

Teachers and teacher educators: Education and professional development for early language learning
TEdELL2020 *Virtual*
12 – 14 November 2020

Final Report

'Teachers and teacher educators: Education and professional development for early language learning', which became 'TEdELL2020 *Virtual*', was organized through **CETAPS, FCSH, Nova University, Lisbon** in collaboration with the AILA **Early language Learning Research Network** (ELL ReN) and the **Primary English Education in Portugal** (PEEP) Network.

The conference website: <https://tedell2020.wordpress.com/>

The conference email: teachered.ell@gamil.com

General information about TEdELL2020 *Virtual*

- The conference conveners were Sandie Mourão (CETAPS) and Carolyn Leslie (CETAPS / FCSH)
- The organizing committee was made up of colleagues from CETAPS, representing Nova University Lisbon and University of Porto faculties.
- Invited colleagues from AILA ELL ReN and the PEEP Network were involved in the scientific committee, and provided feedback on proposals.
- The conference was held on Zoom Meetings and used six different Zoom Rooms. The faculty has a Zoom account for its faculty members / researchers, so each Zoom room was hosted by a CETAPS member, an FCSH faculty member or a CETAPS secretary.
- ICT Technicians from FCSH Nova University Lisbon provided technical support before and during the event.
- Speakers known to the conference organizers were invited to chair the presentations - 14 accepted the invitation.
- There was a total of four keynotes, five self-organized symposia, nine thematic panels (with three or two papers) and one round table.
- Four publishers agreed to sponsor the event, **Cambridge Assessment English** (sponsored a virtual concert) **Multilingual Matters**, **Palgrave Macmillan** and **Routledge** (available to speak to participants during coffee breakouts and donating books for raffles).
- The event opened with a welcome speech from Professor Carlos Ceia (Director of CETAPS and CIPSH Chair in Digital Humanities in Education) and a musical presentation by the Nova University musical group *Real Tuna Académica NeOlis*.
- Social events included a Quiz Night and a Virtual Concert with the Portuguese band, MONDA (<https://www.mondamusic.com/>).
- We included a General Meeting for AILA ELL ReN members on the Friday evening of the event (13 November).
- Recordings were made of most presentations (with permission). These were uploaded onto a private YouTube channel and made available to delegates until May 2021.
- A post-conference publication is being prepared, with interest from Routledge.

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Delegates

There were 92 delegates registered for the conference, although only 83 participants actually checked in with the secretaries, so we do not have the exact number for attending participants. Four publisher representatives attended during the breakout sessions. The opening and closing sessions and keynotes reached a total of 65 participants. One of our most treasured memories was seeing the Zoom room fill with delegates just before a session.

Amongst the delegates, there were seven PhD students (three were speakers), three MA students and three school-based mentors. Fifty speakers presented in all.

Speakers and attendees came from a total of 22 countries, from Japan to Mexico although most were based in Europe. The highest number of delegates came from Portugal and Germany (n=16), followed by Spain (n=12) and Norway (n=9). See Table 1 for more information.

Europe	Nº	Rest of world	Nº
Portugal	16	Israel	1
Germany	16	Japan	1
Spain	12	Mexico	1
Norway	9	South Africa	1
Poland	6	USA	1
UK	6		
France	3		
Iceland	3		
Malta	2		
Italy	1		
Croatia	1		
Greece	1		
Luxembourg	1		
Slovenia	1		
Sweden	1		
Switzerland	1		
The Irish Republic	1		

Table 1: Countries of residence (TEdELL2020 delegates)

The post conference survey

AILA ELL ReN

Sixty-nine responses were received in total, which represents approximately 76% of the delegates (considering 90 to have attended). Of these, 44.9% were members of the AILA ELL Research Network.

The majority of delegates (76,8%) had not attended an AILA ELL ReN conference in the past (see Table 2). When asked if they would consider attending an AILA ELL ReN conference in the future, 89,8% of the respondents indicated this was likely or very likely.

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AILA ELL ReN past conferences	Responses %
Umea, Sweden (2014)	17,4%
Oxford, UK (2016)	15,9%
Reykjavik, Iceland (2018)	17,4%
None of these	76,8%

Table 2: AILA ELL ReN past conference attendance

The event

- Two thirds of delegates would have attended the conference had it been face to face (66,8%), but 13% would not have attended and 20,3% were not sure. It would appear that the virtual format attracted attendance from just under a third of the delegates.
- Just over half of the delegates found out about the conference through a mailing list (ie AILA ELL ReN, Linguist or REYLL) and one third by recommendation from a colleague. Other dissemination routes mentioned were other conferences and websites.
- Half of the delegates had not attended a virtual conference before, yet 98% considered Zoom easy / very easy to use. With regard to technical support through the help centre, 77,9% of respondents indicated they did not visit as they did not need to. Just over 16% visited the help centre and received the help they needed.
- The conference website was considered very or extremely helpful by 94,2% of the respondents and 91,3% considered the number of pre-conference emails they received to be just right.
- Almost 83% of delegates attended on day 1 and on days 2 and 3 participation was indicated at just over 92%. All delegates considered that the pdf document with links to the Zoom rooms worked well.
- With regard to the different presentations, an average of 93,7% stated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the keynotes, self-organised symposia and thematic panels.

30-minute Coffee Breakouts statements	In agreement %
I thought the Coffee Breakouts were a good idea	68,1%
I used the Coffee Breakouts to take time out and left my computer	58,0%
I used the Coffee Breakouts to catch up with work on my computer	33,3%
I used the Coffee Breakouts to speak to speakers after the sessions	31,9%
I used the Coffee Breakouts to speak to the Keynote	27,5%
I used the Coffee Breakouts to speak to friends, colleagues etc	21,7%
I used the Coffee Breakouts to speak to a publisher	13,0%

Table 5: Opinion about the Coffee Breakouts

- Regarding the Coffee Breakouts (see Table 5), which were set up to provide an opportunity for delegates to interact and talk to each other, just over two thirds of the delegates thought these were a good idea. Nevertheless, 58% of the respondents indicated they left their computers during the coffee breaks. Just over a quarter of respondents used the coffee

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breakouts to speak to a Keynote, and just under a third used them to continue discussion after the sessions. Our experience as hosts of the Coffee Breakouts room was amazing, as delegates rushed in after sessions to continue discussion. This was one of the conference highlights for us. Feedback from the publishers was positive, although only 13% of the respondents indicated they spoke to a publisher. We were disappointed that so few delegates used the Coffee Breakouts to speak to friends and colleagues and this we think is because it was not clear enough how to schedule this. Anecdotal feedback from colleagues who did get together for informal gatherings was very positive.

- Networking and engaging with others, formally and informally, is one of the reasons to attend a conference and, as organizers, we were very keen to provide opportunities for this. We included encouragement and information in the pre-conference information on the website, in the book of abstracts and in the information read out before and after each session.
- We set up the Coffee Breakouts and also organized a Quiz and a Live-streamed concert to encourage and facilitate interaction and engagement. However, 40% of the respondents did not individually engage with anyone at the event. Just over one third (37,7%) used the Coffee Breakouts and 30% used the chat function during the sessions to interact with others. All in all, 30,4% engaged with delegates they knew and 21,7% with delegates they did not know. Just over 11% of the respondents wished there had been more opportunities to interact.
- With regard to developing professional networks, 49,2% considered that the TEdELL2020 Virtual conference was very useful or extremely useful and 42,3% considered it to be somewhat useful.
- Evening events included a quiz night and a live-streamed concert. Just 14% of the respondents attended the Quiz and 27,5% watched the live-streamed concert. Anecdotal feedback from delegates, around both activities, was very positive.
- Overall, 82,6% of the respondents indicated they were very satisfied with the conference, and no respondents declared dissatisfaction.

Advantages of attending a virtual conference

Survey respondents were asked to consider the advantages of attending a virtual event. The comments were wide ranging and touched on the following topics:

- time saving with no need to travel (n=19)
- cheaper, due to no travel or accommodation costs (and lower conference fees, though no one actually specified this!) (n=14)
- the opportunity to combine attending a conference with work life (n=14)
- accessibility and inclusiveness (n=12)
- being able to tune in and out, select sessions and move between sessions (n=8)
- the opportunity to combine attending a conference with family life, especially when delegates have small children (n=7)
- better conditions (ie comfort of home); good sound quality, visible PPTs and access to recordings (n=6)
- Opportunities for networking, asking more questions than at a F2F event, speaking to Keynotes (n=5)
- More ecological (n= 3)

Several delegates mentioned preferring face-to-face events, and others noted how surprised they were that they had enjoyed a virtual event so much.

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Comments and suggestions

Of the 69 survey respondents, 52 left a comment / suggestion.

There were some good suggestions for improvement, these included reference to the University including a credit card payment option; advertising the networking opportunities a little more, clarifying the registration / check-in process, giving clearer information to speakers about when to arrive for their talks and including more discussion time in the programme. All suggestions are taken note of for future events!

To end we would like to share a few of the overwhelmingly positive comments survey respondents left ... they filled our hearts with joy to read them.

(...) I can see the effort and work put in to making this work well and with thought, care and effort to make delegates feel as welcome as it was possible to do. As a very new member of the research network only having a previous request to join confirmed in this last week, this was wholly new ground, but it was welcoming and did not feel exclusive.

I really enjoyed this conference, I discovered the online format and was very positively surprised by it. I think you provided the right dosage of information / e-mails (especially with the last 2 pdfs you sent, programme and links - that were just perfect and enough to guide us through the conference). I liked the coffee breakout rooms idea, but I did need to get up and have my own coffee break (and computer break too). I loved your pdf with Portuguese recipes, I thought it was a very personal gesture, more than what you usually get at a front-to-front conference. And, last but not least, the joy, enthusiasm and simplicity in communication that everyone shared definitely enabled us to overcome the obstacle of virtual social gatherings.

I think this was excellent professional development and the organisers went one step further to give participants a taste of Portugal through the provision of the recipe booklet and Monda concert. Lovely ideas and much appreciated!

(...) The Conference could be very well followed and everything worked very well. It felt like there was a good atmosphere and it was nice to see people all over Europe from our [home]. It made us in a way disconnect from our daily routines; it became a kind of oasis full of fresh and new ideas and perspectives.

This was the best conference I have attended in a very long time. Every single presentation I attended was really good. The atmosphere was great and now I am buzzing with ideas. Thank you for making it such a success!

If it stays online, I would love to attend again!

Sandie Mourão and Carolyn Leslie
TEdELL2020 Virtual Conference Co-conveners
10 December 2020