

**KING'S**  
College  
LONDON

## Sparking the imagination: creative connectivity and emotional investment in language learning

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University of California, Berkeley  
15<sup>th</sup> March 2024




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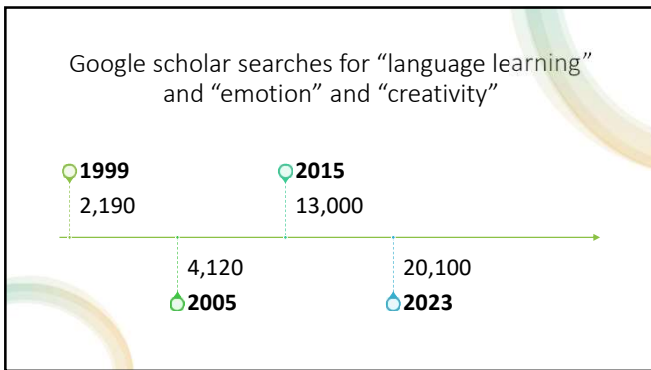
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### Riding a wave



Cavalla, C., Berdal-Masuy, F., Baider, F., Coffey, S. et Pairon, J. (Eds.) (2023) Introduction au numéro spécial : Émotions et créativités en classe de langues. *Le Langage et l'Homme* n°572 : 7-12.



Coffey, S. & De Costa, P. (2023) Guest Editorial to introduce special issue: Emotion and creativity in language learning research and teaching. *Language Learning Journal* 51/5: 559-563.

Emotions and creativity now important areas in language education internationally e.g. <https://www.ecle-emotissage.com/>

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Emotional engagement and creative pedagogies: a discourse to help reframe teacher and learner cognition

- Building on diverse interdisciplinary strands in SLA
  - e.g. the work of work of Barcelos (teacher beliefs), Benesch (using Ahmed's 'sticky objects'), Johnson & Golombek (Sociocultural perspectives; mindful teacher education), Pavlenko (emotions and bilingualism, auto/biographical perspectives), Kramsch (interculturality and the multilingual subject), Kubanyiova (aesthetic and ethical dimensions of language learning and teaching), Barkhuizen (narrative inquiry) .....

(A shout out to)  
*Liberating Language Education: Personal, Aesthetic and Political Perspectives* (2022) edited by J. Anderson, V. Lytra, V. Macleroy and C. Ros i Solé. Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.

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### First generation scholarship using 'emotion' in language learning and teaching

Stevick, E. (1976). *Memory, Meaning and Method*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.  
 Stevick, E. (1980). *Teaching Languages. A Way and Ways*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House.  
 Stevick, E. (1982). *Teaching and Learning Languages*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
 Stevick, E. (1986). *Images and options in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.  
 Stevick, E. (1990). *Humanism in Language Teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
 Stevick, E. (1998). *Working with Teaching Methods What's at stake?* Boston: Heinle & Heinle.



"Having read the book, I concur with the testimonial John B. Carroll gives on the first page: "I'd recommend [the book] to a foreign language teacher to read curled up by the fire on a rainy day, for meditation, entertainment, and renewal. If I were teaching courses in foreign language education, I'd want all my students to read it as a source of inspiration ...". In fairness, I should warn behaviorists and totally cerebral cognitivists that Stevick's book contradicts their theories. However, language teachers convinced of the importance of affective factors in language learning will find support for their point of view." (p. 504)

Marianne Celce-Murcia [UCLA]'s review of Stevick's (1976) *Memory, Meaning & Method*. Rowley, MA: Newbury House. In *Language*, Volume 53, Number 2, June 1977, pp. 503-504 (Review)

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### DFG's Transdisciplinary Framework for SLA in a Multilingual World

Emotions drive every level of "The Multifaceted Nature of Language Learning and Teaching", even if not discussed explicitly at each of the "The macro level of ideological structures" i.e.

- *Belief Systems*
- *Cultural Values*
- *Political Values*
- *Religious Values*
- *Economic Values*

... are emotional regimes

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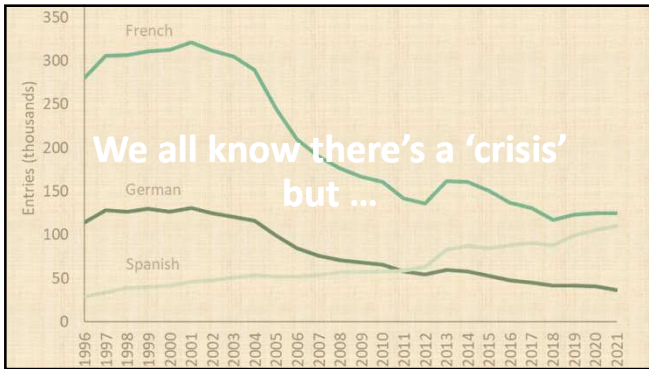
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### Modern foreign languages in England – the search for a ‘method’

Neo-liberal, ideologically driven ‘knowledge’ agenda

Unprecedented government intervention through ‘centres for excellence’, and adherence is imposed through inspection and performance tables

Rigid methods that promulgate ‘processing instruction’

“Language learning in England: why curriculum reform will not reverse the decline or narrow the gaps” (Joana Cardim-Dias, Educational Policy Institute)

The problem is framed as one of ‘method’ rather than ‘principle’

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### The classroom as an instructional space

- Not just in K12 settings, but in adult classrooms e.g. for migrant ESOL students where learning the national language is tightly geared to citizenship rights
- Teachers are cast as “brokers of citizenship charged with promoting ‘British values’ and they are also trainers in employability” (Dearden, p. 247)
- Individuals are called into becoming a subject (Foucault) as a ‘learner’, a ‘speaker of another language’, a ‘recipient of lexico-structural knowledge’
- “Language learners are not just communicators and problem solvers, but whole persons with hearts, bodies and minds, with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identities”. Kramsch, 2006, p. 251

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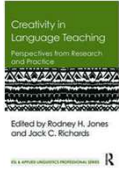
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### Creativity : a false friend?



Coffey, S. & Leung, C. (2015) Creativity in language teaching: Voices from the classroom. In Richards, J. & Jones, R. (Eds.) *Creativity and Language Teaching: Perspectives from Research and Practice*. (pp. 114–129) London: Routledge.  
Coffey, S. & Leung, C. (2019) Understanding agency and constraints in the conception of creativity in the language classroom. *Applied Linguistics Review* 11/4: 607-623.

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The spirit of 'emotional engagement' and 'creative pedagogies', rooted in ancient wisdom

"the correct analogy for the mind is not a vessel that needs filling, but wood that needs igniting — no more — and then it motivates one towards originality and instils the desire for truth"

On Listening to Lectures (*De auditu*, by Plutarch, published in Vol. 1 of the Loeb Classical Library edition, 1927, p. 258, transl by Frank Cole Babbitt)

"The mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness" (Shelley, 1821, 53)

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### A Romantic's view

"The IMAGINATION ... .. dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to re-create; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (*as objects*) are essentially fixed and dead. (p. 205)



Coleridge, Samuel T. (2014 [1817]) *Biographia Literaria Or Biographical sketches of my literary life*. Edited by Adam Roberts. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

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### A scientist's view



[Citing Leo Szilard] "Logical thinking and an analytical ability are necessary attributes to a scientist, but they are far from sufficient for creative work. Those insights in science that have led to a breakthrough were not logically derived from preexisting knowledge: **The creative processes on which the progress of science is based operate on the level of the subconscious**". Jonas Salk has forcefully articulated the same insight and proposed that **creativity rests on a 'merging of intuition and reason.'**" (p. 189)

Damasio, Antonio (1994) *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain*. New York: Avon Books.  
L. Szilard (1992) in W. Lanouette, *Genius in the Shadows*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.  
J. Salk (1985) *The Anatomy of Reality*. New York: Praeger.

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### Vital force? What about structure?

Blake: believed we need to reconcile these opposing forces

Biesta: critique of the "humanist idea of a certain kind of subject who has an inherent potential to become self-motivated and self-directing".



Biesta, G. (2022) *World-Centred Education A View for the Present*. London & NY: Routledge.

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### CONNECTIVITY

'Emotional investment' and creativity are connected to the repertoire concept and are inherent in all discourse

"the primary means of cultivating and maintaining relationships with others and establishing intersubjective understandings is through the activity of communicating and assigning meaning to particular emotional states, behaviors and stances" (Prior 216, p. 31).

Prior, Matthew T. (2016) *Emotion and Discourse in L2 Narrative Research*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

Emotions and creativity come together through 'imagination' – making sensory connections



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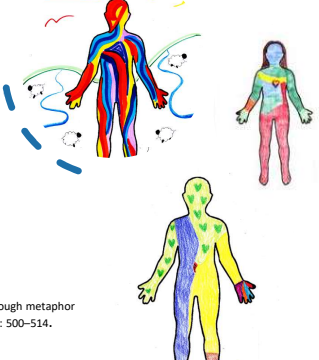
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Reframing language as a *plurilingual repertoire* to extend teacher and learner cognition. We are carriers of language and culture



Coffey, S. (2015) Reframing teachers' language knowledge through metaphor analysis of language portraits. *Modern Language Journal* 99/3: 500-514.

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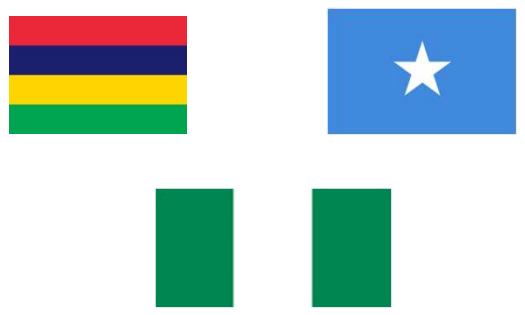
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Memories of a school trip

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**What's in a name?**  
 Illustrating names as autobiographical expressions of social and cultural identities

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M9hR-LQ0xOE&t=6s>

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**Found in translation**

- German: *Sturmfrei* (When parents are away, and you have the house to yourself.)
- French: *frileux-euse* (adjective describing someone who feels the cold easily. Also exists in Spanish as *friloso/a*)
- French: *flâneur* (person strolling around city in aimless way, cool aloof observer of urban society)
- Spanish: *el entrecejo* (the space between both eyebrows)

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**Artefacts to generate descriptions of 'feeling' sensations**

Emotion words of describing, feeling, place, imagined relations

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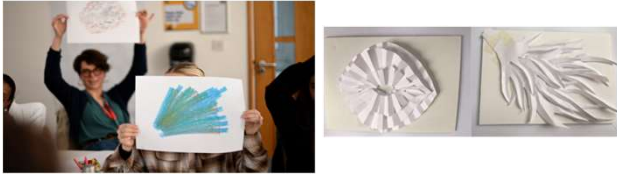
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## Drawing and sculpting sounds



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## Mapping emotion words in different languages onto body portraits



FRENCH	SPANISH	GERMAN
Paix	Paz	Friede
Doux	Suave	Weich
Peur	Miedo	Angst
Dur	Duro	Hart
Jolie	Alegría	Freude
Amer	Amargo	Bitter
Léger	Ligero	Leicht
Amour	Amor	Liebe
Detester	Hair	Hassen
Menace	Amenaza	Bedrohung
Desir	Deseo	Verlangen

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*Some ways to encourage putting emotional engagement and creativity at the heart of the research (and advocacy) agenda*

- Introducing the expanded concept of repertoire. Being a 'language person' (Colin Evans) in new ways, by mobilising and reconfiguring the resources of our linguistic repertoire.
- Building confidence to be brave (the courage to create) and freeing preconceptions about what it means to be creative ("creative self-efficacy", Tierney).
- Asking teachers and learners to consider their own experience (auto/biographical subjectivities).
- Acknowledging the historical perspective, including situating oneself in the broader ideological landscape.
- Questioning the metaphors we use.

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## Summary and further thoughts

- Advocacy arguments may not work if the benefits are abstracted from the immediate reality of the learner. Current advocacy arguments don't go far enough
- Cognitive science research is a very broad church, and has been selectively co-opted by this government to prescribe a particular model
- There other metaphors for learning: questioning the metaphors we use
- **Principle** arches over **method** (so what wider principle is underpinning this action?)
- Ways to ease "epistemological loneliness" (atomised, disembodied, decontextualised) include: to incorporate 'content' *alongside* language through initiatives such as CLIL, cultural learning, arts-based activities, project-based tasks
- We are all carriers of language and culture: bridging between different subjectivities e.g. through auto/biographical and other first-person work
- The 'courage to create' can help sow seeds. Creativity = reconfiguring in new ways for fresh perspectives

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"It will not be obvious to everyone that one becomes a better teacher by describing things differently, rather than by prescribing a different course of action. [...] what makes students decide to invest time and energy in studying a foreign language is not the information the teacher gives them, but the little epiphanies experienced along the way that are often totally beyond the awareness and control of their teachers. These epiphanies are caused by unexpected ways of seeing or saying, not primarily by more efficient ways of doing things or by increased amounts of information."  
(Kramsch, 1995, pp. ix-x)



Redefining the Boundaries of Language Study. Edited by Claire Kramsch. Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.

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