

Language teaching in times of uncertainty through Linguistic Landscaping – getting creative during Covid shutdown

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In 1969, Carl Rogers stated that humans might easily "do away with teaching. People would get together if they wished to learn" (p. 154). Now, more than half a century later and during a global pandemic that has had a profound impact on teaching and learning, it can be argued that, to some degree at least, this statement has been fulfilled. That is not to say that schools and formal learning have dropped by the wayside – far from it - but alternative approaches have been explored and may very well become normalized in the near future, many of which were precipitated by the current world crisis.

With this in mind, this presentation will outline two collaborative case studies, one in primary education, the other in secondary education, in which the teachers had originally designed 'linguistic landscaping' as in-class projects but then had to transform them into online teaching formats. Linguistic landscapes are understood as the prominence and visibility of languages on public and commercial sites and has been adopted as a pedagogical approach to raising language awareness regarding multilingualism in language education. The two cases will present data collected ethnographically in both sites (n =75, ages 10-11 in primary; n =20, ages 15-16 in secondary). The data were compiled from online interactions, due to the Covid 19 crisis in Catalonia, Spain.

Applying qualitative analysis, the data show that even in most extraordinary times it is possible to enhance students' creativity through project-based learning, while helping them become more aware and inquisitive about their surroundings and the world (even during a complete shut-in!). It also demonstrates that this teaching and learning format offers room for reflection and can guide students to critically analyse what they discover through this inquiry-based approach, based on data they collected to create their home and cityscapes.

Keywords:

Linguistic biographies, homescape language teaching, cityscape language teaching, innovation, creativity