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Promoting Teachers' Adoption of Metacognitive Strategy Instruction in L2 listening through Design-Based Research

An Ecological Perspective



Language Teachers' Nexus: Building Communities of Practice



TeAMM

Teaching and Acquiring Multilingualism and Multiliteracies

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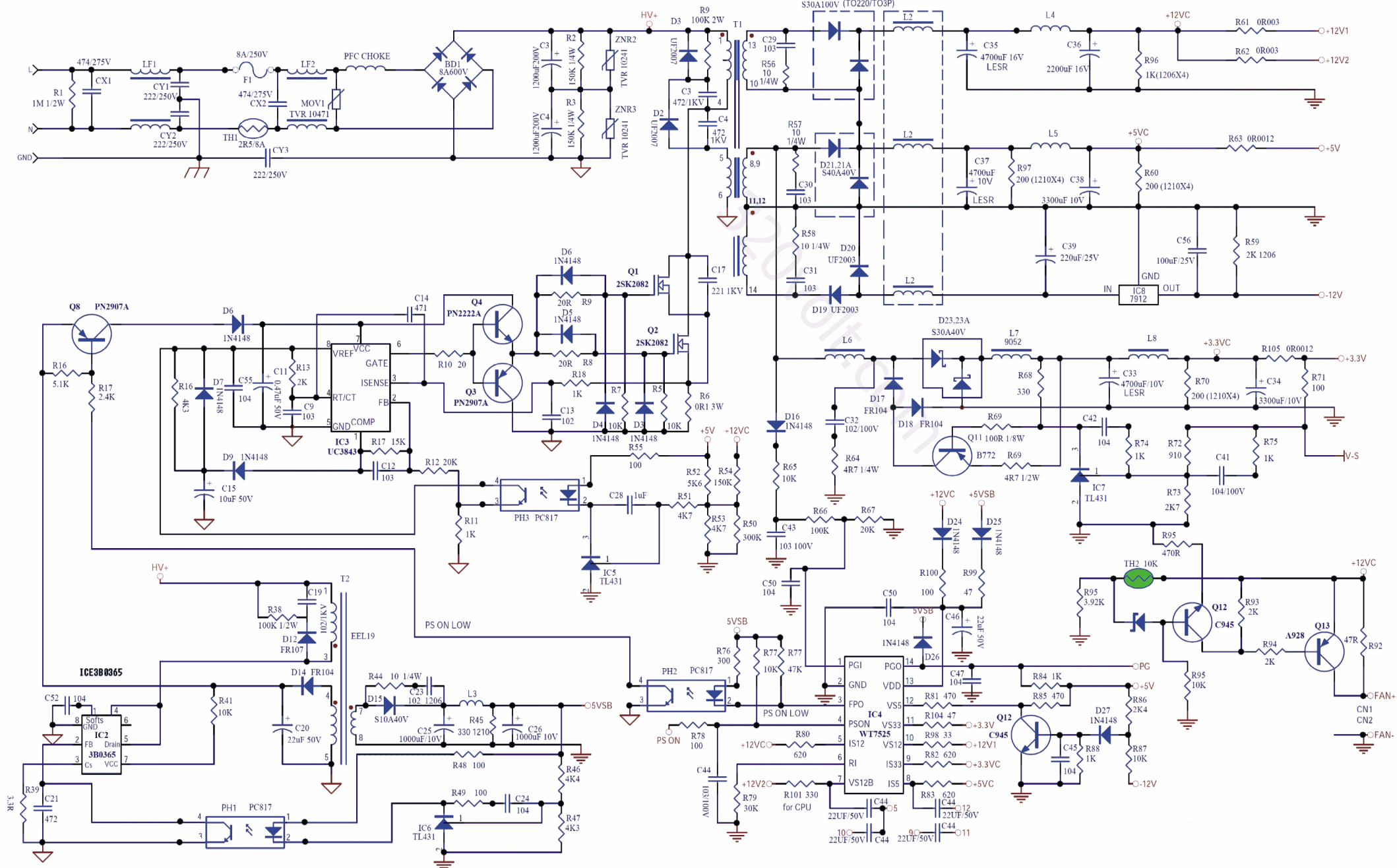


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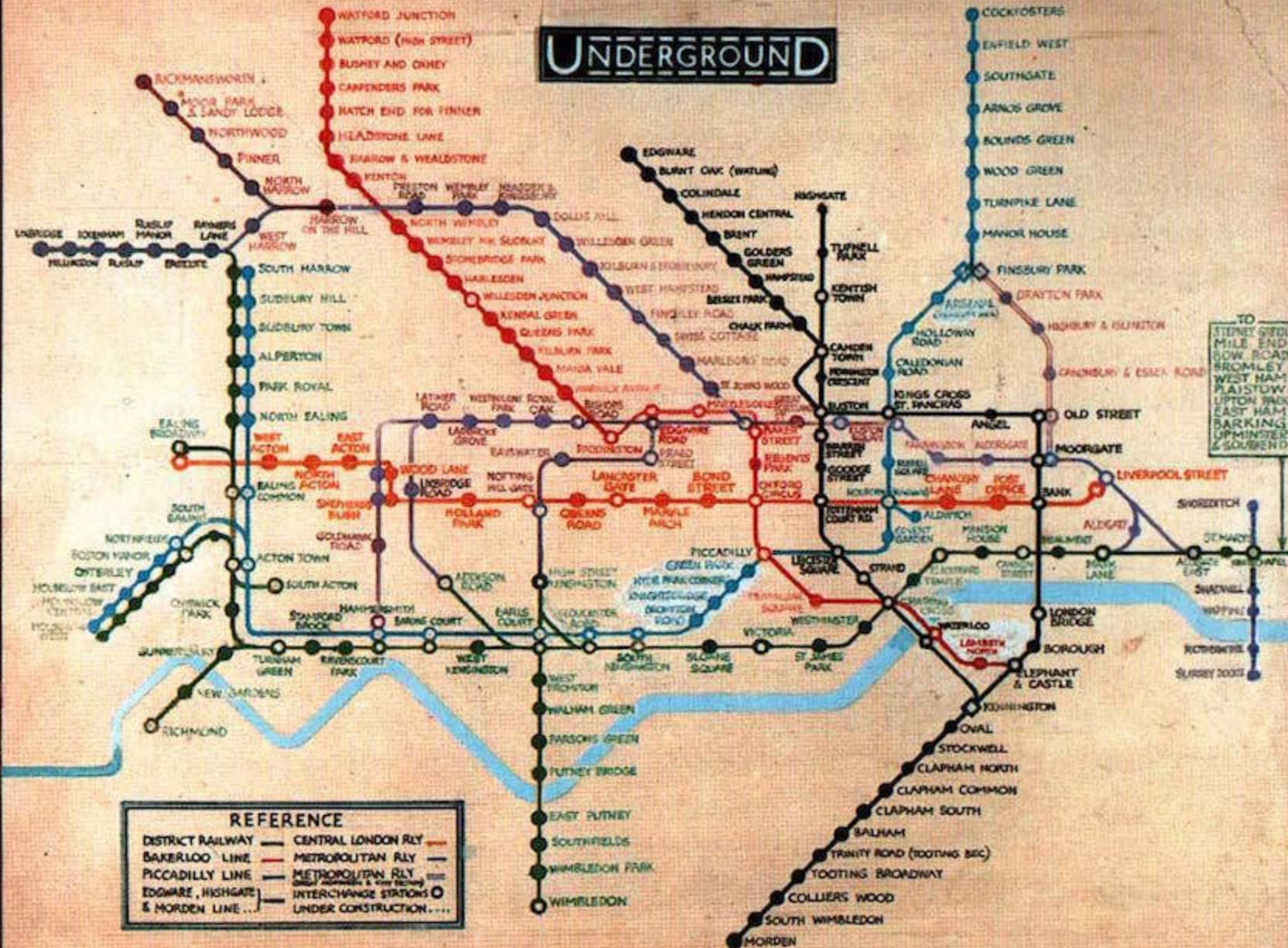


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UNDERGROUND



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Mind the Gap! Towards a teacher/researcher nexus



The tension between **accuracy (theoretical underpinnings)** and **usability** → The **research-practice gap** (see Sato & Loewen 2022).

We can understand it through three complementary types of SLA research (Han, 2016):

- **Fundamental SLA (FSLA)** = the geographical map. It investigates how second languages are learned in general. It provides essential information, but it's **abstract** and often far from classroom concerns.
- **Instructed SLA (ISLA)** starts to move toward practice but it doesn't redraw the map; it works with the existing one. It tells you: *'Given what we know about how the map is structured, here's how you might plan a route more efficiently'*
- **Applied SLA (ASLA)** = attempt to bridge the gap. It asks: *How can we take what we know about SLA and make it contextually relevant for teachers, learners, and institutions?* → Ecological

So, what is our research about?

- Focus on a methodology called **Design-Based Research** (The DBR Collective, 2003) as a way of bridging the research-practice gap in L2 learning and teaching
- DBR follows multiple steps (Reeves, 2006): collaborative analysis of problem, solution, iterative cycles of testing and refinement, evaluation, and generation of new theory
- What kind of theory?

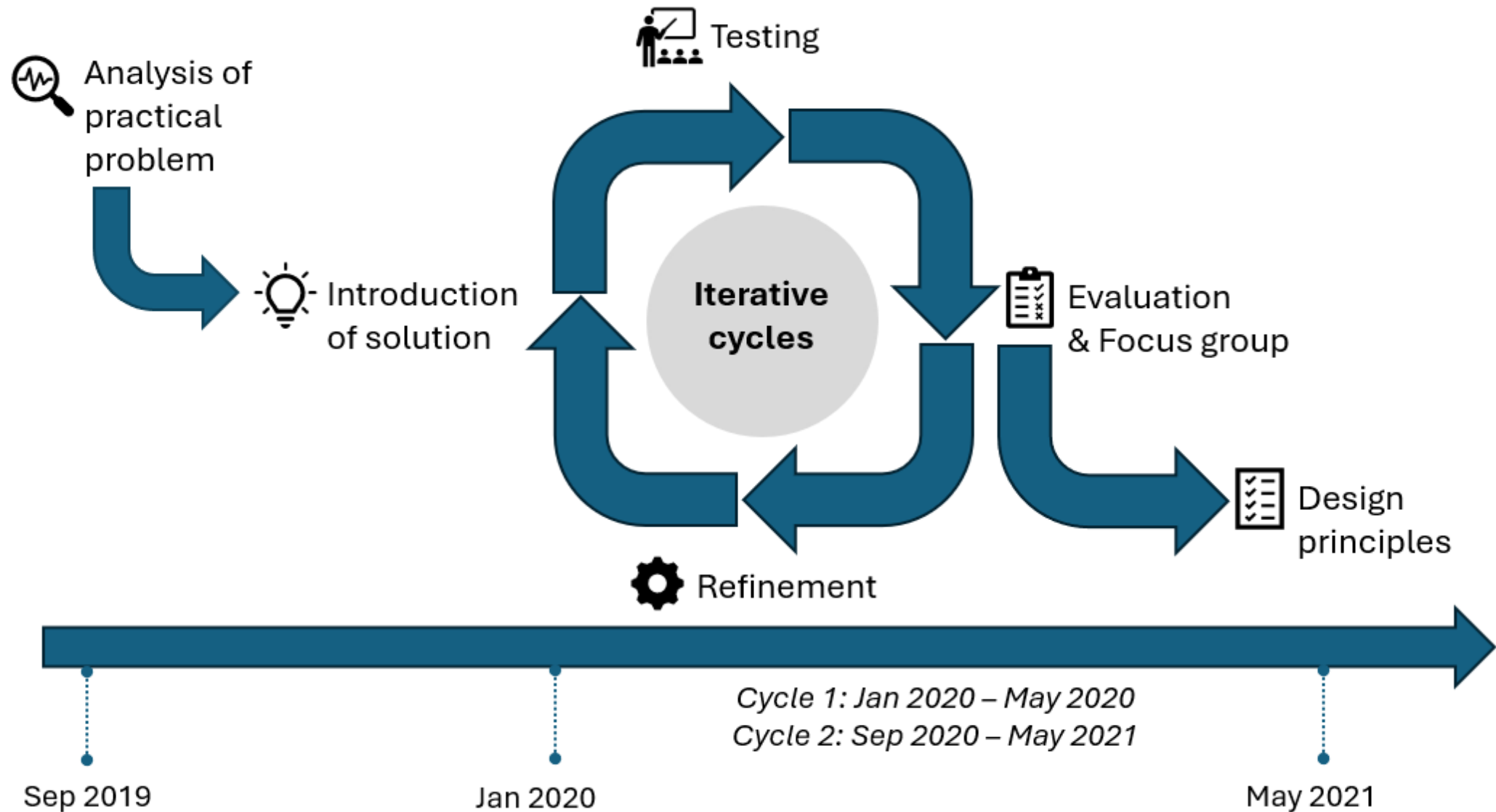
“If you want to design intervention X for the purpose/function Y in context Z, then you are best advised to give that intervention the characteristics A, B, and C, and to do that via procedures K, L, and M, because of arguments P, Q, and R.” (Van den Akker, 1999, p.9)

- Our take: **we wanted to know how the end-users experience this type of collaboration with researchers**
- Today: a glimpse at one of the studies that emerged from this DBR project

Context

- **Two-year DBR project** as part of an initiative financed by the Belgian government
- In **French-speaking Belgium** (FW-B), with 84 lower-secondary school L2 teachers of English and Dutch
- Initial focus of the project: difficulties L2 learners encounter with listening





How was DBR operationalized in our research?

What the teachers said about their learners

Many learners:

- Have trouble understanding what is expected of them (decoding tasks);
- are **anxious** and sometimes refuse to engage in listening activities because they are **afraid not to understand** anything;
- do **not** easily **associate** uttered **words to their written form**, and as a result do not recognize some meaningful lexical units;
- do **not** easily **link what they hear to what they already know**;
- spend too much time **focusing on words they do not know** instead of trying to make sense out of what they do understand.

Solution = Focus on process rather than outcome

MSI in L2 Listening

- **Metacognition** = “**Cognition about cognition**” (Flavell, 1979); promotes learner awareness, autonomy, and self-regulation (Wenden, 1987).

Applied to L2 listening (Goh & Vandergrift 2022), it comprises:

- **Metacognitive knowledge:**

Awareness of listening processes, task demands, and personal strengths/challenges.

- **Metacognitive experience:**

Reflections during listening that inform future strategy use.

- **Metacognitive strategies:**

These strategies include planning for listening, monitoring comprehension, solving comprehension problems, and evaluating one’s own listening performance

This study

What ?

- RQ1: How do L2 teachers **perceive the DBR project** upon its completion?
- RQ2: How do teachers **perceive MSI in L2 listening** as a teaching practice that stemmed from the DBR project?

How?

- Case study design: focus groups + thematic analysis

Who/Where?

- 16 L2 teachers in 4 schools (Dutch/English) in French-speaking Belgium

When?

- End of the project – evaluation phase

Why?

- To see if DBR can help bridge the research-practice gap

DBR was both liberating and disorienting

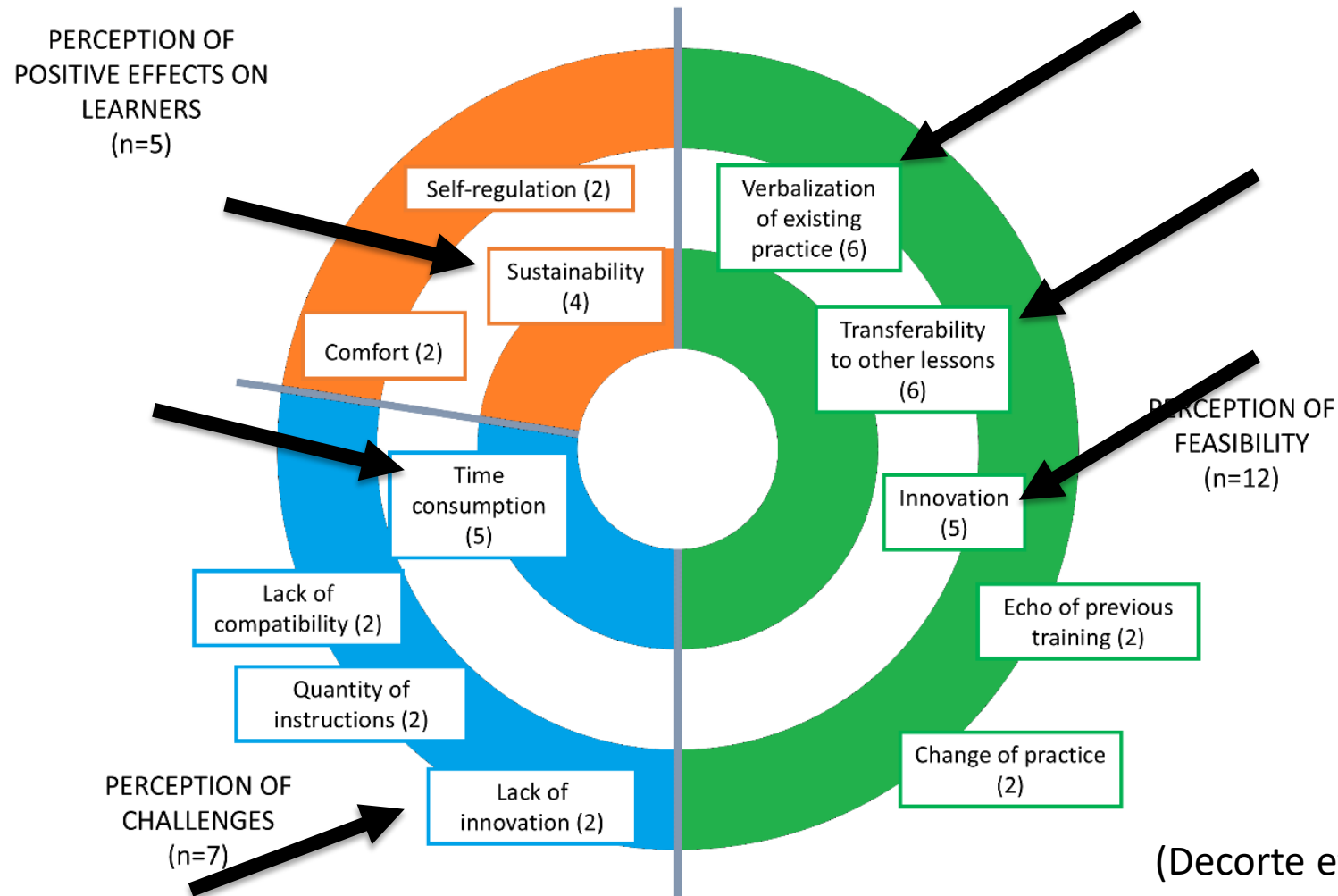
On one side, the teachers felt liberated thanks to:

- **Freedom to adapt:** Teachers valued the autonomy to adjust materials to their classroom contexts.
- **Positive collaboration:** Warm, trusting relationships with researchers created a motivating, supportive environment.
- **Professional ownership**
Teachers felt like co-constructors of knowledge, not passive recipients.

BUT for the same reasons, they were disoriented by:

- **Lack of clear objectives from the start:** The gradual definition of goals left some teachers feeling lost at the start.
- **Need for more support:** Despite enjoying flexibility, some teachers wanted more structured training and guidance.

Teachers' perceptions of MSI: feasible, helpful, yet challenging



(Decorte et al., accepted)

Across the Two Questions – What Emerges?

Teachers valued autonomy, strong researcher relationships, and clear objectives, but some also expressed a need for a more top-down approach

- Possible reason: teachers' initial perception of research as top-down (// prior experience) → Perhaps: A more collaborative approach is new to them.
- However, excessive guidance may harm ecological validity in DBR

Teachers' views on MSI mostly depended on its **feasibility in their context** and on whether they observed benefits for **their learners**.

- highlights the importance of an ecological approach

Teachers found MSI transferable and aligned with prior practices but faced challenges like time constraints and limited perceived novelty

- the intervention was situated **within their Zone of Proximal Development**, but may not have pushed their development far enough beyond their current practice to feel transformative

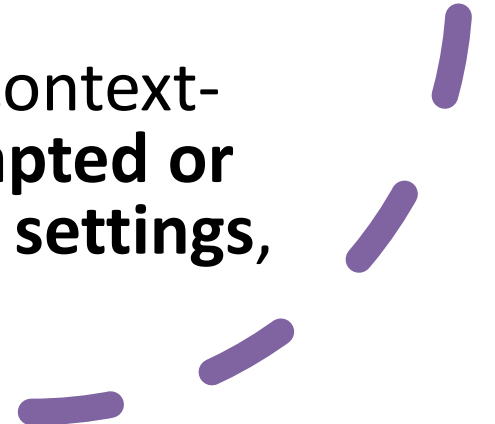
DBR promoted the core motivational conditions of Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci 2000)

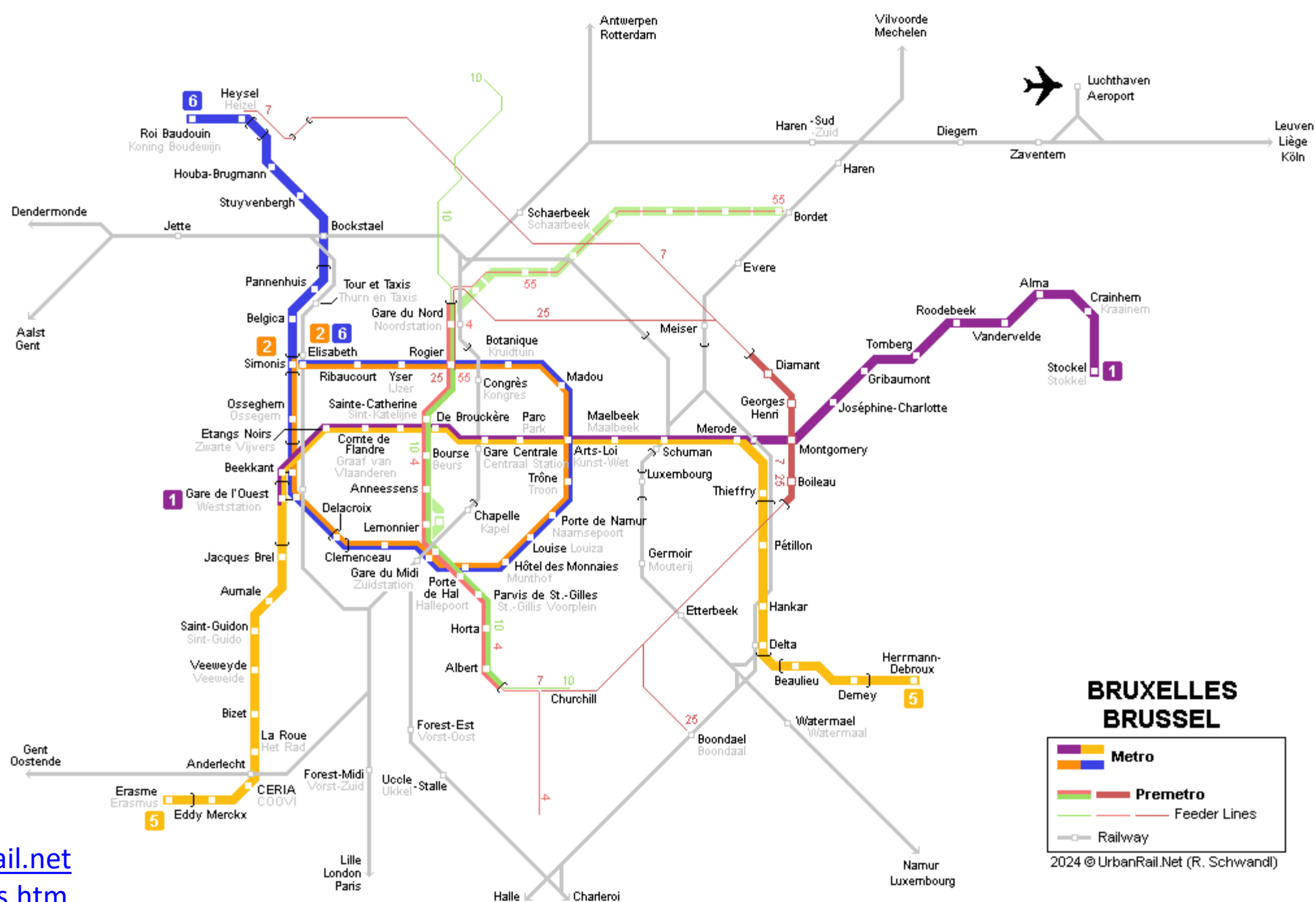
- autonomy, competence (transfer of familiar practice), and relatedness (collaboration with researchers).

Conclusion

DBR as a vehicle for ecological change

- DBR can foster **research-informed practice** and **teacher agency**.
- Acts as a model of “**training through research**” (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).
- Potential **ripple effect**: teachers trained through DBR can influence peers and institutional culture. → CoP!
- Contribute to bridging the **L2 research–practice divide**.
- Aligns with ASLA’s objectives of contextual relevance
- BUT if DBR outcomes are highly context-dependent, **how can they be adapted or transferred to other educational settings**, including my own?









Thanks for your
attention!
Ready for your
questions 😊



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