

CRITICAL CONNECTIONS MULTILINGUAL DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECT (2012–2022)

PROJECT FUNDERS AND PROJECT PARTNERS



PROJECT DIRECTORS

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THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

1. Ideology and the struggle for cultural alternatives (Pennycock, 1997; Atkinson and Dash, 2005, Lytra, 2019)
2. Intercultural/transcultural language learning / trans-semiotising / CLIL (Abdelhadi et al., 2019; Byram & Fleming, 1998, Phipps & Gonzalez, 2004; Kramsch, 2009, 2021; Winston & Stinson, 2013; Anderson & Macleroy, 2016; Gonçalves & Majhanovich, 2016; Lin, 2019; Cummins, 2021; Fleming, 2021)
3. Multiliteracies, digital media and post-humanism (New London Group, Duncam, 2004; Thorne, 2010; Alrutz, 2014; Bezemer & Kress, 2015; Mills, 2015; Pennycock, 2016; Kumagai et al., 2016; Dunford & Jenkins, 2017; Braidotti, 2018; Bayley, 2018; Hawkins. 2021)
4. Artefactual literacy and new materialism (Simon, 2010; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012; Budach, 2018)
5. Nomadism (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; Braidotti, 1994; Benesch, 2012; Ros i Solé, 2016)
6. Aesthetics, rhizomatic figurations, affective assemblages and imagined worlds (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; O'Sullivan, 2010)
7. Agency, dialogic learning, negotiation of identities (Bakhtin, 1981; Norton, 1995, 2000; Cummins, 2001; Wegerif, 2013; Alexander, 2017)
8. Ethics, voice and activist citizenship (Byram, 2008; Janks, 2010; Lambert, 2013; Osler & Starkey, 2015; Gonçalves & Majhanovich, 2016; Darvin & Norton, 2015, 2017; Peutrell, 2019; Matos, A. & Melo-Pfeifer, 2020)

EVOLVING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

How can a transdisciplinary arts-based approach, drawing on the affordances of digital media, provide an engaging and nuanced context for ethical transcultural language learning and environmental activism?

This research question is broken down into the following set of sub-questions:

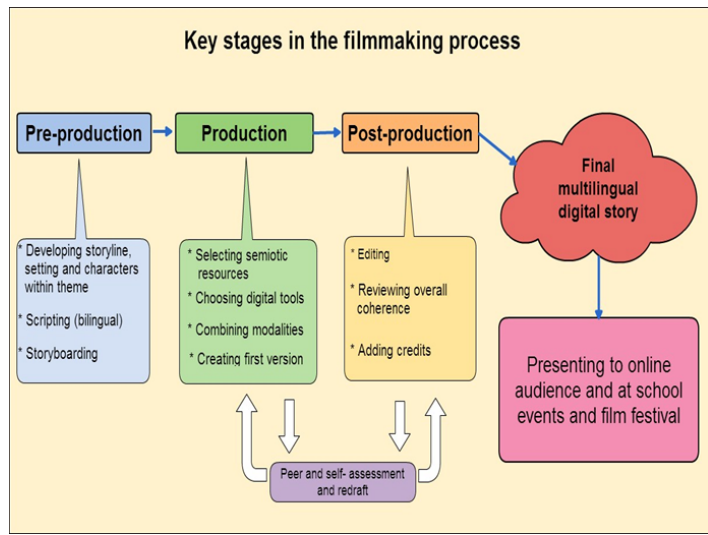
1. In what ways can the arts and digital media open up spaces for ethical transcultural language learning?
2. How can arts-based approaches to multilingualism support Young Participants (YPs) to become environmental activists engaging with their local and global communities, cultures and environments?
3. What happens to transcultural language learning when YPs are given the space to communicate and share their personal, lived ideas in multisensory, multimodal and multilingual creative work?
4. How can international partnerships between YPs be sustained and developed to foster transcultural dialogue, understanding and environmental activism?
5. What kinds of interconnections are uncovered by researching language learning through ethnography and creative praxis methods and approaches?



PBLL USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY

Project-based language learning using digital technology 'One of the most promising applications of digital media for language learning is digital storytelling ... It opens up a space for experimentation, for multimodal and potentially multilingual bricolage, for expanding lifeworlds, and for developing voice ... and the opportunity through subtitling to incorporate more than one language makes it possible for translingual and transcultural perspectives to be incorporated.' (p. 246)

Anderson, J. & Macleroy, V. (2021) Stories, Communities, Voices: Revitalising Language Learning Through Digital Media within a Project-based Pedagogical Framework. In M. Thomas and K. Yamazaki (eds) Project-Based Language Learning and CALL: From Virtual Exchange to Social Justice. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing Ltd, pp 245-276.



DEVELOPING MULTILINGUAL ACTIVIST PEDAGOGIES

Key features of the Critical Connections project in developing a new mindset towards language education:

1. Languages and cultures
2. Modes of communication
3. Ways of learning (cognitive, affective, multisensory, aesthetic)
4. Crossing Curriculum Borders
5. Transformative pedagogy
6. School, home, local and global communities

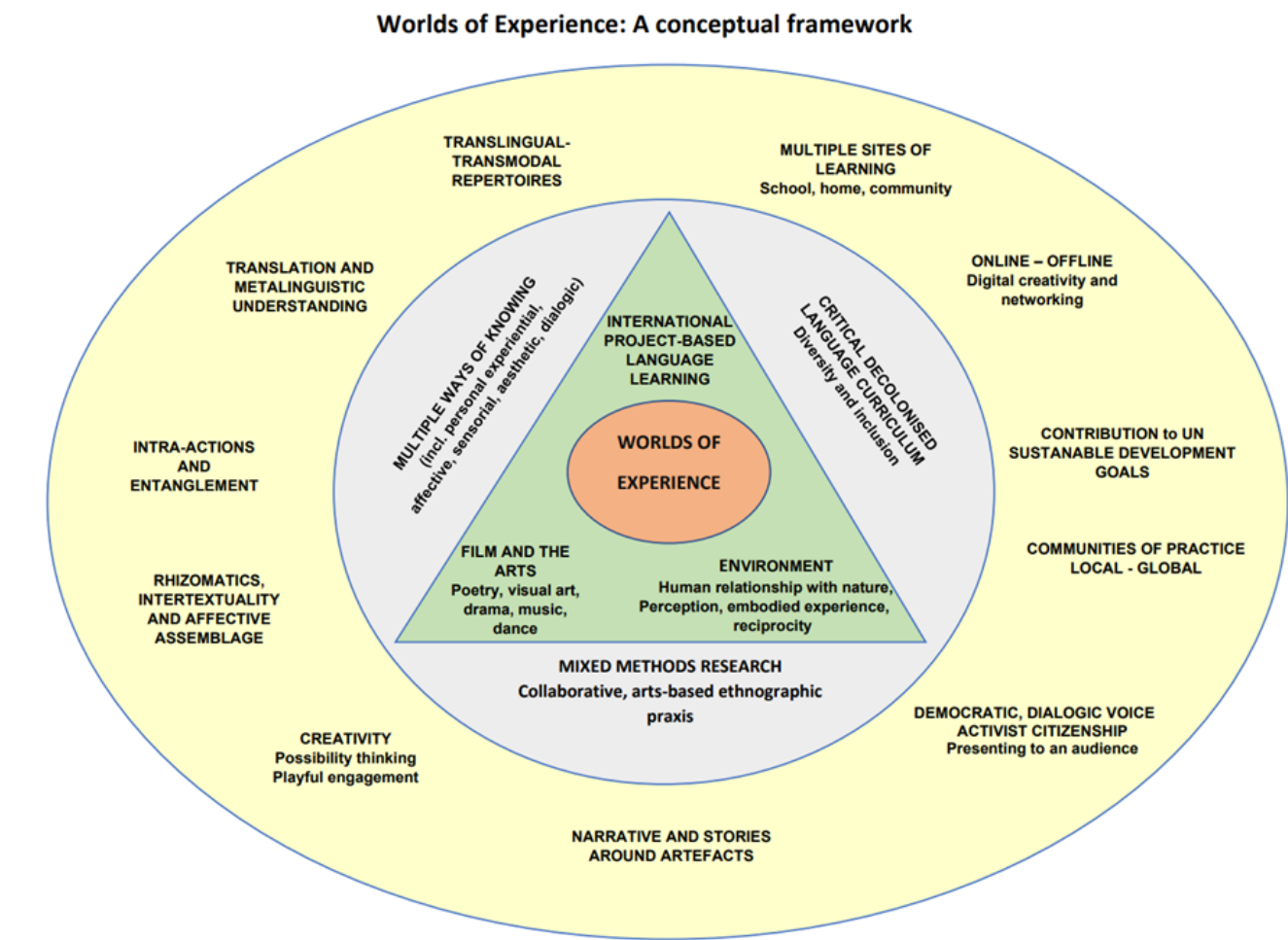
Anderson, J. & Macleroy, V. (2021) What is a multilingualism activist? Multilingual moves: Changing the mindset of teachers and policy makers. In A. de Medeiros & D.Kelly (Eds) Language Debates, pp 173-184, London: John Murray Learning

HOW CAN DIGITAL STORYTELLING TRANSFORM LANGUAGE LEARNING?

- Supporting and validating multilingual repertoires (whether first or second; foreign or heritage languages).
- Understanding young people's digital stories are creative, but also critical of the status quo.
- Challenging the lack of imagination and time given in our current educational systems to local languages and cultures.
- Recognising project-based learning as key to open spaces for multilingualism and giving voice to children and young people's lived, embodied experiences.
- Seeing schools as the stepping off point to provide resources and structures for project-based learning to happen.
- Acknowledging communities, both offline and online, can provide real audiences and feedback for learners' work.
- Opening up opportunities for activist citizenship.
- Valuing children and young people's multilingualism as vital to their sense of identity and well-being and the way they learn and access the curriculum

EVOLVING CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The Critical Connections project (2012 – ongoing) seeks to transform the stark landscape of language learning through establishing meaningful dialogue across the curriculum and better links with local and global communities. Firstly, this project aims to (re)connect Young Participants (YPs) with language learning; secondly, foster closer connections with local and global environments and instil a passion for activist citizenship; and thirdly, provide new spaces for the arts as a vehicle to give voice to YPs' artistic, multilingual, and multisensory experiences. The project encourages YPs in a variety of different language spaces to be more active and to spend time outside in their local environments teaching them about the value of being socially responsible and engaging in their local community as well as understanding shared global issues and experiences through artistic practices.

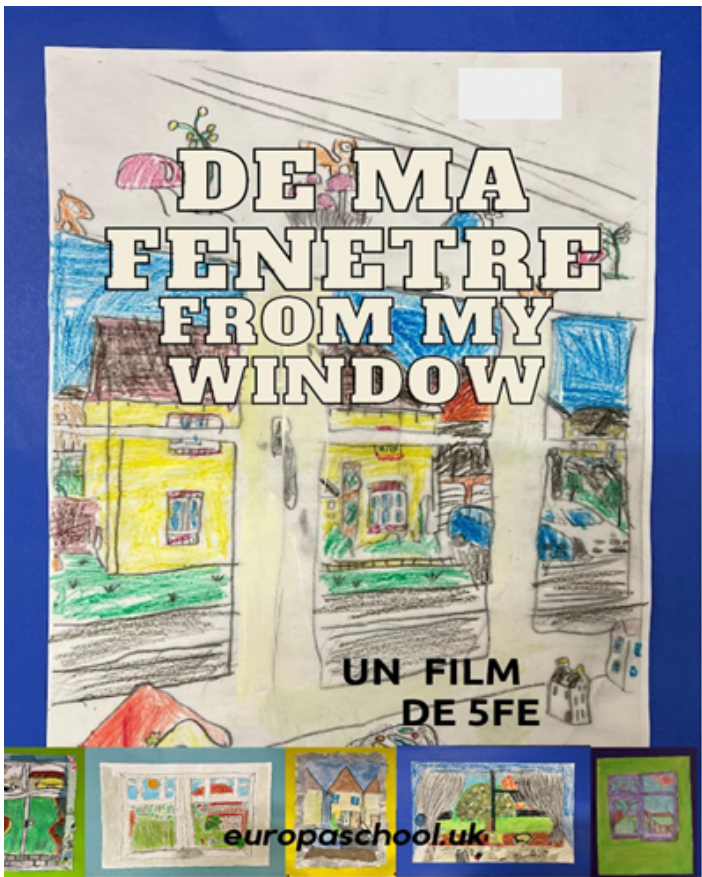


The Project in Practice

The project has involved over 2,000 young participants, across primary and secondary age ranges (6-18 years old), in a digital storytelling community. Young participants have created and shared digital stories in bi- and multi-lingual version in over 36 languages: Arabic, Bengali, Bulgarian, Chaldean, Croatian, English, Cypriot Greek, Estonian, Farsi, Filipino (Tagalog), French, Georgian, German, Greek, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Kiswahili, Kurdish, Latin, Malay, Malayalam, Mandarin Chinese, Polish, Persian, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Slovakian, Somali, Spanish, Tamil, Telegu and Turkish (with either voice-over or subtitles in English). Teacher professional development has been an integral part of the project and over 50 lead teachers/educators have implemented the digital storytelling work in over 50 primary, secondary and complementary schools around the globe in 14 countries (Algeria, Australia, Cyprus, Egypt, England, Germany, India, Italy, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Palestine, Taiwan, Turkey, U.S.A.) from 2012-2022.

References

- Anderson, J., & Macleroy, V. (Eds). (2016). Multilingual Digital storytelling: Engaging Creatively and Critically with Literacy. Oxford: Routledge.
- Chung, Y.-C. & Macleroy, V. (2022) How Weird is Weird? Young people, activist citizenship and multivoiced digital stories. In V. Lytra, C. Ros-i-Solé, J. Anderson & . Macleroy (Eds): Liberating Language Education. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.
- Rifesser, J. & Ros i Solé, C. (2022) Filmmaking as creative praxis: capturing the intimate side of interculturality. In: Language and Intercultural Communication, 22 (2), pp. 221-234.
- Project website for Critical Connections Multilingual Digital Storytelling: <https://goldsmithsmdst.com/>



Student, Europa Primary School UK (2021)

"I learnt that languages are what make you, YOU ... We speak differently but we want the same thing ... I like our film and the art and the fact that our poetry was in it ... It makes you feel like a celebrity. You can be seen by many people around the world."

Student, Herz- Jesu Institut, Italy (2022)

"I've seen different problems and how it is around the world."

Teacher, Fengshan Senior High School Taiwan (2012-ongoing)

"It is like you have planted seeds in our heart and they keep growing. The students became very sensitive about 'fairness' around them. During the years following completion of the film, I often heard them commenting on their surroundings and on news, saying 'this would be a good topic for the digital storytelling project'."

Principal Investigator for Language Acts and Worldmaking (2020)

"This project doesn't come from nothing. It comes from the long experience of its directors, from their work over decades in education, in multilingualism, pedagogy, in the skills of storytelling ... This is a project about how languages live and how storytelling educates us."