Major Trends in English language teaching: implications for primary and pre-primary digital materials design

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Annual Conference - Better Tools - Better Learning II (Early Learning, Kindergarten, Primary)
25 – 26 September 2014
Overview

1. New generation learning research project 2010-13
2. ELT in 2014
3. Experience from YDP
4. Recommendations

YDP Core Curriculum for English: Year 6: Lesson 39
http://tinyurl.com/lpbeasd

Weapons of Mass Distraction
Hot topics across borders in ELT

https://iateflwebcon.eventbrite.co.uk

This event is free to IATEFL members and non members:

**Herbert Puchta** - Taking our learners seriously
**Evan Frendo** - So you want to teach business English?
**Paul Shaw, Katie Quartano and Waleed Nureldeen** - Beyond the borders of just teaching English: using the ELT classroom to raise social awareness
**Chia Suan Chong** - What do English language teachers do all day?
**Marisa Constantinides** - How I got here – tales of online professional development
**Marian Delaney** - Challenging Thinking on Challenging Behavior
**Philip Kerr** - Leveraging new technology for learner choice: adaptive solutions
**Naomi Ganin-Epstein** - The Eureka Moment
**Graham Stanley** - Killer bunnies and the quest for the magic carrot
**Barbara Sinclair** - Learner Autonomy: what’s “hot” and what matters?
Window of opportunity

English compulsory in most education systems for 10+ years, part of matriculation exam

But globally poor quality provision/achievement

Increased consumer access to digital + mobile

Potential competitors slow in responding to this opportunity

"UNFORTUNATELY WHEN OUR LAST WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY OPENED UP, WE MISTAKENLY CRAWLED OUT OF IT RATHER THAN INTO IT."

"DOVE COPPERHEAD..."
ELT Coursebooks in 2010

“Publishers treat learners as passive consumers of state curricula.”

• 750m speakers, 1 billion learners, 11 million teachers

• Growth in emerging markets

• Coursebooks account for 90-95% of ELT publisher revenues

• Wide range of stakeholders
“Books = learning for many Students.” Easy to refer to, flick through, a security blanket for Students and Teachers. Doesn't break down or need electricity.”

“We're becoming more technologically advanced and students expect materials in a more flexible and portable format.”

“It helps teachers by giving structure and organisation to lessons. We will always need an established basis for a course, even if we then diversify. Students need a basis to "hang onto" and to revise from, whether it be online or hard copy or limited to other resources.”

“The coursebooks will all be digital, conducted on iPads/tablets, but I think the format of coursebooks will be the same. This will save an immense amount of paper and hence trees - a good thing!”
McGrath (2006) research suggests considerable ambivalence towards the coursebook

Chambers (1997) observes school managers often choose coursebooks

“[the] false paradigm of good language learner as a hard-working, analytical learner .. cause[s] many experiential learners to fail.” Tomlinson

Tomlinson (2008) argues too much focus on teaching of linguistic items
“we should all worry about the gap that has opened between the institutions, teachers and learners who have embraced – and are busy astonishing us with – this complex mix of technologies.”

Professor Stephen Heppell

• Regularly updated *granular* content, pick and mix programmes of study.

• Clearer sense of learner progression: testing, tracking, and e-portfolios

• Exploit authentic content on the Internet

• Content that really interests and excites learners (multisensory + cognitive challenge)

• Wider repertoire of interactive routines
Recommendations 2010: technologies

- Multi platform/retrieve track across platforms
  - Open systems
  - Institutional Wifi
  - Easy access and storage
- Hybrid, mixed media
- Tech savvy teachers and institutions
ELT in 2014, what’s changed since 2010?
ELT in 2014

- 1.5 billion learners, 11 million teachers
- Growth in emerging markets
- International ELT market +/- $58bn
- Switch from course books to digital
English in Schools

• “English is in a kind of cradle to grave situation” David Graddol

• More emphasis on assessment and testing

• English medium instruction

• Not enough teachers
Languages in formal education K-16 (Europe)

How much?

- Average of 10 years
- 43% start age 5, 25% age 6, 15% age 9
- 1 hour a week Primary
- 2-3 hours a week Secondary school
- English usually first, often only FL
- In EU 2nd FLs are French, German, Spanish, Russian

Achievement

Desired (CEFR):
- Age 11: A1
- Age 14: A2
- Age 17/18: B2
- University: C1/C2

Reality
EU Average at Age 15 is A2, over 50% of young Europeans in many countries achieve <A1
Outside EU similar or worse.
Not enough teachers

Only 3% of Teachers in Bulgaria under 30 Years – Education Minister

Bulgarian Education Minister Aneliya Klisarova has cautioned that a mere 3% of teachers in the country are below 30 years of age, adding that is important to make the teaching profession attractive for young people.

In a Thursday interview for the Bulgarian National Radio (BNR), Klisarova argued that it was essential to adopt measures to motivate young people to become teachers because a large number of teachers were expected to retire over the next 10 years.
English medium education

English medium instruction via CLIL, Bilingual & Immersion schools

Chart 4: Number of international English speaking primary schools
No. of international primary schools

Source: ISC Research, 2012
Progression & assessment

John Trim recommendations:
A1 – age 11
A2 – Age 14
B1 – Age 16
B2 – Age 17/18
C1 & C2 - HE
Assessing Young Learners

“Assessment of FL learning in young learners is a challenge… it should be closely linked to the nature of the in-class activities. … in the context of the ELLiE study, after four years of FL instruction many of the children across the different countries were at the A1 Level of CEFR. … many studies of FL learning in primary school apply the CEFR criteria, doing so underlies a lack of understanding of how FL learning in the primary school context progresses – slowly and in a piecemeal fashion…”. Victoria Murphy (p42)
Growth of pre-primary

“Parents around the world place great value on English language learning. The children's English language learning market in China is currently estimated at $4.5 billion (USD) in consumer spending, excluding additional public/government spending. This landscape, along with our wealth of experience and resources, allows Disney to fill an important niche in supplementary learning.”

http://goo.gl/mQxbN
Pre-primary language learning

Global variation in provision

Varied access to technology in kindergartens or preschool

Lots of myths about ability of very young children to learn languages

Transition to Primary

Early literacy
Backlash

“Throughout childhood they need active, imaginative, social play in the real world (not sedentary, screen-based entertainment). Real play is unstructured, preferably outdoors, doesn’t need adult control or direction, and seldom costs money – real play happens with whatever’s to hand.”

http://www.suepalmer.co.uk/the_5_finger_excersise.php

“…too much early exposure to screen-based technology makes it more difficult for children to learn to read and write.”

Rest of this blog post highly critical of the use of computers and mobile devices with children up to the age of 9 years.

http://www.suepalmer.co.uk/blog.php
Pre-primary English in Poland

“English is very often taught in almost all kindergartens.

Teaching English starts from the youngest groups, for the limited time of approx. 15 minutes and is systematic.

The teachers themselves prepare the materials, program, games, recordings, illustrations and copies they see useful for the classes.”
Photocopying

“…48 surveyed kindergartens use copied materials, even the ones using one selected book.

Only 2 kindergartens declared that they do not use copied materials – I would suggest to take it with a pinch of salt as the kindergartens notoriously make xerox copies, e.g. of colouring pages for children.”

Nowa Era, Poland
Issues and recommendations 2014

Weapons of Mass Distraction
YDP checklist for mobile learning

✓ Adaptable, flexible

✓ Works on PCs and all mobile devices

✓ Range of engaging activity types

✓ Supports communicative language teaching

✓ Supports assessment and testing

✓ Needs print support material
1: Supporting ubiquitous learning

- **Teachers:** in the classroom, on whiteboards, tablets, PCs as a supplement to any course book, flexible to pick and choose

- **Students:** at school with the teacher, at home – self-study, on PCs, mobile – revise, practise or do homework

- **Parents:** at home, can follow & support their children’s progress
2: Getting the blend right and support teachers

Step by step guide

Printable resources, e.g. worksheets

IWB and/or data projection presentation resources

Homework management support

Assessment, revision & testing tools
3: Technical challenges

- Making mobile-friendly resources
- Creating engaging learning routines
- Redesigning product development processes
- User testing
- Time!
4: Pedagogical challenges

• Creating a common global ELT syllabus for Pre-Primary to Primary to Secondary (and beyond)
  • Finding new angles on the same repertoire of topics and linguistic content
• Supporting progression from primary to secondary
  • Consulting teachers at all stages of development
“But now entire product lines—whole markets—are being created or destroyed overnight. Disrupters can come out of nowhere and instantly be everywhere. Once launched, such disruption is hard to fight. We call these game changers “big-bang disrupters.” They don’t create dilemmas for innovators; they trigger disasters.”

Harvard Business Review
Questions?

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