



**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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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 21<sup>st</sup> century educator?



**JOINT EFFORTS FOR INNOVATION:  
WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING IN  
THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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

First published in 2019 by Paragon Publishing

© 2019 by Editors (collective work)

© 2019 by Authors (individual work)

All rights reserved; no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written consent of the publisher or a licence permitting copying in the UK issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency Ltd. [www.cla.co.uk](http://www.cla.co.uk)

ISBN 978-1-78222-680-2

DOI <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3064130>

Generalitat de Catalunya. Agència de Gestió d'Ajuts Universitaris i de Recerca. Project title: Preparing future English teachers with digital teaching competences and the know-how for application to practice: A collaborative task between university teachers, school tutors and pre-service teachers. Grant reference number: 2015 ARMIF 00010.

Front cover photo: Maria Mont

All photographs in this book, except for the ones on pages 79, 100, 104, whose source is documented in the text, are owned by the authors of the chapters in which they are published and/or by the state schools where they work. Pictures with children are published with the consent of parents.

Book design, layout and production management by Into Print

[www.intoprint.net](http://www.intoprint.net)

+44 (0)1604 832149

## **A recipe for becoming a supportive teacher**

Xavier Núñez i Morera  
*Escola Samuntada (Sabadell)*

Teaching can be a rather solitary and demanding activity. Engaging students in the classroom activities and helping them take control over their learning is not an easy task. Active learners require empowered teachers, that is, educators who put them at the centre of learning, help them fulfil their personal potential and create a cooperative and supportive environment for learning to take place. “Empowerment is closely related to self-efficacy, among other factors. Self-efficacy, similarly to the concept of agency, is the belief that one controls one’s life and that one can make positive changes in one’s surrounding environment” (Boom, 2015:1). Consequently, empowerment transcends the classroom walls. As teachers, our attitudes in our professional world as well as in our personal lives can have an impact on what occurs in the classroom. In this regard, Goleman (1998:275) gives us the following piece of advice: “if your emotional abilities aren’t in hand, if you don’t have self-awareness, if you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can’t have empathy and have effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far.”

In order to help our students develop and grow as learners and as individuals, we, teachers, must first learn to take care of ourselves. In this chapter, we will reflect upon the self-care and self-nurture actions we can adopt to learn to nourish ourselves every day. We will metaphorically present them in the form of a recipe that requires the right mixture of all the ingredients. It is our hope that those teachers who carefully follow the directions of the preparation method we suggest will be able to develop their emotional intelligence and become more supportive educators. Our recipe can be read many times, as each attempt will offer a new reading and new opportunities to grow and become a teacher who touches their students’ lives.

### **Our recipe**

We suggest that you allow yourself spare time on a daily basis to prepare this recipe and to assess your progress in the process of learning to take better care of your mind, soul and body. Do not worry about when you will find all the necessary ingredients, that is not what matters. Just take as much time as you need to make sure you will not forget to collect them all.

## Ingredients List

200 gr Respect	1 tbsp.	Positive beliefs about diversity
150 gr Love	1 tbsp.	Learning environment ideas
150 gr Effort	1/2 cup	Naturalist and humanistic knowledge
100 gr Kindness		Freshly ground of critical thinking skills
100 gr Visual arts & performance		
100 gr Body consciousness		
100 gr Curiosity		

## Preparation Method

1. Whisk together kindness, love and effort in a bowl.
2. Stir together respect and curiosity in a cup.
3. Beat together the mixture in the bowl and the appropriate dose of visual arts and performance with an electric mixer for about 3 minutes, until the mixture reaches consistency.
4. Add body consciousness until well combined.
5. Mix the resulting dough together with naturalist and humanistic knowledge alternately in batches at low speed until smooth.
6. Add the mixture in the cup.
7. Transfer to an oven proof casserole and bake it for 15 to 17 minutes.
8. When ready, let it chill before decorating it with ideas from the immediate learning environment and a good dose of positive feelings about diversity.
9. Sprinkle a pinch of critical thinking on it and enjoy the experience!

## **Tips to find all the ingredients**

### ***Kindness***

In your daily routine there may be times when you feel you are not doing the right things not only for you but even for others. When that occurs, stop torturing yourself. Be kind to you. Silence your mind and try to visualize the situation-problem from a bird's eye view to find the right solution. It is in you. When you have it, try to write it down or draw it as soon as possible. If you have problems in seeing the solution, focus on a sound or an image instead —they will probably trigger the positive thought that will help you move ahead.

### ***Love***

Where can you find this ingredient? Every day try to find a moment to recall a good memory and rejoice in it. Draw it, write it down in your personal diary or register it in one of your electronic devices. If you like socialization, share a conversation about that memory with a friend, either face-to-face or online. Do not be lazy or think you are too busy to spare your time on past events. Good memories are nurturing! They help you look back on what you have just done and focus on some positive experience. In the end, you will feel somehow all days are lovely days.

### ***Effort***

Every morning, when you wake up, try to envisage a purpose for the day. Try, for example, to complete this sentence “Today I’ll put my effort on...” If at first you find it too difficult, fix a frequency on your calendar (every other day, twice a week, etc.) in order to establish this routine. To attain your set purpose, share it with others, comment in a conversation what your purpose of the day is. Look around in search for clues on how to fulfil it. The universe is like a treasure map you need to learn to read! Feel your corporeality and let it inspire you. Acknowledge your progress, too.

### ***Respect***

Try to recognize and accept others (your students and their relatives, your friends, your partners, etc.) without making judgments. It is a difficult task because our brain is used to judging others and to create one's reality based on assumptions, fake opinions and rumours built from prejudice. Do not judge others, do not judge yourself. Learn self-respect and to respect those who are around you.

### ***Curiosity***

Connect with your origin. Build up your family tree and know about your ancestors. Invite other family members to do this research with you, to know more about your origins. Investigate your past to understand your present.

### ***Visual art and performance***

Your clothes, your hairstyle, the colours you sport are clues to express yourself with creativity, but also hints others can use to know how you feel on a particular day. Re-think your appearance day by day. Use your body to express yourself and to present to others.

### ***Body consciousness***

*Mens sana in corpore sano.* To cultivate yourself prepare your body by doing physical exercises before or after school time. Move consciously, feel your body and treat it as it deserves, not just as a mere capsule to store your brain.

### ***Naturalist and humanistic knowledge***

Everyday a learning journey, an opportunity to gain knowledge and grow. Observe and be attentive to what occurs around you, to what you see and listen. Stay connected and try to make the most out of your time. Make George Bernard Shaw's words your motto: "Don't wait for the right opportunity: create it."

### ***Ideas from the immediate learning environment***

Your culture and the cultures of those around you, the diverse physical locations in which you move, the various communicative events you take part in, etc. constitute rich learning environments that provide a great variety of sources of inspiration and opportunities for gaining knowledge. Never underestimate your immediate surrounding.

### ***Positive feelings about diversity***

Love the diversity in your community. Use gender-neutral language when appropriate. Give others a voice without silencing your voice. Let others recognise in you and recognise that the other person is you.

### ***Critical thinking skills***

Solving problems, formulating hypothesis, making guesses, taking decisions or inferencing, among others, are examples of reasoned, purposeful and goal-directed thinking, also called critical thinking (Halpern, 2014). Taking responsibility



for your thinking has a potential impact on your personal growth and success, accept the challenge.

### **Checking your progress**

Self-knowledge is the first step to making meaningful changes in your life. You cannot know yourself if you do not observe what you do. We should all develop the habit to monitor our actions on a regular basis. The chart in Table 1 below can be a useful instrument to do so. In the first column, we can write down the daily activities we conduct when we want to invest our time on doing things we enjoy. At the end of the day, we can recall what we did and reflect upon whether we collected all the ingredients we need to nurture our body, soul and mind. By observing which items we tick and which ones we do not tick, we can become aware of our strengths and weaknesses. Knowing ourselves better allows us to reflect upon which changes are necessary in our lives and which attitudes we need to maintain. Acknowledging what we do and what we can improve is undoubtedly an empowering tool we should make use of.

### **Concluding remarks**

In this article we have subscribed to the premise that the more teachers nurture their needs through self-care, the more supportive they can be for their students. People who know how to take care of themselves are undoubtedly capable of taking care of others. We have used the metaphor of elaborating a recipe as an excuse to reflect upon how we can develop a self-care and self-nurturing plan. We have also presented a tool to reflect upon how we develop such plan (see annex 1). If we are able to complete it, we will feel empowered and will be able to replicate it with our students.

### **Acknowledgments**

I would like to express my gratitude to

The work of Daniel Goleman, as it opened my mind to Emotional Intelligence during my university years.

Artigal's materials for scaffolding my first days as a teacher.

Xaro Mas, a community of teachers, who opened a new door to me to reflect upon what teaching entails for my students, families, friends, boyfriend, fellow citizens and activists.

The teaching community from Escola Samuntada (Sabadell) for accompanying me in my personal growth.

Lola Espasa, Pau Prat and the members of the theatre company *Contes de prop* for letting me be myself during all the creative moments we construct together.

My special thanks to Alison Smith who proof-read the first version of this text and gave me sound pieces of advice on how to improve it.

## **Bibliography**

Broom, Catherine (2015). Empowering students: Pedagogy that benefits educators and learners. *Citizenship, Social and Economics Education*, 14(2): 79-86. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1177/2047173415597142>

Goleman, David P. (1998). *Working with emotional intelligence*. New York: Bantam Books.

Halpern, Diane F. (2014). *Thought and knowledge: An introduction to critical thinking* (5th ed.). New York: Psychology Press.

**Annex 1. Self-evaluation grid to keep track of the type of self-nurturing actions we take**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

	I nurture my ....										
	Critical thinking skills	Positive feelings about diversity	Ideas from the immediate learning environment	Naturalist & humanistic knowledge	Body consciousness	Visual art and performance	Curiosity	Respect	Effort	Love	Kindness
DAILY ACTIVITIES											
When I register and reread my thoughts											
When I explain/listen to myself or others...											
When I assist others during a voluntary (artistic/activist) event											
When I practice some body exercise											
When I consider diversity											
When I read about the past											
.....											