

# What constitutes effective language teaching? Internal and external perspectives

## Outline

- 1) Thesis: Expanding the construct of instructional quality by defining subject-specific dimensions
- 2) Background: DESI video study (Helmke et al. 2008)
- 3) Internal perspectives: BELT (Rossa 2017; 2019)
- 4) External perspectives: Developing classroom observation scheme ELT\_IQ (Helsper, forthcoming; Rossa & Helsper, work-in-progress)
- 5) Conclusions: 1) Instruction in the target language, 2) meaningful communicative tasks, 3) classroom discourse, 4) linguistic and conceptual support and feedback

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# Instructional quality

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Instructional quality = the degree to which instruction is effective, efficient, and engaging

“observable characteristics of classroom instruction that are **orchestrated by teachers** and goes along with **desirable development** of students’ **learning outcomes** in a **theoretically plausible** way, supported by **empirical evidence**.”

(Mu et al. 2022: 2, cf. Klieme 2019: 396).

good teaching (adhering to standards)

+ effective teaching (achieving objectives in terms of learning outcomes)

= quality teaching (cf. Berliner 2005, Kunter & Trautwein 2013)

# Surface structures

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# Deep structures

# Expanding the construct of instructional quality

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Basic dimensions (vgl. Klieme 2019; Kunter & Trautwein 2013; Praetorius et al. 2018); FA (bottom-up)  
TIMSS Video (vgl. Klieme, Schümer & Knoll 2001)

COGNITIVE ACTIVATION

classroom management (STRUCTURE)

student SUPPORT

+X?

# What are subject-specific dimensions of IQ?

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Still searching for the holy grail: How generic or subject-specific are dimensions of teaching quality?

(Praetorius & Gräsel 2021, cf. Rossa 2019, Wilden 2021, Schurig et al. 2022)

Results, so far, RE: language teaching  
cognitive-aesthetic / communicative-cognitive activation  
(Praetorius & Gräsel 2021: 185)

The goal remains “mapping the terrain of current practice and [...] determining the potential impact of different features of instruction”  
(Tengberg et al. 2022: 775).

# What is the evidence base for effective language teaching?

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ISLA: isolated facets, no coherent theory in the post-method era

- Grammar, Vocabulary: explicit form-focus, repetition and elaboration
- CLT: content-based teaching, meaningful tasks, planning, structured input
- Feedback and support: formative assessment, metacognition

(Rossa 2019)



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The image shows a screenshot of a video editing software interface. It features two main windows:

- Transkript Mediaclip 1:** This window displays a transcript of a video clip. The text reads: "I give you a minute... to find all the words that you need in your mind." The window has a blue title bar and standard window controls (minimize, maximize, close).
- Timeline Clip 1 (2330030311.avi):** This window shows a video timeline. The top part of the timeline has a blue bar representing the clip's duration. Below this, there is a pink bar labeled "Wer" (Who) with several segments, indicating a multi-camera or multi-track edit. The timeline includes a playhead and time markers at 2:50, 3:00, 3:10, and 3:20. The bottom right corner of the timeline window shows a timecode of 0:02:57.

# Helmke et al. 2008, DESI video study: features of instructional quality in ELT predict outcomes in 105 classrooms

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- using English in interaction
- supporting higher proportions of learners' speech
- allowing for sufficient time to think about questions
- creating opportunities for self-correction

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# BELT: beliefs about effective language teaching

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Formative / longitudinal, exploratory interview study: 18 months' in-service training scheme  
How do beginning language teachers make sense of their work? (Rossa 2017)

Central findings:

Beliefs develop along the three-act drama of “**revolution, adaptation, resignation**”,

focus on subject-specific ideals



more generic conceptualisations of effective teaching

(learners' interests, communication, joy)

holistic, communicative approach



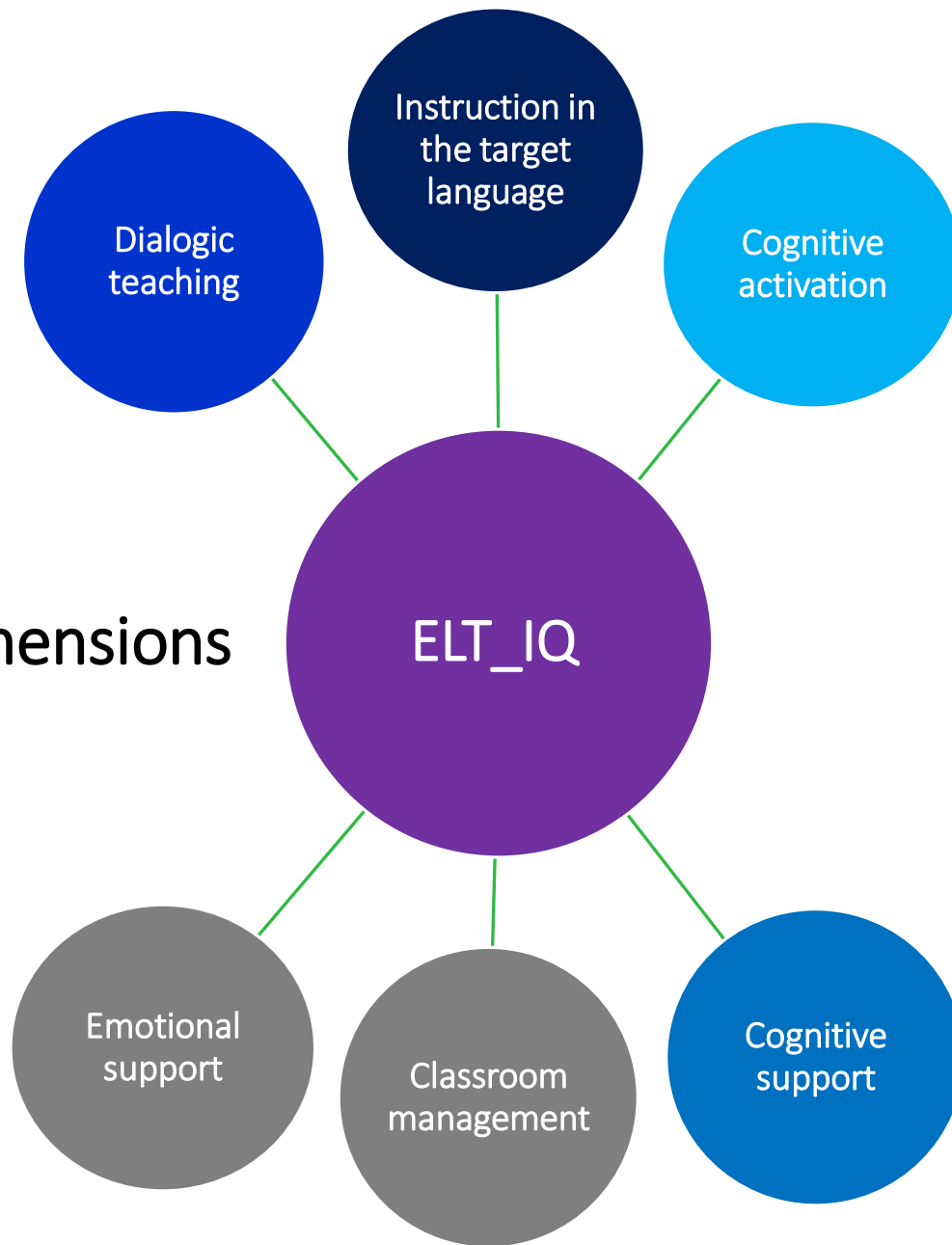
itemised, bitesized, focus on forms approach

(differentiation, supporting individual learners)

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## ELT\_IQ model: six dimensions



# ELT\_IQ: four subject-specific dimensions

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## **Instruction in the target language**

The teacher delivers the lesson for the learners clearly and correctly in the target language.

## **Cognitive activation**

The teacher encourages an in-depth examination of meaningful content in the foreign language.

## **Cognitive support**

The teacher constructively supports the learners' linguistic and conceptual learning processes.

## **Dialogic teaching**

The teacher stimulates autonomous learner contributions to classroom discourse AND responds to them in a way that allows for a meaningful elaboration and connection of ideas





**Cognitive activation** (The teacher encourages an in-depth examination of meaningful content in the foreign language.)

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**Category** (indicators)

**Challenging tasks** (Learners often work on tasks that require analysis and inferencing, reasoning, expressing opinions, or creative thinking.)

**Linguistic Alternatives** (Learners frequently compare linguistic alternatives AND Differences in meaning or communicative outcomes are generally addressed in depth.)

**Openness of task outcomes** (Learners work on tasks that have a clearly defined communicative outcome AND are free in terms of both language and content when they perform and complete the task).

Bell et al. 2020; Ellis et al. 2019; Larsen-Freeman 2003; Loewen 2012; Long 2018; Mayer 2004

## **Cognitive support** (The teacher constructively supports the learners' linguistic and conceptual learning processes.)

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**Working with learners' prior knowledge** (The teacher makes explicit connections between classroom activities and learners' prior knowledge in terms of their previous experiential knowledge, content covered previously in the classroom, and their L1/L2 linguistic resources)

**Corrective feedback: Linguistic repair** (The teacher often supports learners' utterances by offering linguistic repair AND generally does this by giving hints and prompting self-correction)

**Feedback as an opportunity for deeper learning** (There are three or more feedback loops that address the reasons why the learners' contribution would require conceptual or linguistic correction AND Misunderstandings are fully resolved OR There are no observable misunderstandings.)

Bell et al. 2020; Mackey et al. 2016; Lyster & Ranta 1997; Schmidt 1995, 2001; Li 2010

- ✓ Categories based on basic dimensions and TALIS video (Grünkorn et al. 2020)
- ✓ Deductive/inductive approach to constructing subject-specific categories
- ✓ Rater training, three raters
- ✓ 101 DESI videos with a language learning focus, coded at least twice

	relative frequencies			
	1	2	3	4
Instruction in the L2	7,92	22,28	<b>41,58</b>	28,22
Cognitive activation	28,71	<b>42,57</b>	23,76	4,95
Cognitive support	7,43	<b>47,03</b>	42,08	3,47
Dialogic teaching	19,31	<b>45,05</b>	28,22	7,43

Data taken from Helsper, forthcoming

## Inter-rater reliability

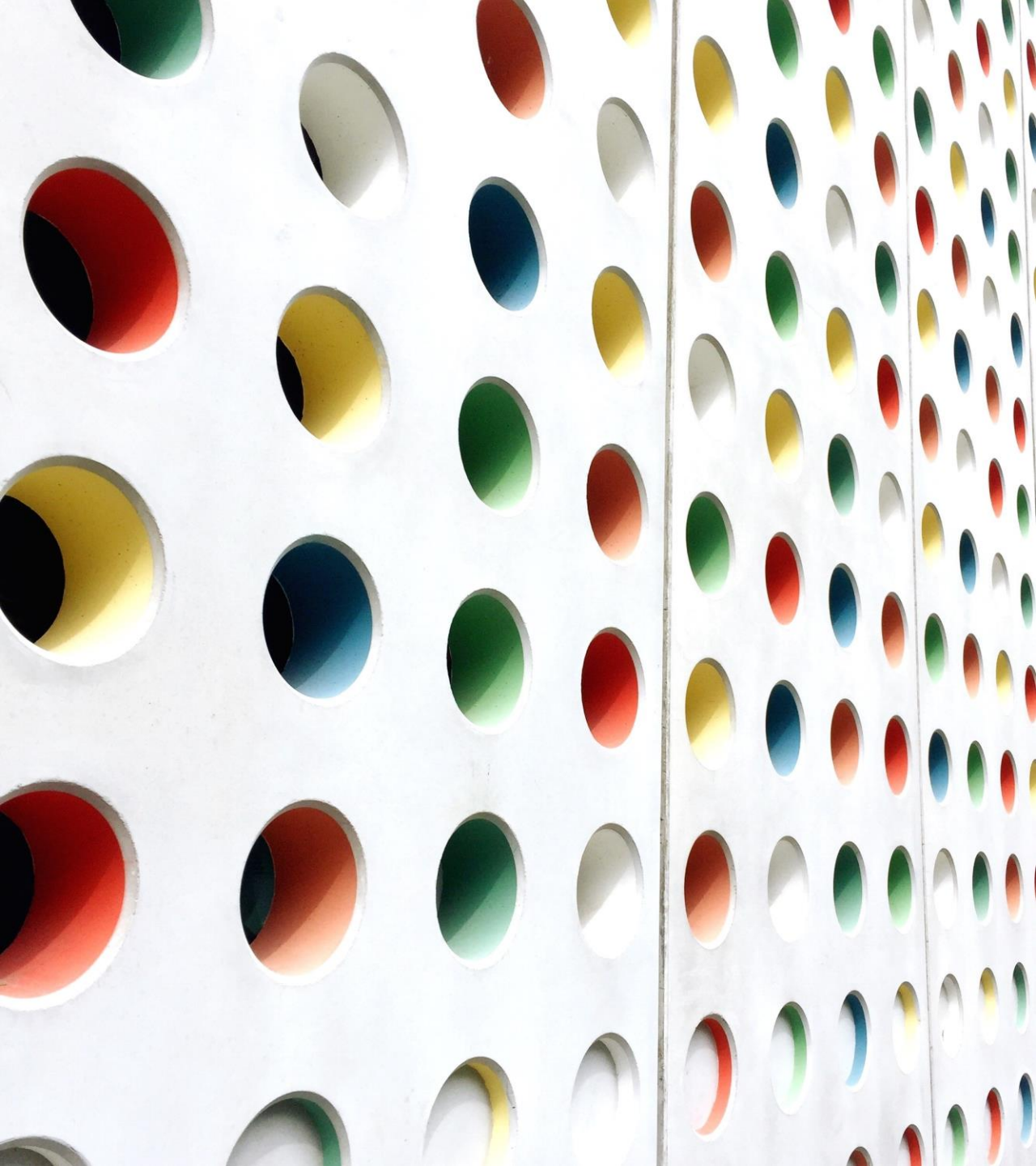
Observation dimensions	Averaged percentage of exact and adjacent agreement (exact)
Instruction in the L2	96,02 (52,44)
Cognitive Activation	96,02 (46,49)
Cognitive support	98,01 (54,46)
Dialogic teaching	98,04 (48,63)

Data taken from Helsper, forthcoming

Conclusions: Making sure that what we count counts

- 1) instruction in the target language
- 2) meaningful communicative tasks
- 3) classroom discourse
- 4) linguistic and conceptual support and feedback

The road ahead: testing the model, testing for predictive validity



**TEACHING ENGLISH**  
FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION  
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