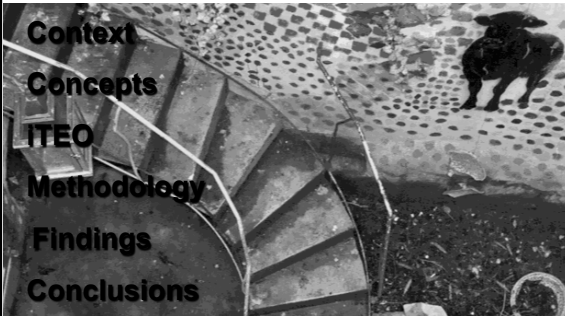**Learning languages through collaborative storytelling with iTEO**

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International Conference on Urban Multilingualism & Education
Ghent 6-8 March

Context
Concepts
ITEO
Methodology
Findings
Conclusions

Moritz Ney

Luxembourg in a nutshell

- Second smallest state in the European Union
- Borders with France, Belgium and Germany
- Size: 2586 km^2
- Population: 512,353 (2012)
- 43% are non-national residents (2012)
- Trilingual state (Luxembourgish, French and German)
- Trilingual education system

Education system in Luxembourg

Institution	Luxembourg nationals	Student with an ethnic minority background
Primary and secondary school	58.3%	41,7%
Preschool	51.7%	48.3%
Primary School	52.4%	47.6%

Nationalities of the students (MENFP 2012)

The success of an education system can be measured by the extent to which students with ethnic minority background are integrated in the education system (OECD 2012a).

Equal opportunities

The likelihood that students repeat a year, enroll in the vocational strand of secondary school EST or leave schools early is higher for students with ethnic minority background than for Luxembourgish students. (MENFP 2011a, 2011b)
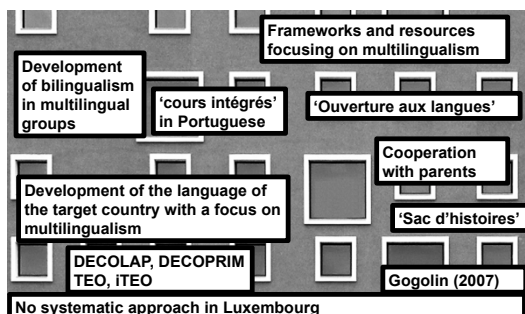
The PISA studies have shown that the Luxembourgish school system was not successful at providing equal opportunities. (Sunnen und Christman 2008:127)


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Concepts and models to further the language learning of migrant children in nursery and primary schools

Frameworks and resources focusing on multilingualism

Development of bilingualism in multilingual groups

'cours intégrés' in Portuguese

'Ouverture aux langues'

Cooperation with parents

Development of the language of the target country with a focus on multilingualism

'Sac d'histoires'

DECOLAP, DECOPRIM TEO, iTEO

Gogolin (2007)

No systematic approach in Luxembourg

Concepts underpinning the iPad App iTEO

- Storying

- A sociocultural and social constructivist perspective on language learning

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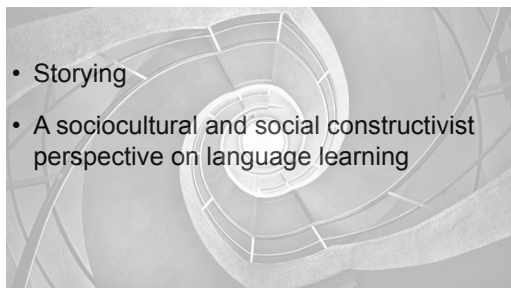
Storying and narrative structures

Human beings make sense in life through narrative elaborations combining events, actions and feelings into a common narrative structure or mode of discourse:

'(…) we represent our lives (to ourselves as well as to others) in the form of narrative (…). (…) human beings make sense of the world by telling stories about it – by using the narrative mode for construing reality. (…) [Tales are tools,] instrument[s] of mind on behalf of meaning making.' (Bruner, 1997, 40, 130, 41)

Narrative is deeply related to the way humans experience memory by organizing things and events in mental sequences and in chronological order, in patterns of cause and effect (FOX, 1993, 195).

Storying and language learning

- Storying is a leading activity in language learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Newman & Holzman,1993)

- Storying is a valuable tool for the 'interanimation of languages' (Bakhtin, 1981, 51) in Luxembourg's school and societal context. Contents and processes can be discussed in L1 while the recorded story and utterances are finalised in an L2.

- Storying binds technological features, social interests and human activities.

- The meaningful activity of 'storying' generates human consciousness in the language learning process (Kozulin, 1998, 8).

- The process of storying allows for what Cummins calls the interpretation, negotiation and re-interpretation of language in the light of the personal and collective experiences and stories (Cummins, 1994, 54).
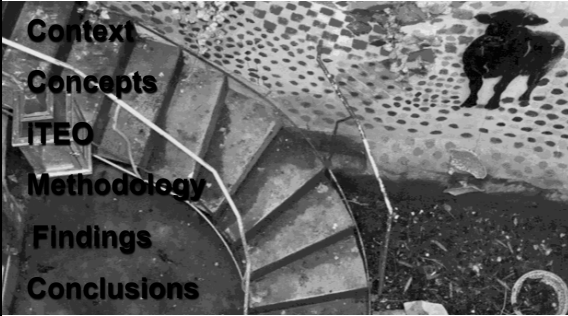

A sociocultural perspective on language learning

We understand language learning as a variable, dynamic, dialogic and differential process that is shaped by social and cultural factors and that involves a range of different human and non-human actors.

(Bingham & Hinchcliffe, 2007; Clark, 1997; Lantolf & Appel 1994; Lantolf, 2000; Law, 2008; Sørensen, 2009; Swain, Kenny & Steinmann, 2011)

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iTEO: space and time for dialogue, authenticity, responsibility

- The transaction with competent members of the cultural group allows for the immersion into the intellectual life and experience (Vygotsky, 1978)

- There is room for innovation, individual timbres and overtones based on personal characteristics, experiences and knowledge (Bakhtin, 1986)

- (Tension-filled) responsivity (Dyson, 1997, 218) and responsibility in unexpected and unprepared sequences is fostered (Lave, 1996, 24, 29).

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Slide 2

The tool: The iPad App iTEO

- Mobility
- Integrated camera
- Touch screen
- Intuitive mode of access and use

Slide 3

The iPad App iTEO

The potential of the iTEO App capitalises on previous work with TEO (Gretsch, 2010):

- iTEO should enable children to **interanimate** their unique language resources when constructing oral texts. Pupils can discuss contents and processes in one language while finalising and recording utterances in a different language.

- iTEO provides users with many opportunities for the **transformation** of languages and language structures through the possibilities of deleting utterances and through endless possibilities for correcting them. The transformative appropriation and internalisation are key characteristics of the imitative process that is a very important factor in language learning (Lantolf & Poehner, 2008, 21).

- The work in the iTEO team should allow for the use of **co- and subvocalising** utterances as a means for language learning, thus establishing the use of individualised means in the language learning process and exemplifying Freinet's 'tâtonnement experimental' (Freinet, 1994).

- The iTEO team can **perform** collective language productions and storying in a **network** involving human and non-human actors (tools):

    '(...) assisted performance is not just performance without competence, but performance before competence - (...) the assisted performance does indeed contribute to subsequent development'. (Cazden, 1997, 309)

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Research questions

We would like to examine

- The ways in which teachers use the iPad App in the classroom;

- The ways in which children use iTEO;

- The extent to which the children's participation in storytelling events changes over a period of 4 months;

- The strategies children use to support each other.

## Slide 6

Methodology

- School in SE Luxembourg

- Participants:
    3 nursery classes,
    1 primary school class (Year 2)

- Focus: Serena (4, P), Daniel (8, F), Fabienne (8, L)

- Methods:
    video recording, observation, interviews (children, teachers), oral texts over 4 months

- Data analysis: grounded theory, ANT

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Slide 2:

Study 1: nursery class

Nursery class:
- Team-teaching, 3 teachers
- 33 children (2/3 with ethnic minority background)

Serena and her peers
- Serena: 4, Portuguese
- Peers: aged 4 to 6
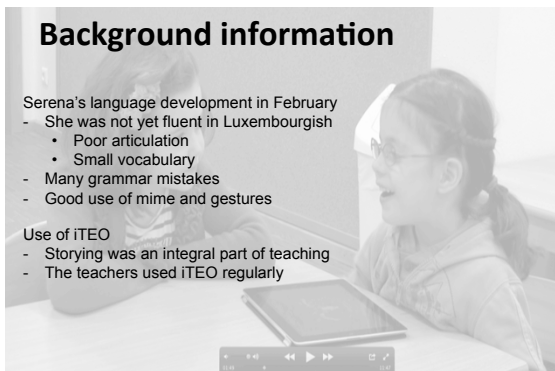

Slide 3:
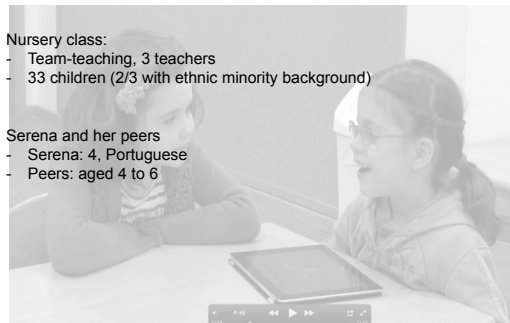
Background information

Serena's language development in February
- She was not yet fluent in Luxembourgish
  - Poor articulation
  - Small vocabulary
- Many grammar mistakes
- Good use of mime and gestures

Use of iTEO
- Storying was an integral part of teaching
- The teachers used iTEO regularly

Slide 4:

Serena's learning progress

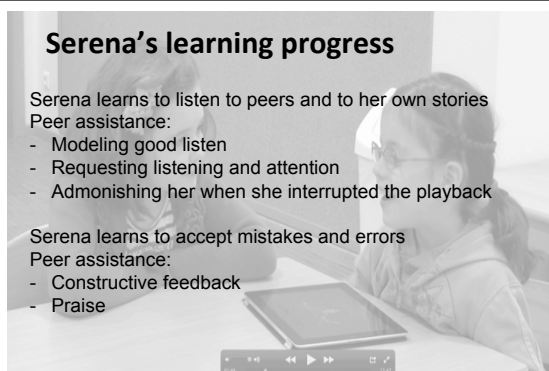Serena learns to listen to peers and to her own stories
Peer assistance:
- Modeling good listen
- Requesting listening and attention
- Admonishing her when she interrupted the playback

Serena learns to accept mistakes and errors
Peer assistance:
- Constructive feedback
- Praise

Slide 5:

Peer assistance

Slide 6:

Serena's learning progress (cont.)

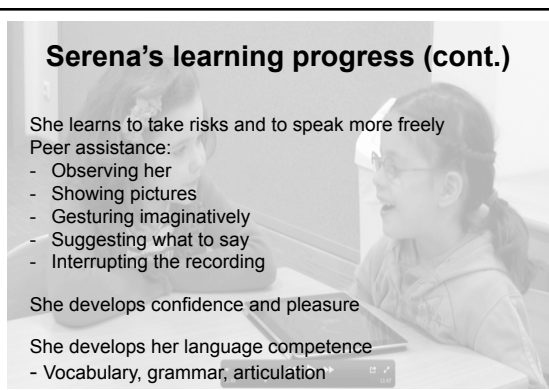She learns to take risks and to speak more freely
Peer assistance:
- Observing her
- Showing pictures
- Gesturing imaginatively
- Suggesting what to say
- Interrupting the recording

She develops confidence and pleasure

She develops her language competence
- Vocabulary, grammar, articulation

An dono so, so, de Prinzessin. Mamm! Ech wëll net goen! Ge Firwat? Schwëster. Mee, well, ech hued kaal! Ech wëll net goen. Dono sot, do sot Doudou, mee, wee bass du? Méng Mamm! Mee, du bass net de Kand.
And then said, said the princess. Mummy! I do not want to go! Why? Sister. But, I have cold. I do not want to go. Then Doudou, said, then said, but who are you? My mummy! But, you are not my child.

Summary

- The findings illustrate, firstly, that the participation of the younger children in language activities involving iTEO improved over time.
- In particular it was noted that Serena, a four-year old Portuguese child, became more eager to tell stories over the 4 months.
- While in March she avoided recording stories on iTEO, she was pleased to do so in June.
- While in March she needed peer assistance, by June she was speaking with greater confidence, fluency and proficiency. In addition, she developed better listening skills.
- While at first she was apprehensive when listening to her recordings, she learned to listen with some concentration to both her own recordings and to those of her peers.

(Kirsch 2012)

Study 2: Year 2

Primary school:
- team-teaching, 3 teachers

Daniel
- 8, French

Fabienne
- 8, Luxembourgish
- Hearing aid

'Au restaurant'

'De rien'

Later in the interview:

- Which factors influence the learning outcome?

- How did the iTEO team perform and learn language?

Findings and interpretations

Establishment of a dialectic and dialogic process of internalisation and externalisation through the transformation of utterances

- In the iTEO team language (what and how it is done/spoken/lived) is internalised via sub- and covocalising (Haught & McCafferty, 2008, 144)

- Daniel's original model is transformed in the production process and the partners in the team can innovate and bring in their timbres and overtones based on their individual experiences and characteristics.

Findings and interpretations continued

- The children in the two settings develop awareness of the possibilities of change and transformation in languages because they learn to delete and correct their utterances at will and they work with persistence at the perfectibility of their utterances.
- The partners in the iTEO team develop learning strategies, meta-cognitive functions and conceptual knowledge about language (Kozulin, 1998, 129).
- The work in the iTEO team promotes the appropriation, the invoking and the incorporation of others' voices through dialogue and discourse (Wertsch & Hagstrom & Kikas, 1995). Routine language practices can thus be coloured with and through one's personal and inimitable voice.

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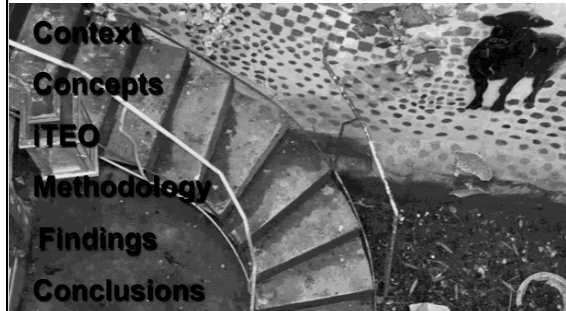
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Conclusion: work in progress....

- Need to embed our findings into initial teacher education
  - In progress

- Need to develop in-service training
  - iTEO formation continue (22 teachers) with official ministerial support

- Need for further research
  - 3 year- project iTEO with some funding from the MEN

- Need to work with the whole school

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