

# Mindbite

APLIERJ NEWSLETTER

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## EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

Welcome to the first 2015 edition of our newsletter!

This edition is very special because it is the last printed one. In fact, even this edition will only have a very limited number of printed copies. You have probably received it by email. It is much more convenient, economic and environment-friendly. Another new aspect is that from now on we will also accept articles in Portuguese. In this issue, for example, Renato Venancio (UERJ) explains how he uses literature for teaching French.

Unfortunately, not everything is happiness as we have lost two of our dearest colleagues: Carmem Lucas and Bil McDavid. The last part of the noticeboard is used to show our respect and sadness for losing these two great professionals.

Following the noticeboard, we begin with an interview in which Leila Barbara (PUC-SP) shows how Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) may contribute to foreign language teaching. Then, there are two very interesting articles, in the first one, Bianca Walsh (UERJ) writes about teaching speaking for different types of performing and the second is the one by Renato Venancio.

We have a new session: Tech Talk. In this issue, you may learn a little more about games and gamification. We finish this edition with the Exploratory Corner with some “puzzles”, in the exploratory sense, of course.

We hope you enjoy this issue of Mindbite! Happy New Busy Year!

Janaina Cardoso and Alda Coimbra

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Editors: Janaina Cardoso & Alda Coimbra

NEW APLIERJ BOARD (2015-2017)

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Janaina Cardoso

Vice-President: Bianca Walsh

Treasurer: Sheila Lima

1st Secretary: Alda Maria Coimbra

2nd Secretary: Rosane Fernandez

#### CULTURAL COMMITTEE

Clarissa Ewald

Danielle Menezes

Ines Miller

Katia Tavares

Maria Isabel Cunha

Rogério Tilio

Solange Vereza

#### FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

Anielle Silva

Cecilia Nobre

Claudia Rebelo dos Santos Santos

Fernanda Vieira

Marcela Iochem

Raquel Oliveira

## NOTICEBOARD

### New Board and New Address

After the elections, APLIERJ has a new board:

#### EXECUTIVE BOARD

President: Janaina Cardoso (UERJ)  
Vice-President: Bianca Walsh (UERJ)  
Treasurer: Sheila Lima (Curso Oxford)  
1st Secretary: Alda Maria Coimbra (Colégio Pedro II)  
2nd Secretary: Rosane Fernandez (UERJ e SME-Rio)

#### CULTURAL COMMITTEE

Clarissa Ewald (SME-RJ)  
Danielle Menezes (UFRJ)  
Ines Miller (Puc Rio)  
Katia Tavares (UFRJ)  
Maria Isabel Cunha (Puc Rio)  
Rogério Tilio (UFRJ)  
Solange Vereza (UFF)

#### FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

Anielle Silva (Santa Monica)  
Cecilia Nobre (Curso On Go)  
Claudia Rebelo dos Santos Santos (Cultura Inglesa)  
Fernanda Vieira (Mundi Línguas)  
Marcela Iochem (UERJ)  
Raquel Oliveira (SME-Rio)

Some **regional representatives** were also chosen or reelected:

Angra: Rodrigo Silva (SEE - Angra)  
Campos: Heloisa Raposo (Raposo Idiomas) & Maria Kury Ines Albernaz (IFF – Campos)  
Caxias: Rosangela Valle (Consultora)  
Itaboraí: Marcia Petti (SEE – Itaboraí)  
Niterói: Aline Javarini (Fundação Municipal de Educação de Niterói)  
Rio Bonito: Lia Guimarães e Angela Guimarães (Achieve Idiomas)

APLIERJ has a new address too. Now, it is based at Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro – Campus Maracanã, Rua São Francisco Xavier, 11th floor.

### Enplirj 2014

Enplirj 2014 was a great success. There were more than 200 participants from different parts of Brazil. The discussions varied from the daily school life to more academic subjects. The opening session “Trocando em Miúdos” was innovative and seemed to be very well accepted by participants. Once again, we counted with the support of a good number of publishers like Cambridge, Oxford, Pearson, Richmond (for sponsoring Paul Seligson), among others and Cultura Inglesa (for sponsoring Giselle Santos). We would like to thank specially the British Council, for sponsoring Lucy Crichton, and UERJ for receiving the event once again. Other important institutions responsible for the success of the event were Curso Oxford, FME-Niterói, Colégio Pedro II, Puc Rio, SME-Rio, UFF and UFRJ.

### Upcoming events

During our General Meeting at Enplirj 2014, we decided to have two regional events in 2015. The exact places have not been chosen yet, but we thought about Angra and Buzios.

### Portuguese accepted

From this edition on, we will accept contributions to the newsletter also in Portuguese. In this issue, Renato Venancio presents some ideas on how to use literature in the classroom. Being a French teacher, his ideas will certainly be able to be adapted to the English teaching environment. Another surprise is that this is the last paper edition of Mindbite, as, in the near future, it will only be available online.

## IN THEIR HONOUR

We are sad to announce that we have lost two important APLIERJ members and founders: Carmem Lucas (who was one of our presidents) and Bil MacDavid (APLIERJ board member for a long time). For sure we will miss them and, to say good bye, we would like to post two beautiful texts. The first was written by Maria Kury Ines Albernaz in honour of Carmen and the second was written by David Sheppherd to say goodbye to his old friend, Bil.

### ACROSTIC IN YOUR HONOR

Carmen Lucas, our dearest inspiring colleague:

After all these years we wear a smile and dry the tears,

Restoring your powerful strength to fight

Maintaining it all so right!

Eternal you are in our minds and hearts so deep inside

Never ending is your story lived in commitment and glory...

Leaving APLIERJ a model to follow yesterday, today and tomorrow.

Urgent is our homage to you.

Care... we care and how much!

After all these years... here we come to say:

Saved you are in APLIERJ life and soul...That's why we let you go.

(Maria Inês Albernaz Kury, September/2014)

### Bil McDavid (1942-2014)

I am very sad to have to report that my good friend, walking companion and colleague, Bil McDavid, died in Rio de Janeiro on Tuesday, 30<sup>th</sup> September.

Bil first came to Brazil as a Fullbright scholar in the mid-1960s to carry out research in Salvador, for his M.A. thesis from the University of Albuquerque, New Mexico, his home town and state, of whose cultures Bil was very proud. He told me it was far from easy for a young, innocent blond, blue-eyed American to study at the federal university of Bahia so soon after the 1964 coup. But Bil no doubt made the most of it, as always, learning capoeira with the old masters, and beginning his lifelong love, fascination and study of things Brazilian. Bil's resulting dissertation, on the stereotypical members of Brazilian society, as portrayed in Jorge Amado's novels, was ground-breaking for that time, and fostered Bil's continual interest in contrasting Brazilian and North American cultures. He just had a birthday, in 12<sup>th</sup> September, which often fell, appropriately enough, during our 'Semana da Patria'. Bil worked in the States during the turbulent late 1960s as the coordinator of intensive immersion courses in Portuguese for future Peace Corps workers destined for Brazil; his future wife, Dinora, was one of the all-Brazilian teaching staff. That was Bil's first taste of language teaching/learning. Back in Brazil, Bil was a Field Director for Peace Corps volunteers, doing what he loved, travelling around Brazil. In this he was stationed first in Vitoria, ES, where his children, Erika and Patrick, were born, later in Rio de Janeiro. Bil took over from Anne Whitfield as the teacher development officer/ editor/ representative for Ao Livro Tecnico.

This again enabled Bil to do what he most enjoyed and did best: to travel throughout Brazil, setting up TESOL development courses, working together with fellow teachers, and launching new teaching materials. I first met Bil in 1980 at one of several APIB Conferences, the pre-cursor of BrazTesol, held annually in Rio de Janeiro. We subsequently ran courses for teachers in Curitiba and other cities in Parana. Bil was a joy to work with: always flexible, never uptight, open to new ideas and approaches and always demonstrated his fascination for books. In Curitiba, Bil teamed up with Phil Young (they had known each other in Vitoria), for whom he taught in Parana, Santa Catarina and Florida. In the last decade of his working life, Bil was the International Testing Manager for CCAA, and in this role often ran stalls at Braztesol, at TESOL conferences in the USA, Canada and even South Korea. And this final post once more gave him the opportunity to show his professional strengths, travelling all over Brazil, to enthusiastically encourage ESOL practitioners to develop, study and, above all, enjoy their privileged position, as he saw it, of language teachers in the classroom. And over the past 20 years I've been able to share with him one of his other great joys: walking the trails of the Mata Atlantica in the Tijuca Forest and other Brazilian national parks. He will be sorely missed. Ah, que saudades!

David Sheppherd.

## INTERVIEW

### Alda Coimbra interviews Leila Barbara

LEILA BARBARA - Atualmente é professora titular da PUC-SP com estágios de pós-doutorado em Reading, Liverpool e Lisboa. Dedica-se à Linguística Sistêmico-Funcional e utiliza metodologia da Linguística de Corpus, pesquisando principalmente questões relacionadas a usos de linguagem e gêneros de interesse para o desenvolvimento de cidadãos para a vida e para o trabalho

#### 1. What is the importance of solid linguistic background knowledge for the foreign language teacher practice?

A knowledge of Linguistics is very important for everybody who works with language and gets more important when one works with a specific language or its teaching. We must remember it is also central for a number of professionals who use elaborate, foreign language or specific types of language and who have to be proficient in different situations. To help them, a course on specific aspects of Linguistics is essential. What is fundamental is to have clear which aspects different professionals have to master according to their activity.

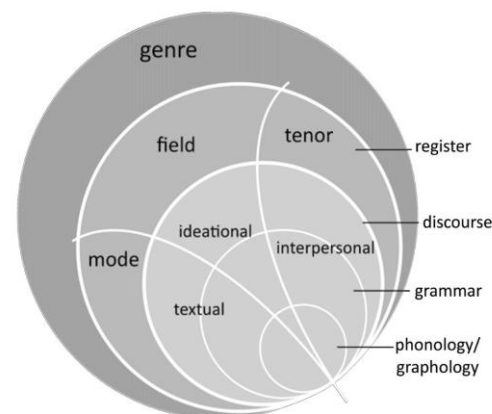
The foreign language teachers, including native speakers, belong to a group that will need a lot of Linguistics of a specific type. The FL teacher needs a fair knowledge of the language to teach because some descriptive knowledge of the language will help predict problems. In fact, it begins with a clear knowledge of the lexicon to teach: their meaning(s) and appropriate use. It is worth having in mind that clear differences, in meaning or use, tend to be easier to teach than certain types of similarities and false friends. Also the so to speak nucleus of the grammatical elements that organize the lexicon chosen as sentences and the sentences in text are vital. All these categories are selected drawing from the three *metafunctions*, respectively, *ideational*, *interpersonal* and *textual metafunctions* and based on two variables of context of the utterance: the *context of situation*, where, when and whom the text is destined to and the *context of culture*, the features of the wider surroundings of speakers and listeners.

#### 2. What are the most important contributions of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) to foreign language teaching?

I would say the most important contribution of Systemic Functional Linguistics is summarised in the chart below: starting from the features

accounted as the most important cases of elements, everything can be visualized.

The selection from the lexicogrammatical elements in the three metafunctions, based on the features of the immediate context, the *context of situation*, divided respectively as *field*, *tenor (relations)* and *mode*, and with reference to the *context of culture* that accounts for the wider context of the participants. This makes SFL more useful than any other theory at our disposal because it accounts both for structure and meaning, with tools for each and guidance to use the tools as it separates different functions and their elements. This relationship between form and function, separated but coordinated by specific and workable rules is its great force and advantage. Meaning is systematically separated from form, but related to it from the basis.



Language in social contexts (Martin & Rose 2012: 311\*)

#### 3. Tell us about the research projects that you and the group you supervise are conducting.

Well, that is most difficult to summarise. We have a large number of universities and colleagues together, from different institutions in the country as well as in Argentina, Colombia and in China

where our “mentor” Christian Matthiessen is. Three years ago, we started our research with verbs. As verbs are head of nominalizations, they are very productive and get us to reflect on different and varied language problems. Considering we needed those verbs, we decided to analyse articles, as they are frequent academic discourse and because they are important for university students and academics in general. Therefore, we have collected

a large number of articles (more than 1300) from the site [www.scielo.com.br](http://www.scielo.com.br), from different areas and started our work that concentrates on verbal and mental processes.

\*Martin, J.R., & Rose, D. (2012). Learning to Write, Reading to Learn. Sheffield: Equinox.

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*There is no teacher's association without teachers.*

*Become a member and participate!*

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## ARTICLES

### Teaching speaking: instructing for different types of oral performance

Bianca Walsh

(Professor of English Language at UERJ)

#### 1. Introduction

Brazilian studies and publishing works on the teaching of oral English are not as prolific as studies on reading. One reason for that is the recommendation from the National Curriculum Parameters (1996) that English teachers majorly focus on reading in basic education. On the other hand, teachers of private English schools, though directly involved with the teaching of that skill, are generally supposed to follow the guidelines of their specific school and /or of the textbook they use, but did not necessarily choose. The result is no demand, nor space for reflection about teaching English speaking.

A slight shake on this scenario, however, has occurred recently. Some external and political factors contributed to refresh the topic. In Rio de Janeiro, the so-called project Rio Global Child, which started in 2009, has shifted the focus in municipal public schools from reading to speaking with the alleged purpose of

preparing the children to the Olympic Games in 2016. Nationally, the Science without Borders Program brings about the need of preparing university students to communicate fluently abroad, and, for that, English oral skills are essential.

This article aims at contributing to the topic by focusing on the importance of systematizing learning opportunities taking into equal consideration the two main types of oral performance: monologic and dialogic. In a different direction, English textbooks tend to exercise the dialogic oral skills only – evidence for that is the several role plays, “talk-to your-partner” types of exercise that fill the pages of those materials. In addition, those activities are hardly ever contextualized or meaningful for the students.

Training in both types of performance means considering very specific skills, such as the ability of taking turns in dialogic activities or the ability of organizing information in monologic activities.

Efficient instruction requires both the teacher's awareness of the skills and strategies to be used in each type and his/her capacity of enabling students to "notice" them.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

The two types of oral performance, monologic and dialogic, present intrinsic differences that require specific strategies and skills from the speaker. Bell (2003) argues that dialogic tasks demand the capacity of starting and finishing turns and holding the floor, as well as of dealing with interruptions because speech is not linear. Gestures and emotional signs such as intonation, pitch, and hesitation are also part of this type of activity. Conversely, monologic tasks require the ability of using discourse markers and fillers to sustain speech as well as argumentative techniques and speech organization skills.

The National Curriculum Parameters also have a word on the topic. Although they do not tackle the types of performance, they recommend that oral tasks be contextualized and present clear purposes so as to ensure the proximity with real interactional situations. They also suggest that planning is a key aspect in oral instruction. For Bell (2003), planning reduces the cognitive processing burden and releases attention resources to the performance of the task – especially with beginners, the systemic gap overloads speech processing.

Therefore, teaching speaking is not only a matter of putting students to speak. It involves teaching specific strategies and skills and particularly showing students how to plan for the different activities. This is possible if one specific construct of Second Language Acquisition is taken into consideration: "noticing" (Schmidt, 1986 qtd in Ellis, 1997). Noticing is the "process by which learners pay conscious attention to linguistic features in the input" (ibid, p. 141). According to the author, acquisition takes place when learners "notice the gap" between their current state of production in the target language and the language production they observe. Ellis states that noticing

probably helps learners to process input and intake (ibid, p.57).

In a study about the recognition of emotions in English voices, Graham et al. (2001) suggest that learners should be exposed to explicit instruction to develop that skill. They studied Japanese and Spanish speaking individuals living in the United States for one year and a half and being exposed to the language inside and outside English classrooms. The participants showed difficulty in judging emotions and that difficulty did not decrease as the fluency in speech increased. The authors advocate learners' attention should be directed to this feature in instruction.

This paper combines the construct of noticing with the specificity of the two types of oral performance to suggest that teachers should focus their students' attention to the particular strategies and skills demanded by monologic and dialogic tasks. Instructional attention focus may contribute to the planning and enhancement of the two types of performance.

## **3. Monologic and dialogic tasks**

Goh and Burns (2012) subcategorize speaking tasks into communication-gap and discussion tasks (corresponding to the dialogic tasks) and monologic tasks. The two first tasks combine transactional and interpersonal interaction, while monologic tasks are mainly transactional (ibid, p. 202). The next sections present explanations and examples of the present author's own teaching experience for each type.

### **3.1 Communication-gap tasks**

Communication-gap tasks present a gap of information or context. They are typically conducted in pairs or groups, who are led to interact to achieve a pre-defined goal. In the case of a gap of information, students are provided with different instructions to complete the task collaboratively. The information may be presented in several ways: printed handouts, recorded audio, pictures etc. (ibid, p.203). In the case of a context gap, students are given the same set of information and they have flexibility to create a context



out of that, by telling stories from the same pictures, for example.

### Example of information-gap task

The following activity was proposed for a group of beginning students learning to talk about habitual actions. The activity was conducted in pairs. Each student received a slip of paper containing the following information.

Student A: You are the secretary and need to complete the morning agenda with the activities of your boss.

Student B: You are the boss and need to help your secretary complete your morning agenda. Make sure to tell the secretary your preferred lunch time.

Planning: Students read their slips of paper, but did not show them to the other students. The teacher checked comprehension and elicited from students their plan to execute the task. The teacher asked if they would start the conversation and how, the types of questions they would use, if they would use polite words, formal or informal expressions. Students were given some time to organize their strategies and search for resources.

\*An alternative for big groups is to put all students A together to discuss their strategies and do the same with students B.

Noticing: Students recorded<sup>1</sup> their conversation and analyzed it later on. They were asked to notice the types of resources they used, if their choices caused problems of comprehension, if they failed in being formal or polite, etc.

\* An alternative for that is to promote a moment of group noticing. The teacher may monitor the conversations, take notes of successful and unsuccessful strategies and put on board for class discussion.

## **3.2 Discussion tasks**

These tasks present the advantage of containing a genuine communicative purpose, according to Goh and Burns (2012, p. 207). However,

that statement is due to the fact that the examples these authors provide for communicative-gap tasks do not necessarily simulate a communicative situation. The example presented in section 3.1 attempts to contextualize an exercise that could be merely mechanical if students were to complete a timetable with actions. Irrespective of the type of task, teachers will enable more effective learning opportunities if they follow the guideline of contextualizing the task, promoting simulations of real communicative situations (as recommended by the National Curriculum Parameters, see section 2).

In discussion tasks, students negotiate ideas to propose recommendations, solutions, actions plans, evaluation or simply to organize information. This type of task typically involves groups, simulations and dramatizations. Unlike communicative-gap tasks, discussions will necessarily require more preparation about the topic to be successful. Therefore, students “could be given the details of a scenario or problem in a handout, or they could be asked to listen to a recording of a situation and use that as a basis for that discussion” (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 208).

### Example of discussion task

This activity was part of an ESP English class for students of the International Relations School at UERJ. It was part of a larger project, which simulated that different groups of the class took on the role of representatives of each one of the BRICS countries. The major purpose, which was chosen by the group, was to come to a set of common environmental goals for the next 15 years. Each group was responsible for an extensive research on the achievements and challenges of the countries they represented in the environmental area. One day was scheduled for a meeting of those countries to discuss this topic. Students prepared an agenda for the meeting, which included presentations from each country and a discussion section. The goal of the discussion was to propose an action plan.

of their performance as a way of studying and enhancing their own performance.

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<sup>1</sup> Nowadays, many students have smart phones, which offer several free voice recorder apps. They can use the recording



Planning: A class was reserved for each group to set strategies for the discussion. They reflected on research paths and strategies to convey their ideas in a diplomatic way (which requires formal speech and politeness markers). This class was conducted in a laboratory with computers for the students to start their research. The fact that they are International Relations students and are used to these simulations in the other disciplines contributed a great deal to their choices of content research.

Noticing: The teacher took notes of successful and unsuccessful strategies. In the following class, a sequence of activities was conducted. For noticing of linguistic choices, the teacher distributed several slips of paper with the utterances they produced in the meeting. There were two boxes for students to place the samples: good English and bad English. After students completed the task, the class reflected on the reasons for the choices. For noticing formality and informality differences, students had to work in pairs in a mirror-like activity. One of the students stated a particular expression (based on the utterances actually produced in the discussion) in formal English and the other student had to provide an informal correspondent. The inverse activity was also done. Students had a lot fun with changing formal utterances into informal ones. One particular example was their changing the formal expression “now, I give the floor to the representative ...” to the informal counterpart “hey dude, you can talk now”.

### **3.3 Monologic tasks**

In monologic activities, students produce an extended piece of discourse in formal or informal English depending on the purpose of the talk. Conducting these tasks in small groups decreases anxiety of presenting in front of the whole class. Typically, monologic tasks involve the ability of introducing, maintaining and closing a topic, using cohesive devices and anticipating listeners’ perspectives (Goh and Burns, 2012, p. 212). Although monologic activities represent challenging and enriching learning opportunities, they are often neglected by text books

and teachers, leaving students insecure to function comfortably in academic and professional settings.

#### Example of monologic task

This activity was used with an individual adult student. He used English in his company to communicate with foreign customers and frequently had to prepare presentations about the company and its projects. The student was supposed to talk about his company simulating a video presentation similar to what is typically found in business websites on the link entitled “About us”. The talk should last from three to five minutes.

Planning: To prepare for the activity, the student was exposed to some samples of “About us” videos and reflected on content and linguistic characteristics that frequently appeared in those videos. Some of the characteristics were systematized: establishment date of the company in the beginning of the presentations, adjectives or adverbs to represent the company’s values spread along the videos, the company’s products or services, some information about the company’s size, etc. Based on this analysis, the student put together all the relevant data about his own company, using its website (online in Portuguese) and reflecting on the image he would like to convey for the company. He organized the sequence of the parts of the talk after a reflection about the discursive impacts of his choices.

Noticing: The talk was recorded and the actual production was contrasted with his initial plans and with the other previously analyzed talk samples to check for the strategies and resources used.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

This paper aimed to contribute to teachers’ awareness of the two types of oral performance, monologic and dialogic, and some of their specific demands. Monologic activities are generally neglected by text books and teachers, but represent an important educational experience if students are to function in academic and professional contexts. Particularly, they need to develop organizational skills, use specific cohesive devices and be sensitive to genre and public

constraints. On the other hand, although dialogic activities are more often represented in English learning settings, their specific demands are unknown or poorly explored. Interpersonal strategies to take turns, hold the floor, express and understand emotions, cope with interruption are as important as transactional strategies to convey the message.

A brief introduction<sup>2</sup> for each type of task was presented in the article together with particular examples implemented in class. Two instructional procedures deserve highlighting: planning and the terms of cooperation to help Haiti in the post-earthquake crisis.

Finally, irrespective of the type of oral performance, following the guideline (see section 2) of contextualizing the task and making it similar to a real interaction is an excellent rule of thumb for the teaching of speaking. By doing this, teachers train students to react to real demands of communication, helping them notice and practice strategies and skills necessary for them to become successful speakers.

## 5.0 References

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noticing. Planning is said to reduce cognitive processing (see Bell, 2003). In fact, experience shows that students that start planning for their oral performance conduct tasks with more confidence and less anxiety, not to mention the feeling of achievement they generally show. Conversely, noticing contributes to enhance oral performance. Experience also reveals improvement when similar activities are repeated. For example, in the case of the group of International Relations students, students' control of formality devices was impeccable in a second project, which included a meeting to discuss

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GRAHAM, C.R. et al. Recognition of emotion in English voices by speakers of Japanese, Spanish and English *IRAL - International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*. v. 39, no 1, pages 19-37, 2008.



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<sup>2</sup> For further information about each type of oral performance and for more examples, see Goh and Burns, 2012.

## O texto literário na aula de FLE: *Le petit Nicolas* de Sempé-Gosciny no curso de Língua francesa II

Renato Venancio Henriques de Sousa (Professor Doutor de Língua Francesa - UERJ)

[...] L'objectif pédagogique, n'étant pas de former des spécialistes de littérature, mais des lecteurs éclairés de textes produits dans la langue qu'ils sont en train de s'approprier, il est nécessaire de construire cet enseignement dans la continuité, la progression et la répétition. Il va de soi que, quels que soient le contexte ou les situations lectorales, quelles que soient les autres finalités, *la compréhension, qui engendre le plaisir du texte, est l'objectif premier de la lecture: les stratégies de compréhension mises en place doivent donc être des aides à la lecture: elles doivent faciliter la construction du sens ou plus exactement d'un sens pluriel et induire des interprétations grâce à un parcours fléché qui propose des entrées pertinentes dans le texte.* (CUQ, GRUCA, 2011, p. 420-421, grifo nosso.)

Nosso trabalho tem por objetivo discutir algumas questões relativas à utilização do texto literário na aula de Francês Língua Estrangeira (FLE). A partir das reflexões de Jean-Pierre Cuq e Isabelle Gruca (2002), e de Janine Courtillon (2003), vamos falar sobre a exploração da narrativa *Le petit Nicolas* de René Gosciny e Jean-Jacques Sempé (1994) no curso de Língua francesa II, ministrado em duas turmas, respectivamente, no segundo semestre de 2011 e de 2013, na Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro (UERJ).

*Le petit Nicolas* (*O pequeno Nicolau*, na tradução brasileira), escrito por René Gosciny, criador dos personagens de histórias em quadrinhos *Astérix* e *Obélix*, e ilustrado por Jean-Jacques Sempé, foi publicado na França em 1960. O sucesso do livro foi tamanho que os autores dão continuidade às aventuras do garoto parisiense e de sua turma de colegas da escola publicando *Les récrés du Petit Nicolas* (1961), *Les vacances du Petit Nicolas* (1962), *Le Petit Nicolas et les copains* (1963), para citar apenas alguns títulos da série. Em 2009, estreia a adaptação para o cinema sob a direção de Laurent Tirard. O filme é exibido no Brasil, em 2010, com enorme sucesso de público, chegando a

ficar em cartaz no Rio de Janeiro durante aproximadamente um ano.

Nosso trabalho consistiu na criação de estratégias utilizadas na elaboração de exercícios visando iniciar e sensibilizar os alunos à leitura do texto literário. Tais atividades de leitura e escrita buscaram não perder de vista os conteúdos gramaticais e civilizacionais do programa, com ênfase no estudo do discurso descritivo definido pela ementa do curso. As estratégias pedagógicas adotadas visaram facilitar a compreensão leitora, além de despertar os alunos para a fruição do texto literário e para os aspectos propriamente culturais que este implica. Neste sentido, procuramos elaborar questões que permitissem um melhor acesso ao sentido, sempre em função da unidade temática dos capítulos do livro. Pudemos observar que a tipologia dos exercícios, a princípio rígida, tendeu a se conformar à estrutura interna do capítulo, tornando a exploração do texto mais adequada aos objetivos do curso.

Como tínhamos três encontros de dois tempos (de uma hora e meia) com as turmas, às segundas, quartas e sextas, decidimos reservar as aulas de sexta-feira para o trabalho com o livro. Foi pedido aos alunos que lessem, pelo menos, dois capítulos para cada encontro. Deste modo, como o livro possui 19 capítulos, nosso trabalho tomaria, no máximo, dez semanas.

No livro *Élaborer un cours de FLE* (2003), Janine Courtillon chama a atenção para o fato de que, no ensino de línguas estrangeiras, há uma ênfase exagerada na produção oral dos alunos iniciantes, que ainda não possuem estruturas suficientes para produzir enunciados idiomáticamente aceitáveis. No ensino regular e tradicional de Francês Língua Estrangeira (mais conhecido pela sigla FLE), o aprendizado da gramática ocupa o primeiro plano, em detrimento de atividades visando à compreensão oral e escrita. No entanto, no caso de uma língua próxima como o francês, o estímulo à compreensão deveria ocorrer desde o

início, através da “lecture de textes authentiques choisis, non pour leur intérêt linguistique, mais pour leur intérêt culturel et leur adéquation aux objectifs poursuivis” (2003, p. 44)

Segundo a autora, diversos estudos mostram que a ênfase em atividades de compreensão (oral e escrita) e na avaliação desta competência favorece a aprendizagem do funcionamento global da língua, sem que a atenção se detenha na estrutura da língua.

O trabalho de construção de sentido faz com que o aluno retorne ao texto para encontrar informações, o que reforça a ideia de que uma grande parte da memorização mobilizada no aprendizado de uma língua estrangeira se dá de modo implícito, subconsciente, graças ao trabalho contínuo de leitura. Neste sentido, “décider d’évaluer la compréhension parce que c’est la compétence de base de toute acquisition d’une L. E. est un acte pédagogique important, qui réoriente les différentes activités d’une classe de langue” (2003, p. 44).

No caso do texto que escolhemos, nossa intenção era, principalmente, avaliar a compreensão escrita, pois concordamos com Courtyllon para quem “évaluer la capacité à lire signifie évaluer la capacité à extraire des informations d’un texte et le temps nécessaire à cette opération, puisqu’il ne s’agit pas de traduire mais de lire.” (2003, p. 44)

Courtyllon distingue entre três projetos de leitura em função do nível da aprendizagem:

- um **projeto funcional/pragmático**, no qual a leitura se articula a uma ação. Pode-se propor a leitura de receitas de pratos que serão preparados para a comemoração de uma data festiva.

- um **projeto semântico**, no qual a leitura é orientada para uma tarefa comunicativa. Os alunos leem um texto para compreender as ideias principais e/ou extrair informações. A verificação da compreensão pode variar em função do tamanho do texto. No caso de documentos curtos, pode-se verificar a percepção da função e do tema. No caso de textos mais longos, é preferível se avaliar a compreensão global.

- um **projeto de aprendizagem**, no qual se lê um texto visando a compreensão da forma como ele se constrói. Este projeto seria mais adequado na aprendizagem da produção escrita. Pode-se propor

atividades ligadas à compreensão da organização textual e à escrita. Para a primeira, pode-se pedir aos alunos para elaborar “esquemas de conteúdo” ou “grades de leitura” dos textos propostos. Para a segunda, os alunos deverão ser capazes de determinar, a partir dos diversos modos de expressão textual, as especificidades do texto, seu gênero (jornalístico, científico, etc.), a intencionalidade do autor, o público a que se destina, entre outros aspectos (Cf. 2003, p. 45-47).

Optamos de partida pelo **projeto semântico**, pois nos parecia o mais adequado para o nível da turma e para os objetivos a que nos propusemos. Como se trata de um texto mais longo – o livro possui 157 páginas – privilegiamos a avaliação da compreensão global. Com relação a esta última, lemos em *Cours de didactique du français langue étrangère et seconde* (2011) o seguinte:

Pour vérifier la compréhension globale et pour initialiser une compréhension plus approfondie, après une ou des lectures silencieuses, il est possible de conserver l’esprit du questionnaire traditionnel véhiculé par les méthodes actuelles d’enseignement/apprentissage et qui consiste à sélectionner les questions pertinentes qui permettent d’analyser toute situation de communication: Qui? Fait quoi? À qui? Où? Quand? Comment? Pourquoi? [...] (CUQ, GRUCA, 2011, p. 422-423)

Podemos nos perguntar sobre que tipo de exercícios seriam mais adequados para avaliar, de forma pertinente, a compreensão leitora. De acordo com Jean-Pierre Cuc e Isabelle Gruca, “[...] il est nécessaire de varier les procédures méthodologiques: questions ouvertes, grille de lecture, questionnaire à choix multiple, activité de repérage, de relevé, d’élucidation, etc., et de sélectionner celle(s) qui convient le mieux aux spécificités du texte choisi”. (CUQ, GRUCA, 2011, p. 423)

*Le petit Nicolas* se apresenta sob a forma de “quadros”, se assim podemos dizer. Ao longo da narrativa, vamos acompanhar o personagem principal na escola, em casa com os pais, na rua, ora fazendo travessuras com os colegas de turma ou envolvido em brincadeiras e jogos próprios da infância. No primeiro

capítulo intitulado “Un souvenir qu’on va chérir”, um fotógrafo vai à escola para tirar a foto da turma de Nicolas, mas é impedido de fazer seu trabalho por causa da confusão criada pelos alunos, apesar das intervenções da professora, que não consegue controlar esses pequenos “diabretes”.

Reproduzimos abaixo as atividades elaboradas para a verificação da compreensão leitora deste capítulo, que comentamos mais adiante:

#### Chapitre 1 – Un souvenir qu’on va chérir

a) Relevez les informations et/ou les descriptions données dans le texte concernant:

1. Les copains de Nicolas :

Geoffroy \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Agnan

\_\_\_\_\_

Eudes

\_\_\_\_\_

Rufus \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Alceste

\_\_\_\_\_

2. La maîtresse

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Le photographe

\_\_\_\_\_

b) Dico – Trouvez le sens des mots et/ou expressions suivantes :

1. « le *chouchou* de la maîtresse » (p. 5)

\_\_\_\_\_

2. « en faisant les *guignols* » (p. 9)

\_\_\_\_\_

3. « un camarade qui ne me cherche pas *noise* » (p. 12)

\_\_\_\_\_

c) Résumé du chapitre

[...]

Na questão *a*, pedimos que os alunos extraíssem informações sobre os personagens que são apresentados ao leitor pela primeira vez. Trata-se dos colegas de sala de Nicolas, além da professora e do fotógrafo. Embora os alunos tenham uma certa liberdade para situar essas informações no texto, eles

são condicionados pelas descrições que nos são feitas dos personagens ou por certos qualificativos que os caracterizam e que, como se verá ao longo do livro, são repetidos à exaustão. Assim, Geoffroy é logo apresentado como o aluno rico cujo pai pode comprar tudo o que ele quiser, Agnan como o melhor aluno da turma e o preferido da professora, Eudes é caracterizado por sua força física, Alceste é o melhor amigo de Nicolas e está sempre comendo. Será preciso esperar o capítulo seguinte, intitulado « Les cow-boys », durante o qual Nicolas e seus amigos brincam de mocinho e bandido, para que o leitor, que já foi apresentado a Rufus, seja informado que o menino é filho de um policial (Cf. « dont le papa est agent de police », 1994, p. 18), o que explica o fato de ele ter vindo fantasiado como tal.

Na questão *b*, a palavra *Dico* (forma familiar de Dicionário em francês), indica que se trata de uma exploração sobre um elemento linguístico, uma palavra ou expressão. Trata-se, geralmente, de chamar a atenção do leitor para um uso particular (familiar, literário ou outro) de um dado vocábulo ou idiomatismo. Assim, em 1 *chouchou*, que já aparece na caracterização do personagem Agnan, significa « o aluno preferido » (da professora), em 2 « fazendo palhaçadas » indica a conduta mais frequente dos personagens, tanto na escola quanto fora dela, e em 3, a expressão *chercher de(s) noise(s) à quelqu’un*, utilizada principalmente na língua escrita, quer dizer « procurar ou criar confusão com alguém ». Na última questão, pede-se que o aluno resuma o capítulo em poucas frases, o que implica que ele retorne ao texto para buscar informações que deverão ser apresentadas de forma sucinta.

A “estrutura padrão” dos exercícios elaborados no início logo deu lugar a questões mais flexíveis (ou menos rígidas), em função da organização interna ou à temática do capítulo. Como exemplo, apresentamos a primeira atividade do capítulo 4, que descreve um atribulado jogo de futebol entre os colegas de escola de Nicolas:

#### Chapitre 4 – Le football

a) Faites correspondre les personnages et leurs positions dans la partie de foot :

- |             |                       |
|-------------|-----------------------|
| 1) Joachim  | ( ) gardien de but    |
| 2) Agnan    | ( ) capitaine         |
| 3) Eudes    | ( ) arbitre de touche |
| 4) Geoffroy | ( ) arrière-droit     |
| 5) Maixent  | ( ) arbitre           |

Neste exercício, o leitor precisa apenas identificar a função ou posição dos personagens na partida: goleiro, capitão, árbitro, etc.

Em algumas questões, introduzimos exercícios de expressão escrita, ainda que se tratasse de atividades de reescrita, como se pode ver em dois exemplos citados a seguir.

No capítulo 8, intitulado « Le chouette bouquet », pedimos que os alunos escrevessem de outra forma os seguintes enunciados:

c) Dites autrement :

1. « (Alceste) est allé *fourrer* son nez dans les fleurs... » (p. 67) \_\_\_\_\_

2. « — Tu as de la *veine*... » (p. 68) \_\_\_\_\_

3. « il était encore *de bonne heure* » (p. 69) \_\_\_\_\_

Aqui, espera-se que os alunos proponham sinônimos tais como *mettre* para *fourrer*, *de la chance* para *de la veine* e *tôt* para *de bonne heure*.

No capítulo 9, intitulado “Les carnets”, a entrega dos boletins é a ocasião para todo tipo de inquietação, por parte dos amigos de Nicolas e do próprio, no que diz respeito à reação dos pais, à exceção, naturalmente, de Agnan, « le *chouchou* de la maîtresse ». Na primeira questão, pedimos que os leitores retirassem as informações que constam dos boletins dos alunos aí citados. Na questão seguinte, que reproduzimos abaixo, trata-se de reescrever um longo trecho do primeiro parágrafo da página 77, no qual Nicolas imagina o que o pai diria ao ler o seu boletim (Cf. « Élève turbulent, souvent distrait. Pourrait faire mieux », 1994, p. 73). Aqui, a atividade de reescrita consiste na passagem do discurso indireto para o discurso direto, o que, considerando-se o nível de dificuldade do trecho em questão, demanda um esforço considerável por parte do aluno:

b) « Papa, je savais bien ce qu’il me dirait. Il me dirait que... » (p. 77) Réécrivez à la première personne ce que Nicolas imagine que son père lui dirait après avoir lu son carnet de classe.

Note-se que, em diversos momentos, o trabalho com o dicionário unilíngue – pensamos particularmente no *Petit Robert* – (2013), utilizado na consulta e na análise de verbetes em função dos exercícios visando uma melhor compreensão do vocabulário estudado, tornou-se indispensável, mostrando o quanto o uso desta ferramenta permanece central no que diz respeito ao ensino/aprendizagem de uma língua estrangeira.

Ressalte-se que a especificidade do texto literário, que demanda um esforço particular por parte do leitor na construção do sentido, tem ainda a vantagem de apresentar a este um conjunto de elementos da cultura estrangeira que, em muitos casos, poderão representar um obstáculo maior do que a compreensão do funcionamento da língua, como se pode perceber na citação a seguir:

[...] Même s’ils ne maîtrisent pas totalement le système langagier, les apprenants sont loin d’être insensibles aux variations linguistiques, aux écarts, aux connotations et aux modulations par rapport à une attente, une contrainte ou une convention, bref à tout ce que l’on désigne communément par un concept bien décrié ces derniers temps, mais dont il est difficile de faire l’économie tant il est commode: il s’agit de la “littérarité” qui regroupe l’ensemble du corpus des signes à interpréter. *L’étude de la mise en scène textuelle des faits de langue correspond à l’objectif premier d’une classe de langue; la perception des faits littéraires renvoie donc directement à cette finalité; à ce titre, le texte littéraire pourrait même être un espace privilégié, car il condense les fonctionnements langagiers et, s’il les complexifie, il les rend paradoxalement encore plus saillants. À noter que, généralement, ce ne sont pas les difficultés linguistiques qui font obstacle, mais plutôt les éléments culturels véhiculés par les textes de fiction.* (CUQ, GRUCA, 2011, p. 424-425, grifo nosso)

Gostaríamos de concluir dizendo que nosso artigo não tem a pretensão de esgotar um tema tão complexo quanto o trabalho com o texto literário em sala, que exigiria desdobramentos a serem

aprofundados num estudo de maior fôlego. Além disso, a seleção das atividades elaboradas nos obrigou a deixar de lado outras contribuições, igualmente interessantes, que tentaram dar conta da leitura e da compreensão do texto de ficção que serviu de *corpus* para o presente artigo. Esperamos, porém, ter sido capazes de lançar algumas pistas e reflexões que possam auxiliar na abordagem do texto literário como instrumento de ensino/aprendizagem de uma Língua Estrangeira (LE).

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## *Aplierj has a Facebook Community – Become a Member*

### *Participate!*

The screenshot displays the Facebook interface for the group 'APLIERJ - Associação de Professores de Língua Inglesa'. The top navigation bar includes the group name, a search bar, and user avatars. The left sidebar lists various Facebook features like 'PÁGINAS', 'APLICATIVOS', and 'GRUPOS'. The main content area shows a post by Claudia Rebello dated 9 de outubro de 2014. The post text reads: 'Hi everyone, Como foi prometido no nosso último encontro, ENPLIRJ 2014, estamos trabalhando para formar os SIG's, Special Interest Group. É uma forma de trocar experiências e aprender mais sobre um determinado assunto. Vários SIG's foram sugeridos. Queremos saber sua opinião. Quais SIG's você gostaria de fazer parte? É só marcar uma ou mais opções abaixo ... Ver mais'. Below the text are three checkboxes with corresponding labels: 'Technology' (checked, +19), 'Teacher development' (checked, +15), and 'Assessment' (unchecked, +7). The right sidebar contains information about the group, including '262 membros', a description, and a 'Criar grupo' button.





## Online games: homework can be fun

Janaina Cardoso (Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro)

A problem that language teachers generally face is the fact that learners, especially teenagers and young adults, do not like to do homework. These learners often lay the blame on lack of time, but it may mean lack of motivation, as they often find time to do other activities, such as social networking. The aim of this article is to suggest a different kind of homework, which involves learners' preferences as well.

### Games & Gamification

A game may be defined as an entertaining activity with rules, a goal and it usually involves competition and cooperation. Although some educators have questioned the use of games (mainly because of the competitive element) (Ur 1996:289), game-like activities have always been employed in the language classroom, as the element of fun motivates learners and improves language retention.

If the use of games in education is not something new, the concept of "gamification" is. It refers to the application of game mechanics and rewards to non-game situations, in order to increase engagement and motivation.

"...gamification doesn't simply convert education into game. It does a lot more than that. By using the gaming features of achievement levels, leader boards, points and progress tracking systems into real life learning, gamification can motivate students to develop better problem-solving skills." (Sahledu 2012)

Gamification of educational activities may be an effective way of involving this new generation of connected learners. Another good option is the use of online games. As other language games, there are two kinds of online games: the ones specifically tailored to be used in the language learning process (linguistic games); and the ones which were not designed for ELT, but offer effective ways of developing vocabulary, reading and other skills (communicative games).

### Mini-games & Complex games

Online games promote collaboration, autonomy, and sense of achievement. They are also

more authentic, more fun and usually less competitive than other games.

Prensky (2005) mentions two types of online games: *mini-games* and *complex games*. *Mini-games* have little complexity. They typically provide one single type of challenge; they only treat one subject, puzzle or gameplay type. As for *complex games*, they "provide a sophisticated mixture of difficult challenges that typically intertwine and support each other." Complex games often have one or several mini-games embedded within them. Prensky (2005:04) adds that most of the educational games found on the Web are mini-games, designed by digital immigrant educators. However, "it is complex games – not mini-games – what kids want when they request educational games."

In the last part of the presentation, three examples of online games were presented and their possible usefulness to language learning was discussed: *Duolingo* (a linguistic game), *Hidden Chronicles* and *Little Big City* (communicative games).

To sum up, although traditional homework tends "to be eaten by learners' dogs," another kind of homework has successfully survived. In other words, while learners play online games, they are learning English. In fact, now it is our (educators') turn to do some homework: finding ways of profiting from learners' outside-the-classroom experience.

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- E-mail: [janascardoso1@gmail.com](mailto:janascardoso1@gmail.com)

GAME	GAMIFICATION
Games have defined rules & objectives	May just be a collection of tasks with points or some form of reward
There is a possibility of losing	Losing may or may not be possible because the point is to motivate people to take some action and do something.
Sometimes just playing the game is intrinsically rewarding	Being intrinsically rewarding is optional.
Games are usually hard and expensive to build	Gamification is usually easier and cheaper
Content is usually morphed to fit the story and scenes of the game	Usually game like features are added without making too many changes to your content

## EXPLORATORY CORNER

### Why do some 1701 students disrespect longtime friends? What's in a nickname?

Walewska Gomes Braga (Escola Municipal Santo Tomás de Aquino)  
Thelma Christina Ribeiro Côrtes (Bolsista PIBID/PUC-Rio)  
Ana Flora Alves de Oliveira (Bolsista PIBID/PUC-Rio)  
Carolina Pinho da Silva (Bolsista PIBID/PUC-Rio)

This paper aims at presenting the process and the understandings of a collaborative and reflexive Exploratory Practice work developed in a public school in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, by 7<sup>th</sup> graders, their English teacher and three teacher learners involved in a Teaching Initiation Scholarship Program (PIBID/PUC-Rio, Capes 2012).<sup>3</sup>

Keywords: Exploratory Practice, reflection, puzzle, understandings.

#### *A puzzle emerges*

The class was over, the students dismissed and we, three teacher learners and the 1701 English teacher, joined our usual reflection on what the group had done. A disrespectful attitude of two students upset C., a future teacher. The names “Paraíba” – as poor inhabitants of a northeast state of Brazil are known, even when they are from other northeast states – and “Cirilo” – the name of a young black TV character – were used in an offensive way by two boys. Due to that, they got irritated with each other and started to fight. Part of the class encouraged them to fight and seemed to enjoy the situation. C. tried to stop them with no success. Fortunately, some students separated the boys and no one got hurt. C. wanted to discuss and reflect with the group but the excitement of the moment made it impossible.

The narrative surprised us in a negative way mostly because those students had been studying together since kindergarten. The class was motivated and the students were creative and easy going. We were aware that pre-teenagers tend to be emotionally unpredictable, though this kind of aggressiveness should not be accepted. We started asking ourselves several questions ...*Was it a kind of bullying? Should*

*we report the fact to the coordination? How long had this offensive name calling attitude been going on? What should we do?*

Being an Exploratory Practice<sup>4</sup> practitioner, the teacher proposed some collaborative work for understanding the emerging puzzle: *Why do some 1701 students disrespect longtime friends?* Letting aside a natural desire for solving the problem, the teacher and the teacher learners engaged in a process of reflection and search for understanding.

#### *Our Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activity (PEPA)*

The theme of the English curriculum point to be addressed was “Family Members”, possessive pronouns “his” and “her”, genitive case and the verb “to have”. A week before, on a field trip to the Botanical Gardens, the students did some research on the environment and interviewed the park staff and some visitors. It seemed a good idea to tighten the loose ends avoiding more work and more stress on our shoulders.

The students were assigned a simple task: drawing a family tree and finding out the families’ nicknames. The main objective of this potentially exploitable pedagogic activity was to provide food for thought on the nicknaming issue for the whole group.

<sup>3</sup> The “Institutional Scholarship for Teaching Initiation Program” (PIBID) is an initiative that aims at improving and valuing the education of teachers to act in the public system. This project promotes the integration of future teachers in the context of public education since the beginning of their academic education. They develop didactic-pedagogical activities in the public schools under the guidance of a university professor and a school teacher, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of the education at these schools.

This information was taken from the website of the Federal University of Technology in Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil. Available at: <[http://200.19.73.116/pibidingles.ct.utfpr.edu.br/?page\\_id=7](http://200.19.73.116/pibidingles.ct.utfpr.edu.br/?page_id=7)>

<sup>4</sup> To find out more about Exploratory Practice, the reader may access <http://www.letras.puc-rio.br/unidades&nucleos/epcentre/index.htm>; to contact the EP Rio Group, we encourage the reader to send an e-mail message to Bebel at [epcentrerio@hotmail.com](mailto:epcentrerio@hotmail.com)

Most of the students found it interesting and pleasant to know more about their families' lives. We encouraged them to go forward, to do more research in their school, this time. So, they went ahead asking about the nicknames of their colleagues and of the school staff: present and former teachers, secretaries and the principal.

Introducing the students to data categorization led us to make some research on the internet. The Wikipedia site enhanced our knowledge showing the unexpected ways in which different cultures deal with the issue. Nicknames are usually familiar or humorous names given to people, not chosen. A nickname may be desirable but some nicknames are cruel, offensive or derogatory name calls. Nicknames may refer to a person's occupation, or title. They may also refer to characteristics of a person. In addition to that, we discovered that in Australian society people are nicknamed in an ironic way. For example, a short person would be called "big mate". Moreover, in our class, we found out that we had two students that played "capoeira" and they told us that everybody who plays it has a nickname in order to be identified by it. These students told us they were known as "Folha seca" (Dry leaf) and "Botinho" (Young dolphin).

### *Quality of life in the classroom*

The time had come to prepare the poster. Three sheets of construction paper were spread in the classroom and immediately filled with three categories of nicknames: funny, cute and offensive.

After some time, students asked us if they could create a fourth category: useful. We agreed, but we did not understand what they meant by "useful" nicknames. So, we asked them and they told us that nicknames could be useful too. They said that nicknames make relationships easier, because sometimes they forget or

do not know the name of a friend they met recently, for example, but they probably know or will remember the friend's nickname, because it may be funny or different. Thus, if they need to talk to this friend, they will call him/her by his/her nickname, instead of by the name. After this explanation, they asked about our nicknames and included them on the poster. Students from other classes entered the room and gave their contribution. We chatted and we laughed a lot.

It was a time for sharing, reflecting and for changing some of our preconceived ideas. A nickname considered offensive could be considered cute. A funny nickname could offend a person. The class was noisy and productive. The excitement of a group showing, discussing, sharing, learning the subject in the syllabus in a meaningful way was contagious. Quality of life in our classroom was beyond our expectations.

### *Some understandings*

Concerning the English language syllabus, our students learned about possessive pronouns, the verb to have, family members besides reading and discussing texts found in Wikipedia. Mission accomplished, one could say...

There were no incidents during the time we intensively worked together. The atmosphere was inspiring and very pleasant. We realized that it is possible and desirable to be happy at school.

C. was more relaxed. Letting the initial intention of solving what was, at first, considered a big problem and getting involved in the Exploratory Practice enterprise proved to be worthy and meaningful. Observing the attitude of the two boys we could still notice a few childish moments, now seen as part of their longtime friendship.

The whole process of investigation brought us closer to the students. We learned a little more about their lives, they got to know more about ours. Differences and similarities enrich human relationships.

Accepting the challenge of discussing behavior, reflecting on human relationships, working to understand the good and not so good moments of life are ways of welcoming life into our life in the classroom.

Listening to the students and accepting them as our partners enhance mutual trust, a way to go in the direction of a more democratic class. We hope that this may have a positive impact in the future of our society. Small steps, meaningful steps.



**Figure 1. Why do some 1701 students disrespect longtime friends?**