Spotlight — Anna Bartosik

Who is Anna Bartosik?

Hahahaha!

Let's start with how I introduce myself now. I've been saying my name in Polish since December and my identity is tied to my name. It has taken me a long time to stop making it easier for English speakers to say my name.

If you look at my email signature, you'll know how to pronounce my name, my pronouns in the order of languages I am comfortable speaking (she/ona/elle), and my degrees.

I don't know which identity I should highlight; I suppose language teacher because of the content of this interview. We can add professional details as well, such as: instructional designer, facilitator, researcher. These details don't often help, as many people don't understand what an instructional designer does.

I'd like people to know that I am an open, detail-oriented person who responds to challenges, and I enjoy supporting teachers and helping others succeed. I have a memory like an elephant, except for names.

Finally, I'll add that I always make an effort to write in my voice, and I hope that comes through.

Your recently conferred PhD in Languages and Literacies Education, looks at self-directed teacher development in digital spaces. What's your biggest takeaway from your research?

My takeaway has been silent until now. I documented how research participants in my study have been influenced by Twitter, and I didn't have the time to follow up on the people and resources they mentioned. I've been continuing my learning in various ways: following the people research participants mentioned, doing some reading, and listening to some podcasts. Many of these people are from disciplines different from mine, and there are more things to learn: about perspectives from underrepresented groups, about intersectionality, about representation, about racism and colonialism in language teaching. My biggest takeaway from my research is the awareness that I need to keep learning.

Can you speak to your involvement with the LINCDIRE Project?

I'll provide a link to the site so that there is context for my response, but in short, LINCDIRE is a collaborative SSHRC-

Anna Bartosik's work as an educator spans across language learning research, instructional design, teaching, and teacher training/facilitation. In her instructional design work, Anna focuses on digital accessibility, representation, and creating opportunities for students to direct their own learning. Her recent projects include a hybridized accelerated English language learning program, completing her dissertation, facilitating workshops for faculty with a focus on educational technology and Universal Design for Learning, and developing online language learning courses courses using Open Education Resources. Anna is looking forward to new challenges this fall as she begins a secondment with the Teaching and Learning Exchange at George Brown College.

funded project across multiple institutions encouraging and promoting plurilingualism and pluriculturalism in language learning.

I've had the opportunity to have various perspectives working with LINCDIRE and the associated LITE e-portfolio site. My first encounter with LINCDIRE was with the technical elements of the e-portfolio site. I assisted in adding questions (Can-do statements) to scenarios in additional languages so that students could complete their progress on the site. I worked with the developer on the back end by helping them test out new plug-ins and using the e-portfolio in student mode in order to gauge where things could be improved or needed adjusting.

The second element of my involvement with LINCDIRE included visiting teachers' classrooms who were using the LITE e-portfolio site, and I conducted classroom

observations as part of the LINCDIRE research project. My prior experience with the backend of the e-portfolio helped me as a classroom observer to understand what stage of the action-oriented process students were at, and I assisted a bit with some troubleshooting of the site.

Yet another aspect of my work included coding interviews that had been conducted with research participants using NVIVO, a qualitative analysis tool. They were interviews with various teachers whose students had participated in the project as well. We worked together as a group to first individually code the interviews with NVIVO, then convened together to strengthen inter-rater reliability.

These various experiences helped immensely when our team worked to write our respective chapters in the book *Activating Linguistic and Cultural Diversity in the Language Classroom*. Finally, I read the drafts of each chapter and was one of our team's proofreaders.

In one of your latest publications, "Teachers Implementing Action-Oriented Scenarios: Realities of the Twenty-First Century Classroom," you and your co-authors examine action-oriented approaches. How do we see this approach in English Language Teaching?

As a language teacher who is also an instructional designer, I see a number of benefits of using an action-oriented approach to teaching language, regardless of the language being taught. I'm sure you're familiar with outcome-based curricula, and building courses with a backward design is something that instructional designers do regularly, but the agency of the learner is not often present in course design. What I mean is a student doesn't often get the opportunity to guide, plan, and select their learning journey in a supported way. Teachers are often concerned about having all of the answers and seeing only one way to achieve a course outcome, but we don't often see students at the helm, determining or defining a real-life task and what the final assessed product will look like. Students aren't often given an opportunity to reflect on their own learning and provided with that agency to see their plurilingual competency. However, with the action-oriented approach to language teaching, a teacher can provide possible resources and direction for learners, but the learner ultimately is in charge of the journey, and that journey looks very different for each learner, based on their current language abilities.

You have multiple publications—what has been the most rewarding part of being published?

I have had the opportunity to present my research work at various conferences, ranging from local, to national, to those not related to language teaching, like the Social Media and Society Conference in July.

I knew early on in my studies that I wanted to talk about my research openly, and so I've focused on transparency by blogging about stages of my process, tweeting with the hashtag #MyResearch, creating a few TikToks, and talking about my research on podcasts and in recorded webinars. Thinking out loud as I was processing has been rewarding for me; I can't tell you how many people have reached out to me privately or when I meet them; they talk about different things I've posted or recorded that resonated with them, and yet they didn't publicly share their thoughts. These encounters with fellow teachers and researchers reinforce something my research revealed—that silence is **not** not learning. We don't know how our words and work impact others because it's difficult for many of us to publicly acknowledge we don't know something or that we are still learning. When people are in precarious or political work situations, it is even more difficult to add a public voice.

Ultimately, knowing that some people have been impacted by my sharing successes and setbacks is the most rewarding part of learning in the open for me.

What does the future of English language teaching in Canada (or Toronto) look like to you?

Can I give a hopeful answer?

I hope the future of ELT everywhere, but especially in our Canadian context since it affects us most, is not referred to as an "industry" or operationalized as a business model.

I hope the value of language learning is recognized as an asset, and not a deficit. To that end, I hope we see an end to the use of "ESL" in this country and find terms that don't place one language as more important over other languages.

I hope that language teachers have better conditions for working: benefits, salaries which reflect the work they do, vacation, sick days, a say in how students will be assessed without mandatory protocols for settlement language programs, and access to relevant professional development.

I hope that self-directed professional development is recognized and acknowledged by professional organizations

and employers. This should include conducting research and getting degrees.

Finally, I hope that teaching language includes: making all learning materials accessible and free, both in print and digitally; providing language learners with more agency; encouraging multiple languages and perspectives in the classroom; using resources which reflect the experiences and voices of learners and surrounding communities; and continuing to build online language learning resources and courses, because there is value to studying language online.

If you would like to know more, please visit Anna's site.
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Thank you once again for your contribution, Anna!