



FOREWORD

Two university undergraduate students are talking over Skype in the university lab. One is an American student of Portuguese language from an American university. The other, is a Brazilian student of English language at Universidade Estadual Paulista in Assis, in the rural inlands of São Paulo state in Brazil. They are about 7.200 kilometers apart from each other. There is a time difference of three hours between them at that time of the year. Despite the geographical distance, there is a sense of closeness – a telepresence, perhaps because of the colorful webcam images showing their faces and the whole atmosphere in the background. These images also give the cues about the weather in each of the two locations. The weather is cold in the US because the American student wears a plaid flannel shirt whereas in Brazil the weather is hot - the Brazilian student is in her high summer trunks. Though a bit hesitant when speaking, the students' faces are smiley, their bodies are relaxed. Their conversation flows slowly, but with variations in rhythm, sometimes in Portuguese, sometimes in English. They try to overcome the limitations of their knowledge in the respective languages by asking each other for new vocabulary and alternating between English and Portuguese. They use Google Translator to look for new words and press a button to listen to the pronunciation of a metallic sounding voice. They focus on getting meanings across and on the exchange of information, ideas and opinions about their families, their undergrad courses, their favorite music styles, the politics and economy of their countries. Their focus on the conversation is a 100%, their gaze is on the computer screen the entire sixty minute session - no time to look around, complete focus of attention during the sixty minutes of interaction. "See you next week?", the American student asks. "A gente se vê!" [See you!], the Brazilian student replies. [Click] Skype closes. One more teletandem session is over.

Perhaps, twenty years ago, what is described above would hardly represent an activity or (even less) a language class, in the minds of teachers and students. The ways in which technologies have advanced

in the last couple of decades have caused a relevant pedagogical impact over foreign language pedagogy and on what “once upon a time” educators and students conceived as “a foreign language class”. Once more, teachers’ position in the classroom has shifted to a different one, as Leffa (2005) has pointed. Once the center of the students’ attention and controllers of every action and discourse in the classrooms, teachers now become mediators of students’ interactions in the target language. Some novice teachers to technology may even feel lost and unable to understand what their roles are as teachers in the middle of their students who can, now, interact among themselves autonomously, without any control of their teacher and receiving language feedback from each other ubiquitously (from anywhere, any gadget, any time). Previously, Paiva (2009) has discussed this evolution of the foreign language teaching technology. We have gone a long way: from the chalk and blackboard to the radio, from the radio to the tape-recorder, from the tape-recorder to the language labs, from cassettes to DVDs, from DVDs to computers, from computers to e-mail, from e-mail to VOIP technologies such as Skype, Oovoo and, now, Zoom. However, to what extent has foreign language teaching been transformed? What is next to affect the teaching of foreign languages? Holograms? (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcfNC_x0VvE) Has technology really affected the evolution of foreign language pedagogy? Do not our pedagogical practices continue to enact the same kind of eighteenth century pedagogy, now dressed up in new and seducing cyber ways? Technology does not embed critical and transformative pedagogies. Rather, they are in the multiple alternative creative and critical ways of our practices in teaching foreign languages. Technology represents one of the many ways we, as teachers, can carry out such critical and transformative practices.

These ideas of change in foreign language pedagogy and the insertion of new technologies into the teaching foreign languages connect us to the two purposes of this issue of DELTA. First, we want to pay a tribute to a Brazilian educator who experienced several transformations in this area and whose ideals and long history in foreign language education have touched generations of Brazilian teachers of foreign languages – *Maria Antonieta Alba Celani*. Second, we want to contribute to the existing knowledge about a relatively new context for practicing and learning foreign languages – *teletandem*. Within this virtual, autonomous and collaborative context, a learner of a foreign

language establishes an online *intercultural contact* (Kramsch & Uryu, 2014) with his/her partner. They are located in different parts of the world and they help each other learn their native languages or language of proficiency. They also get in touch with each other's cultural practices. They do it by means of voice, text and webcam images of VOIP (Voice Over Protocol) technology, such as Skype, Oovoo or Zoom.

Preparing this issue to a scientific journal such as DELTA and simultaneously paying a tribute to a professor-emeritus, scholar, educator and teacher as Maria Antonieta Alba Celani are both challenging and daring responsibilities. Professor Celani's outstanding work has had a profound impact over the teaching of foreign languages as well as over Applied Linguistics research in Brazil, of which she was the initiator in the sixties. Dr. Celani has touched the academic lives of hundreds of colleagues, students, graduate supervisees and researchers. All of us had the pleasure and privilege of being by her side, like myself (of whom she was a mentor). Her scholarly contributions to the English language education, to the teaching of languages for specific purposes and to the development of foreign language teacher education in Brazil and abroad have been exceptional. Professor Celani has always been a faithful and dedicated worker to the Catholic University of São Paulo (PUC-SP), her home institution. However, with her characteristic open-mindedness and sensitivity as a scholar, she never denied her generous help and guidance to any higher education or foreign language teaching institution that she has ever been in contact, in Brazil or abroad. Neither has she merely circumscribed her educational, academic and social actions to her home university. For decades, acting as an educator, a scholar and theses supervisor, professor Celani has been encouraging many research and educational projects through her work of educating and qualifying so many other teachers, scholars and researchers. They left the so-called LAEL - the Graduate Program of Applied Linguistics of PUC-SP to explore other vistas and to create leading educational research programs around the whole country and abroad. Somehow, all of these professionals carry "a bit of Antonieta" inside them, as they teach, as they supervise theses and as they do research in their own ways and paradigms. Barbara & Caltabiano (2013) have previously offered an overview of professor Celani's scholarly contributions.

Foreword

Most of the papers in this issue of DELTA were presented during the *I INFLIT - International Meeting of Foreign Language Learning in-Tandem*, organized by Dr. Leila Martins da Costa, senior lecturer at the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of Miami, Florida, USA. For the first time within the ten years of the Teletandem Brasil Project (Telles, 2006), researchers and teachers from Europe, United States and Latin America who practiced and studied foreign language learning in-tandem gathered in an international meeting at the University of Miami, in March 2014. They wanted to share their pedagogical and practical experiences to better explore and understand this virtual context of learning foreign languages. We organized the articles of this issue in three parts. They correspond to the areas in which the contributors explore foreign language learning in teletandem through their research: the *conceptual*, the *pedagogical* and the *cultural* areas.

The two beginning articles in *Part I: Teletandem: The conceptual realm* provide the readers with an understanding of teletandem as a virtual, collaborative and autonomous context for online intercultural contact and interaction in the target language. In the first article, Telles presents the teletandem context from the students' perspectives and responses to it. In the second article, grounded on Complexity Theory and on different ways that teletandem can be implemented, our French and Italian research colleagues Mompean & Capellini explore the possibilities of a dynamic model of teletandem. The five articles in *Part II: Teletandem: The pedagogical realm* offer our readers a few perspectives from which to view the pedagogical practice of teletandem. The first article begins with assessment, a perspective that is highly and often considered by our partner institutions abroad because it involves alternative classroom roles of teachers in supporting and assessing learning in teletandem. Consolo & Furtoso offer a study that addresses issues related to the characteristics of a foreign language spoken in an online learning context, the ways that teachers can conduct oral performance assessment and possible assessment parameters in the context of teletandem. In the second article of Part II, Ramos examines the students' belief system that emerges out of discourse produced within the virtual intercultural context of teletandem, drawing relevant inferences to teletandem mediation sessions that are conducted right after the students interact in teletandem. The third article of Part II by

Carvalho, Messias and Diaz (our research collaborator at UNAM - Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México) examines how Brazilian undergraduate students majoring in Portuguese/Spanish degree program organize and implement the teaching of Portuguese for Spanish speakers within a Teletandem context. From the same practical perspective, the fourth article by Silva & Figueiredo reports on their findings of a study using an alternative way of telecollaboration in teletandem. In this case, the authors used a different software called *Openmeetings* instead of *Skype*. The Brazilian and German university students who participated in their study aimed at enhancing the learning and the sharing of knowledge related to a specific area of their interest by using English as *lingua franca*, in addition to Portuguese and German. In the last article of Part II, Aranha & Cavalari used their previously defined concept of *institutional integrated teletandem* (Aranha & Cavalari, 2014) to report on a study about writing activities following the teletandem sessions. The authors address issues about how future Brazilian teachers of Portuguese who participated in an institutionally integrated teletandem offered corrective feedback to texts written by their American partners. Finally, in *Part III: Teletandem: The cultural realm*, we present two articles. In the first, grounded on sociocultural theory, Salomão verifies the impact of teletandem interactions over the Brazilian teachers' concepts and beliefs concerning language and culture. Her participants were Brazilian teachers of Spanish as a foreign language who took part in a blended course about tandem learning with Uruguayan and Argentinean teachers of Portuguese as a foreign language. In the second article, Santos explores the construction of cultural identity representations by Brazilian and French students (third generation of Portuguese immigrants) who took part in a teletandem process.

Finally, we call attention to the fact that this special issue is being published in English so that our partners abroad can have both an easier access and a glimpse to the multiple perspectives from which our international research team has been investigating the virtual, autonomous and collaborative context of teletandem in the project *Teletandem Brasil: Foreign languages for all*. Although most of our publications of articles and theses have been in Portuguese, many others in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish can be found on the site of the project – www.teletandembrasil.org.

We also wish to express our gratitude to FAPESP – Fundação de Amparo a Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo, to UNESP – Universidade Estadual Paulista and its PROINTER – PROPE/PROPG funding program, to the reviewers of the articles in Europe, North and South America and to the Editors of DELTA, Dr. Leila Barbara and Dr. Maria Aparecida Caltabiano from whom we have had precious support in achieving the publication of this volume. We hope the ideas brought by the articles will inspire further research and dialogue about teletandem. As professor Antonieta Celani once pointed out with her profound educational view of foreign language teaching, the Teletandem Brasil Project is not only engaged in the theoretical and philosophical aspects of the knowledge construction through the online intercultural contact in teletandem. It is also engaged in “the key political issue of the exclusion of individuals for lack of opportunities to acquire proficiency in one or more foreign languages that the globalized world is increasingly demanding” (Celani, 2009:13).

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