Exploring engagement with classroom activity, 'together': Learners as active practitioners of learning

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Engaged learning and classroom activity
What kind of engagement?

engaged learning through practitioner enquiry

Why and what type of practitioner research?

Action Research (AR)
Educational Action Research (EAR)
Participatory Action Research (PAR)
Reflexive Practice (RP)
Exploratory Practice (EP)
…

The project

Introduction

Exploratory Practice (EP): What is EP? Why EP?

EP methodological frame and principles

The LTR project (2014 – present): objectives and participants

How EP has been implemented

Students' voice and our understanding(s)

Some of the challenges and benefits

Conclusions: inputs/feedback

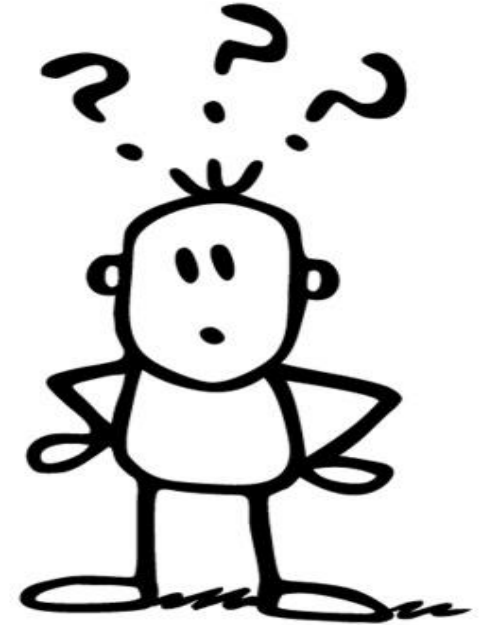**What is Exploratory Practice (EP)?**

puzzle-based classroom inquiry

Puzzles

questions ('why questions') by teachers and learners

about **counter-intuitive phenomena** related to the (language) **teaching and learning experience**

Learners' puzzles: emerging occurrences

struggle with activating knowledge (from passive to active)

Why is it sometimes difficult to find the right words at the right moment to speak fluently?

Why can't I remember vocabulary when I am talking, even though I know the word?

Why can't I conjugate verbs in an appropriate way when I talk?

Quality of Life

Why some of my classmates don't engage with classroom activities? / Why there is so much noise in this classroom?

Teachers' puzzles: emerging occurrences

struggle with applying (canon) methodology
Why don't the students make the most of the written feedback?
Why do I feel that I do not obtain from students sufficient high quality, usable feedback and evaluation of course content and methodology?
Why do my students fail to see the point of language learning strategies?

Quality of Life
Why do students use the mother tongue during the class?
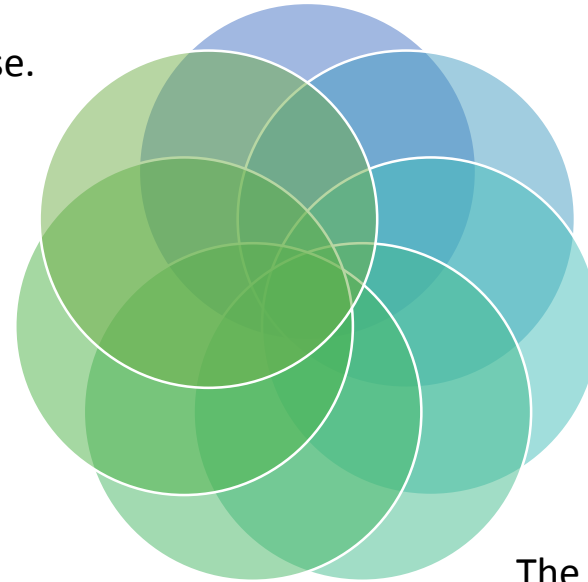Why do students use their mobiles during the class?

Why EP?

'**Quality of life (QoL)** prioritised for (language) teachers and learners.

Make working for understanding a continuous enterprise. **(sustainability)**

Work primarily '**to understand'** classroom life prior to bringing any change.

Integrate the work for understanding into classroom practice. **(use of normal pedagogic activities as investigative approaches)**

'**Involve everybody'** in the work for understanding through teacher and/or learner puzzles.

The work needs to be conducted in the spirit of mutual development. **(inclusivity)**

The work needs to bring teachers and learners together. **(collegiality)**

LTR Project 2014-

- LTR project 2014-16 focused on teacher-initiated inquiry
- LTR project 2016-18 focused on **learner inclusivity**
  MFL (French, Spanish, Italian) & EAP

'Learners are capable of developing as practitioners of learning.' (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 7)

'[…] being in a group is likely to be far more enjoyable and far more productive because of the mutual support such a group can provide.' (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 5)

LTR Project 2016-18

Working on **learner inclusivity**
- including learners as co-researchers for understanding(s)

Working **collegially** with other EP teacher-researchers
- sharing understandings with other teachers

Working **sustainably**
- deploying conventional classroom activities as investigative tools (PEPAs), and qualitative research means as classroom activities
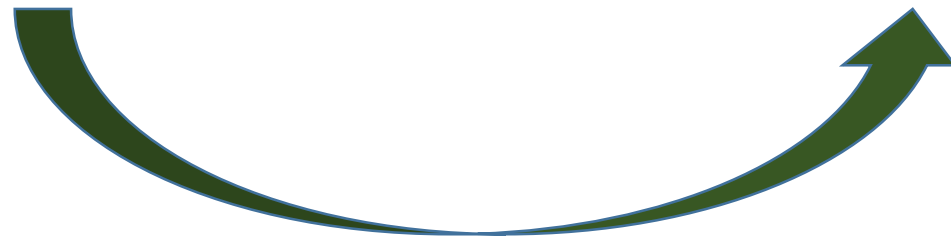
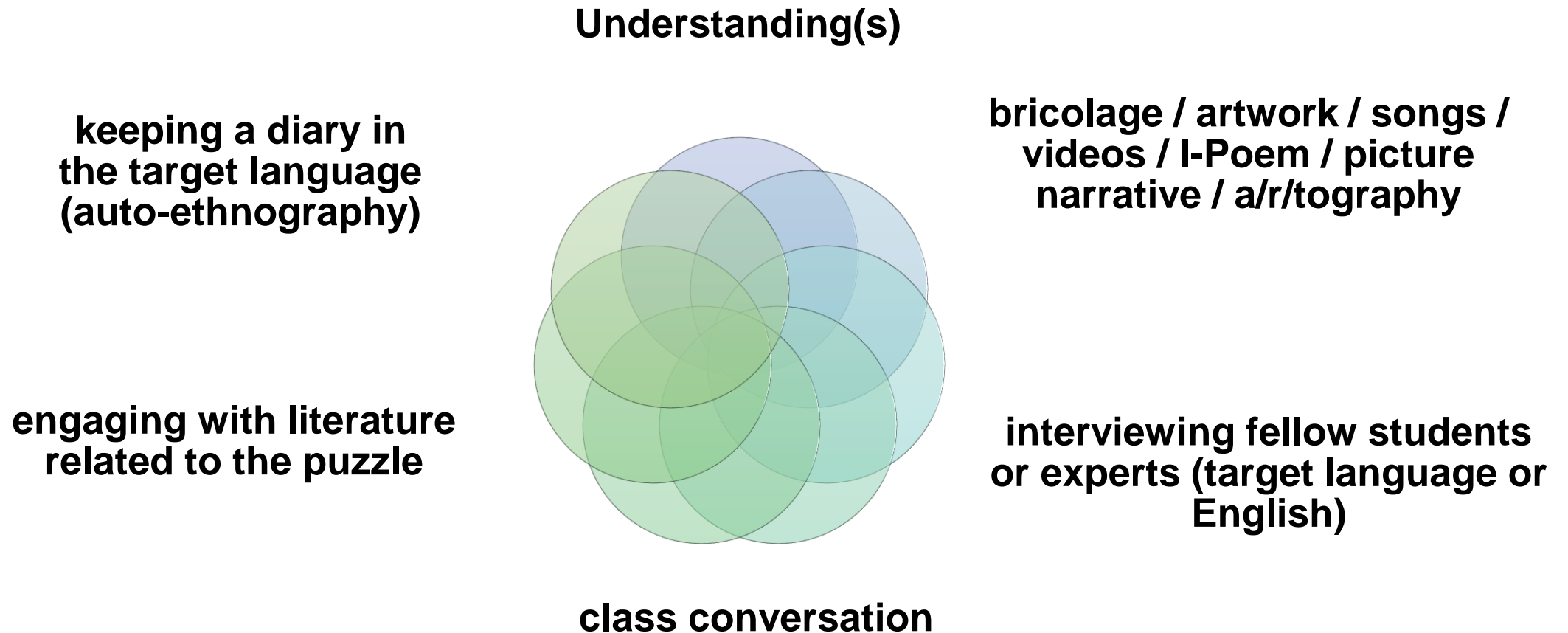# Investigative tools and sustainability

PEPAs
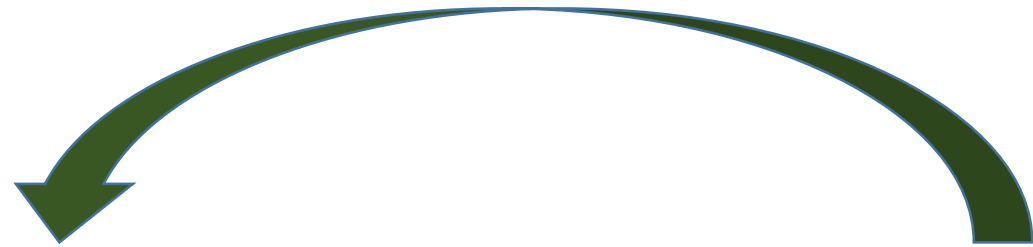
(Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities)

qualitative enquiry tools

Investigative tools and sustainability

Understanding(s)

keeping a diary in the target language (auto-ethnography)

bricolage / artwork / songs / videos / I-Poem / picture narrative / a/r/tography

engaging with literature related to the puzzle

interviewing fellow students or experts (target language or English)
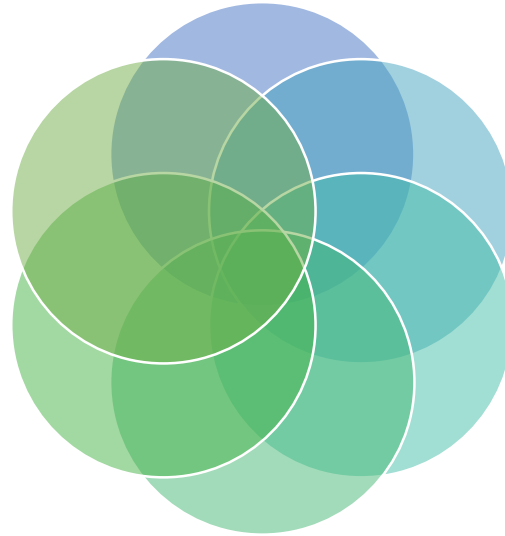
class conversation

Investigative tools and sustainability

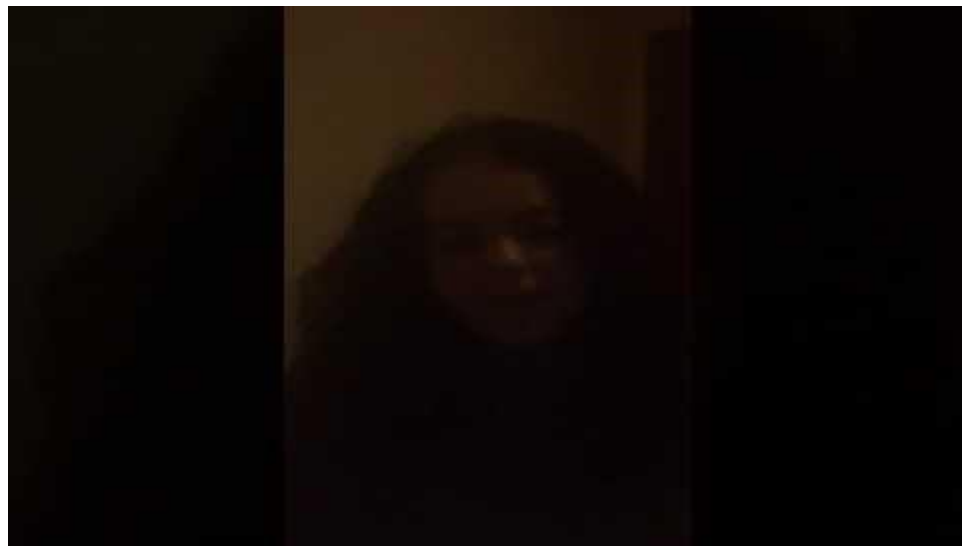reporting on understanding(s)

artwork

final presentation
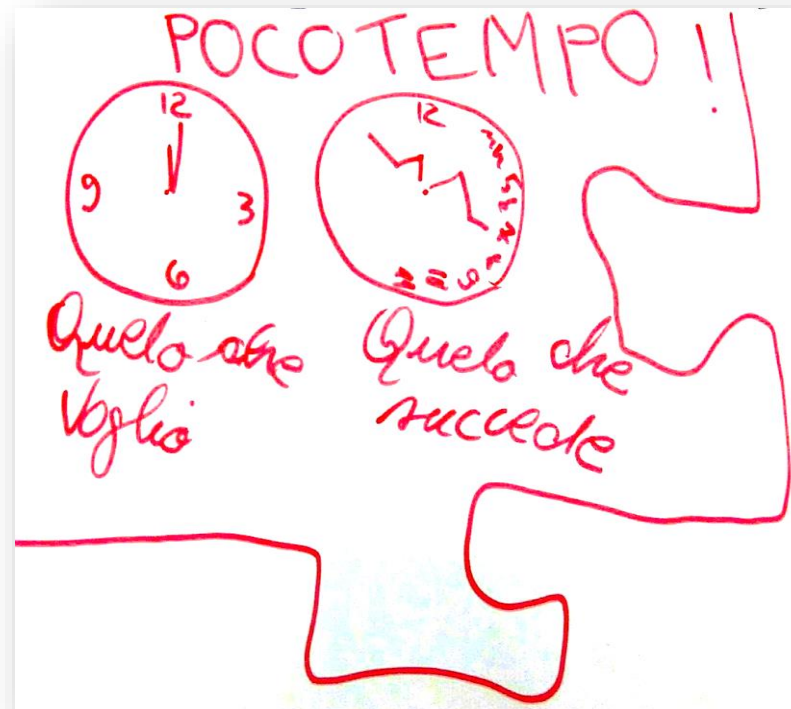(individual / group)

poster

narrative

Natasha

Rana

Challenges & Time

managing increased workload sustainably
lack of space-time for reflection (Ts & Ls)
syllabus fit vs non-prescriptive practice

(by Cristina)

Learning opportunities via understanding

Developing capabilities

- fluency in the target language, reflecting on learning, self-reflection and creativity, sight translation, reporting information into another language, teamwork

Engaging with divergent perceptions of our practices

- unpacking learners' and teachers' mutual views
- illuminating aspects of our teaching practice

Working towards understanding

- fostering a sense of ownership over learning against the backdrop of 'life', of an embodied classroom

Thank you for your attention & Questions

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