Joint Efforts for Innovation:

Working Together to Improve Foreign Language Teaching in the 21st Century

Dolors Masats, Maria Mont & Nathaly González-Acevedo (Editors)

A book for the curious and passionate 21ˢᵗ century language teachers and teacher trainers.

Tired of reading about the wonders of technology enhanced project-based learning but not knowing where to seek inspiration to start to adopt this teaching approach? A team of in-service teachers, teacher trainers, pre-service teachers and researchers have worked together to present a simple, engaging and practical book to offer fellow education professionals stimulating ideas for their teaching practice.

Joint efforts for innovation: Working together to improve foreign language teaching in the 21st century offers:

> ➢ Inspiring classroom projects and innovative teaching experiences.
>
> ➢ A compilation of digital tools and resources for the foreign language classroom.
>
> ➢ Pioneering proposals to open up the classroom doors.
>
> ➢ Problem-solving and inquiry-based tasks that promote team work.
>
> ➢ Honest reflections from practitioners on their classroom practices.

This book includes

> ➢ accessible examples of teacher-led classroom research small-scale studies.
>
> ➢ calls for teachers to do research in their classrooms.
>
> ➢ personal accounts on the importance of school internships for pre-service teachers.

This book is an invitation for practicing teachers and teacher trainers to be creative and to develop learning skills, literacy skills and life skills.

Are you ready to become an innovative 21ˢᵗ century educator?

JOINT EFFORTS FOR INNOVATION: WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Dolors Masats, Maria Mont & Nathaly Gonzalez-Acevedo (Editors)

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Innovative approaches and pioneering resources for the foreign language classroom: Introduction

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Second language acquisition (SLA) and educational research in the 20th century focussed on the elaboration of theories to describe and understand language and language learning. (Socio)linguists, psychologists, sociologists, anthropologists and other academics interested in educational research also sought the best approaches and methods to learn a foreign language (see an overview of the main SLA theories, methods & approaches in, for example, Richard & Rogers, 1986; Lightbown & Spada, 1999; Larsen-Freeman, 2000; Moore, 2016). At the end of the century, we entered the so-called postmethod era that empowered teachers to create coherent alternatives to the existing methods (Kumaravadivelu, 1994) by systematically conducting actions such as to

> "observe their teaching, interpret their classroom events, evaluate their outcomes, identify problems, find solutions, and try them out to see once again what works and what doesn't. In other words, they have to become strategic thinkers as well as strategic practitioners. As strategic thinkers, they need to reflect on the specific needs, wants, situations, and processes of learning and teaching. As strategic practitioners, they need to develop knowledge and skills necessary to self-observe, self-analyse, and self-evaluate their own teaching acts." (Kumaravadivelu, 2003:2).

No new language learning theory, approach or method has emerged during the 21st century. Yet teachers have had to test and adapt existing theories to the peculiarities of their teaching contexts. Consequently, they have learnt to envision their own approach to foreign language teaching and to develop their personal method. While doing so, they also had to be attentive to the numerous technological advancements in our global and wired society. This means that they constantly need to be eager to (a) experiment with new digital tools and resources, (b) open their classrooms to other realities and learning environments, (c) test new teaching strategies/modes and (d) learn to cooperate and (tele)collaborate with other teachers (Sandler & Dooly, 2016).

The first five chapters in this section constitute examples of the type of innovations teachers today incorporate in their classrooms to maximize learning

opportunities. The last chapter is a reminder of how necessary it is to cultivate teachers' emotions and welfare. All six chapters have been written by in-service teachers with ample experience in teaching young children English and are meant to encourage other teachers to incorporate in their classrooms the learner-centred resources and methodologies they present. In the first chapter, ***Coding toys while learning English: Programming with very young learners***, Maria Mont and Nathaly González-Acevedo suggest practical activities teachers can put at play in their classrooms if they opt to use Bee-Bots, small robots very young children can use to understand and give commands in English. In the second chapter, ***Co-teaching***, Maribel Gomáriz reflects upon co-teaching or team teaching by narrating her personal experience as a teacher who works together with a colleague to plan, implement and assess classroom projects. The author does not only highlight the advantages of this methodological proposal but also examines the challenges co-teachers need to face. In the third chapter, ***Flipped classrooms***, Esther Serramià & Carol Barriuso describe this instructional strategy that consists in practising communicative skills or delivering grammar contents online, often outside the classrooms. They provide teachers with pieces of advice on how to plan and assess learning in flipped classrooms. Their proposals are illustrated with real examples of tasks and projects conducted in their lessons. In the fourth chapter, ***Classroom management***, Esther Serramià describes her personal journey of development as a teacher to inspire us on how to set up our classrooms to create a nourishing learning environment and on how to organise teaching and establish routines as meaningful opportunities for students to use the target language. In the fifth chapter, ***Bringing real-life English into your classroom***, Carol Barriuso aims at persuading teachers to take part in European projects as a tool to create real contexts for language use. She presents two initiatives promoted by the European Commission, namely *Erasmus*+ and *eTwinning*, instructs teachers on how to get involved and offers them practical knowledge about what they can do and cannot do as project participants. Finally, in the last chapter, ***A recipe for becoming a supportive teacher***, Xavier Núñez uses a cooking metaphor to give teachers ideas on how to take care of their emotional wellbeing. Interesting enough, the tips he suggests can also be used by teachers to care for their students and create a supportive learning environment for them.

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