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**Conference Abstracts**

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Plenary Sessions

***European responses to the challenge of language learning***

Mike Kelly (University of Southampton)

Despite the EU’s long-held objective of creating trilingual citizens, almost half of Europeans claim to be unable to hold a conversation in a second language. Policy makers are concerned about this disappointing performance, and in responding, two interconnected strategies have emerged.

The first is to find alternatives to language learning such as improved translation services, intercultural communication or intercomprehension.

The second is to improve the quality of language learning. This paper will focus on attempts to improve language learning, drawing on the recent policy statements of the EU Commission and recent work by the Council of Europe. It will suggest that the language community needs to find new ways of thinking about its methods, about its aims and objectives, and about its place in education.

***From innovation to normalisation with COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) and MOOCs (Massive Open Online Learning Courses): internationalising the language teacher education curriculum.***

Marina Orsini Jones (Coventry University)

Despite the fact that many innovations, like mobile phones, have become normalised in our daily life, there is evidence that language teachers in the tertiary sector are still not at ease with the idea of embedding technological innovation in their practice. Some language lecturers would also appear to hold strong negative beliefs regarding blended and online learning.

Moreover, many teacher training textbooks (both theoretical and practical) reinforce  language teachers’ scepticism regarding technology and Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), by relegating the subject to a separate chapter, so that the embedding of technology is presented as an ‘add on’, an optional extra.

This talk explores ways in which language teachers can be supported in adopting a holistic and reflective process-oriented approach to the embedding of technology in their practice.

It illustrates how reflecting on blended and online learning ‘in action’, ‘on action’ and ‘for action’ by participating in both a MOOC (Massive Open Online Learning Course) and a COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning) exchange helped some language teachers with reconceptualising their understanding of technology and dispelling their fear and/or scepticism regarding its embedding in their practice.

The talk will conclude with some recommendations on how to support language teachers in their journey of discovery and acquisition of new competencies for the 21st century.

Conference Papers

***Cultures in interaction and the culture of CMC in online intercultural exchange (OIE) using English and French***

Amira Benabdelkader (University of Southampton)

A ‘new’ culture of communication has been introduced through computer-mediated communication (CMC). Nowadays, CMC facilitates collaboration between individuals and partnerships between educational institutions through projects of online intercultural exchanges (OIEs) in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning and ensure the openness to different cultures and languages. This paper looks at how language(s) learners/users navigate with their cultures in the technology-enhanced learning (TEL) environment, its affordances and different channels of communication in order to (co-)construct and negotiate meaning, and most importantly maintain communication. It aims at unfolding the different patterns the speakers create in order to accommodate their communicative purposes with their peers and achieve understanding. It also explores the different machineries that govern the interaction. The corpus presented in this paper, four video-recorded conversations (two English and two French, one hour each), is derived from a Skype OIE including learners of English and/or French over a period of four months. The pairs comprise: L1S of French with L1S of English, and L1S of English with Algerian (L2/LF of French and English). Being analysed thematically and by means of some principles of conversation analysis, the findings reveal that these learners/users exploit TEL space through the audio-visual modes and through practices, such as texting and sending multimodal content, as a response to the communicative needs and purposes especially when describing cultural specific celebrations, in instances of non- or mis-understanding and in cases of linguistic deficiency. Moreover, the speakers show different tendencies with regards to how they shape these intercultural interactions. That is, some of them navigate their cultures, interests and hobbies and could make from this OIE a site for socialisation, co-construction of knowledge and discovery of shared spaces. Others have conceived OIE as a platform to share and negotiate their (intercultural) knowledge and develop their intercultural awareness.

***Treasuring and preserving languages through inclusivity: how MOOCs can help***

Kate Borthwick (University of Southampton)

This presentation will reflect on how MOOCs can support language learning, and the promotion and preservation of languages through their design features. It will consider what we mean by inclusivity in the context of MOOCs, and some of the features of MOOCs which might be thought to be inherently inclusive (for example, their open, free nature and often broad appeal) and of value in supporting language learning. It will present some examples of inclusive design from two of the MOOCs we have created and run at Southampton: English as a Medium of instruction for Academics and Digital Accessibility. It will show how these courses were particularly designed to reach the broadest audiences as possible, and indicate how this might be relevant in language learning contexts. It will consider the challenges of creating inclusive open content and how we might respond to these challenges, to ensure that the benefits for language education – and all-inclusive education - can be realised and expanded into the future.

To treasure languages is to use them – and to find ways to reach and support those who use them.

***Repurposing VR Assets: from Health Sciences to Italian Language Learning***

Billy Brick (Coventry University)

Tiziana Cervi-Wilson (Coventry University)

Alessia Plutino (University of Southampton)

Sean Graham (Coventry University)

Nina Godson (Coventry University)

Kelly Ryan (Coventry University)

Tsvatan Tsnakov (Coventry University)

Recent decline in applications to study languages at UK universities is driving language educators to seek innovative and creative approaches to support multiple skills needed by the new global citizens.

Serious games have the potential to improve the learning experience, by increasing the learners’ motivation and diversifying the content delivery media (Michael & Chen, 2005). In the last decades, educators’ interest in the area of serious games has been increasing steadily and quite few successful pedagogic models for training and professional development have been designed. However, it is evident that issues like the complexity of serious games design and production, costs, time and effort, are all impacting on the production of similar approaches in other disciplines.

Many studies have demonstrated that one possible way to address these issues could be via the adoption of the educational practice of *repurposing*, that is, by changing, adapting and reusing serious games (Protopsaltis et al., 2011). This practice would enhance the possibilities to respond to the needs of a wider learning public and areas of application, without incurring in excessive costs and workload.

Serious games repurposing though, is still in its early stages and there is not a huge amount of work addressing the issue. Protopsaltis, Panzoli, Dunwell, & Freitas (2010) have developed

a theoretical framework for repurposing serious games, whilst a more practical way to simplify serious games repurposing has been provided by the scenario-based games repurposing (Protopsaltis et al., 2010; 2011).

This paper will report on a pilot project, developed from a scenario-based Virtual Reality (VR) resource, which was originally developed by Health Sciences at Coventry University aiming to prepare health care students for home visits by allowing them to experience a semi-linear conversation with a virtual character.

The authors will discuss how the resource was repurposed for Italian language learning and teaching and will analyse the potential uses within the modern language curriculum, including employability skills and year abroad.

Lastly, the paper will outline future developments of a collaborative approach for repurposing the Italian language teaching resource, involving various institutions.

Authors would welcome to hear from colleagues interested to collaborate in other languages.

***Valuing language skills – enabling students to articulate their value in an ever-changing work environment***

Caroline Campbell (University of Leeds)

This presentation will share the findings of an evaluative research project funded by the Leeds Institute of Teaching Excellence. The project objectives were 1) to explore the value of ‘broadening’ within a student’s degree programme in terms of gaining knowledge, skills and attributes and 2) to explore the value of language learning in the context of language modules delivered as part of Institution-Wide Language Provision. Focussing on the data from interviews with employers, it will present employer expectations of graduates.

As language teachers we have a responsibility to make our students aware of the connections between the learning outcomes (assessed and unassessed) of our modules and how this enhances their graduate profile. There is also work to be done to ensure that employers are aware of the broader value of these skills and how they can enhance an organisation. The presentation will consider how to better support students in articulating the knowledge, skills and experience gained in their undergraduate journey through co-, extra- and curricular opportunities. It will identify the less obvious skills developed via language learning and the broader value of this learning beyond linguistic competence, and map this to employer expectations. It will show that students need to focus on developing their personal ‘brand’ based on their knowledge and their social capital, highlighting the skills and attributes often demonstrated by language learners. It will suggest a model of reflection to help students evidence their skills and experience of learning a language as they articulate the breadth of their employability.

***Developing intercultural competence: The Year Abroad in the Oral Class***

Dr Vera Castiglione and Dr Stefania Placenti (University of Bristol)

This paper discusses a blended learning activity designed by the Department of Italian at the University of Bristol in order to develop intercultural competence.

The activity stems from the increasingly pressing need to embed this competence in our programmes so that students can learn how to function in a pluricultural context by using their linguistic skills together with their social and cultural competence. In line with the new CEFR descriptors, this activity wants to increase, in particular, the students’ capacity of “dealing with ‘otherness’ to identify similarities and differences” and “build on known and unknown cultural features, in order to enable communication and collaboration”.

Embedded in the final year Italian oral course, the activity builds on the students’ year abroad experience to focus on the cultural differences encountered.

The paper will report on how these very differences are brought to surface online via the online platform Padlet, which has been used for this project. In Padlet, students make notes about their observations before discussing them in class.

Crucial to the success of the activity is the role of the teachers who act as cultural mediators in class in order to guide interpretation and encourage conceptual analysis of ‘otherness’.

Due to the nature of this activity, the ideas and principles of this paper can be potentially adapted to any language to improve learners understanding of other countries and cultures as well as supporting the multiple skills needed in our society and raise awareness of the benefit of the year abroad.

***A practical workshop on how EdTech can impact teaching and learning a new language in and outside the classroom***

Steve Eatock (uTalk)

How often do academics and instructors get to grips with learning a new language themselves? Any why should they?
In this masterclass led by Steve Eatock, uTalk’s education specialist, attendees to this workshop will put themselves firmly in the shoes of language learners - and very possibly outside their comfort zone.
Come prepared to be challenged: iPads will be provided and there will be a fascinating selection of world languages available

***Effective feedback for language assessment***

Catherine Franc (The University of Manchester)

Annie Morton (The University of Manchester)

Awareness and acquisition of intercultural competencies lies at the heart of the language curriculum in Higher Education today, with teachers endeavouring to bring the target culture to the classroom.  There is one aspect of our teaching, however, where this can prove problematic: the way in which we provide feedback to our students.  Grades are usually awarded in light of accepted, precise benchmarking established within an institution and / or according to the European Framework for Languages, and summative assessment is then moderated by external examiners.

It is the comments provided on scripts, or via feedback sheets which can vary quite considerably, as they can reflect our origins, with the majority of Higher Education language teaching staff not being British.  This can, indeed, be a window into the target culture – the feedback becoming an object of interest in itself, but it can raise other issues.  Differing communication styles can lead to misunderstanding, and be counterproductive, resulting in frustration, anxiety and resentment.

This paper will present our findings on how feedback can be shaped by cultural particularities, and what we have done in French Studies to help students and teachers make the most of feedback as a teaching tool.  We shall look at the language used (target language, as well as tone and style, particularly in the light of authority relationships in different cultures), the length and format of the feedback provided.  We shall also discuss the training and material we can provide to staff and students to achieve efficient dialogue, and enable our students to act upon feedback and ultimately, to make progress.

***Enabling HE students to learn foreign languages autonomously: our contribution to the production of teaching and learning materials.***

Cristina Garcia Hermoso (University of Southampton)

Carmen Martín de León (University of Southampton)

Working independently will help students develop a series of skills and strategies that will continue to be useful in their future professional careers. Teachers in Higher Education have a role in facilitating independent learning for their students, so that they may take control of their own learning by planning and setting goals.

When creating opportunities for students to develop autonomy in learning, teachers may wish to provide learners with the appropriate resources by offering adequate bibliographies and adapting existing material. Moreover, teachers can take an active part in the creation and publication of relevant teaching material, drawing from their classroom experience and from the way their students learn.

Our production of such teaching and learning materials has resulted in the publication *Palabras clave para organizar textos en español, Routledge[[1]](#footnote-1),* which focuses on improving students’ ability to produce coherent texts in the Spanish language. In this book, we have made theoretical explanations suitable to Spanish Language students. The book contains both dynamic activities for the classroom and for the self-directed learner in HE. These resources follow active learning methodologies such as Gamification and Problem Solving, with a communicative approach. The activities are aligned to the learning outcomes of CLS Southampton Spanish Language stages 4 and 5 (equivalent to reaching Levels B2/C1 of the Common European Framework). However, they can be transferred to other levels/stages and languages.

In this workshop, we will provide a space for participants to reflect on learning activities created to support students’ independent learning.

We invite the participation all Modern Languages teachers interested in producing, renovating or publishing teaching and learning materials that support and enhance in-class teaching practice and independent learning.

***Making innovation meaningful: a framework for freer teaching and collaboration***

Alexandra Holloway (University of Leeds)

When a language programme decides to ‘do away with’ course books and instead turn to more creative, dynamic approaches to learning, how can we maintain a shared understanding of progress and assessment? Is it still possible to have clear curriculum aims and objectives with assessment reported through the CEFR if we are experimenting with new and exciting language learning experiences? How do we make collaborative experiences meaningful to the curriculum?

This presentation will show how the General English Programme has redesigned a framework for teaching and assessment. The ‘Knowing language’ / ‘Choosing language’ / Taking risks’ model of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980, Canale, 1983, Okvir, 2005) takes a holistic view of language learning where linguistic knowledge is as important as communicative strategies. The model is applied to modular units of work which culminate in the assessment of various text-types that the students both explore and produce depending on their needs. We exploit authentic texts and experiences and encourage teachers to experiment with innovative approaches along with established best practice.

The result of this redevelopment has been the creation of a programme which encourages teachers to freely use different ideas and activities in class safe in the knowledge that they are working towards clear aims and assessment tasks. Students also learn how to exploit language encounters – from watching YouTube to attending a conference. Juggling multiple needs, ages, motivation and levels is a challenge. Now, we have a solid, cohesive curriculum which allows us to adapt our materials to suit the students and current trends in topics and types of discourse. We have been able to meaningfully incorporate creativity as well as collaborative partnerships across the wider university community.

This presentation will be relevant to those involved in designing a language-learning curriculum or writing materials for language learning in an innovative, collaborative environment.

***Collaborative approaches in the language teaching at the university of Calgary***

Dr Miao Li (University of Calgary)

In the HE sector, our various responsibilities (teaching, grading, course coordination, research and service) often leave us limited time for conversations with colleagues which could have brought new perspectives and ideas in our teaching. Moreover, the lack of communication between instructors and graduating TAs teaching multi-section courses risks providing a heterogenous and inconsistent learning experiences to students.

At the University of Calgary, with the Taylor Institute of Teaching and Learning (TI) dedicated to supporting teaching initiatives, and the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures that brings 10 disciplines together and makes cross-disciplinary collaboration easier, as well as technology that allows asynchronous conversations, we have developed three ways of collaborating with colleagues: Teaching Square, Small Teaching Reading Group, weekly report on google doc.

A Teaching Square consists of four faculty from different disciplines facing similar challenges in teaching. The process involves observations of each member’s class, a debriefing meeting following each observation that provides opportunities to self-reflections, and a final meeting to share the learnings of the Teaching Square with other colleagues. The Small Teaching Reading Group meet four times over a semester to discuss each part of a selected book on pedagogy, and possible applications in teaching. The Weekly report on google doc invites instructors and graduate TAs teaching the same course to submit weekly report (progress, innovative activities, concepts to be reviewed, classroom management), to comment and to offer suggestions to each other.

This paper will examine the effectiveness of these collaborative forms in enhancing teaching practices, tackling common issues encountered in various disciplines, and contributing to a homogeneous and enriched learning experience in multi-section courses.

***Bringing Innovation to Corrective Feedback in EFL University Writing Classroom:*** ***The Case of First –Year Students at The University of Ghardaia, Algeria***

Yasmine Mustafa (University of Southampton)

Over the last years, there have been profound disagreements regarding the effects of corrective feedback. Results from previous studies indicated that there are still no conclusive findings on whether corrective feedback is effective or not and whether certain types of feedback are more effective than others. Therefore, innovative approaches and methods are needed to further explore this issue, especially as numbers of language students are in decline and practitioners are trying different approaches to retain and motivate them. This study investigated the potential effects of form-focused and content –focused feedback on the writing accuracy and complexity of Algerian EFL learners (N =69) at Ghardaia University. Two groups were randomly assigned: The participants in group one received feedback on form (N=37) whereas the participants on the other group received feedback on content (N=32). The study follows a longitudinal quasi-experimental design in which participants in each group were asked to produce consecutive essays over a 12-week period. Both groups were taught by the same teacher-researcher. Although the study was conducted with EFL learners, its principles could be applied to other languages.

***Engaging Educators as participants on an Online MOOC: Reflections on (co-) construction of knowledge and directions of communication***

Mary Page (University of Southampton)

Robert Baird (University of Southampton)

After five iterations, our experience of developing and facilitating the *English as a Medium of Instruction for Academics* MOOC on the FutureLearn platform has been a positive one. Lecturers, some with little or no background in delivering their content areas through English, have engaged in networked discussions around doing this across diverse global and institutional contexts. Yet, despite much positive engagement in and beyond the MOOC, we, as developers and facilitators, are not fully convinced that our initial plans for a bottom-up, participant-centred approach is working as effectively as we had initially hoped, and we find that the direction of and communication around ‘knowledge’ can be at odds with our preferred approach to engaging with both the course content and participants. In this presentation, we identify the benefits and challenges in fostering the kind of interactions and relationships we would hope to promote in such a learning environment, and discuss the extent to which the current format and preconceptions of the MOOC platform enables and/or inhibits our ambitions for a bottom-up, participant-centred experience.

***Developing critical cultural awareness and criticality in Modern Languages – Insights from a US-UK comparative study***

Elinor Parks (University of York/University of Manchester)

The paper draws upon a doctoral study exploring the complexity behind the separation of language and content within Modern Language degree programmes with particular focus on implications for students’ development of Criticality (Barnett, 1997) and Intercultural Competence (Byram, 1997). The study investigated implications of the divisionas experienced by German studies staff and students in two American and two British universities.

The importance of developing a critical perspective towards culture has been raised in the Worton (2009) report, as well as in the QAA (2015) Benchmark Statement, which emphasises the value of graduates developing a ‘critical understanding of other cultures and practices other than one's own’ (QAA, 2015, p. 15-16). With regards to the USA, the 2007 Modern Languages Association (MLA) report notes that ‘a two-tiered structure impedes the development of a unified curriculum in which language and content may be taught coherently at the upper and lower divisions of the university FL sequence’ (MLA 2007, pp. 2–3) and suggests that ‘a curriculum should consist of a series of complementary or linked courses that holistically incorporate content and cross-cultural reflection at every level.’ (MLA 2007, p.5)

Yet findings from the *Southampton Project* suggest that criticality development is less central to language modules compared to ‘other areas’ of the curriculum, ‘especially ‘content’ courses’ (Brumfit, 2005). In interviews, both staff and students referred more often to the contribution of content modules as well as the explicit prompting towards an increased critical approach. The findings suggest that students who are prompted to critically reflect upon both the TL and the TC have greater opportunities to develop into ‘good’ interculturalists in line with the view that students require an ‘intercultural education’ in order to maximise the benefits (Byram and Dervin 2008; Byram and Feng 2006; Jackson 2008 in Holmes, 2015).

***“Head in the clouds – innovating classroom practice using online file sharing for collaboration and feedback”***

Laura Richards (University of Leeds)

As HE practitioners navigate the shift towards blended learning (Porter et al., 2014), opportunities arise for enhancing language teaching in the classroom. Despite significant research into tools such as Rosetta Stone, open access platforms remain relatively underexplored as a pedagogic tool. This paper will present a TEL-based project which aims to create a more collaborative and interactive classroom using open access file sharing services (such as Office365 and Google Docs) which are widely used in university administration. This action research project focuses on developing collaborative writing practices and enhancing peer and teacher-learner feedback loops.

A group of 16 pre-undergraduate foundation year students participated in several activities based around the use of shared and editable files on Microsoft Office 365. Using a synchronous computer-mediated communication (SCMC) (see Lin et al., 2013) approach to co-creating texts, students participated in series of related in-class group writing tasks. After analysis of the resultant texts, students reflected on their experience and what they had learned from the process. Qualitative data was collected in student focus groups and comparison was drawn with similar traditional group writing activities to determine whether students felt the process was enhanced through SCMC and how comfortable they felt writing in this way. Following this, the texts produced were anonymously displayed and analysed by the group, allowing both participants and tutor to analyse features of language produced by other groups, recording the feedback directly on to the shared document.

Preliminary results revealed a positive response to the use of SCMC for collaborative writing stemming from easier text manipulation and greater discussion of both textual and linguistic features, which is crucial to collaborative writing (Storch, 2019). Viewing and analysing multiple texts in real-time (Fagan, 2015) allowed participants to notice – and then later review – features of language and genre in a way previously impossible.

***Providing opportunities for “internationalisation” on campus***

Carolin Schneider (University of Leeds)

The University of Leeds is investing heavily into supporting internationalisation in a meaningful way and enhancing the student experience by developing skills, improving employability and promoting intercultural understanding. In this session, I will share successes, tips and challenges of three activities that support the University’s international strategy, promote language learning and facilitate peer-to-peer learning, such as Language Exchange, Language Groups and Tandem@Leeds.

The Language Exchange enables users to register a language exchange profile which is used to make contact with fellow students and staff who speak other languages. Users offer their own native language skills and knowledge to establish an informal language exchange partnership, in order to improve conversation skills, practise listening and speaking and to learn more about other cultures.

The Language Groups programme is open to all students at the University. Volunteer native speakers of English, French, German, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish receive training and support in order to lead conversation sessions, helping non-native speakers to develop their proficiency in the language used outside the classroom. Groups currently run for one semester at a time and the leader role is HEAR-accredited.

Tandem@Leeds is a more formal commitment than the Language Exchange with participants required to commit to at least eight meetings over the semester/academic year. They are also required to submit a reflective diary with evidence of learning in terms of language development and cultural awareness.

***Enhancing the learning experience and digital literacies of English Language Teachers on an Online MA in ELT through Blackboard and Microsoft Teams***

Tamsyn Smith (University of Southampton)

Charlotte Everitt (University of Southampton)

During 2017-18, a team from across the University of Southampton supported the migration of the Online MA in English Language Teaching, an online programme aimed at practising English Language teachers in 25 countries around the world, from Moodle to Blackboard and Microsoft Teams. The aim of this migration was to enhance and streamline the delivery of the programme by bringing it in line with University supported online platforms. It also provided the opportunity to revise the structure of resources and improve the accessibility of materials.

Now almost one year on from the relaunch of the course in the new platforms, course designers, academic staff and students are now settled into the new course environment and are exploring ways to maximise use of the course’s new technological affordances in ways that enhance the learning experience and digital literacies of course participants.

This presentation is aimed at delegates with an interest in how online platforms and tools can be harnessed in innovative ways for language teaching and language teacher education to improve the online learning experiences and digital literacies of language teachers and learners. We will begin by giving some context to the course migration process and the rationale behind the move, as well as discussing some of the opportunities and challenges of moving the course to Blackboard and Microsoft Teams. We will show the course in Blackboard, and demo Microsoft Teams, showing its chat and discussion features. We will show how it can be used for webinars and tutorials with Skype for Business which includes screen-sharing functionality. We will also discuss how content sharing apps such as Padlet walls can be embedded. We will highlight the accessibility features of Teams including the immersive reader which is available in 45 languages.

***The role played by an Institution-Wide Language Programme in promoting a value-driven Internationalisation***

Isabella Stefanutti (University of Bath)

Whether one accepts or not the concept of global citizenship, it is undeniable that the world is interconnected, physically (through transnational work opportunities) and virtually (through the use of technology), and that one needs the intercultural skills and agility to move from one cultural context to another. Accepting this, International Education, whether seen from its pragmatic or value-driven worth, has much more relevance than national education which does not equip students with a global perspective and, hence, does not prepare them for a global future. The Internationalisation of Higher Education is also an inevitable reality, whether we see it from a pragmatic or value-driven perspective. In the UK, for instance, with the decrease in the number of students going to university, with the relatively high cost of education and with the uncertainties of Brexit, the sector needs to rely on international students to thrive and needs to prepare students to work in international contexts to be a

truly worthwhile option. Even if international students might come to study in the UK to gain a UK or English-medium education and if home students are yet unaware of their future transnational needs, as educators we have the moral responsibility of ensuring an inclusive education and of offering to all students the ability to develop intercultural agility, hence moving towards a value-driven International Education for all. An IWLP, even if originally thought of as a pragmatic tool to equip students for international work, has the potential to promote a value-driven International Education. This presentation aims to explore what we mean by value-driven International Education and compare it to the Internationalisation of Higher Education. We will then look at what role an Institution-Wide Language Programme should play to promote International Education and to contribute to the making of global and culturally agile graduates.

***Sortez-moi de là ! Holt mich hier raus! Get me out of here! – Designing escape games for language classes***

Sascha Stollhans (Lancaster University)

Escape games are “live-action team-based games where players discover clues, solve puzzles, and accomplish tasks in one or more rooms in order to accomplish a specific goal (usually escaping from the room) in a limited amount of time” ([Nicholson 2015, p. 1](http://scottnicholson.com/pubs/erfacwhite.pdf)). According to the [Financial Times](https://www.ft.com/content/10c4ffda-0e00-11e6-b41f-0beb7e589515), this “entertainment trend grows rapidly as numbers of UK venues double every six months since 2013”. In the light of gamification theories ([Nah et al. 2014](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-07293-7_39)), it is not surprising that this trend has been picked up by teachers and educators who appreciate its potential to increase student engagement, collaboration, and emotional involvement in learning.

What are the potential benefits of escape game-type activities in language classes? What language skills and transferable skills might they promote? How difficult are they to design? How do students perceive them? In this workshop, we will discuss such questions by looking at concrete examples and developing ideas for our own escape games. The workshop will be divided into three parts:

1. Introduction to escape games and gamification in language teaching and learning, and presentation of an escape game developed for a first-year post-A Level German class on modal verbs (10 minutes)
2. Group activity: develop ideas for an escape game-type activity that you could include in your teaching (25 minutes)
3. Presentation and concluding discussion (10 minutes)

The workshop will last approx. 45 minutes and will include both theory-driven discussions and practical activities.

***Assessing language with production of video blogs***

Stefania Triggiano (University of St Andrews)

In the light of the ever-increasing importance of language learners as global citizens and language graduates with practical skills, the issue of training and curriculum design has acquired paramount importance in Modern Languages. The Department of Italian at the University of St Andrews assesses the language skills of final year students with production of video blogs, combining traditional approaches with technology. This type of assessment develops multiple skills and understanding of other cultures.

At the beginning of the course, students are given a list of class topics so that they can research and prepare materials for video blogs in advance. Topics include politics, economy, and socio-cultural current affairs, both at national and at international level. There are no restrictions in terms of format and material in order to encourage creativity, mixed skills, and

diversity of approaches. Video blogs are produced in groups that change weekly to ensure collaboration among students.

As students of modern languages are expected to have acquired multiple skills by the end of their degree courses, with this form of assessment they can develop several transferrable skills, such as intercultural awareness, creative skills, familiarity with the language of the media.

Firstly, the paper discusses the approach to assessing oral skills used in the Department of Italian at St Andrews, namely production of video blogs in final year.

Secondly, the paper focuses on the outcomes of this approach.

Finally, the paper deals with examples from the project conducted at St Andrews, including teaching materials and students’ work.

***Reflections on Skills for Business - A Collaborative Project)***

Sarah Winspear (University of Southampton)

This presentation reflects on the optional blended year-round course ‘Academic and Professional Skills for Business’ (Skills for Business / S4B), which is a collaborative project of the Academic Centre for International Students (ACIS) and Southampton Business School (SBS). S4B was developed as new approaches were needed for the effective delivery of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) support, study skills and professional skills for international postgraduate students at Southampton Business School. We also work closely with careers colleagues to ensure that employability is at the heart of the programme.

S4B is designed to overcome some of the challenges involved in meeting the different needs of this large postgraduate cohort, who have diverse English language and study skills levels. There is a large Chinese majority, consisting of both direct entry and ex-University Pre- sessional students, and a minority of students who have previously studied in English. Complex curriculum and timetabling with 23 Masters programmes and hundreds of modules (with numerous permutations of options modules) means reaching these students is challenging. Blended learning using an online community of resources to supplement face-to-face (F2F) workshops helps to overcome some of these challenges. S4B is the ‘wrapper’ which enables students to choose how, and indeed whether, to participate in F2F sessions, such as workshops and lectures (booked via the S4B WordPress site), tutorials (managed using the ’Bookly’ plug-in), and self-study resources (many produced using Articulate Storyline).

As awareness of S4B support increases, we increasingly deliver targeted language support attached to particular business modules, which is particularly effective in reaching a larger number of students.

The presentation describes the evolution of S4B, and provides insight into future developments through analysis of S4B usage data and feedback from students and staff. The presentation will be of interest to those considering setting up and developing blended courses.

***FTF to Online: PhD Academic Writing @Maastricht University***

Neill Wylie (Maastricht University)

Maastricht University (UM), a young university in the heart of Europe, founded in 1976, has a distinct global perspective and a strong focus on innovative education and research strategies.

UM offers an array of PhD courses to both internal and external candidates who have access to elective, credit bearing modules and the language needs of these students are catered for by the Language Centre. Many PhD candidates choose to take an academic writing course in their first or second year of their degree. In recent years, demand for a more student focused, flexible academic writing course has grown. In line with UM’s policy of supporting innovative teaching practices, the Language Centre’s face-to-face PhD Academic Writing course, *PhD Writing 1*, has been transformed into a fully online course containing 8 interactive webinar sessions named *Online PhD Writing* which runs in addition to the face-to-face rendition. This online course is primarily aimed at UM’s external PhD candidates or Netherlands based candidates who cannot travel to Maastricht for the face-to-face course and is continuously rated highly at UM (average rating 8.5/10).

On the back of the success of this course, coupled with increased demand for a follow up course, this author was tasked with creating an *Advanced Online PhD Academic Writing* course to cater for global students with work schedules as diverse as their time zones. Developing both courses has not been without its challenges, however. Items to consider in the creation of the online courses included contact hours, number of students, delivery platform, flexibility, student language proficiency, assessment, lecture materials and credit allocation.

This paper deals with the challenges posed and the advances made in constructing these courses in addition to the technologies used in implementing them.

1. DUQUE, E, **MARTÍN DE LEÓN, C**, GARCÍA-HERMOSO, C (2019) *Palabras Clave para organizar textos en español*. Routledge editorial. ISBN: 978-1-13-859204-9 (United Kingdom). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)