difficult part will be the construction of the poster and speak with new people about my idea

4. What help do you need from your team and/or teacher?

What I want: Help the most it's about vocabulary

Appendix 4a

A2 Board game project



Appendix 4b

B1+ Blog project

<https://corkenglishcollege.wordpress.com/2017/08/24/fantastic-trips-for-about-e500/> (B1+ Blog mags

Appendix 4c

B1+ Blog project stages

	Project Stages	Sample Project: B1+ Blog
Monday	Agree on theme or topic	Students agreed to do a project on travel blogs, with various destinations and budgets to be considered.
	Input language to scaffold research	Lexis about journeys and travel problems introduced in line with the learning outcomes of the weekly syllabus.
	Decide on what the published product will be	Students chose to focus their blog on what Ireland has to offer to weekend travellers on different budgets.
	Agree on the stages	Students agreed on who would do what research and how much time was needed for collation of results and writing the blog entries.
Tuesday	Carry out research	Students brainstormed and then researched destinations in Ireland for different budgets, and read reviews. They also looked at travel blogs online for formatting help.
Wednesday	Reflect and prepare for drafting stage	Student mid-week individual reflection.
	Draft product and edit	Students wrote first drafts of blog entries and peer-corrected.
Thursday	Reflect and prepare for final preparation of published product	Student mid-week group reflection. Students edited and produced final draft with images. Teacher checked for errors in spelling and punctuation.
Friday	Present / publish finished product	Blogs published on school blog and Facebook page.
	Final reflection and feedback	Student end of week individual reflection on SurveyMonkey.

Teaching nuclear stress: an investigation into the effect on student comprehensibility

By Stephen Bruce, Isobel Burke and Stephen Easley-Walsh (DIFC)

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the students who participated in this project, the raters who volunteered their time so generously and our employers at Dublin International Foundation College for supporting us in this project.

We would also like to thank Mr Ben Beaumont for his generous feedback and wise counsel at various stages throughout this project.

On a personal note, we would like to thank our families and friends who were kind enough to listen and offer encouragement and support.

Finally, we are deeply indebted to Mr Chris Farrell. This initiative, which he started, is a wonderful opportunity for teachers to engage in research. Chris kept us on track and motivated. We would neither have started or been able to complete this project without him.

1. Table of Contents

2. Literature Review	82
2.1 Pronunciation instruction.....	82
2.2 The value of pronunciation instruction	83
2.3 What to teach – English as a Lingua Franca	83
2.4 Nuclear Stress.....	83
3. Method	84
4. Results.....	86
4.1 Average Comprehensibility Scores Pre-Treatment	86
4.2 Pre-Treatment: Average Comprehensibility Scores for Question and Read Aloud.....	87
4.3 Post-Treatment comparison tables of mean comprehensibility ratings	87
5 Discussion.....	89
References.....	91

TABLE 1: SUMMARY STATISTICS OF MEDIAN-BASED MEAN COMPREHENSIBILITY RATINGS PRE-TREATMENT

TABLE 2: SUMMARY STATISTICS OF PRE-TREATMENT MEAN SCORES FOR RA TASK AND QR TASK RECORDINGS

TABLE 3: COMPARISON TABLE OF OVERALL MEAN FOR BOTH GROUPS

TABLE 4: COMPARISON TABLE OF MEAN PRE AND POST TREATMENT (RA TASK)

TABLE 5: : COMPARISON TABLE OF MEAN PRE AND POST TREATMENT (QR TASK)

FIGURE 1: MEAN COMPREHENSIBILITY RATING FOR EACH SPEAKER PRE AND POST TREATMENT IN READ ALOUD EXERCISE

FIGURE 2: MEAN COMPREHENSIBILITY RATING FOR EACH SPEAKER PRE AND POST TREATMENT IN QUESTION RESPONSE EXERCISE

1. Introduction

Research has shown that teaching pronunciation can be a challenge for English language teachers. Uncertainty as a result of limited training (Baker, 2014; Foote et al., 2011; Macdonald, 2002; Thomson, 2012), or ill-defined learning objectives and curricula (Baker & Murphy, 2011; Breitzkreutz et al., 2001; Lim, 2016) can end result in limited pronunciation teaching in class (MacDonald, 2002). And yet the evidence suggests that explicit instruction improves students' pronunciation (Couper, 2003; Couper, 2006; Derwing & Rossiter, 2003; Lee et al., 2015).

Teaching pronunciation is also heavily politicised. In the past, "native" norms of pronunciation were the models we taught our students to aspire to. However, those norms can be nationally, even regionally, specific and choosing which to model for our students is problematic. This has led many (Jenkins, 2000, for example) to suggest intelligibility and comprehensibility are more appropriate goals for students than 'native-like' norms. One of the aspects of pronunciation that affects intelligibility and comprehensibility is the placement of nuclear stress.

The aim of this project is to look at one relatively simple approach to pronunciation instruction – an explicit focus on nuclear stress placement - and to measure its effectiveness on the participants' perceived comprehensibility.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Pronunciation instruction

To begin, it is worth considering the extent to which teachers prioritise pronunciation in their class. Research in this area is inconclusive. Anecdotal evidence suggests that pronunciation instruction is frequently overlooked (see Burns, 2006; Gilbert, 2008; Hismanoglu & Hismanoglu, 2010) but many other studies have found contradictory reports. In two studies in Canada, teachers reported regularly teaching pronunciation, including both segmental and suprasegmental features (Breitzkreutz, Derwing, & Rossiter, 2001; Foote, Holtby, & Derwing, 2011). Studies in Greece (Sifakis & Sougari, 2005) and Cyprus (Hismanoglu 2010) also reported similar findings. However, these studies used teacher self-reports which do not always provide a reliable account of what happens in the classroom (Baker & Murphy, 2011, p.33). Studies that used classroom observations in addition to teacher surveys found pronunciation instruction occurred less frequently than claimed by teachers (Foote, Trofimovich, Collins, & Urzúa, 2016) and to be reactive to student errors rather planned as part of the lesson (Baker & Murphy, 2011).

2.2 The value of pronunciation instruction

Irrespective of the challenges of teaching pronunciation in class, several studies have shown that students want more of it (Couper, 2003; Derwing, Diepenbroek, & Foote, 2012). This is perhaps unsurprising when we consider that employment opportunities can be affected by negatively perceived pronunciation (Jenkins, 2005); that pronunciation is the most common cause of communication breakdowns (Jenkins, 2002); and that some students are unable to notice pronunciation difficulties without help (Derwing & Munro, 2005).

Experiments in which participants received instruction in suprasegmental features showed statistically significant improvements in intelligibility (Derwing et al., 1998; Derwing & Rossiter, 2003; Munro & Derwing, 1999). A meta-analysis also found positive improvements where participants had lessons and feedback in segmental and suprasegmental features (Lee et al., 2015). Some research even suggests that improvements can occur with minimal interventions. Bradlow et al. (1999) found that training Japanese students to recognise the difference between /l/ and /r/ in English, resulted in an improved ability to produce these two sounds.

2.3 What to teach – English as a Lingua Franca

Today, the number of people who speak English as a second language is far greater than those for whom English is their first language (Crystal, 2008). In response to these changing patterns in English usage worldwide, Jenkins (2000) proposed ELF - English as a Lingua Franca. Rather than defining (and teaching) according to native speaker norms, Jenkins argued for a series of core competencies which reflect the needs of international communication where speakers are using English as their second language. Of particular relevance to pronunciation teaching, ELF emphasises intelligibility above replicating native speaker norms.

The phonological core Jenkins proposed is based on those features which compromise mutual intelligibility if not acquired by the student. Of the ELF phonological core, Jenkins stresses the importance of nuclear stress which she describes as “crucial for intelligibility” (2000, p. 153).

2.4 Nuclear Stress

Often when teaching stress, we tend to focus on individual words and which syllable within that word is stressed. The essential idea of nuclear stress is that within extended utterances, a speaker will stress one syllable within that utterance to give it prominence, to convey that this syllable (and word) are the most important for the listener to pay attention to. The idea is that nuclear stress has a communicative function. For instance, take the following sentence:

The exam wasn't that difficult

If I stress *that* I may be disagreeing with someone who has just been talking about how difficult the exam was. If I place primary nuclear stress on *exam* (or the last syllable in exam), then I may mean that the exam was not difficult but that something else was. If I stress *difficult* I may be implying that it was something else, for example, boring. The placement of stress is the choice of the speaker and has a communicative function.

Jenkins emphasises the 'teachability' of nuclear stress. The choice of where to place nuclear stress is not determined by a rule - instead it is the choice of the speaker who is directing the listener to the most important part of their speech by stressing it. Therefore, teaching nuclear stress does not require a knowledge of phonemic script on either the part of the student or teacher, and can be easily built into lessons, both receptively and productively (Jenkins, 2000, p. 155).

Patsko (2014) proposes a number of ways in which nuclear stress can be worked into classroom practice. Receptively, students can be given transcripts, listen to the audio recordings and asked to mark pauses and nuclear stress placement. Productively, they can be given transcripts and asked to annotate and read aloud themselves before listening to the audio and contrasting with the choices they made. Rather than being independent pronunciation exercises within a class, these activities can form extensions to traditional listening practice and do not place great demands on the teacher in terms of preparation or phonological knowledge.

Given the difficulties some teachers find when teaching pronunciation, the possibly beneficial effects of even limited pronunciation instruction and the importance of nuclear stress, this project aims to test the effect of a six-week teaching intervention which focused on nuclear stress.

3. Method

Initially, there were 22 participants in this study - one participant was Nigerian, two were from Vietnam and the remaining 20 were from China. 4 participants dropped out. All were adults and studying on a pre-master's foundation programme, the goal of which is to enter a Master's level

programme of study at a UK or Irish university. The minimum entry level for this course is IELTS 5.0 but students' actual entry levels varied from IELTS 5.0 to 7.0. As a normal part of this course, the students were randomly divided into two groups: 1 and 2. For this experiment, group 1 served as the treatment group, group 2 as the control group.

In the third week of the programme, the students were invited to participate in the project. They were given information leaflets; the nature of the project was explained and assurances of anonymity were given. Consent forms were obtained both from the school and the participants.

The experiment relied on three stages: a pre-test, a treatment and a post-test. The pre-test took place in the third week of their foundation course. In the pre-test, the participants were required to perform two tasks. In the first task, the participant was asked a general question (for example, to talk about a favourite hobby) given 30 seconds to prepare a response and then asked to speak for 30 seconds. For the sake of convenience this will hereafter be referred to as QR Task (Question Response Task). The response was recorded. They were then given a short piece of text (taken from Hewings, 2012), given 20 seconds to prepare and then asked to read it aloud (hereafter referred to as RA Task – Read Aloud Task). Again, their response was recorded. This approach was based on existing work in the field, in particular the work of Sheppard, Elliott & Baese-Berk (2017).

The treatment took place over six teaching weeks, with three classes per week. In the treatment stage, group 1 received specific instruction on nuclear stress from their teacher integrated into their regular English for Academic Purposes (EAP) lessons. Group 2, the control group, did not. This treatment was limited to the approach advocated by Patsko (2014) for the teaching of nuclear stress. In each class, after completing a Listening exercise, the teacher gave students a short piece of text from the transcript. The participants were then required to mark where in the sentences they thought a pause would be most appropriate, and which words/syllables would be given greater emphasis. After deciding, the audio was played back and students discussed reasons for the placement of nuclear stress in the examples. In addition, students were given homework once per week related to nuclear stress. This homework required them to take a short piece of text, mark it for pauses and nuclear stress placement and then prepare it to read aloud in the following class. The post-test repeated the procedure from the pre-test, varying the questions and short texts to ensure no participant repeated the same question or text.

In total, there were 72 individual audio recordings as 4 students (3 from the control group, 1 from the treatment group) did not participate in the post-test. In order for each of the 72 audio recordings to be rated a minimum of 5 times, 26 individual surveys were created using Google Forms, with each survey consisting of 14 randomly selected audio recordings so that each rater would have the same amount of work. This meant that 4 recordings were marked 6 times as opposed to five. After each audio recording, a Likert scale invited raters to rate the comprehensibility of the audio on a scale of 1 – 9. The instruction was as follows:

In each case, please listen once only to the recording. When it is finished please choose a number on the scale below each video. A guide to the scale is:

9 = I can easily understand the speech with no real effort

5 = I can understand the speech but I have to make an effort

1 = I can understand very little of the speech, even with an effort

As each audio recording would be marked by 5 raters, and as the purpose was solely to measure whether there was a perceived improvement, the only requirement of the raters was an ability to understand English. Raters were recruited from the researchers' personal circle of family, friends, colleagues and Twitter professional network. The majority were teachers of English.

4. Results

A total of 26 surveys were completed. Of the 72 audio recordings, 70 were rated a minimum of 5 times. In two instances, the same recording featured twice in the same survey and was thus rated twice by the same rater. The value of the first rating was taken in both cases and the second value was disregarded. Otherwise, all surveys were completed successfully by raters and no difficulties with the audio recordings were reported by raters. In each of the 72 recordings, the median value of the ratings was taken.

4.1 Average Comprehensibility Scores Pre-Treatment

The mean average of the median-based-score for each student in the treatment group was 5.45 compared to 5.03 in the control group. A two tailed not paired t-test found a p-value of 0.49 ($t = 0.6999$; $df_1 = 19$, $df_2 = 15$) suggesting no significant difference between the two groups. The mean averages, derived from median-based-scoring for both groups pre-treatment, are summarised in table 1.

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Treatment Group</i>	5.45	1.53	1	9
<i>Control Group</i>	5.03	1.58	1	9

Table 1: Summary statistics of median-based mean comprehensibility ratings pre-treatment

4.2 Pre-Treatment: Average Comprehensibility Scores for Question and Read Aloud

Based on median-based-scoring, the mean pre-treatment score for all QR Task recordings was 5.97 whilst the RA Task recordings was 4.56. A summary of the mean scores for pre-treatment QR Task recordings and RA Task recordings, divided according to control and treatment group, are provided in table 2.

	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>
<i>Read Aloud Treatment Group</i>	4.55	1.47	1	9
<i>Read Aloud Control Group</i>	4.56	1.52	1	9
<i>Question Response Treatment Group</i>	6.35	0.81	3	9
<i>Question Response Control Group</i>	5.50	1.61	1	9

Table 2: Summary statistics of pre-treatment mean scores for RA Task and QR Task recordings

To determine whether there was a difference between comprehensibility in the RA and QR tasks pre-treatment, a two tailed not paired t-test was carried out. This found a p-value less than 0.05 ($p=0.014094$, $t=2.58815$, $df=17$) showing a statistically significant difference between the two groups in the RA and QR Task, with raters generally considering the participants to be more comprehensible when responding to questions than when reading texts aloud.

4.3 Post-Treatment comparison tables of mean comprehensibility ratings

In order to determine the effect of the treatment, using median-based-scoring, mean scores of both treatment and control group were determined. A two tailed paired t-test was carried out to test the null hypothesis (i.e. that the treatment had no effect on the speakers' comprehensibility).

	<i>Mean Pre Treatment</i>	<i>Mean Post Treatment</i>	<i>P Value</i>	<i>T score</i>	<i>df</i>
<i>Treatment Group</i>	5.45	5.25	0.68	-0.413962	19
<i>Control Group</i>	5.03	5.06	0.92	0.099373	15

Table 3: Comparison table of overall mean for both groups

In order to determine the effect of the treatment at the level of the two differing tasks (i.e. text read aloud and open response to question), mean averages of both treatment and control group were determined and are displayed in tables 4 and 5.

	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>P Value</i>	<i>T score</i>	<i>df</i>
<i>Treatment Group</i>	4.55	4.60	0.93	0.086280	9
<i>Control Group</i>	4.56	4.13	0.33	-1.050188	7

Table 4: Comparison table of mean pre and post treatment (RA task)

	<i>Pre</i>	<i>Post</i>	<i>P Value</i>	<i>T score</i>	<i>df</i>
<i>Treatment Group</i>	6.35	5.90	0.59	-0.564340	9
<i>Control Group</i>	5.50	6.00	0.29	1.154701	7

Table 5: : Comparison table of mean pre and post treatment (QR Task)

In all cases the p-value is much more than the critical value of 0.05. As such, we can say that in this case, the treatment had no significant effect on the speakers' comprehensibility. The control group also showed no statistically significant improvement.

To allow for variability between speakers in RA and QR tasks, the mean comprehensibility ratings for each speaker were recorded both pre and post treatment. The results are presented in figures 1 and 2.

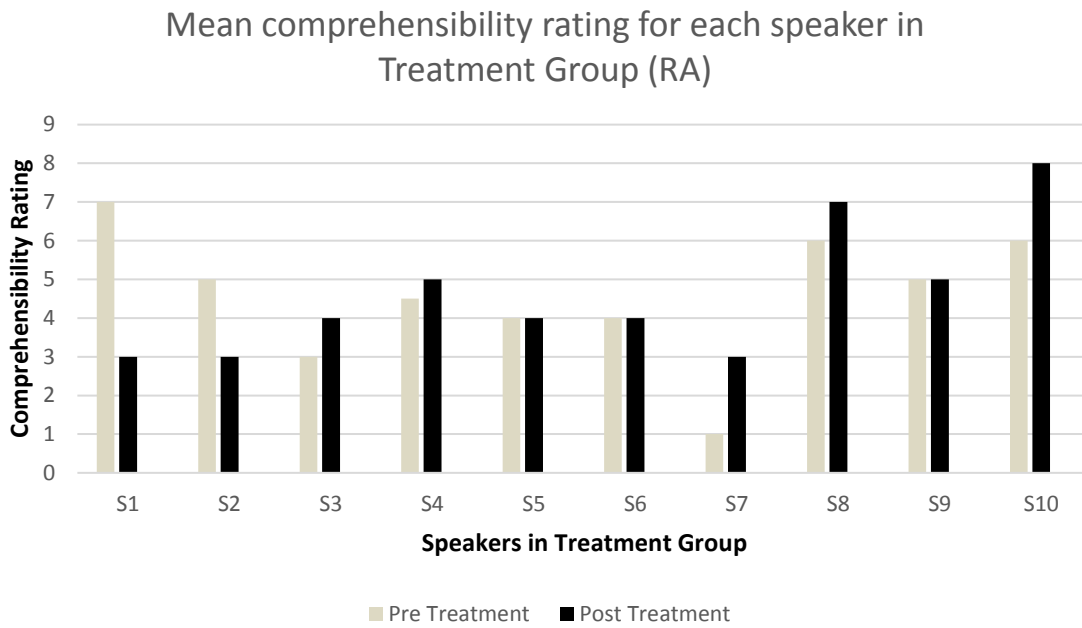


Figure 1: Mean comprehensibility rating for each speaker pre and post treatment in read aloud exercise

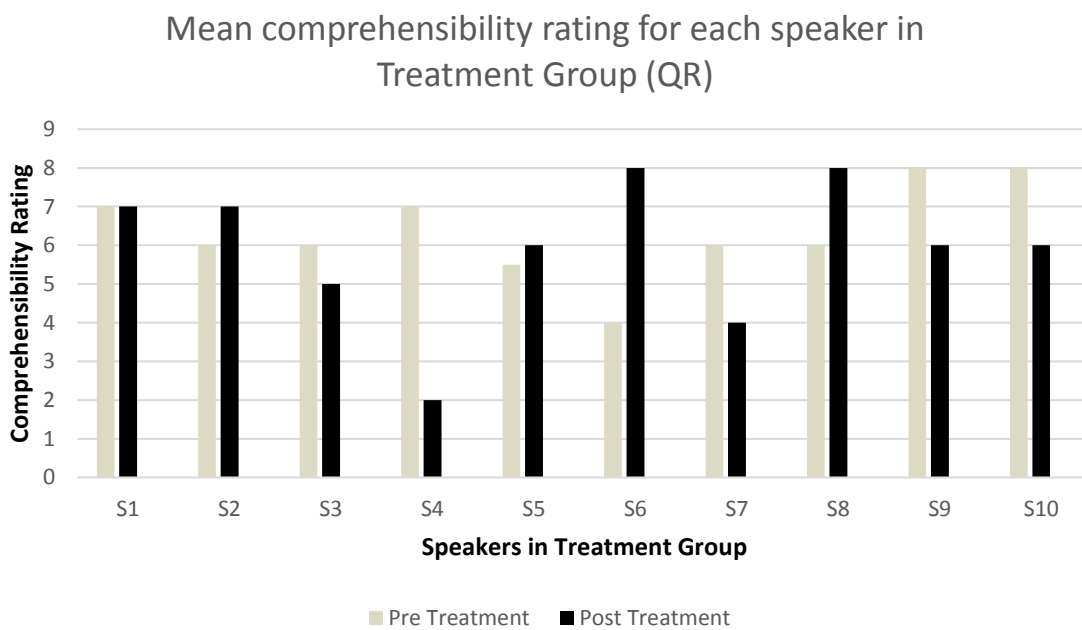


Figure 2: Mean comprehensibility rating for each speaker pre and post treatment in question response exercise

The results show no consistent pattern. There is considerable variation between speakers, both in terms of their pre and post scores and in terms of the QR and RA Task.

5. Discussion

The results show that by the end of the experiment there was no statistically significant improvement in the treatment group. Similarly, no statistically significant improvement in comprehensibility was noted in either the RA task or the QR task. The control group followed a similar pattern with no significant improvement in comprehensibility by the end of the experiment. The control group did show a slight improvement in the response to question task but this was not statistically significant.

Generally, speakers were considered less comprehensible when reading texts aloud than when speaking in response to a question. The mean comprehensibility rating for both groups, pre and post treatment, did not reach 5, which suggests that raters required an effort to understand the speakers when they were required to read texts aloud. Given that the speakers were given limited time to prepare these texts, it is perhaps unsurprising that their comprehensibility was deemed inferior to when they responded to more familiar open questions. However, given that much of the teaching treatment required students to work with texts and read aloud, it does raise a question as to why the treatment group showed no detectable improvement.

The narrow focus of the pronunciation instruction or the small sample size of the treatment group ($n=10$) may explain the lack of detectable improvement. However, given the context (i.e. participants being recent arrivals to an English speaking country), the length of time from first recording to second (8 weeks due to a one week holiday during the 6 week treatment) and the amount of classroom time the speakers had (20 hours per week), it is surprising that there was no improvement in comprehensibility. This suggests that improvements in perceived comprehensibility may require more time than this project allowed for, a larger sample size or possibly a wider teaching intervention that includes segmental as well as suprasegmental features.

References

- Baker, A. (2014). Exploring teachers' knowledge of second language pronunciation techniques: Teacher cognitions, observed classroom practices, and student perceptions. *TESOL Quarterly*, 48(1), 136-163. doi:10.1002/tesq.99
- Baker, A., & Murphy, J. (2011). Knowledge base of pronunciation teaching: Staking out the territory. *TESL Canada Journal*, 28(2), 29-50. doi:10.18806/tesl.v28i2.1071
- Bradlow, A., Akahane-Yamada, R., Pisoni, D., & Tohkura, Y. (1999). Training Japanese listeners to identify english /r/ and /l/: Long-term retention of learning in perception and production. *Perception & Psychophysics*, 61(5), 977-985. doi:10.3758/BF03206911
- Breitkreutz, J., Derwing, T., & Rossiter, M. (2001). Pronunciation teaching practices in Canada. *TESL Canada Journal/Revue TESL Du Canada*, 19(1), 51-61.
- Burns, A. (2006). Integrating research and professional development on pronunciation teaching in a national adult ESL program. *Tesl Reporter*, 39(2), 34.
- Couper, G. (2003). The value of an explicit pronunciation syllabus in ESOL teaching.
- Couper, G. (2006). The short and long-term effects of pronunciation instruction. *Prospect: An Australian Journal of TESOL*, 21(1), 44-64.
- Crystal, D. (2008). Two thousand million? *English Today*, 24(1), 3-6.
- Derwing, T. M., & Munro, M. J. (2005). Second language accent and pronunciation teaching: A research-based approach. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 379-97. doi:10.2307/3588486
- Derwing, T. M., Munro, M. J., & Wiebe, G. (1998). Evidence in favor of a broad framework for pronunciation instruction. *Language Learning*, 48(3), 393-410. doi:10.1111/0023-8333.00047
- Derwing, T. M., & Rossiter, M. J. (2003). The effects of pronunciation instruction on the accuracy, fluency, and complexity of L2 accented speech. *Applied Language Learning*, 13(1), 1.
- Foote, J. A., Holtby, A. K., & Derwing, T. M. (2011). Survey of the teaching of pronunciation in adult ESL programs in Canada, 2010. *TESL Canada Journal*, 29(1), 1-22.
- Foote, J. A., Trofimovich, P., Collins, L., & Urzúa, F. S. (2016). Pronunciation teaching practices in communicative second language classes. *The Language Learning Journal*, 44(2), 181-196. doi:10.1080/09571736.2013.784345
- Gilbert, J. B. (2008). *Teaching pronunciation: Using the prosody pyramid* Cambridge University Press.
- Hewings, M. (2012). *Cambridge academic english. An integrated skills course for EAP, upper intermediate*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hismanoglu, M., & Hismanoglu, S. (2010). *Language teachers' preferences of pronunciation teaching techniques: Traditional or modern?*
doi:<http://dx.doi.org.lcproxy.shu.ac.uk/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.138>
- Jenkins, J. (2002). A sociolinguistically based, empirically researched pronunciation syllabus for english as an international language. *Applied Linguistics*, 23(1), 83-103.
doi:10.1093/applin/23.1.83
- Jenkins, J. (2005). Implementing an international approach to english pronunciation: The role of teacher attitudes and identity. *TESOL Quarterly*, 39(3), 535-43. doi:10.2307/3588493
- Lee, J., Jang, J., & Plonsky, L. (2015). The effectiveness of second language pronunciation instruction: A meta-analysis. *Applied Linguistics*, 36(3), 345-366. doi:10.1093/applin/amu040
- Lim, S. (2016). Learning to teach intelligible pronunciation for ASEAN english as a lingua franca: A sociocultural investigation of Cambodian pre-service teacher cognition and practice. *RELC Journal*, 47(3), 313-329. doi:10.1177/0033688216631176
- Macdonald, S. (2002). Pronunciation-views and practices of reluctant teachers.
- Munro, M. J., & Derwing, T. M. (1999). Foreign accent, comprehensibility, and intelligibility in the speech of second language learners. *Language Learning*, 49, 285-310. doi:10.1111/0023-8333.49.s1.8
- Patsko, L. (2014, March 3). Identifying and practising thought groups. Retrieved February 4, 2018, from <https://elfpron.wordpress.com/2014/03/03/identifying-and-practising-tone-units/>
- Sheppard, B. E., Elliott, N. C., & Baese-Berk, M. (2017). Comprehensibility and intelligibility of international student speech: Comparing perceptions of university EAP instructors and content faculty. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 26, 42-51. doi:10.1016/j.jeap.2017.01.006
- Sifakis, N. C., & Sougari, A. (2005). Pronunciation issues and EIL pedagogy in the periphery: A survey of Greek state school teachers' beliefs. *TESOL Quarterly: A Journal for Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages and of Standard English as a Second Dialect*, 39(3), 467-488.
doi:10.2307/3588490
- Thomson, R. I. (2012). ESL teachers' beliefs and practices in pronunciation teaching: Confidently right or confidently wrong. *Proceedings of the 4th Pronunciation in Second Language Learning and Teaching Conference*, 224-233.

The efficacy of note-taking instruction for learners of English as a second language

By David Wolfe (English Studio Dublin)

Content

This report will attempt to investigate and to evaluate methods of note-taking during listening used during the Trinity ISE examination for learners of English. In my context I have consistently struggled with facilitating learners' note-taking skills, and I have noticed that understanding that they are recommended to take notes, but not knowing what good notes look like is a common frustration for learners. Many learners at C1-C2 level also wish to progress into third-level education, where note-taking can be an invaluable skill, which means it is critical that I am able to give them meaningful instruction in this regard.

Rationale

In this section I will detail the context, the background reading, and what implications I hope the study will have on my own practice.

My educational setting is a large language school in Dublin, Ireland. This is a school that has been operating for a number of years and has been growing year on year. The learners in the school are predominantly South American, with a large contingent from Brazil, and smaller contingents from almost all other South American nations, as well as many from Central America. This means that the L1 of most learners is either Portuguese or Spanish. Most of these learners are considered 'long-term', which means that they will study fifteen hours per week for a period of six months. The vast majority of the learners are from middle class backgrounds and most have studied at third level before, suggesting that they are likely familiar with note-taking in their L1, and indeed indicating that there may be transferable skills which can be built upon. There are also smaller groups of learners from South Korea, China, Russia, and occasionally some European countries. Many of these learners are 'short term' (2-4 weeks of study). The levels in the school range from Beginner to C2 (Proficiency). There are also Business classes on offer (BEC Vantage), as well as IELTS preparation classes. I personally teach C1 (Advanced) and B2 (Upper Intermediate) classes on a regular basis. Irish immigration regulations require that learners sit an external exam in order to renew their visa for another 8 months, and so all schools choose and provide these external exams as a default for learners. The examination that The English Studio has chosen to provide for its learners is the Trinity ISE (Integrated Skills in English), which comes in five distinct varieties matched with the CEFR level descriptors; ISE Foundation (A2), ISE I (B1), ISE II (B2), ISE III (C1), and ISE IV (C2). As I teach mostly Advanced and Upper intermediate classes, I have given extensive instruction and practice on both the ISE II and ISE III, with some amount of experience with ISE I for a brief period. The ISE examination is a skills test, and is divided into two separate exam papers: Reading and Writing, and Speaking and Listening. After feedback given by school management and later the external exam coordinator, it came to my attention that learners were having difficulty in the Speaking and Listening part of the exam. This is

when I became interested in trying to improve my own practice in order to prepare learners more fully for the challenges they would face in this exam.

Field (2006) suggests that listening strategies can and should be introduced in order to boost learner confidence when confronted with listening tasks, and further suggests that specific instruction can help learners to identify which strategies they may need to use in real world situations. Rost(2011) contends that note-taking is an activity that learners recognise as being valuable and having real-world applications, and goes on to detail several methods and functions of note-taking which were used to construct the instruments included in this research project. According to research conducted by Carrell (2007), learners generally do not make use of organisational strategies during their note-taking, however their test performance is at least somewhat related to whether or not they took notes at all. Xie (2002) suggests that it is the quantity of notes taken, and number of content words within those notes, which are indicators of a learner's success in an exam setting. Xie (2002) and Carrell (2007) had the additional caveat that 'good' notes (i.e. those taken by learners who ultimately achieved a higher score in an exam) in some way reflected the organisation of the text which they were made from. In other words, the visual representation of the notes on the page reflected the organisation and pacing of the listening text.

This research reinforces the assumptions I was working under in my own practice, confirming that note-taking instruction is a valid exercise for learners for reasons of perceived validity and actual effects on listening test results. On the other hand, the idea that the exact nature of the notes taken seems to have little effect on test performance does somewhat frustrate the idea of designing instruction and tasks to help learners in this area. However, as stated already, the psychological validity (Rost, 2011) of these tasks is immediately clear to learners and this may contribute to the learners' confidence during the task.

Aim

The aim of the following procedures is to identify and evaluate two different methods of note-taking in order to inform my own practice with regards to teaching listening strategies, particularly with regard to the Trinity College London test of Interactive Skills in English. This will include a description of each strategy along with an evaluation of the perceived usefulness of the notes during post-listening recall.

Procedure

The following note-taking procedures have been developed using suggestions from both Field (2006) and Rost (2011) for what 'good' note-taking task design should look like, followed by a discussion of both the advantages and challenges of these methods. This evaluation will be heavily influenced by my context, being specifically geared towards the listening tasks in the Trinity ISE examination.

The first method which has been researched and evaluated is based on the Cornell method. This involves actively listening to a lecture-style text and taking notes organised into headings and subpoints based on related topics.

- The listener must create several 'cascading' headings for this method, meaning the headings can be identified in terms of importance to the overall meaning of the text by way of indentation. It is advised to distinguish headings from subpoints by using indentation, underlining, bullet points, or some combination of these methods.
- Then the listener must follow the chronological order of topics discussed in the text, creating headings and writing more detailed points below the headings as they do so.
- This method rewards or perhaps necessitates the use of abbreviations and symbols, which can be pre-taught or devised by the listeners themselves in an adhoc manner from previous L1 note-taking experience.

The second method which has been devised is a method based on suggestions and conclusions raised by Field (2006) which indicate that listening for the frequency of information can be helpful when it comes to recalling information from a listening text, and it can also assist the learner in identifying the key points of the text.

- This method involves dividing the page into three vertical columns with headings like: main points, frequency, and additional points.
- The listener then indicates briefly in the 'main points' column what they believe to be the most important topics in the text as they hear them.
- In the frequency section the listener makes a small mark beside each point whenever they believe that the point is repeated or reinforced in some way.
- In the additional information section, listeners can add any small details that they think might be necessary to remember next to any of the important points.

In order to test these methods, I simulated a typical Trinity ISE listening test and used the above methods in order to take notes on what I heard. Exactly the same structure as is given in the Trinity ISE Speaking and Listening exam was followed, material for which can be found in the appendices of this paper. With the help of a colleague, the instruction and audio files were prepared blindly, so that I could approximate the experience of a learner taking the examination. The files were sent to me and then I prepared myself with a pen and notepaper. I used two recordings, playing each one twice as per the exam instructions. After the first listening, the student is instructed to explain what the recording is about in one or two sentences, and then they are given a pen and paper, and told they may take notes for the second listening. Then they are given a more specific question for this second listening, which may involve evaluating the speaker's point of view, or listing the advantages and disadvantages of some situation described within the text. It is this task which was the focus of my research. During this playthrough of each recording I took notes using a different method for each, and then preserved these notes afterwards for the appendices of this report. After this process I reflected on the experience of making the notes as well as how effective the information contained within the notes was in helping me to answer the exam question. I discovered that, in keeping with my reading on the topic, just taking notes was useful, and the form that the notes took was not especially relevant to how useful they were in helping to recall details from the recordings.

Findings

The Cornell method of note-taking is very recognisable to the average learner and seems to make the most 'logical' sense as a method of note-taking. This perception of the Cornell method as the default style of note-taking can be both a boon and a hindrance to learners hoping to learn effective note-taking skills. The method involves a very close listening of the text and is quite punishing to mistakes or missed information. This method also requires more actual words to be written down and so may have dexterity considerations for some learners. It can also be quite difficult for listeners to distinguish when to move to the next heading-level topic, as opposed to simply including further subpoints as they are heard and processed. One of the benefits of the method is that it seems to make sense intuitively and so is not difficult to conceptualise for learners. Another benefit is that the notes produced are generally very easy to consult and review, making the overall relevance of the note-taking process extremely clear and beneficial to the learners. There were, however, some differences in the actual experience of making the notes while listening. The Cornell method was stressful, as it was very easy to fall behind on what is being recorded on the page. The amount of words to write for each point was constantly in question, as well as where exactly to begin a new topic segment. It was also difficult to quickly make certain symbols (up arrow, down arrow) for example, as they are not something that the average listener would have particular practice at writing in line with other text. Perhaps the biggest benefit of the method was being able to very clearly see the structure of what was said upon review.

During the process of taking the notes for the frequency method, I felt much more relaxed and less rushed than during the Cornell method. However, I did feel that the actual notes produced were not quite as useful upon review. While I was able to remember most of the key points, some of the detailed points weren't fully fleshed out due to the fact that writing notes as actual words is not the focus of this method. Most of the notes in the third column were only one or two words, so it was slightly harder to recall those details than with the Cornell method.

Conclusions

After conducting this research, there are some clear implications for my own practice as well as suggestions for others' practice and areas available for further research in the future. It seems clear that whether learners take notes while listening at all is more or less the key factor in predicting how well learners perform in listening tests. It is also clear that there are a number of methods which can be used to structure this note-taking activity, with each having its own advantages and disadvantages. These activities may be more or less useful depending on the context, for example the frequency method might be more useful for learners at A1 or A2 with some adaptations to be more teacher-led, due to the reduced focus on processing syntactical information, and the increased focus on individual words and phonology. On the other hand, the Cornell method may be more useful with B2 or C1 groups due to their greater autonomy both during- and post-listening, and indeed their likely greater need for practice of these skills in their L2 for their further education goals. As a suggestion of further research on this topic, it might be worthwhile to survey learners in a variety of contexts in order to ascertain a greater understanding of their educational background in order to assess what possible transferable skills are available. This could also incorporate research into the learners' pre-existing proficiencies and needs by means of a needs analysis.

References

- Xie, Qian. (2002). The relationship of notetaking to listening comprehension in the English Placement Test. Retrospective Theses and Dissertations. Paper 16155. [online] Available at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=17154&context=rtd> [Accessed 14 Oct. 2017]
- Carrell, P. (2007). Notetaking Strategies and Their Relationship to Performance on Listening Comprehension and Communicative Assessment Takes. Monograph Series. [online] Carbondale: ETS. Available at: <https://www.ets.org/Media/Research/pdf/RR-07-01.pdf> [Accessed 19 Oct. 2017].
- Rost, M. (2011). Teaching and Researching: Listening. 2nd ed. Harlow, England: Pearson Education, pp.70, 186-192, 221, 272.
- Field, J. (2006). Listening in the language classroom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp. 286-324

Appendix 1:

Samples of both the frequency method and the Cornell method of note-taking.

Dolphins

Topics	Freq.	Additional info.
Dolphins comm. language		whistles + clicks kind lang.
culture?		taught behave - generations taught
bottlenose	1	
forage		noses - foraging
play		bubbles, humans

Highly-paid jobs

Why an imbalance of salaries?

- 10 richest → bus. ppl
- avg dir 120x salary of employee

Downsides

- Celebs private life
- Doctors lots of training
- Directors workaholics

Other jobs

- Nurses shiftwork
- chefs, hot, stressful

Supply and Demand

- only a small % have something extra - connectivity

What can be done?

- cap on earnings?
- ↑ tax high ↓ tax low
- deduct a % of high earnings for clarity

Afterword



This is the second year of the Irish Research Scheme for Teachers and the first with which Trinity TESOL has had the pleasure to be involved with. Before talking about the great research conducted by this year's participants, it is important to remember the firm foundations started with the first group, back in 2016. Being led by Chris Farrell and with growing support offered by ELT Ireland, there were six researchers who took part in the first scheme, producing four reports.

This scheme was created to provide an essential professional development plank for teachers intent on becoming better teachers. This was at a time when many schools did not see the value in investing in CPD or helping teachers move beyond their initial ELT qualification. Although the situation has not changed for many, there is now a chance for teachers in Ireland to engage in free mentoring and learning through the IRST and other opportunities created through the growth of ELT Ireland. So, by way of the academic and emotional support offered in workshops and via feedback to numerous iterations of the research pieces, the teachers who have participated have been able to learn not only more about their local teaching context, but also about themselves as reflective practitioners.

This year there have been 6 pieces of research pieces by 14 participants, showing again that the appetite for professional development is real and something to be nurtured. As you will have read in this volume, each piece of research is personal to the teachers' own contexts, as it should be. Some are more academic than others, and some are more experimental. Whatever the approach, they are all written by working teachers and all have their roots in the desire to improve practice.

As you will have seen from these reports, engaging in action research to learn more about our learners, ourselves and our teaching is a realistic and attainable goal. It's not something you need a DipTESOL/Delta or Master's for; you just need the desire to improve learning and teaching and the willingness to give it a go. With that in mind, I'd like to commend this scheme to you and encourage you to get involved. And if you are uncertain about your skills or think you do not have the time, maybe you are right. But before you do set the idea aside, why not talk about it with one of the IRST organisers or, even better, one of the previous participants? What may seem like a vague idea to you now, may be more concrete and attainable than you think!



Trinity IRST 2017/18