

### **Guest editorial introduction**

This Special Issue of *Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics* gathers insights from the *Third International Conference on Intercultural and International Education* that took place at the School of Humanities and Sciences of Education, Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP), in August 2014. It was supported by British Council Argentina and Universidad Nacional de La Plata, and organised and coordinated by Dr. Melina Porto. The invited speakers were Audrey Osler (University of Leeds, UK and Buskerud University College, Norway), Hugh Starkey (University of London, UK), Michael Byram (University of Durham, UK) and Suresh Canagarajah (Penn State University, USA).

The conference addressed the topic of intercultural citizenship in foreign language education. This topic combines the current interest in language education (multilingualism, plurilingualism, foreign language learning, linguistic rights, cultural and linguistic imperialism) with the also current concern about the role of Education (with capital E), particularly in formal schooling, which goes beyond the instrumental-functional perspectives associated with language learning, toward intercultural communication, citizenship education, moral and social justice education, human rights education, lifelong learning, and critical thinking and criticality, among other related issues. Each of these dimensions, as self-standing disciplines, is the focus of much heated discussion in the scholarly literature at present, and this conference brought together a number of expert scholars with the following aims:

1. Provide critical appraisal of both the foreign language dimension and the citizenship and human rights dimensions;
2. Explore other notions/models that have been proposed in the era of globalization; and
3. Present a comprehensive view that integrates the issues involved.

The event was planned as an open conference (free and without enrolment, 8 August 2014) and as a formal postgraduate seminar (with fee and enrolment, 8-9 August) (PhD level) offered by the School of Humanities and Sciences of Education at UNLP. The only speakers at the conference were Byram, Canagarajah, Osler and Starkey. Audrey

Osler and Hugh Starkey were in La Plata in person and the British Council provided transportation and accommodation. Michael Byram and Suresh Canagarajah were present through video and paper respectively.

In December 2014, I invited the teachers who had taken the postgraduate seminar to submit lesson plans based on the notion of intercultural citizenship and human rights education for possible publication. In April 2015 I submitted a Special Issue proposal to AJAL, which was accepted.

This Special Issue is organised as follows. There are two theoretical articles that describe the underpinnings of intercultural citizenship and human rights education. The first one is written by Michael Byram and Melina Porto and the second one is written by Audrey Osler and Hugh Starkey. Then a series of seven applications for the classroom follow. Each application is thought for a specific context (primary, secondary, higher education and teacher education) and is structured in nine sections: Preview, Summary, From theory to practice, Materials and technology, Preparation, Instructional plan, Related websites, Conclusion and References.

1. Preview: overview of level, language competence, age of students, type of project, theme and estimated timeline.
2. Summary: overview of the project.
3. From theory to practice: summary of the theory behind the project.
4. Materials and technology: list of necessary resources (websites, technology, materials, printouts, etc.).
5. Preparation: step by step description for the preparation stage.
6. Instructional plan: step by step description of the project for each session/week (it can include homework, extensions, student assessment/reflections, etc.).
7. Related websites (additional relevant and useful websites).
8. Conclusion: a brief reference to what the proposal achieves.
9. References.

All applications purposefully include interactive student tools with the aim to integrate technology within the foreign language classroom. They were created with a very specific context in mind, in all cases the contexts of work of the authors, and consequently they were designed for a particular group of students in a certain institution with specific sociocultural and other characteristics. This information does not appear in the applications to secure appeal to an international readership but the Preview section provides essential details about the general intended contexts of application in each case.

The applications are:

- *We are the world and the world is our home: Learning about the environment and taking care of it in the primary classroom* by Ethel Rosenberg: a project to raise awareness on environmental issues such as water saving and deforestation, through language learning, comparison and contrast between two cultures, and an emphasis on the rights and responsibilities that cosmopolitan citizens share.
- *Anonymous green heroes in the making* by María Emilia Arcuri: a project for the primary classroom to raise children's awareness on waste treatment, reflect on people's attitudes towards the environment, and develop the skills needed to critique, evaluate, accept responsibility on common issues such as the environment and take action.
- *The plurilingual classroom and ELT: The challenge to overcome tensions between aboriginal languages and hegemonic languages* by Adriana Helver: a project for the secondary school English language classroom that integrates English, art and citizenship in order to develop intercultural competences in the framework of linguistic rights.
- *Accomplishments: Raising awareness human rights and developing skills in secondary school* by Ana Laura Marchel, Mercedes Peluffo and Paula Perez Roig: an interdisciplinary project about a generative topic, achievements, seen in relation to the recovery of the children kidnapped during the 1976-1983 military dictatorship in Argentina. This is a project for secondary school that integrates Language, History, Social Studies and Human Rights Education.
- *The cultural iceberg* by Constanza Arriaga and Marina Coscia: an ESP project for university students interested in participating in an international mobility program or working in a multicultural context, intended to raise their awareness of cultural difference and develop their intercultural communicative competence.
- *Desire to end violence: Human rights and intercultural citizenship in teacher education* by Mariel Amez: a teacher education project describing an interdisciplinary approach to the theme of women's rights through the content areas of Literature, Social Studies, Didactics and Language.
- *Using anti-war art to create and build cultures of peace in the classroom and beyond* by Eladia Castellani, Claudia Dabove and Patricia Guzmán: a teacher education interdisciplinary project that

addresses human rights in the analysis of significant works of art in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries through the content areas of Language and Culture (or Social Studies) and Didactics.

These projects respond to the need to “build our understandings of the profession in diverse contexts and relate them to global issues” (Paltridge & Mahboob, 2014, p.2). The notion of intercultural citizenship and human rights education in the (foreign) language classroom developed in this Special Issue is a current global concern and the applications provide multiple perspectives from a variety of different contexts.

Melina Porto

### Reference

Paltridge, B., & Mahboob, A. (2014). In this issue.... *TESOL Quarterly*, 48, 1–5.