

Introduction

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Communication is an essential component of every aspect of our lives, and education is no exception, as it facilitates learning and understanding between educators and students, and builds strong relationships and trust, fostering a positive learning environment. Communication also promotes social and emotional development, while being integral in developing an awareness of ourselves and the world around us. It was with this in mind that the 8th International Conference on Teaching English as a Foreign Language at NOVA-FCSH, entitled 'Learning to Communicate – Communicating to Learn' was organised. This edition of e-TEALS brings together a selection of articles developed from presentations, with a special focus on implications for classroom practices.

With a focus on successful communication, Margaret Russell shows us how the use of a mediation skills competency framework improves communication skills for a cohort of healthcare students. More specifically, the use of the mediation competency framework to formatively self and peer assess a roleplay task enables the learners to develop the use of both sociolinguistic skills and critical thinking skills.

The second study aims to understand the impact of independent study versus communicative pairwork in terms of Language-Related Episodes (LREs) in a private language school setting with Spanish adult learners of English. Andrew Sampson's findings suggest that pairs working collaboratively engage in significantly more LREs than individual learners. He then goes on to provide pedagogical recommendations on how to further enhance learning in both independent and collaborative tasks.

The next two articles focus on textbooks used in primary and secondary school settings. Silene Cardoso brings our attention to the importance of textbooks

as promoters of Intercultural Awareness (IA) and Intercultural Communication (IC) and analyses the representation of the most significant foreign groups in Portugal and their corresponding cultures in images and texts, compared to American, British and other English-speaking cultures, as well as the Portuguese culture. Whilst her findings confirm a predominance of representation of the UK and the USA, Cardoso provides strategies to help teachers adapt activities to promote learners' IC/ICA in the classroom.

Not forgetting that pronunciation is also a vital element of successful communication, Carlos Lindade sheds light on the lack of explicit pronunciation instruction featured in certified ELT textbooks. Due to the centrality of textbooks in Portuguese schools, Lindade urges stakeholders to take on a more conscientious and intentional approach to the instruction of pronunciation.

We thank all who have contributed to this volume.