

ELT Research and Teacher- Research: What, Why and How?

ow.ly/Fs5g4

Richard Smith, University of Warwick

Plan

I. Background: ELT, Applied Linguistics, and research

II. 'ELT research'

III. Teacher-research

I. Background: ELT, Applied Linguistics, and research

Roots of ELT

- 1946 – *English Language Teaching* → *ELT Journal*
- *Bulletin of the Institute for Research in English Teaching* (1923-41): Harold Palmer, A.S. Hornby
- *The Phonetic Teacher* (est. 1886): Paul Passy

Early Applied Linguistics

- 1948+ Michigan
- 1957+ Edinburgh – Pit Corder / *Edinburgh Course*
- Linguistics Applied vs. Applied Linguistics (Widdowson 1979, 1980)

70s, 80s – heyday of AL–ELT relationship?

- CLT as main achievement of UK AL–ELT alliance?
- brokered by British Council
- why AL (not LA) / why CLT? Because of underlying ELT tradition of experience theorized → problem-orientation of AL as opposed to LA?

90s / 00s – Problems in AL – ELT relationship?

- CLT as ‘inappropriate methodology’
- Broadening of AL → ELT sidelined?
- Divorce of theory/research (e.g. SLA) from practice → AL not based on or well-related to practitioners’ concerns; inaccessibility of research; practitioner scepticism

The place of research

My main point today:

Research is needed for ELT but it has gone too far from the concerns of / out of the hands of practitioners

There needs to be a re-engagement

Images of research

What do you associate with the word '**research**'?

Images of research



Images of research



Images of research



Definitions of research

Research is ...

‘a process of inquiry consisting of three [...] components: (1) a question, problem, or hypothesis, (2) data, (3) analysis and interpretation of data’ (Nunan 1992)

‘the organized, systematic search for answers to the questions we ask’ (Hatch and Lazaraton 1991: 1)

‘systematic enquiry made public’ (Stenhouse 1975)

Why research?

“Research-based knowledge provides a principled basis for understanding language teaching and learning, and making decisions about policies, plans, and actions.

Research has the potential to help English language teaching professionals improve the processes, outcomes and conditions for language teaching, learning and assessment.”

(www.tesol.org)

“[Research] also can help the profession address urgent social and political issues around the world, improve the materials used for second language teaching in schools, institutions and workplaces, as well as clarify debates and debunk myths regarding second language acquisition.

A strong commitment to research as a means of improving professional knowledge is vital to the field of teaching of English to speakers of other languages.”

(www.tesol.org)

Potential benefits for teachers of engaging *with* research

- allows teachers to reflect on and review their teaching
- keeps teachers fresh
- allows teachers to question assumptions about language learning/teaching
- helps teachers understand the reasons for their practices
- makes teachers more informed practitioners

(Bullock 2012)

Barriers to engaging with research

- sheer volume is daunting
- ambiguous results
- often too much jargon and statistics - difficult to understand
- too theoretical and unhelpful or irrelevant
- researchers not writing for practitioners
- research which imposes models on teaching
- subscriptions and costs

(Bullock 2012)

Antecedents

- Henry Sweet (forerunner of AL) on the need for ‘principles’ (vs 19th century ‘patented methods’) - 1899
- Harold Palmer on the need for an eclectic ‘basis for methods’ (1917) and his practice developing ‘appropriate methodology’ in Japan (1922—36) – *not* ‘Linguistics Applied’!

II. ELT Research

Research which is *relevant* and
accessible to ELT practitioners

www.teachingenglish.org.uk/elt-research



Teaching**English**

**Directory of UK ELT Research
2005–08**

Compiled by Shelagh Rixon
and Richard Smith

The project and its products

Three phases of data collection / three books:

➤ 2005-08 (data collected in 1st half of 2009)

R.Smith, S. Rixon, S. Choi, D. Hunter

➤ 2009-10 (data collected in 1st half of 2011)

R.Smith, S.Choi, S.Reid, G.Sky, D.Hunter

➤ 2011-12 (data collected in 1st half of 2013)

R.Smith, S.Choi, I. Liggins, G. Sky

One searchable online database (2005-12) on British Council's TeachingEnglish website:

<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/elt-research>

Definitions

‘ELT research’ =

“Any research whose data and/or findings relate directly to the teaching, learning or assessment of English as a Foreign, Second or Additional Language in the UK or any other context.”

Definitions

‘UK research’ =

“Research undertaken by a current member of staff or associate of an educational institution with a base in the UK: the actual research may have taken place anywhere in the world, not necessarily in the UK.”

Types of item included in the *Directory*

- journal articles
- chapters in edited books
- papers in conference proceedings
- authored books
- 'unpublished' but electronically accessible items
- doctoral theses
- externally funded research projects

Institutional bases of UK ELT research

2005-12: over 2,500 entries (from around 70 contributing 'units')

9 units account for over half of total entries

Institutional bases of UK ELT

TeachingEnglish

Contributing Institutions

The following institutions all contributed to the Directory of UK ELT Research:

Aston University (School of Languages and Social Sciences)

www.aston.ac.uk/lss

Bangor University (School of Linguistics and English Language)

www.bangor.ac.uk/linguistics

Birkbeck College, University of London (Department of Applied Linguistics and Communication)

<http://www.bbk.ac.uk/linguistics>

Canterbury Christ Church University (Department of English and Language Studies)

<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/arts-humanities/english-language-studies/>

Cardiff University (School of English, Communication and Philosophy)

www.cardiff.ac.uk/encap

Coventry University

www.coventry.ac.uk/elphe



Is ELT research
accessible enough – to
ELT practitioners?



Directory of UK ELT Research 2005-10

The British Council Directory of UK ELT Research has been compiled by a team led by Dr Richard Smith at the University of Warwick over two phases of data collection (for 2005-08 research and 2009-10 research). The Directory database now comprises over 1,750 entries, from 66 contributing departments or institutions.

[About the project](#)[Access the database](#)

Download the 2005-08 Directory



Click on the image to download the 2005-08 Directory in pdf format.

Download the 2009-10 Directory



Click on the image to download the 2009-10 Directory in pdf format.

User Profile

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Cambridge Dictionaries Online

[Look it up!](#)

children

Search Directory

Found 39 results

Sort by: Author Title Type [Year▼]

Search results for *children* [Reset Search]

2010

Arizpe, E. 2010. 'Visual journeys with immigrant readers: minority voices create words for wordless picturebooks'.

Type of entry: Unpublished

Summary: The range of strategies that draw on newly-arrived/ EAL children's experiences of migration and journey, their home literacy practices and knowledge of popular culture, allow them to engage more fully with the texts, develop their critical literacy skills, and contribute their own words to the collective story.

URL: <http://wowlit.org/wp-content/media/Documents/Arizpe.doc>

Descriptor(s): Classroom interaction, Cultural issues, ESOL/EAL, Methodology, Speaking

Country of research: United Kingdom

Institutional level: primary

Entered by: University of Glasgow (Language and Literature, Faculty of Education)

Hüttner, J. and A. Rieder-Bünemann. 2010. 'A cross-sectional analysis of oral narratives by children with CLIL and non-CLIL instruction' in *Language Use and Language Learning in CLIL Classrooms*.

Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, pp. 61-80.

Type of entry: Book chapter

Book editor(s): Dalton-Puffer, C., T. Nikula and U. Smit.

ISBN: 978 90 272 0523 0

[Search results](#)[Refined search](#)**Directory of UK ELT Research
2005-08**Compiled by Shelagh Rixon
and Richard Smith**Directory of UK ELT Research 2005-08**

There are three ways to use the Directory:

- Browse the database on this 'Search results' page and sort by author, title, type [of publication] and year
- Use the 'Search Directory' facility below and order results by author, title, type and year; or
- Carry out a 'Refined search' using filters (see tab above).

You can consult the websites of the contributing institutions via the link on the right.

 Sort by: [Author](#) [Title](#) [[Type▼](#)] [Year](#)Filters: *Descriptor* is *Writing* [[Clear All Filters](#)]**Help & Support**

- ♦ [How do I create a new account?](#)
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- ♦ [How do I add a blog entry?](#)
- ♦ [How to write a good blog](#)
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- ♦ [Frequently asked questions](#)

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Username: *

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for web addresses

Directory of UK ELT Research 2005–08

Compiled by Shelagh Rixon
and Richard Smith

Directory of UK ELT Research 2005-08

Choose one of the 'Author', 'Type', 'Year', 'Keyword' and 'Entered by' buttons below, and then select from the drop-down menu. Results will be displayed on a new page. If you want to refine the same search further, return to 'Refined search' and select another button.

Show only items where

<input checked="" type="radio"/> Author	is	Rixon, Shelagh	▼
<input type="radio"/> Type		Journal article	▼
<input type="radio"/> Year		2008	▼
<input type="radio"/> Descriptor		Pronunciation	▼
<input type="radio"/> Country of Research		China	▼
<input type="radio"/> Learner's Background		China	▼
<input type="radio"/> Institutional Level		primary	▼
<input type="radio"/> Entered by		Aston University (School of Languages and Social Sciences)	▼

Refine

Research Database – Refined Search

Compiled by Shelagh Rixon
and Richard Smith

Show only items where

- ☒ Author
- ☐ Type
- ☐ Year
- ☐ Descriptor
- ☐ Country of Research
- ☐ Learner's Background
- ☐ Institutional Level
- ☐ Entered by

Leeds Metropolitan University
London Metropolitan University (Faculty of Humanities, Arts, Language
Middlesex University (English Language and Learning Support)
Newcastle University (School of Education, Communication and Language
North West Academy of English
Nottingham Trent University (School of Arts and Humanities)
Queen Mary, University of London (Language and Learning Unit)
Queen's University, Belfast (School of Education)
St. Mary's University College, Twickenham, London (School of Communication
Swansea University (Department of Applied Linguistics)
The Open University (Faculty of Education and Languages)
University College Plymouth St Mark & St John (Department of International
University of Bath (Department of Education)
University of Bedfordshire (Centre for Research in English Language Learning
University of Birmingham (Centre for English Language Studies and Department
University of Birmingham (School of Education)
University of Bristol (Graduate School of Education)
University of Cambridge ESOL Examinations
University of East London (Cass School of Education)
University of Edinburgh (Institute for Applied Language Studies/Office of
University of Edinburgh (School of Education)
University of Exeter (School of Education and Lifelong Learning)
University of Glasgow (Language and Literature, Faculty of Education)
University of Leeds (Department of Linguistics and Phonetics)
University of Leeds (School of Education)
University of Leeds (The Language Centre)
University of Liverpool (School of English)
University of Manchester (School of Education)
University of Northumbria (Department of Humanities, School of Arts and
University of Nottingham (School of Education)
Aston University (School of Languages and Social Sciences)

Research Database – Contributing Institutions

Show only items where

- ☐ Author
- ☒ Type
- ☐ Year
- ☐ Descriptor
- ☐ Country of Research
- ☐ Learner's Background
- ☐ Institutional Level
- ☐ Entered by

is

- Journal article
- Book chapter
- Doctoral thesis**
- Paper in conference proceedings
- Unpublished
- Authored book
- Externally funded project

Research Database – Output Types

**Directory of UK ELT Research
2005–08**
Compiled by Shelagh Rixon
and Richard Smith

Assessment
Classroom interaction
Cultural issues
Curriculum/syllabus
English language
ESOL/EAL
ESP
Learner autonomy/strategies
Learner cognition
Learning technologies
Listening
Management/Innovation
Materials
Methodology
Pronunciation
Reading
Speaking
Teacher cognition
Teacher education
Writing
Listening

Show only items where

is

- ☐ Author
☐ Type
☐ Year
☒ Descriptor

Research Database - Descriptors

Show only items where

- ☐ Author
- ☐ Type
- ☐ Year
- ☐ Descriptor
- ☐ Country of Research
- ☐ Learner's Background
- ☒ Institutional Level
- ☐ Entered by

Refine

is

Rixon, Shelagh

Doctoral thesis

2007

Listening

India

various

primary

adult

n/a

pre-primary

primary

secondary

tertiary

Research Database – Institutional Levels

from ‘Silence on Europe is deafening’ (*THES* 22/11/12)

“Publishing an article in a journal that only a few co-specialists might ever read is valued far more highly than the ability to help the public understand the challenges of the day. . .

[Many] researchers are focused on the narrow at the expense of the broad, writing in arcane language that places much academic work beyond the reach of the uninitiated. And many are too focused on developing and debating theories to be concerned with how they might be tested in practice. The result: scholars spend most of their time speaking only to themselves.”

(McCormick 2012: 21)



Is research ***relevant***
enough
to ELT practitioners'
concerns?

Topic areas of UK ELT research

Descriptors with 100+ entries (2009-10):

- English language (199)
- Assessment (175)
- Methodology (130)
- Teacher education (119)
- Cultural issues (113)
- Writing (103)

Institutional focus of UK ELT research

no. of entries (2005-10)

tertiary	352
adult	139
secondary	85
primary	71
pre-primary	2

(Smith and Knagg 2012)

Location of UK ELT research / Learners' country of origin

Top 4 for country of research (2005-10):

UK 338, 'various' 130, China 33, Hungary 28

Top 4 for learners' country of origin (2005-10):

'various' 337, China 64, Germany 17, Hungary 17

www.britishcouncil.org/learning-eltrpa-2010-awards.htm



eltra@britishcouncil.org

The aims of ELT Research Partnership scheme

- To facilitate the production of high quality research from the UK relevant to ELT.
- To improve access of ELT policy makers and professionals worldwide to high quality and relevant research from the UK.
- To facilitate and encourage the establishment and maintenance of active research links between ELT professionals and policy makers in the UK and overseas.
- Who may apply?Any person resident in UK with an affiliation to a UK educational institution.

ELT Research Partnership scheme – Areas of special interest

- Learning & teaching of English at younger ages
- ICT and new technologies in ELT
- Teacher education and training
- English language testing and assessment - applications of the CEFR
- English language programme evaluation
- English for development: Social, economic, political aspects of English, education, and language teaching

Criteria for award selection

- The potential impact of the research on ELT practice.
- The relevance of the project and research output to ELT professionals.
- The quality of the research design and the qualifications and experience of researcher(s).
- Funding requested and proportion of funding from other sources.
- Contribution to the aims of the scheme, including international research collaboration where appropriate.

ELTRA Awards

English Language Teaching Research Award Scheme



ELT Research Partnerships 2009

Global survey of primary school teachers – 20+ countries

Best practice in Teacher Development – Philippines

Teaching dyslexic children – Singapore

Selecting computer based materials – Thailand , UAE

Evaluating impact of UK teacher training courses – China

Developing a BC Common European Framework word list – Global





Research papers

ELT Research Papers 12-02

Computers and learner autonomy: trends and issues

Huw Jarvis

The British Council works closely with universities and other research institutions to fund and publish ELT research. The Research Papers series gathers together the outputs of these partnerships and collaborations.

A - Z of content

[A global study of primary English teachers' qualifications, training and career development](#)[Attitudes to English as a language for international development in rural Bangladesh](#)[Computers and learner autonomy: trends and issues](#)[Confucius, constructivism and the impact of continuing professional development on teachers of English in China](#)[Early EFL learning in context – Evidence from a country case study](#)[Global Practices in Teaching English to Young Learners](#)[How to make yourself understood by international students: The role of metaphor in academic tutorials](#)[Learner Autonomy: English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices](#)[Perceptions and Strategies of Learning in English by Singapore Primary School](#)

Most recent

About Research papers



How to make yourself understood by international students: The role of metaphor in academic tutorials

Jeannette Littlemore, Fiona MacArthur, Alan Cienki and Joseph Holloway

In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of international students studying at British universities. This paper reports on a study of oral...

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Members
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Management

The Yahoo! Groups
Product Blog

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Info Settings

Group Information

Members: 410
Category: *Teaching and Research*
Founded: Jul 28, 2006
Language: English

Yahoo! Groups Tips

Did you know...
It's your group. Make it
marvelous. Check out

Home

Activity within 7 days: 2 New Messages

Description [\(Edit\)](#)

Welcome to the Discussion list of ReSIG, the Research Special Interest Group within IATEFL (International Association of Teachers of English as Foreign Language)! You do not need to be a member of IATEFL or the SIG to join this discussion group - membership is open to all.

Nevertheless, we encourage you to visit our website (resig.iatefl.org) and to consider becoming a member of IATEFL and the Research SIG - if you have not already joined us.

Research SIG is a unique forum for the discussion of issues connected with research into ELT, bringing together teachers, teacher-researchers and researchers from around the world. In this active community, members share their experiences of and findings from research, and network face-to-face at regular events and in print through our twice-yearly publication, *ELT Research*, as well as online via this discussion list. For how to join ReSIG see here: <http://resig.weebly.com/join-us.html>

NEWS:

- * a series of online discussions of articles in the journal *Language Teaching* started in this Yahoo! Group in December 2011. For summaries of past discussions see: <http://resig.weebly.com/discussions.html>
- * Our next 2012 one-day workshop will feature Anne Burns on Action Research (Reading, UK - 3 November 2012). See <http://resig.weebly.com/events.html> for further details
- * Check out the new section of our website showcasing Teacher Research Updates - <http://resig.weebly.com/teacher-research.html>
We aim to encourage sharing of experience through presentations in a wide variety of conventional and innovative formats such as video-recorded conference presentations, podcast versions of conference presentations, newsletter articles, more formal reports, and so on

Contact resig@iatefl.org with any questions or comments about Research SIG and its activities

IATEFL Research SIG

Re

So, is research important to you?

Is ELT research needed?

What for?

What could support practitioners further in *reading* research?

What should be researched?

What kinds of research – and what ways of disseminating research – are needed?

Who needs to do the research?

What could support practitioners in *doing* research themselves?

III. Teacher-research

Champion Teachers Project



January 2013



January 2014

INNOVATIONS SERIES

Innovations in
**the continuing professional
development of English language teachers**

Edited by David Hayes

Chapter 5: Teacher-research as continuing professional development: a project with Chilean secondary school teachers (Connelly, Smith & Rebolledo)

An example of teacher-research (1): Andrea Robles – a Chilean Champion Teacher on ‘Wrapping up classes’



Step 1

My Puzzle...

When I end my lessons... Am I doing it right?

I decided to explore:

1. What is 'wrapping up'?
2. What are the characteristics of my wrapping up?
3. How do my students react in that part of the class?

Step 2

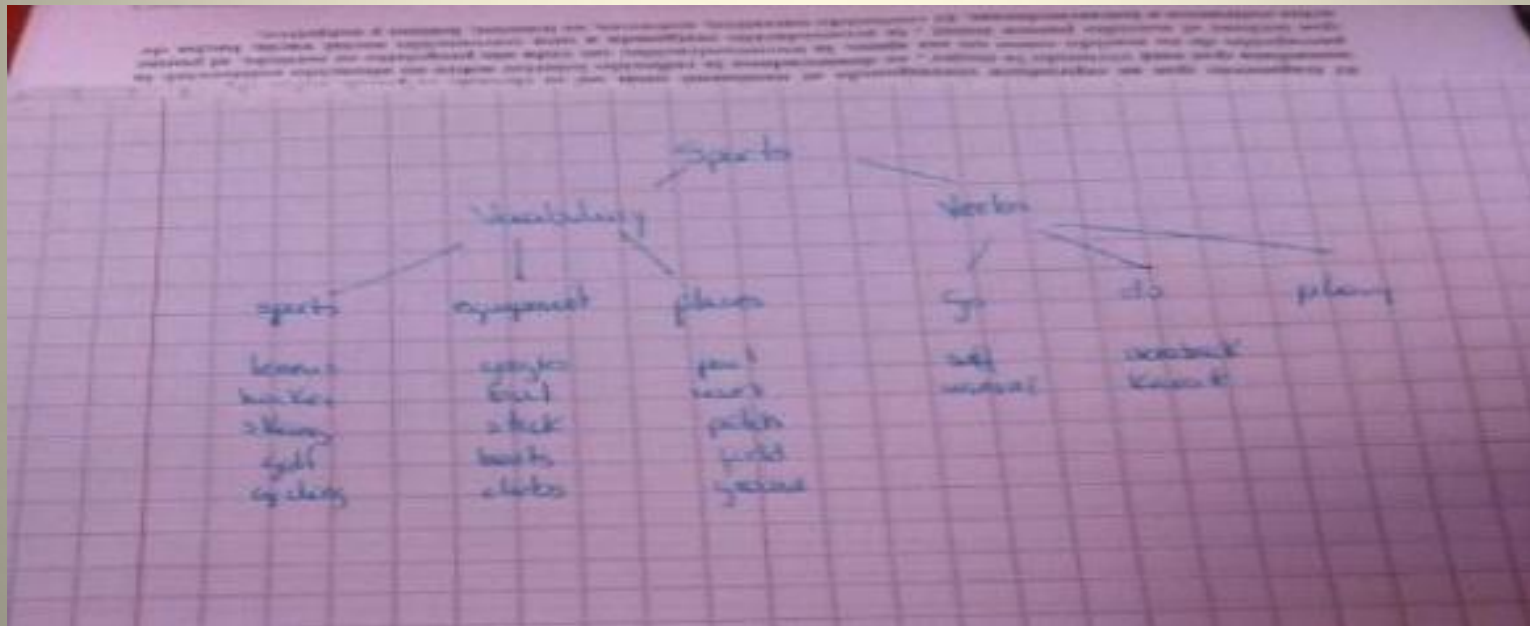
- I asked some colleagues about wrapping up.
- I surfed the web for answers.
- I asked a colleague to observe my class.
- I compared what I was doing with my ideal wrapping up.

What did I find out?

- There was a huge difference between what I was doing and what I thought was right – every time, I repeated the same question at the end of the class, and my students packed their things to leave 😞
- I had to do something about it.

Step 3

- I decided to try a different activity and see what happened.

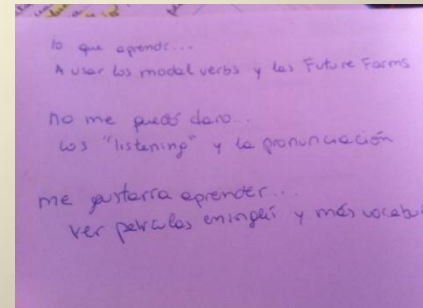


Step 4

- I asked a colleague to observe my class again.

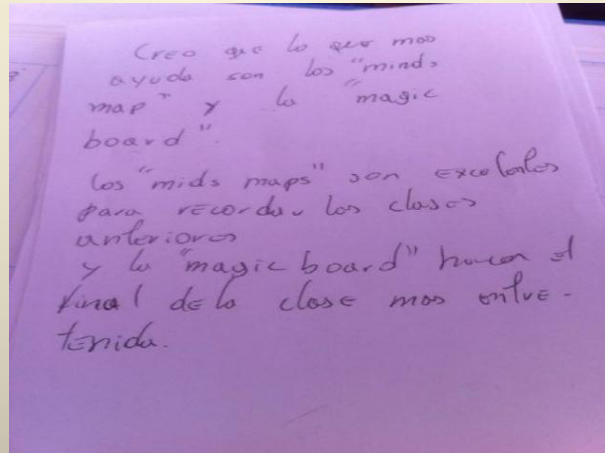
Step 5

I planned various different activities to end the lesson.




Step 6

I asked a colleague to observe my class again and asked students to comment on my activities

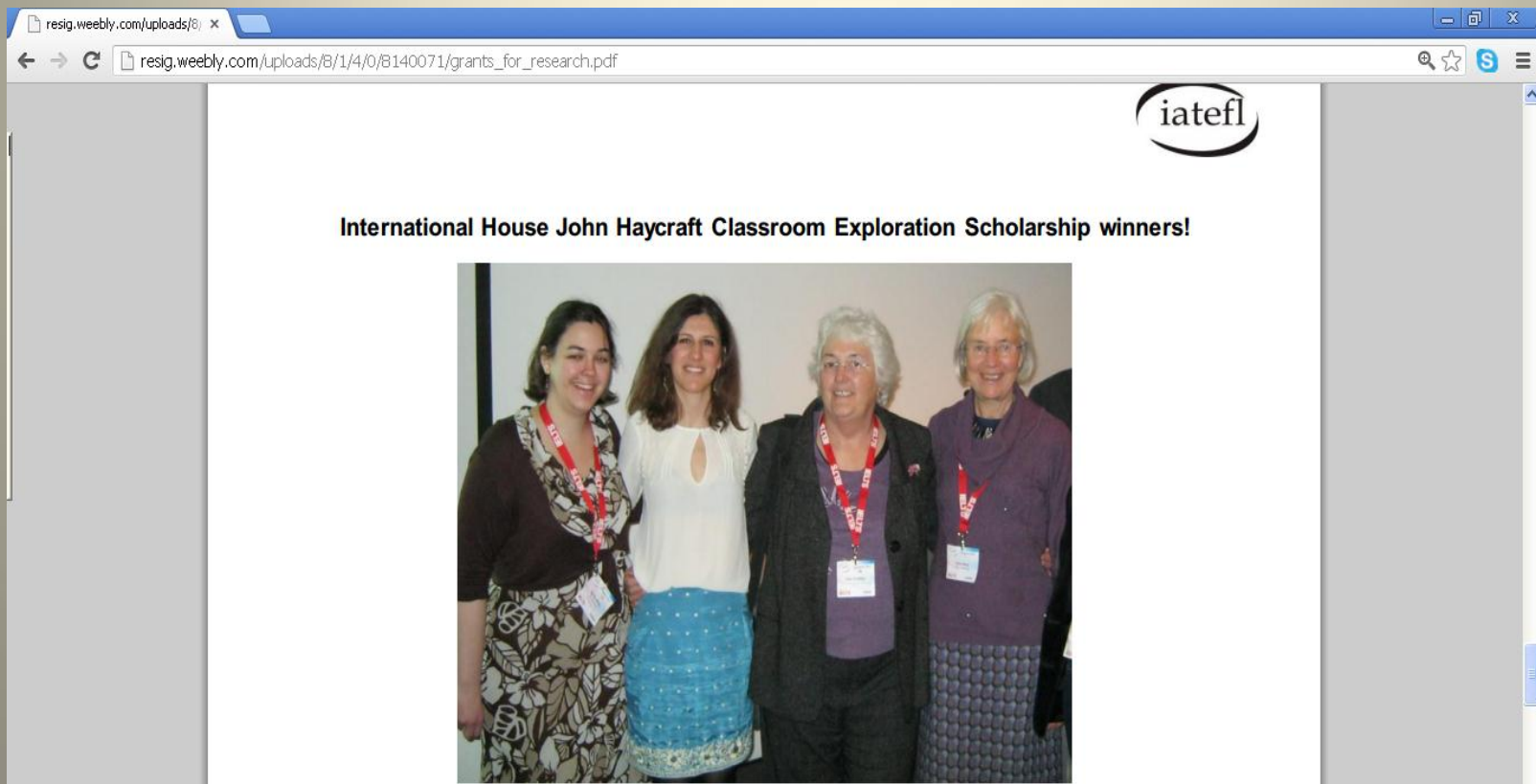


Step 7

- I gave a poster presentation to other teachers – and wrote a written report


- Is this research?
- ‘Questions – Data – Analysis/Interpretation’
- It is ‘systematic inquiry made public’
- It *is* research, by a teacher – for herself and for her learners

An example of teacher-research II: Ana Inés Salvi on 'Increasing student participation'



Why aren't my students as active and engaged in lessons as I would like them to be?

?

A plan for change – engage students in
self-directed project work

Data I gathered

- Video-recorded lessons
- Pictures & posters and products
- Students' daily & weekly reflections
- End-of-course questionnaire & interviews
- Informal talks

‘Wider puzzles’ students wanted to explore:

- *Why do most students prefer living in Leamington Spa to living in or around the university?*
- *Why are we here?*
- *Why are we so sleepy in certain classes?*
- *Why is it hard to come up with a good idea for our written project?*

Finding answers (1): internet / dictionary



Finding answers (2): interviewing classmates

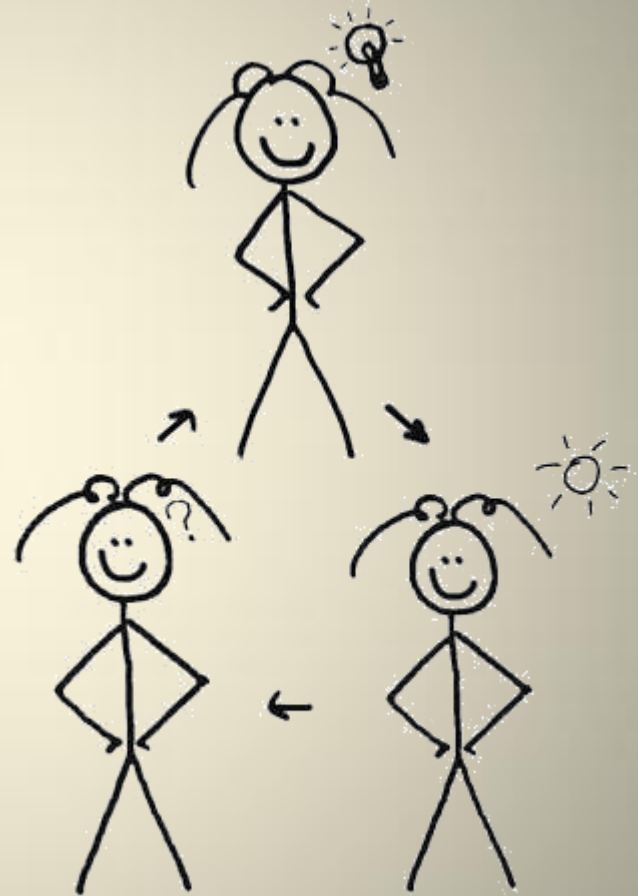
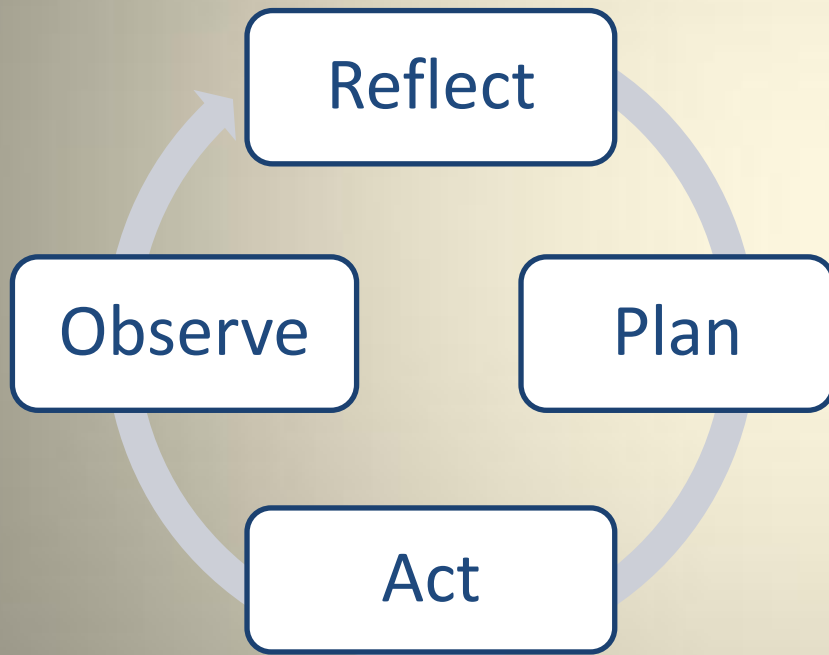


Presenting findings to classmates



- Is this research?
- ‘Questions – Data – Analysis/Interpretation’
- It is ‘systematic inquiry made public’
- It *is* research, by a teacher – for herself and for her learners

Action Research



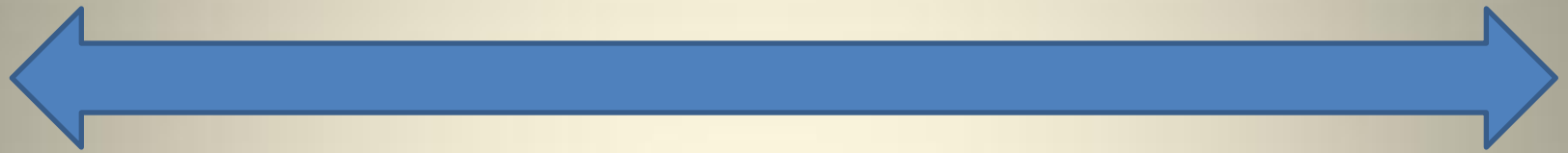
A problem or puzzle drives teacher-research

My students do not understand my instructions in English

I am not sure about the effectiveness of my group work activities



Innovative AR paradigm



EXPLORATORY
PRACTICE

ACTION
RESEARCH



EXPLORATORY ACTION RESEARCH
(EAR)

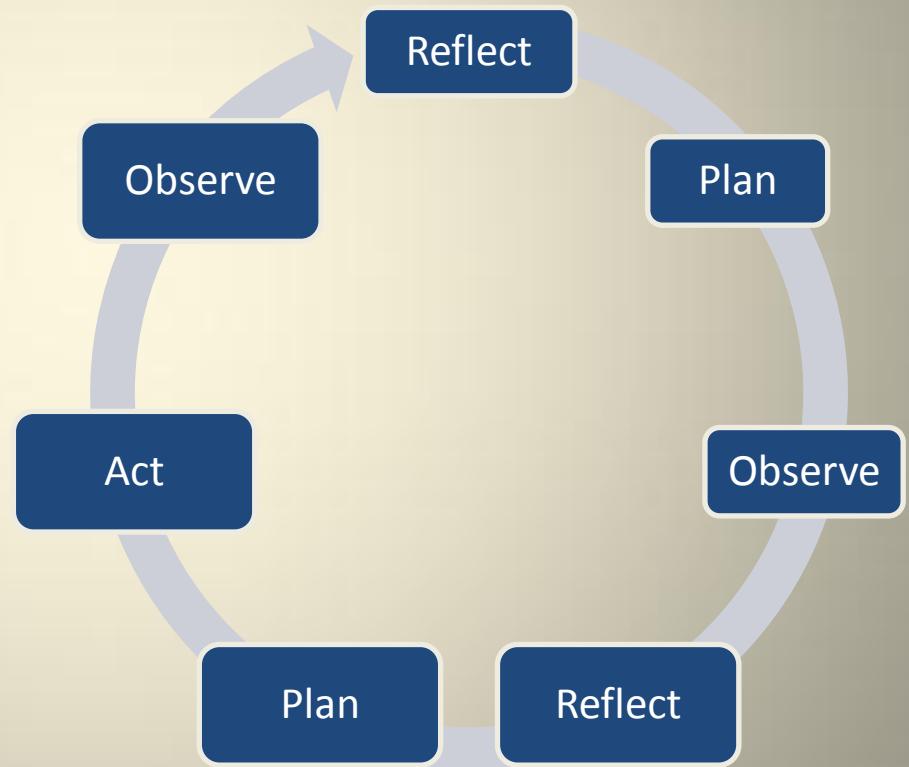
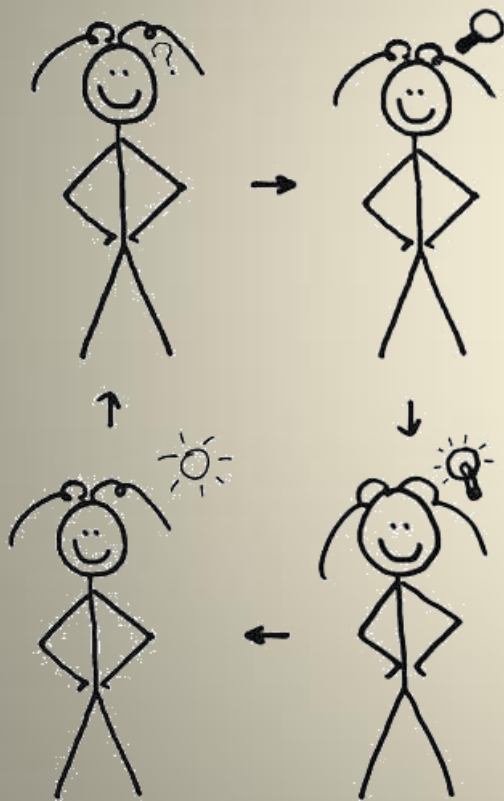
Exploratory Action Research

“[Teachers are] encouraged to engage first in extensive exploration of problematic issues via means which [do] not interfere with their everyday teaching ...

and only later [do they need]] optionally to consider trying to ‘solve’ problems by implementing and evaluating new plans.”

(Smith, Connelly & Rebolledo 2014)

Exploratory Action Research



Exploratory Action Research

I am not sure about the effectiveness of my group work activities



- What is my purpose when using GW?
- What do my students/I do during GW?
- What do my students think about GW activities?
- What happens if I ...?

Exploratory Action Research

My students do not understand my instructions in English



- What do I say/do when I give instructions?
- What do my students do after I give instructions?
- What do my students think about the way I give instructions?
- What happens if I ...?

Think of your own problem / puzzle.

E.g.

- I am unsure about
- My colleagues are / I am unhappy about

Exploratory questions



- What do you mean by X? / What is X? / Why X?
- What do you/your learners do when X occurs?
- What do your learners/colleagues say about X?

Different kinds of data about X

1. Reflective writing by students
2. Your own written reflections and/or notes
3. A critical friend's notes about your lesson (observing X)
4. Recording of a lesson
5. Notes or recording of a focus group interview
6. Notes or recording of an Interview with individuals
7. Responses to a questionnaire

Overall topic

How to improve group activities?

Questions:

1. What do students like/dislike about working in a group?
2. How do students feel while working in a group?
3. What suggestions do students have for improving group activities?

Methods:

1. Suggestion box
2. Focused group discussions with voice recorders

Analysing data:

Categorizing ('coding') or counting?

How do you feel about groupwork?

- I like that we practise [use English]
- I like being relaxed [relaxed]
- I like speaking English [use English]
- I like English conversation with no worry [use English / relaxed]

Questionnaire about group work

1 = strongly agree; 2 = agree; 3 = neither agree nor disagree;
4 = disagree; 5 = strongly disagree

1

2

3

4

5

1 I feel relaxed in group work

2 I like speaking English in group work

3 I worry that my mistakes are not corrected in group work

4 It seems unnatural to speak with friends in English in group work

5 I like pair work better than group work

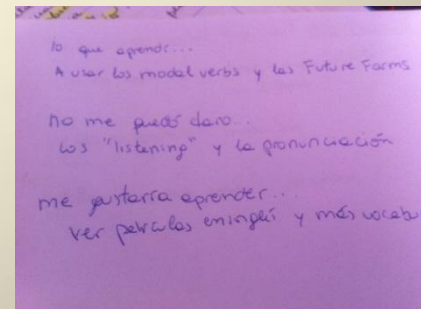
Exploratory Action Research:

Change can occur through ...

- the act of consulting students
- sharing results of exploration with students
- new action -- implementing student suggestions
- new action – implementing other ideas which correspond well with exploration results

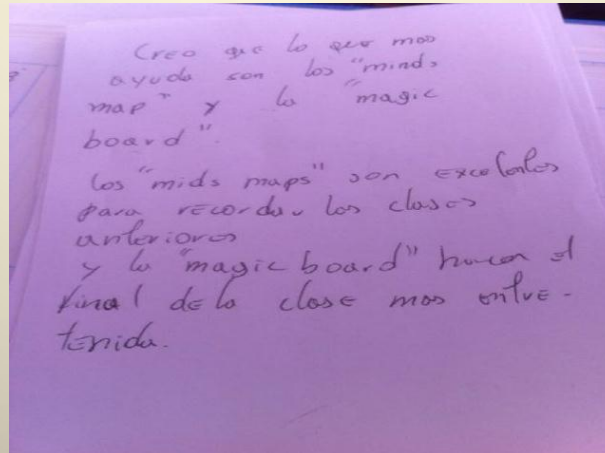
From Andrea's story: Step 5

I planned various different activities to end the lesson.




Step 6

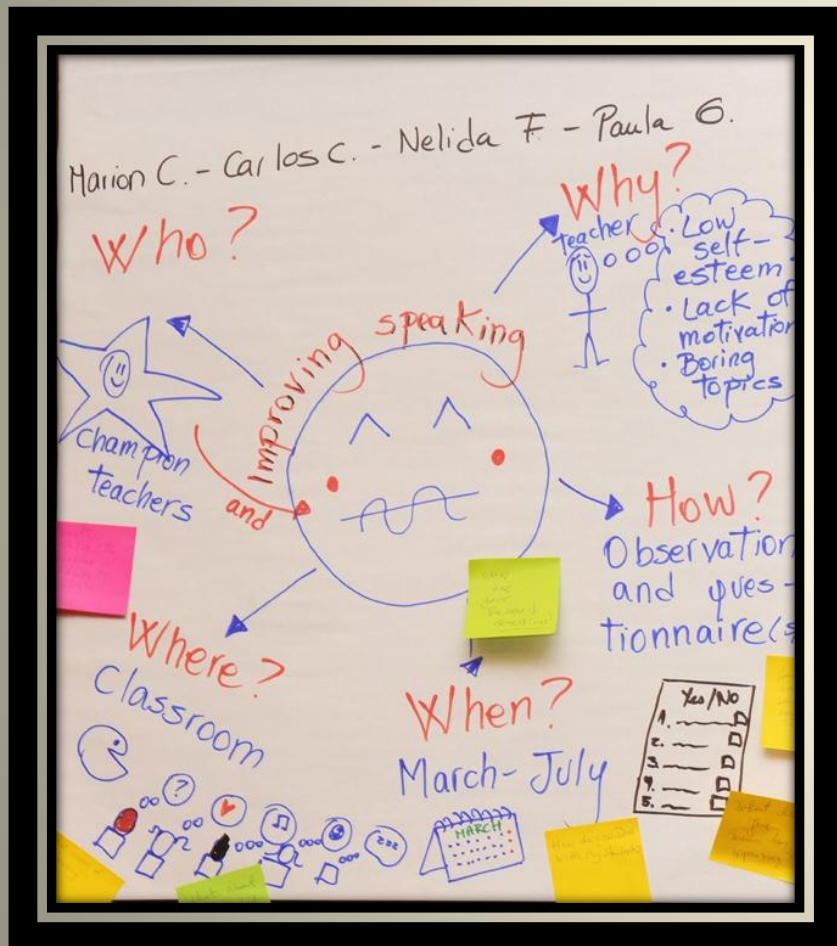
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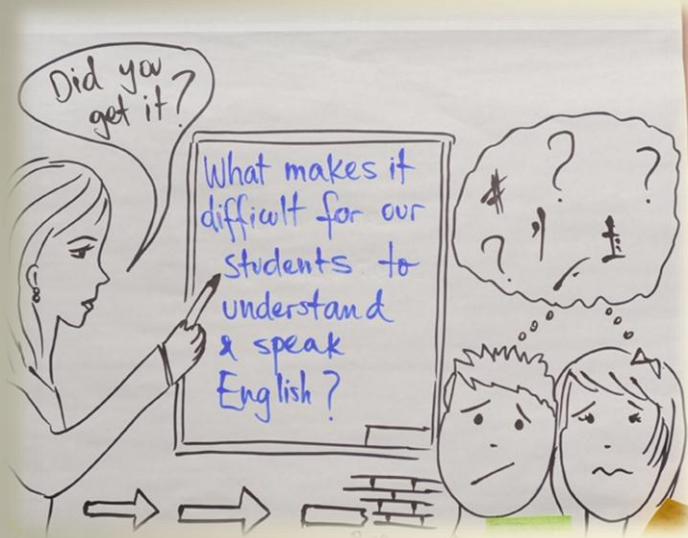
Step 7

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Sharing via posters



Publication process




Teachers' Voices

“Now I know that [...] we must research first in order to change a reality effectively. I also know, with the guidance of my mentor, that the result is not always the objective; the idea is to know my problem and see it from different perspectives before I make a change” (Andrea Robles, reflective writing).

“It’s good to know that some problems’ solutions are just in your hands. ” (Erika Diaz, final report).







Sharing teacher-research

resig.weebly.com/teacher-research-forum.html#/articles/





Welcome to the IATEFL Research SIG Teacher-Research Forum


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 ['An action research project with Greek teenagers at intermediate level'](#) by [Costas Gabrielatos](#) 1 reply
posted by anacik@gmail.com Aug 22, 2012, last reply Aug 22, 2012
2012-08-22 22:24:32

 ['mybrainshark' presentation and blog entry: 'Go online - getting your students to use Internet resources'](#) by [Sandy Millin](#) 0 replies
posted by anacik@gmail.com May 20, 2012

 [Video-recorded presentation: Combining Learner Autonomy and Practitioner Research through Exploratory Practice](#) by [Ana Inés Salvi](#) 0 replies
posted by anacik@gmail.com May 19, 2012

 [Article: Exploratory Practice - Investigating My Own Classroom Pedagogy](#) by [Yasmin Dar](#) 0 replies
posted by anacik@gmail.com May 11, 2012

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IATEFL Research SIG



Welcome

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Teacher Research

more...



Are you: a teacher investigating your own practice; a researcher involved in other kinds of ELT inquiry; a teacher educator engaging others in research? Or not a researcher but curious about what research is and how you can get involved with and in it? *Then the **Research SIG** is the IATEFL special interest group for you!*

[\[Become a member\]](#)

Research SIG is a unique forum for discussion of issues connected with research into ELT, bringing together teachers, teacher-researchers and researchers from around the world. In this active community, members share their experiences of and findings from research, and network face-to-face at regular events, online via our discussion list, and in print through our twice-yearly publication, *ELT Research*. For further information on how to join ReSIG see [here!](#)

NEWS:

- **2013 Liverpool Pre-Conference Event on 'Researching Professional Talk', with Steve Walsh and Steve Mann.** [Details here.](#)
- **Scholarship opportunity** (for ReSIG members only) to attend the PCE. [Details here](#)
- **ELT Research (Research SIG's newsletter) Issue 26 and Issue 27 recently published.**
- Recent Article Discussion: [Review of developments in research into English as a Lingua Franca](#) by Jennifer Jenkins, Alessia Cogo and Martin Dewey, with guest moderators Will Baker, Alessia Cogo and Martin Dewey
- Check out [the resources from our 2012 Glasgow Pre-Conference Event](#) on 'How to combine teaching and researching'.



ELT RESEARCH

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE IATEFL RESEARCH SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP



Spring 2012 Issue 26

01 Richard Smith - *Message from the coordinator*

Feature Article

02 Simon Borg - *Doing quality research*

Roundtable Discussion Report

05 Richard Smith with John Knagg - *The state of ELT research in the UK (Part I)*

Practitioner Research

08 Yasmin Dar - *Exploratory practice: Investigating my own classroom pedagogy*

MA Dissertation Research

11 Shi Xuanzhi - *An investigation of teachers' perceptions of implementing cooperative learning among East Asian learners*

2011 IATEFL Conference, Brighton, ReSIG Day Reports

15 Tim Moore - *Teacher personas: Understanding your own context*

Practitioner Research

Edited by Yasmin Dar, Paula Rebolledo and Ana Inés Salvi

In this new regular feature or 'space' in the newsletter we invite teachers, academics and postgraduate students alike to get involved in research into their own practice and to share their experiences, reflections and views on research they have done in their own classrooms. We believe that by doing so, apart from developing our own practice, we will be contributing to the development of a field within English Language Teaching that is still relatively new and needs to be boosted. We look forward to welcoming your contributions. Since this is the first in a new series for which together we'll be responsible, we begin by sharing a few of the ideas we three have shared together so far about advantages of practitioner research, and what we can do to encourage it, and the reporting of it:

There are different kinds of research. There is research done by a person who is investigating somebody else's classroom; there is research which is carried out by teachers themselves in their own classrooms; and there is research which is carried out by both the teacher and his/ her students (the kind of research advocated by Dick Allwright in his most recent publications). The last of these is the kind of research I have recently been involved in because I think both teacher and students have to benefit from this experience. Embarking on this kind of research has allowed me to get to know my students better, develop a closer relationship with them, and get to know what they need and enjoy the most; and to be much more in control of my teaching than ever before, which was satisfying for me, and beneficial for my students. (Ana Inés Salvi)

Without calling it practitioner research – or 'research' at all – one presenter I saw at the last IATEFL conference actually carried out research which would fit the definition of exploratory practice (though with some features of action research as well). If he and others wrote up such research, then the bottom-up teacher-led research which seems so hard to find actually published, would become accessible through

Teachers are very busy and I imagine, like me, trying to balance work and home life, so to save on preparation time, and to meet the needs of visual and auditory learning styles, perhaps other forms of communication (apart from the newsletter) could be useful for sharing information, for instance, teacher videos and podcasts. (Yasmin Dar)

We'd like to investigate the possible use of other media (e.g. via the Research SIG website) for encouraging oral reports of practitioner research in the future. For this issue, though, Yasmin Dar has agreed to write about her recent experiences with Exploratory Practice. Over to Yasmin ...

Exploratory Practice: Investigating My Own Classroom Pedagogy

Yasmin Dar (University of Leicester)

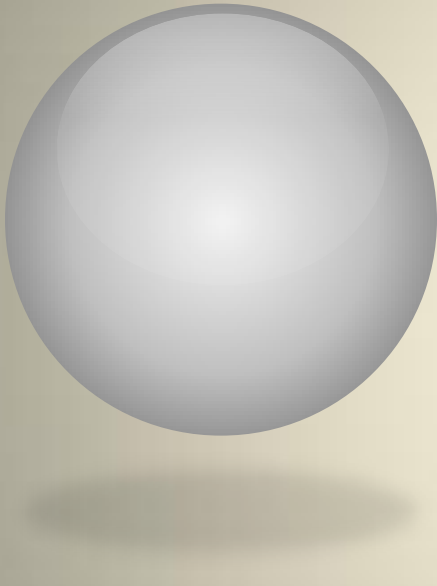
Introduction

The idea of carrying out research that would be directly meaningful to me and my learners really appealed to me when I had to choose from a range of approaches to carry out a research project for my MA dissertation (2009). Luckily for me, my supervisor Simon Gieve introduced me to the EP (Exploratory Practice) way of doing research which I found useful, particularly because it is a holistic way of investigating my classroom pedagogy. The aim of this article is to share with you how I applied the principles of EP and hopefully inspire other language teachers to either try it out for themselves or find out more about Exploratory Practice (Allwright, 2003; Hanks and Allwright, 2009).

What is Exploratory Practice (EP)?

Exploratory practice (Allwright, 2003; Allwright and Hanks, 2009) is an ethical way of doing research that is 'indefinitely sustainable' which promotes the idea of 'on-going' rather than experimental classroom research. For

Conclusions



ELT research is not (should not be) just for the benefit of academics.

It could be beneficial for teachers to engage *with* and *in* ELT research ...

Increasingly, there may be opportunities and support available.

And academics still need to engage much better with teachers!

Better **images** of research?



Better **images** of research?



Better **images** of research?



Better **images** of research?



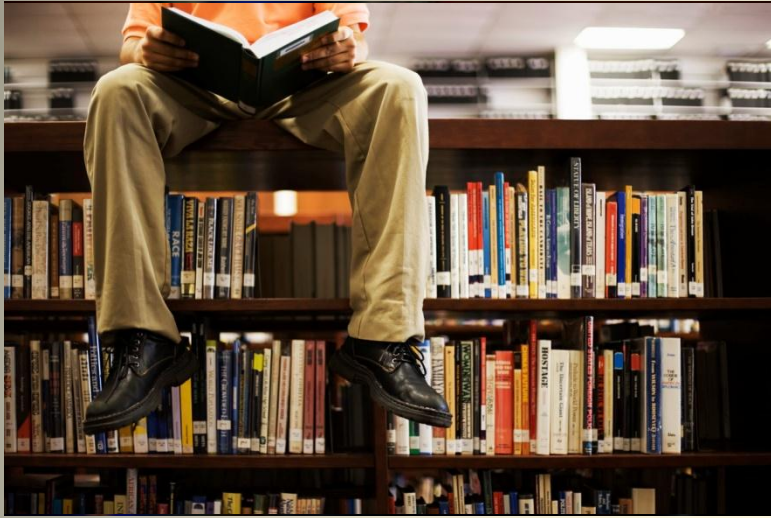
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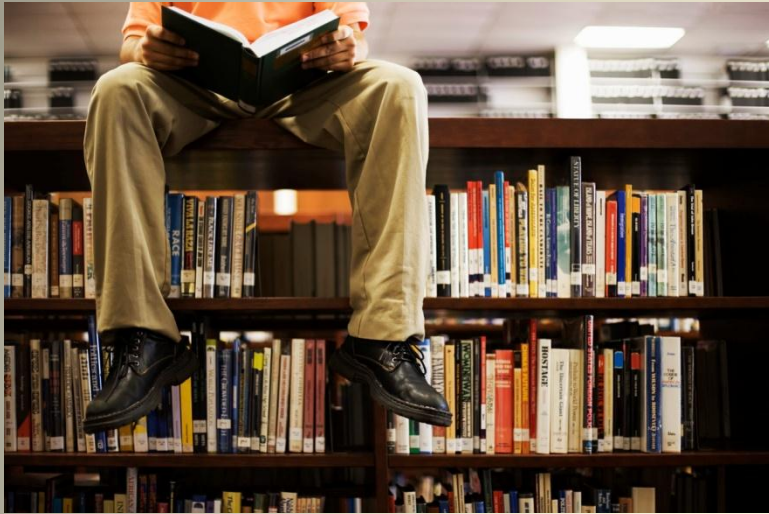
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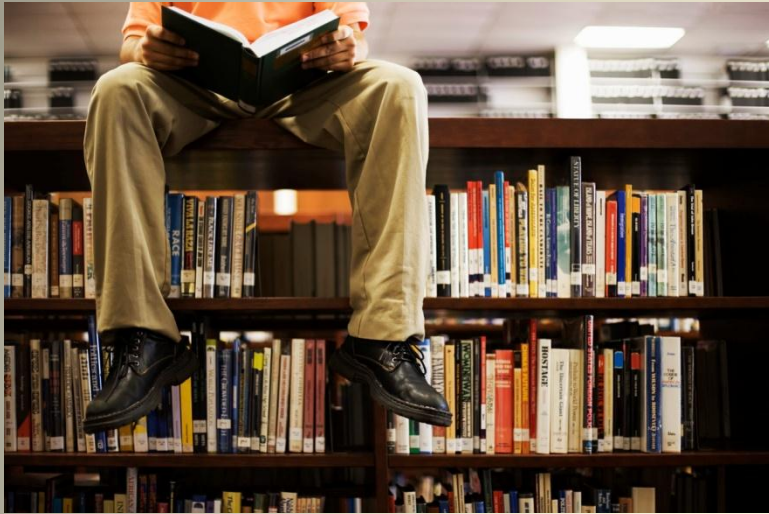
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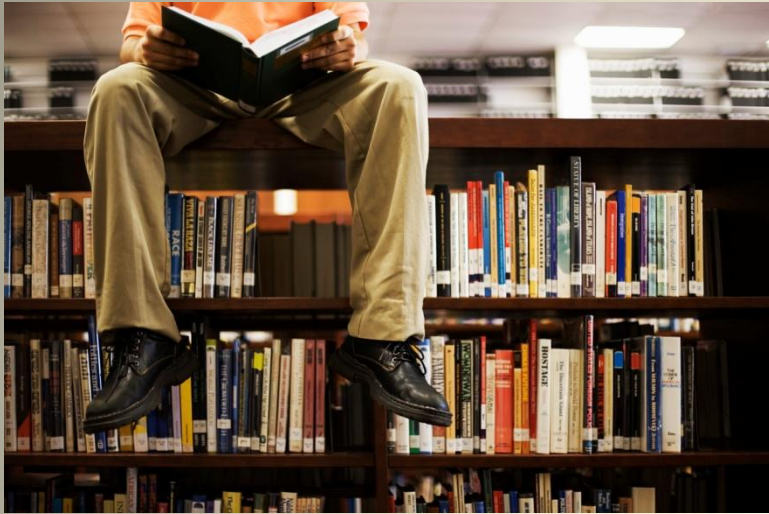
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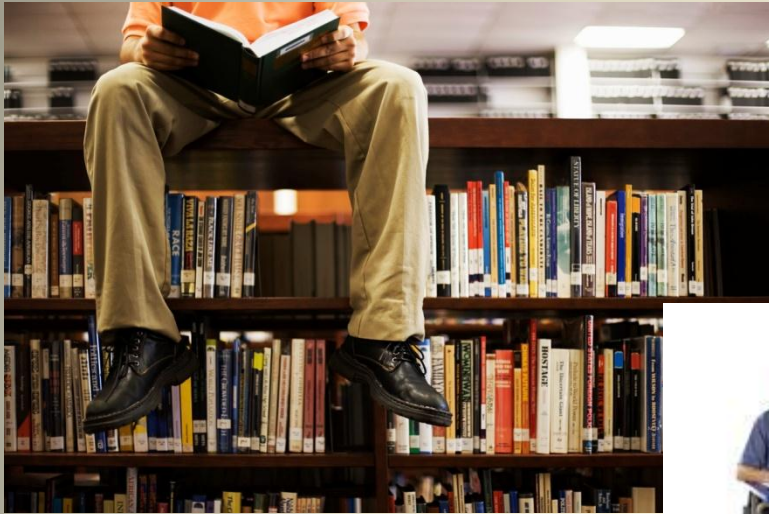
Better **images** of research?



Better **images** of research?



Better **images** of research?





Links to resources: ow.ly/Fs5g4

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References (see also <http://ow.ly/Fs5g4>)

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McCormick, J. 2012. 'Silence on Europe is deafening'. *Times Higher Education* no. 2,077 (22-28 November), p. 21.

Searchable Directory of UK ELT Research database (2005-10):
<http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/elt-research>

IATEFL Research Special Interest Group e-mail discussion list (free to join):
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/resig/>

British Council Research Papers: <http://englishagenda.britishcouncil.org/research-papers>

British Council Milestones in ELT: <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/milestones>

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‘Teacher-Research’ section of IATEFL Research SIG website: <http://resig.weebly.com/teacher-research.html>

Further teacher-research resources:

http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/staff/teaching/smith/action_research