

Collaboration for authentic communication: *A model of effective TESOL pedagogy.*



The concept for collaboration



TESOL placement for RMIT pre-service teachers.

Many EAL students speaking minimally and if so in L1.

Idea to enhance EAL students English communication.
Enhance pre-service teachers opportunities.



So.... A model was trialed Semester 2, 2011.

TESOL Secondary pre-service teachers worked with a year 11 EAL “buddy”.

Language activities – to get to know their buddies, ascertain their competencies & decide on support.



Within minutes, all students were talking non-stop, the buzz in the room was magical!

Class teacher:

“Have a look at them, they are literally on the edges of their seats!!”

“They have talked non-stop!”

The model of collaboration



The trial in 2011 formed the base of “TESOL Collaboration” that we have built on in 2012.

TESOL course – regular opportunities for pre-service teachers work to with year 11 ESL class.

2012 now a model of collaboration at a local primary school for the B.Ed. pre-service teachers to have a similar experience.



Added to our Professional Placement offerings

- an option to do a TESOL specialist placement for B.Ed. students.

Strengthening university-school partnerships with ongoing support in school programs.

Collaboration



What does it look like?

1. Observation.
2. Individual or small group work.
3. Lesson 1.
4. Follow up lesson.

As part of each Semester's course

As an option for students to continue regularly as a placement



Introductory activities:

- Profiles – EAL students select their buddies
- ‘Find Someone Who’
- ‘Speed dating’
- ‘2 truths and a lie’
- ‘What we have in common’



Communication with class teachers to inform content selection.

Recent Year 11 content:

“Persuasive Text” - “Issues in the Media”.

PSTs each had an “issue”, EAL students selected an issue of interest to complete activities together.

Rationale



- Authentic communication opportunities
- Need for English
- Conveying meaning
- Motivating
- Mutually beneficial exchange
- Social learning
- Increase students' talk time

Supporting literature



- Social context
- Learner centred
- Collaboration
- Authentic learning

Social context



Social constructivism.

(Derry, 1999; Hacking, 2000; Kukla, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978; as cited in Herrera & Murray, 2001)

Learning can't be separated from its social context.

Learning, and language in particular, is a social experience (Vygotsky, 1978; Fillmore, L. 1994; Peirce, B. 1995).

“Learning occurs in social contexts through interaction with adults and peers” (DEEWR, 2011, p45) .



Learning socially is engaging for students.

“These classes buzz with a kind of controlled noise. They learn as they engage in social interaction” (Freeman & Freeman, 1998, p174)

Classrooms should allow students to

- have lots of talk time
- work in collaborative groups (Donato, 1994; Lantolf, 2007; Swain, 1998)
- solve tasks and problems together (Ellis, 2003; Long, 1985, 1992, 2000; Swain, 2000)

Learner centred



Input Hypothesis, $i + 1$ (Krashen, 1983) students should be exposed to language a step ahead of their current level.

Scaffold language for individuals (Vygotsky, 1978).

Humanistic learning.

Learner-centred curriculum.

Experiential learning – a focus on personal experience.

Collaboration



Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) students learn language in collaboration with more capable peers.

“Learners are an important resource for their own collective learning and this resource can be accessed through collaboration, cooperation and experiential learning” (Nunan, 1992, p.13).

Collaborative learning enables learners to “outperform their competence” (Nunan, 1992, p.12)

Learners “use what they already know to go beyond what they currently think” (Nunan, 1992, p.13)

Greater learning



“When the learners engaged in collaborative patterns of interaction, they were more likely to achieve higher post-test scores” in a study reported by Watanabe & Swain (2011).

26 programs found that significantly greater learning occurred in classes using cooperative methods (Good & Brophy, 1987 in Nunan, 1992).



The influence and power of socialising needs to be acknowledged and used in the classroom for maximum effectiveness. Students should be allowed to and encouraged to work collaboratively and communicate to the best of their abilities.

“Potential power of the peer group” (Slavin, 1983).

Authentic learning



Authentic language use is always in a social context (Richards & Rodgers, 2001).

Social interaction plays a central role in language learning.

People learn languages outside of classrooms in social contexts (Candlin & Mercer, 2001).

Teachers can facilitate social communication for students to learn the language naturally.

In order to learn, learners must engage in communication (Mitchell & Myles, 2001).

Meaning & need



The social context of a communication is essential in giving meaning to the utterances (Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011).

Focus is on the meaning of the message (Krashen, S. 1983; Swain, M. 1995; Stevick, E. 1996) & a need to understand.



“Modifying interaction through the negotiation of meaning is a means of providing comprehensible input (Krashen, 1983)” (Lantolf & Appel, 1994).

“The Psycholinguistic rationale (Long & Porter, 1985) for classroom group work is derived from the theory that negotiating meanings provides the necessary and sufficient conditions for mastery of a second language” (Lantolf & Appel, 1994, p.34).

Responses



Responses about the TESOL Collaboration were collected from

- pre-service teachers
- EAL students

Pre-service teachers' responses



“There was such a lovely energy in the room”.

“A great way to get to know more about the diverse backgrounds of the students”.

“I have a greater understanding of how ESL students learn”.

“[This experience helped] further develop my own confidence in teaching and become more aware of strategies that are successful in supporting teaching English as an additional language”.



“Interaction is motivating – students seem to contribute more, speak more, and participate in learning more when working with others”.

“A positive result for students who are usually silent in class”.

“The social context means making sharing students’ experiences a foundation of the classroom”.



“The primary students felt comfortable using their L1 with us pre-service teachers. They said they never speak their first language in class and with friends, but they did with us. We really valued that”.

“We were discussing a real issue that the students had strong opinions about so it was an effective use of language through the discussion of a relevant issue”.



“It was great to work with buddies throughout the semester while we studied TESOL Methodology that way we didn’t have to wait until our placement block to try things out or see what we had been learning about. It made our Uni. learning more real”.

“The whole experience ... was an extremely positive one and I think had a profound effect on both us students studying to become teachers, and the ESL students. There was a real sense of camaraderie and respect and I think everyone got a lot out of it”.



“Our final activity [“Should Public Transport be Free?” debate] was really good. The students succeeded in changing each others minds a few times and was really a nice example of how collaborative work can be really beneficial. Communicating with each other and questioning other ideas is a really strong way of putting language to use. What you say depending on who you are saying it to is quite a complex skill to master and they were really good at it”.

EAL students' responses



“It is fun. I feel like I’m playing rather than just studying while learning English”.

“It is a good time to talk to people who have different opinions from me and I learnt a lot from them”.

“Your company, kind, fun and enjoyable future’s teachers. The activities we did brought a lot of fun to ESL”.



“I got a better understanding of the topics that we talked about, discussed and debated”.

“We got more chance to talk in class”.

“I enjoy. When I’m talking, I think and share”.

“We talked and laughed a lot”.

“We learnt more language, more knowledge, talked more and discussed a lot”.



“It improved my conversational skill and provided ideas”.

“Can we do this every term if possible?”

Limitations on reflection



Lots of “big bodies” sometimes overwhelming.
Smaller groups visiting may work best.

Collaboration can be disruptive when it only involves some students. Possibly move to a designated ‘place’ outside the classroom.

The planning for many pre-service teachers in many classes was difficult to coordinate.



Adjusting the notion of what collaboration may look like. Different models suit different learners & teachers.

Long term on-going visits most valuable.

Additional Benefits



- Opportunities for pre-service teachers to work together.
- Meeting many EAL students.
- EAL students spoke more with each other.
- Greater bonds developed between EAL students.
- Partnerships developed within schools.

Where to now?



Seek another primary school to collaborate with.

Trial different ways to support our partnership schools.

Students visit over a longer period.

A Model



Model	Research
1. Partnerships between University and Schools	Mutually beneficial
2. Learner centred	Buddy work would focus on individual strengths and build on these
3. Collaboration	Collaboration with more knowledgeable peers; Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978); Input Hypothesis (Krashen, 1983; Lantolf & Appel, 1994) Greater learning (Good & Brophy, 1987; Nunan, 1992; Slavin, 1983; Watanabe & Swain, 2011)
4. Social context	Social context provides for functional, meaningful and relevant language (Candlin & Mercer, 2001; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011; Mitchell & Myles, 2001)
5. Authentic learning	Authentic language with a real, meaningful & relevant purpose (Richards & Rodgers, 2001)



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