Changing values and priorities in English language teaching

April 27, 2022

DELTA Publishing

Making language matter.

Jason Anderson

Speaking globally

Overview of the talk

1. Contextual changes over last 50 years
2. Multilingual and translingual turns
3. Mediation as social and pedagogic practice
4. The inclusive turn
5. English as MOI and CLIL, rather than as a 'subject'
6. The rise of additional 'skills' (e.g. critical thinking, higher order thinking, 21st century skills, core competencies, etc.)
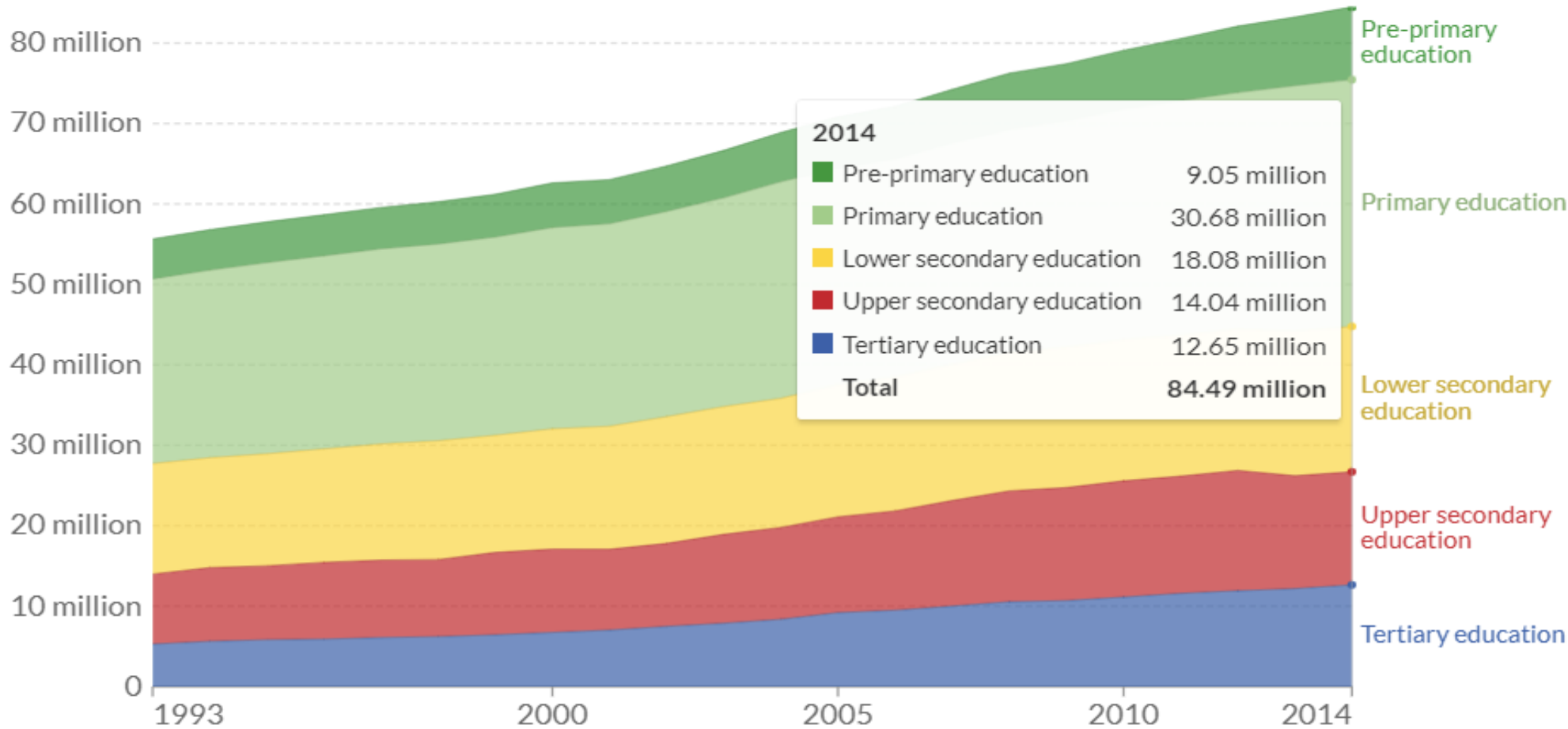7. The rise of (new, ICT-mediated) written literacies

Changing contexts: Who are 'we'?

- Communicative language teaching (CLT) emerged in 1970s in the context of adult education in 'target language' countries with 'native-speaker' teachers (Howatt, 1988).

- It became the dominant 'paradigm' for language teaching in 1980s.

- Since then, English has steadily increased in importance globally, first in tertiary education, then in secondary education, then primary and pre-primary.

- Increasing numbers of teachers in 'English speaking' countries teach a majority of EAL (English as an additional language) learners.

- Thus, today of >30 million teachers who 'teach English' as part of their job, only a tiny minority work in adult education; only a small minority work in 'target language' countries, and only a small minority of us would self-identify as 'native-speakers' of English. And many of us don't just teach English.

Number of teachers across education levels

Total number of teachers in public and private education institutions. Teachers are persons employed full time or part time in an official capacity to guide and direct the learning experience of pupils and students, irrespective of their qualifications or the delivery mechanism, i.e. face-to-face and/or at a distance.

☐ Relative

2014

■ Pre-primary education	9.05 million
■ Primary education	30.68 million
■ Lower secondary education	18.08 million
■ Upper secondary education	14.04 million
■ Tertiary education	12.65 million
Total	**84.49 million**

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Implications for us as teachers of Englishing

- **We** are mainly L2 users of English.

- Most of us share our learners' languages, culture, 'schemata'.

- Most of us work in top-down (national) curricular contexts, teaching the same classes for a whole academic year.

- Most of us are (in part) assessed according to student exam achievement; exams that we cannot change.

- Most of us teach learners who never chose to study English.

- The majority of us work in the Global South.

- Many of us incorporate our Englishing into wider language repertoires.

The 'multilingual turn'

- English language teaching was perceived to be best done monolingually for much of the 20th century (e.g. G. Cook, 2010).

- Although translation approaches have always been common in many contexts worldwide (China, India, Japan) (e.g. Smith & Imura, 2004).

- 'Use of the L1' began to be re-explored in the 1990s.

- Because of the expansion of English to primary and secondary contexts, awareness of the need to teach multilingually increased after 2000.

- Theoretical basis for teaching multilingually has been bolstered directly (e.g., V. Cook's 'multicompetence' [1995], Cummins' 'common underlying proficiency' [2008]) and indirectly (e.g. scaffolding in sociocultural theory, from known to unknown in constructivism).

The translingual turn

- Prior to 2010, Multilingual language use was usually viewed as 'switching' or 'mixing' 'codes' i.e. a hybrid practice.

- Translanguaging theory argues that named codes are a historically recent sociocultural construct (e.g. Canagarajah, 2013) or even 'invention' (e.g. Pennycook & Makoni, 2020).

- Offers different perspectives (there are many ways to understand translanguaging) on how 'resources' in a multilingual 'repertoire' can be deployed in communication to meet specific goals.

- But doesn't necessarily dismiss the socio-political importance of named languages and the need to 'monolanguage' (Anderson, 2018) in certain situations.

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Implications of the translingual turn for ELT

- Early SLA research viewed 'target language' development monolingually (interlanguage theory).

- Translanguaging theory can offer:
  - A view of additional language competence that can reflect multilingual practices in specific societies. This can be a more socially relevant goal than monolingual competence (see Anderson, 2022; Mahapatra & Anderson, 2022).
  - Even where monolingual ability (e.g. English proficiency) is a desired/expected outcome, this may be achieved through the 'target language' emerging from within a translingual repertoire: *translingual emergence*.
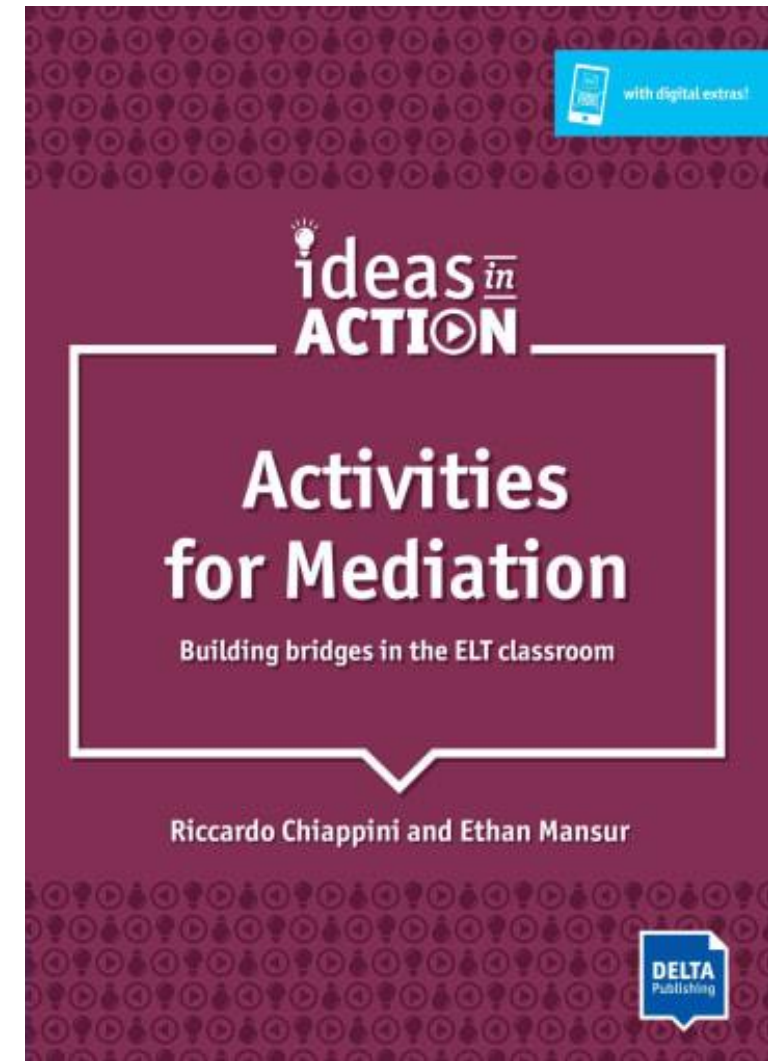 - Theoretical and practical support for 'mediation'.

Mediation

- "In mediation, the user/learner acts as a social agent who creates bridges and helps construct or convey meaning, sometimes within the same language, sometimes across modalities (e.g. from spoken to signed…) and sometimes from one language to another (cross-linguistic mediation)." (Council of Europe, 2020, p. 90)

- ☝ Very different sociocultural vision of 'competence' from that underpinning CLT.

- Movement away from 'four skills' (reading, writing, speaking, listening).

- Recognition of interlocutor's needs and differences (inclusivity).

- From 'getting your message across' to 'helping others to understand'.

Mediation

- Three mediation activities:

    1. Mediating texts

    2. Mediating concepts

    3. Mediating communication

- Two mediation strategies:

    1. Strategies to explain a new concept.

    2. Strategies to simplify a text.

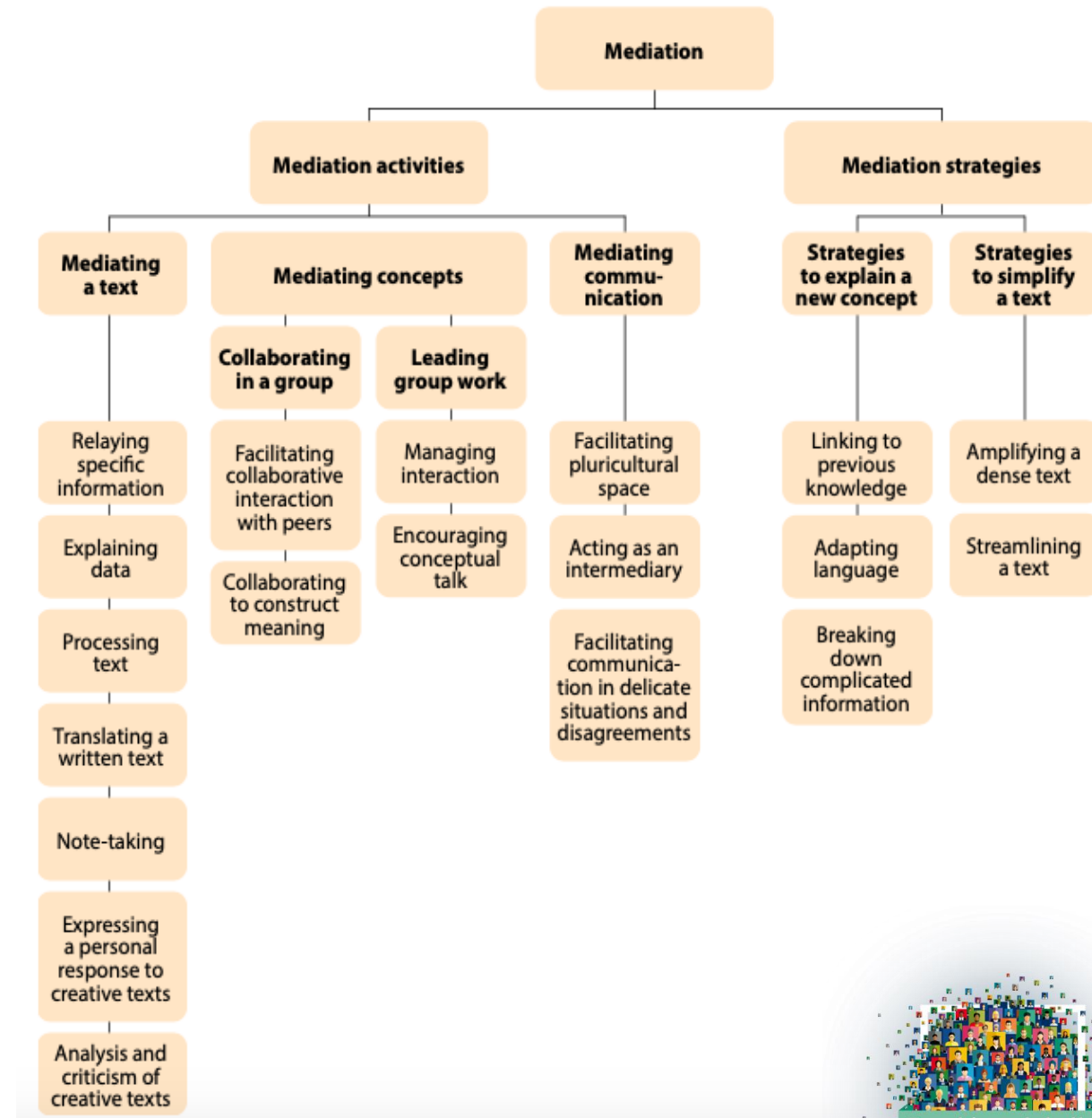- From Chiappini & Mansur (2021), **Activities for Mediation**.

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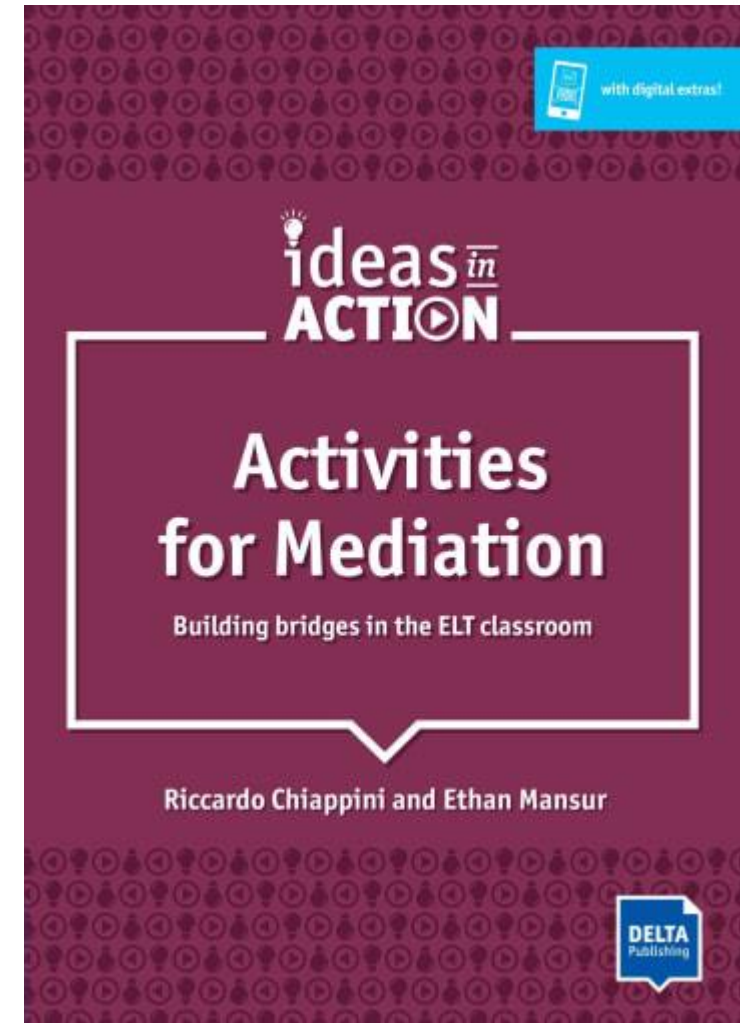
Example mediation activities

- **2.3d Running dictogloss (mediating texts)**

One student relays in English the key points of a text written in their L1 to another student (who has not read it) in English. With the help of their partner, the second student writes a short summary.

- **3a. Black holes (mediating concepts)**

Students gather information on a topic (e.g. black holes) from different sources and together they collate the most relevant pieces into a poster for the school science exhibition.

From *Activities for Mediation* (2021) by Riccardo Chiappini & Ethan Mansur.

ideas in
ACTION

Activities
for Mediation

Building bridges in the ELT classroom

Riccardo Chiappini and Ethan Mansur

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The inclusive turn

"a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners" (Ainscow, 2007)

Shifting priorities

- Globalisation and mobility increasing awareness of social diversity.

- Sociopolitical aspirations to combat discrimination.

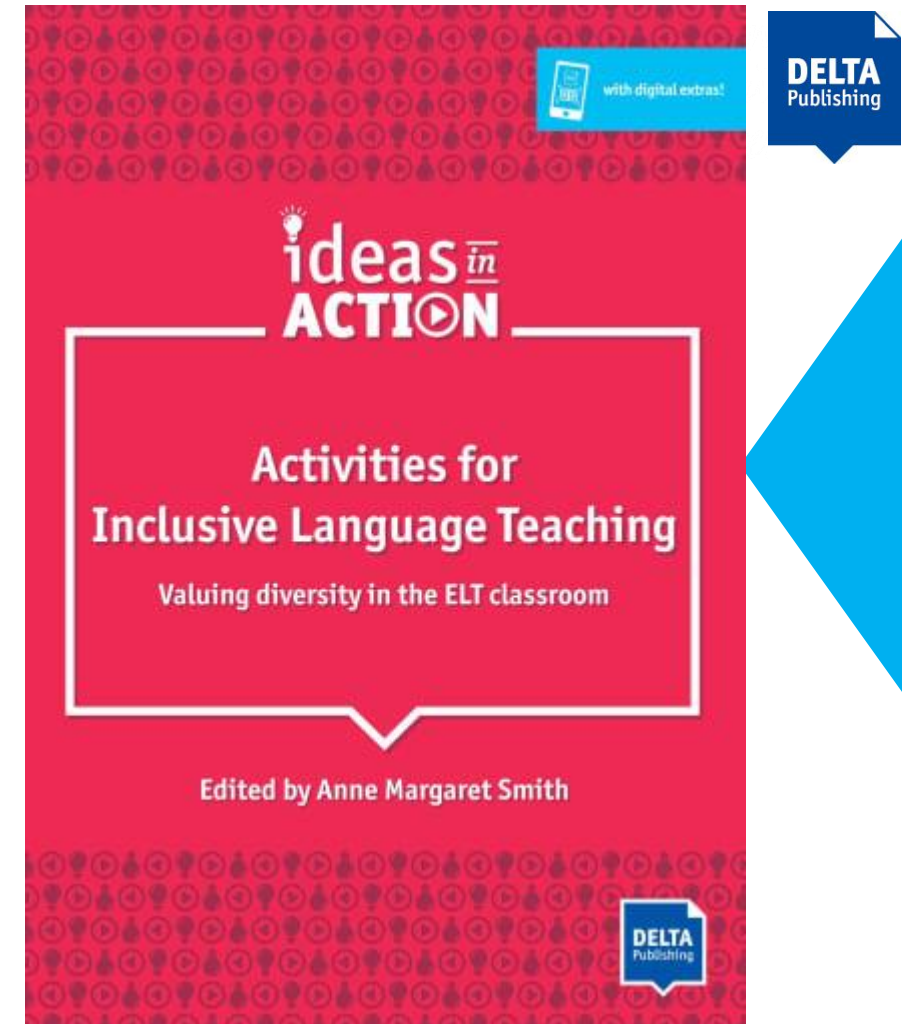- Personal need to be recognised and understood (i.e. identity).

Principles

- Our classrooms can become places where all learners feel well and feel welcome (avoiding *exclusion*).

- The materials and topics in our lessons can represent society's diversity (e.g. races, religions, sexualities, bodies).

- Consideration of interlocutor's needs and identity (link to mediation).

Inclusive language teaching

1. The welcoming classroom
2. Well-being in the classroom
3. Understanding difference, embracing diversity
4. Working together

From: *Activities for Inclusive Language Teaching* (2020), edited by Anne Margaret Smith. Co-authors: Rachael Harris, Anette Igel, Jana Jikova, Giovanni Licata, Rom Neves.
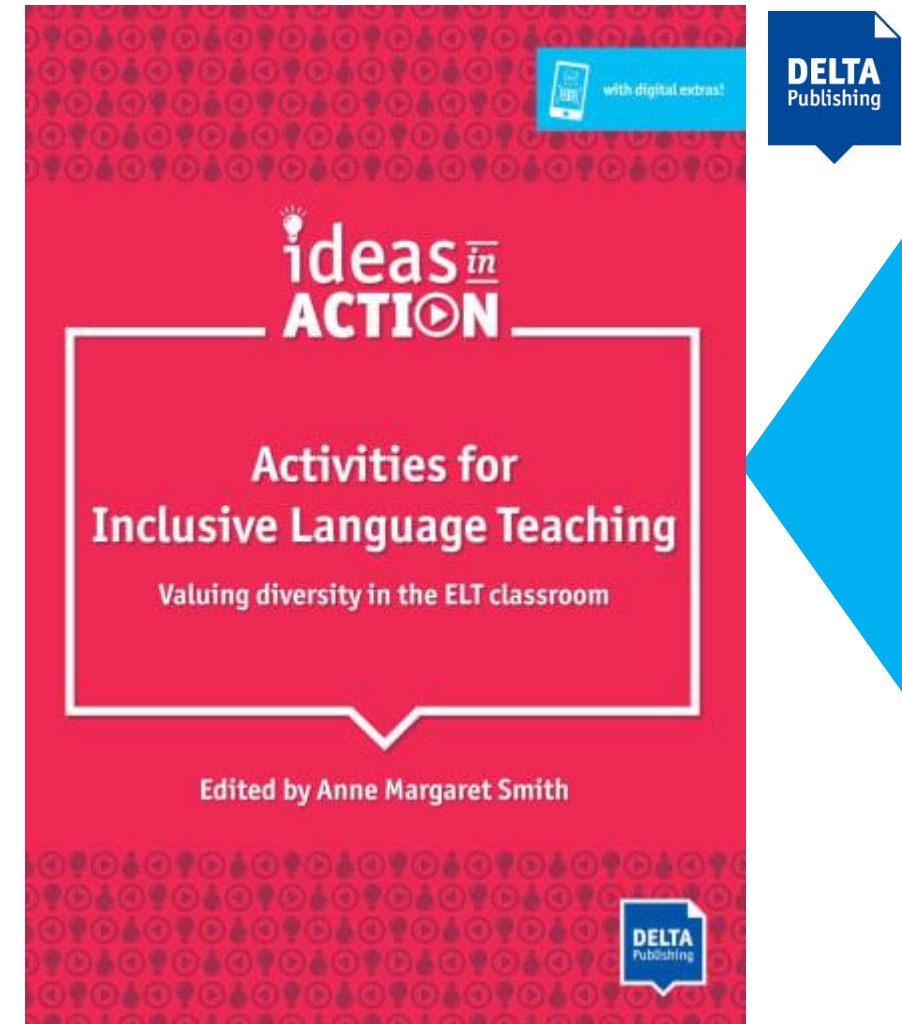
Inclusive language teaching

☞ ■ The welcoming classroom

■ Well-being in the classroom

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■ Working together

My names
Learners reflect on and discuss their many names (e.g. family, friends, formal). They teach each other how to say and write their preferred names.
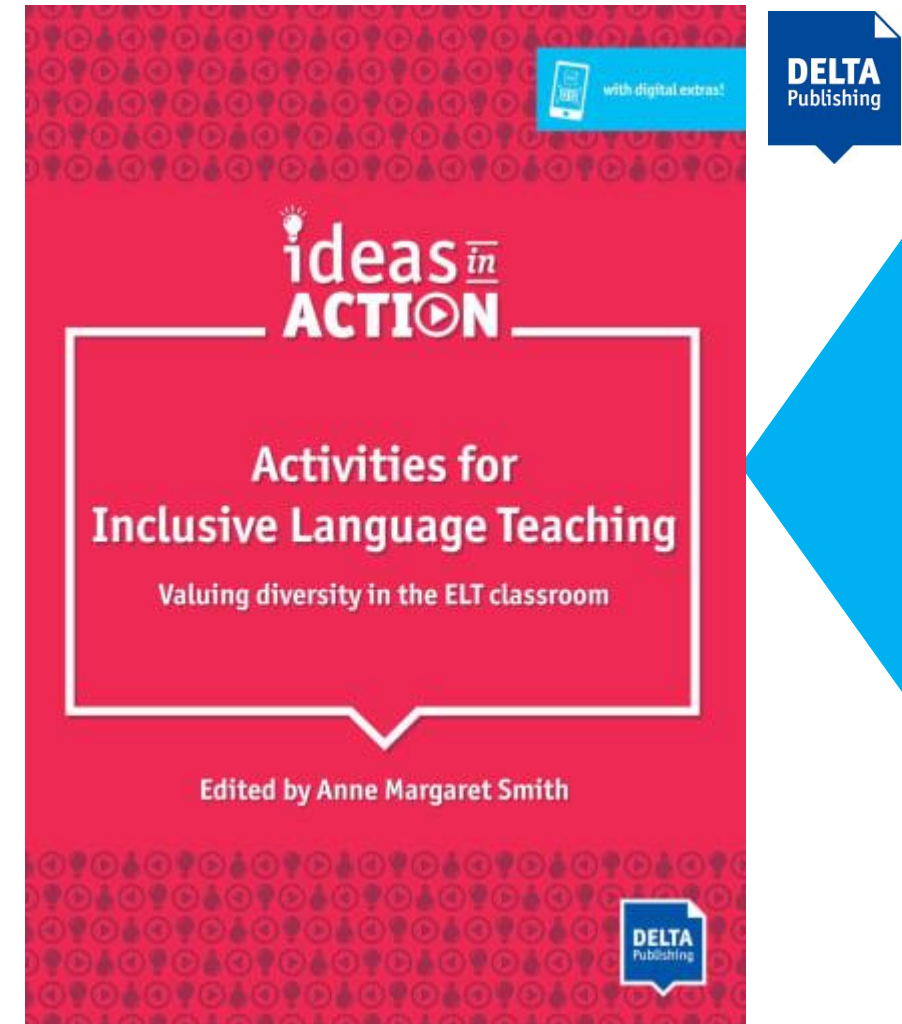
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ideas in ACTION

Activities for Inclusive Language Teaching
Valuing diversity in the ELT classroom

Edited by Anne Margaret Smith

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Inclusive language teaching

- The welcoming classroom
☞ - Well-being in the classroom
- Understanding difference, embracing diversity
- Working together

Memory jar
Learners regularly contribute personal achievements or successes on slips of paper and add these to a 'memory jar'. On special occasions these are taken out and shared.
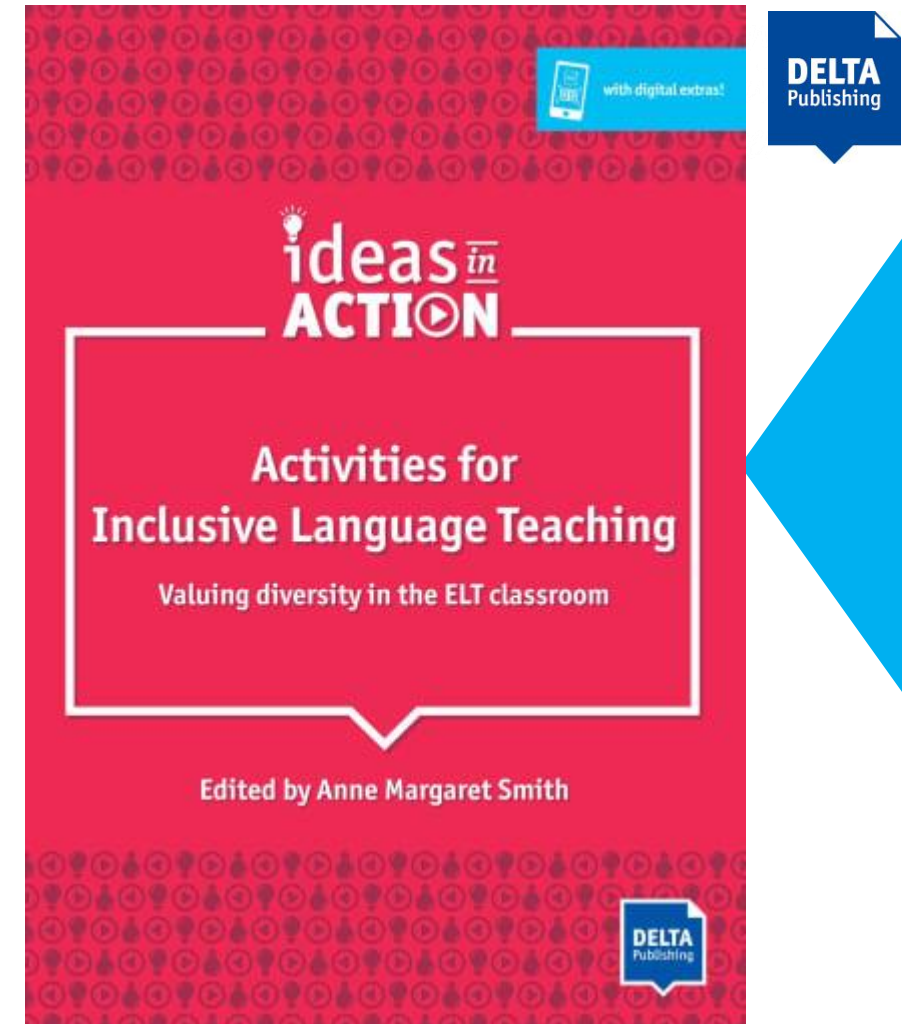
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Inclusive language teaching

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In your shoes
Role-plays which challenge stereotypes of race, sexuality, religion and gender.

Rise in English-as-medium (rather than subject)

As English competence among learners and teachers increases…

- EMI (English-medium Instruction) has increased worldwide.
- CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) has become a norm in some national contexts (e.g. Spain).
- Both create opportunities (affordances) for other languages to enter the classroom.

But very different policies and practices in different contexts:

- 'Positive EMI/CLIL' (my term) can involve translanguaging, inclusive practices, mediation activities (see Tai, 2021).
- 'Negative EMI' can exclude all of these through an 'English only' policy.

'Languages for learning' as a multilingual alternative to EMI (Mahapatra & Anderson, 2022).

Rise of 'additional skills'

What do these all have in common for us as teachers?

- Critical thinking

- Higher order thinking skills (creating, evaluating, analysing)

- 21st century skills (varied discussions of what these are)

- Core competencies (recent Chinese policy shift; Wang & Luo, 2019)

- Global issues awareness (esp. environmental concerns)

Possible answer:

Our role is moving away from being simply teachers of English:

- "Shifting from teaching the subject to developing core competencies through the subject" (Wang & Luo, 2019)

The gradual rise of new *written* literacies

- How much of our communication is actually ICT/EdTech mediated today? And how much of this is more 'written' than 'spoken'?

- How much writing have you done today? How much on paper? How much on a 'device'? How much *speech-to-text* dictation?

- How different are these (>20*) 'new' literacies from those of the past?

- Have these changed, particularly post-Covid? E.g. working from home, blended learning, etc.

- Computers think in written (not spoken) languages (Englishes): "the majority of digital communication is still based on written language" (*Pegrum et al., 2022, p. 12).

Consider also how many learners of Englishes around the world are primarily learning them to both access written texts (e.g. for academic purposes, work-related), and how many to produce written texts (e.g. for academic purposes, work-related).

The gradual rise of new *written* literacies

by 2013, including *remix literacy* (Lessig, 2007), *personal literacy* (Burniske, 2008), *network literacy* (Rheingold, 2009a), *attention literacy* (Rheingold, 2009b), *Twitter literacy* (Rheingold, 2009c), *data literacy* (Johnson, 2011), *mobile literacy* (Parry, 2011) and even *Twitteracy* (Greenhow & Gleason, 2012). Since 2013, the flurry of proposed literacies has continued unabated, including for example *the literacy of 3D printing* (Thompson, 2013), *gamification literacy* (Yamakami, 2013), *social media literacy* (Livingstone, 2014), *hashtag literacy* (Manor, 2014), *the literacy of robot relations* (KnowledgeWorks, 2015), *eHealth literacy* (Notari et al., 2016), *algorithmic literacy* (Rainie & Anderson, 2017) and *AI literacy* (Miao & Holmes, 2021b).

(Pegrum et al., 2022, p. 2)

My conclusion

Learners today need to work more 'with' English, rather than simply 'in' English. As a result, we may need to become less teachers 'of' English as either 'language' or 'system' and more teachers of 'Englishing' as social act.
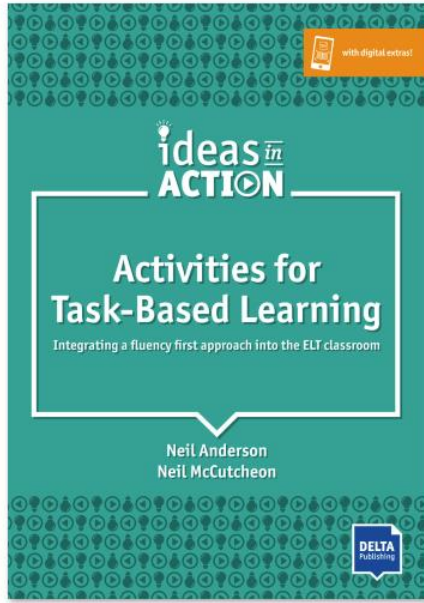
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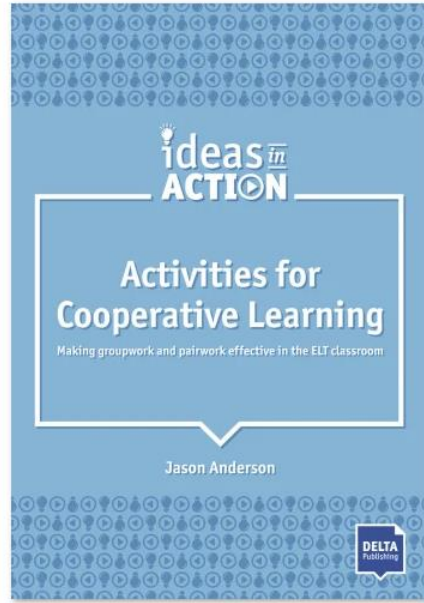7. The rise of (new, ICT-mediated) written literacies

Ideas in Action

Activities for Task-Based Learning
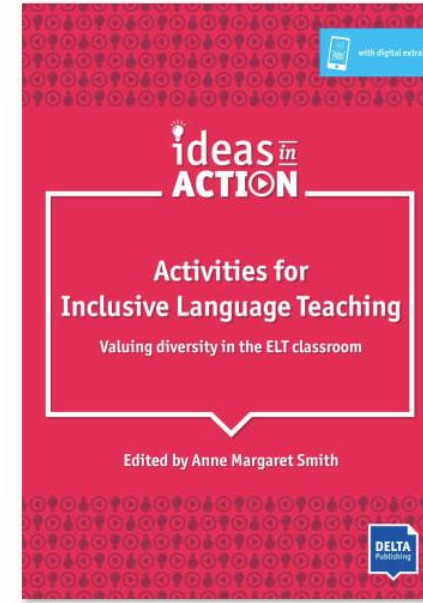
Book with photocopiable activites

Activities for Cooperative Learning

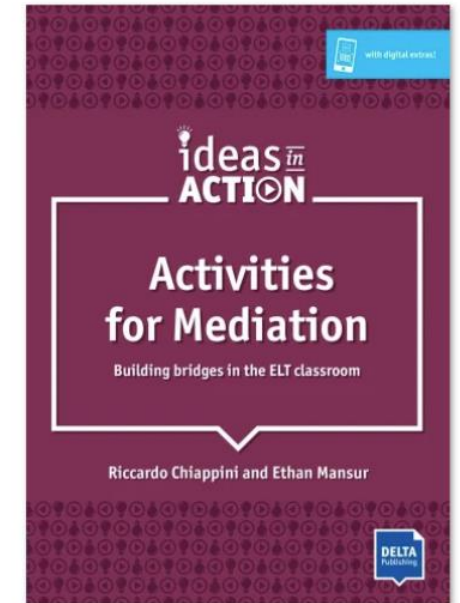Book with photocopiable materials

Activities for Alternative Assessment

Book with photocopiable and online materials

Activities for Inclusive Language Teaching

Book with photocopiable activites

Activities for Mediation

Book with photocopiable activities

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