**Targeting social inequalities through collaborative research in the English classroom**

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This presentation will discuss the ongoing research project, ‘Teachers as agents of transformation through their engagement in innovative interdisciplinary projects in the English classroom (DATE)’ (RecerCaixa 2016; 2016ACUP-001). The research is based at two secondary schools in a medium-sized town in the Barcelona Metropolitan Area. More than half of the students at the two schools do not meet minimum curricular standards for English on completing compulsory schooling. These results are telling of the broader social inequalities these young people face; according to different indicators, if there is one curricular subject in our context that is telling of underlying social and educational inequalities, it is English. Indeed, disposable household income in the town is below the national average, while unemployment in general, and youth unemployment in particular, is quite a lot higher. The research project sets out from the premise that investigating and taking action to improve the competences in English of socio-economically disadvantaged youth is a meaningful contribution towards more socially just educational and professional outcomes for them.

The project’s research methodology is based on collaboration between in-service teachers, university-based researchers and university student volunteers, among other educational agents. These teams work together to design, implement and/or evaluate innovative approaches to teaching English. This presentation is the outcome of a teacher/university researcher partnership, which has involved jointly evaluating the results of a classroom project entitled Parallel Lives, in which students produced and exchanged audio-recordings in English with students at a different town in the region. By working together to analyse the recordings, we both explore the opportunities and outcomes for students’ learning afforded by the classroom project, and also reflect on how teacher/university researcher partnerships might contribute to our mutual professional development and to knowledge building.

**Keywords:** social inequalities, project-based learning, learning English, research partnerships, collaborative research.

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