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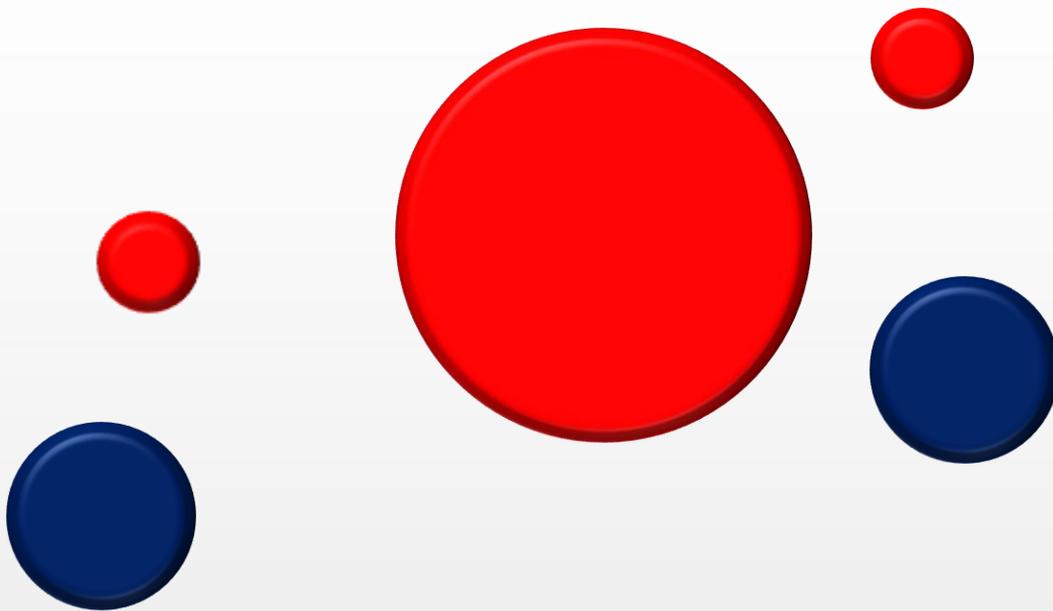
Ex Alumnos del Profesorado en Lenguas Vivas

*"Juan R. Fernández"*

**National Exams, International Standards**

Teachers' Centre

**AEXALEVI *Forum***



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**4 Vocal Suplente**

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**AEXALEVI Forum**

Founded by Marta Moure & Myrian Casamassima

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Original name by Marta Moure

**Coordinator**

M~~orte~~r. Myrian Casamassima

**Editor**

Trad. Gustavo Sevilla

## Contents

<b>An Interview with Sarah Rogerson</b>	<b>4</b>
We are pleased to publish this interview with Sarah Rogerson, Director of Assessment at Oxford University Press.	
<b>It Worked for Me</b>	<b>7</b>
A special section full of ideas for revision and practice for exam preparation.	
<b>Metacognitive Experience at AEXALEVI</b>	<b>10</b>
Myrian Casamassima presents the research carried out at AEXALEVI on creating metacognitive experiences linked to exam training.	
<b>Can “Suggesting” Be Better than Correcting?</b>	<b>15</b>
Based on his experience, Gustavo Sevilla gives us some tips to make corrections more productive.	
<b>Highly Recommended</b>	<b>19</b>
We are delighted to recommend Claudia Ferradas’ new book, <i>Archetypes</i> .	

# An Interview with

## Sarah Rogerson



Since joining Oxford University Press as Director of Assessment in 2019, Sarah Rogerson has taken charge of the assessment strategy with a clear mindset of developing innovative assessments focussed on providing the best feedback for students. Having worked in English language teaching and assessment for 20 years, Sarah believes that every form of assessment needs to have a purpose, and that we need to move away from over-testing. She is passionate about education for all as well as about digital innovation in ELT.

### **AEXALEVI Forum**

**In what ways do you think assessment is changing in language learning worldwide?**

#### **Sarah Rogerson**

Assessment at its core isn't changing, the principles around good assessment (Validity, Reliability, Authenticity, Impact, Practicality) remain, in the same way that the principles of good teaching haven't changed. Changes are related to test taker requirements around

assessment delivery. We live in a world where it's normal to have personalized, flexible, almost-instant access to what we need; high-stakes tests need to live up to this. To achieve this, we need our high stakes tests to be digital, adaptive and on-demand. This is our approach to assessment at OUP, and we strive to provide the best customer experience by meeting or exceeding their expectations.

In terms of course-based assessment, I think there is going to be more demand for assessment for learning methodology in the classroom.

## AEXALEVI Forum

### What is Assessment for Learning?

**Sarah Rogerson**

Assessment for Learning is defined by Val Klenowki, 2009 as **'part of everyday practice by students, teachers and peers that seeks, reflects upon and responds to information from dialogue, demonstration and observation in ways that enhance ongoing learning.'**

I like this definition because it highlights that AfL is an approach that happens every day to enhance ongoing learning.

Put simply, AfL is an approach to classroom- based assessment that supports learning with rich feedback helping students become independent learners. To find out more about this approach, visit

<https://elt.oup.com/feature/global/guide-to-assessment-for-learning/?cc=gb&selLanguage=en>

You'll find a wealth of information including OUP's [position paper on Assessment for Learning](#) which describes the approach and best practice in more detail.

## AEXALEVI Forum

### How important is feedback in language learning?

**Sarah Rogerson**

Feedback is important in every element of your life! Think about it, having an argument with your partner- it's normal but it's also feedback. And while feedback doesn't necessarily need to result from a point of failure (like an argument), it's crucial to any learning taking place. What makes feedback so important is that, if done badly, it can demotivate students and even have a negative effect on learning outcomes; if done well, feedback motivates and improves learning outcomes. Therefore, it is really important to focus on the type of feedback you're giving and how you're giving it. Feedback is the beginning of a conversation, not the end of one. The point of feedback is to inspire change. If you go back to the analogy of the argument with your partner, most of the time you're trying to convince them to change something to avoid having this argument again! In the classroom, feedback needs to inspire the student to go away and change some element of their performance so that they can advance their learning.

## AEXALEVI Forum

**What do we need to take into account to provide effective feedback?**

**Sarah Rogerson**

OUP has produced an excellent [position paper](#) that describes the elements of effective feedback which I'd encourage you to read. The 7 features are listed below and they're all incredibly important. The one I want to draw your attention to is #3. In giving effective feedback, it's crucial that we set students up for success by letting them know what good looks like and what you'll be assessing them against. Avoid giving students feedback on every aspect of their performance because it will be demotivating and overwhelming. Rather, really focus on the key learning objectives that you're trying to get across.

1. Specific & clear
2. Well-timed
3. Linked to learning and success criteria
4. Focus on the task and not the learner
5. Learning cues
6. Strategies not solutions
7. Actionable & achievable

## AEXLAEVI Forum

**How can we ensure that our feedback makes our students think?**

**Sarah Rogerson**

All feedback should make students think, but, for me, the key is pitching it at the right level and creating follow-up activities that encourage students to use the feedback. If students do a classroom quiz and simply get a numerical score (e.g. 70%), they're not getting any guidance on what they did or didn't know or what journey they need to go on to get that elusive 100%. It would be better to have explanatory answer keys that let the students know where they made mistakes and how to improve. Of course, for those students who did get 100%, they probably could do with some stretch activities that support them in their learning goals too.

## AEXALEVI Forum

**Thank you, Sarah, for your insights into assessment! Thank you, OUP!**

# It Worked for Me

In this special section of “It Worked for Me”, we will look at diverse tools that may come in handy for different learning goals, especially for exam preparation. This year, we have devoted teacher training at AEXALEVI to exam preparation. Below, we summarize some of the main strategies that we discussed in our workshops. Take your pick!

## Revision/Practice Circuits

Create revision stations with desks grouped in the corners of your classroom, with each table having a different revision/practice focus. The students can rotate around the different revision stations as they spend time revising different exam areas.

## Revision/Practice Menus



Present the revision/practice activities as if they were the starters, main courses and desserts on a menu. Allow the students to choose what they wish to have. This will ensure different routes for revision, customized to the students’ needs. Choice is usually a good way of motivating our learners.

## Thinking routines

There are a number of thinking routines useful for different learning goals. In simple terms, a thinking routine helps teachers create spaces for thinking in a systematic way. Thinking routines provide our learners with strategies to approach different tasks. For example, “Read, Cover, Remember and Retell” instructs students to first read a bit of the story, to cover the text with their hand, to remember as much as their hand can cover, and to retell what they can remember. It can be an amusing way of encouraging students to work on stories or any other text. (See *Make it Real* by Linda Hoyt, 2002, Heinemann.)

## **You are the examiner**

What if our students thought of questions on the stories that they have read? You probably do that already. But what if you asked your learners to use those questions to examine you? This will surely prove to be a great opportunity to model answers for them. Sometimes students do not know how to answer questions or how to develop them into an extended piece of discourse. This role reversal activity will give you the chance to model expected performance and it can be particularly useful at the time of exam training.

## **Stop mid-task**

We can often introduce variations in our classroom procedures to obtain different results. It is not always necessarily a question of changing the activity. For example, instead of giving our students a task and then correcting it with all the class, what could we do? We could give them an activity for revision/practice, but tell them they only have to complete the first two sentences, for example. Next, we revise the grammar that is necessary for the activity and we tell them to go back to the activity they have been doing and check what they have completed. At this point, we do the report with the whole class. Then, we ask the students to finish the activity and then we correct as usual. This procedure takes longer but it has a clear advantage: it allows the students to try solving the activity with what they remember, and then revising the grammar in the light of what they have been able to do before they attempt to complete the exercise. This is more constructivist than asking the students to do an activity and then correcting it. Read the next section for a variation on this procedure.

## **Freeze report & repeat task**

This is similar to the previous procedure, but the difference is that here what we do not do is the correction. Thus, we give the students an activity and we ask them to do it all. When they finish, we do not correct it with the whole class. Instead, we revise the grammar and we ask the students to go back to the exercise and to check what they did before the class engages in the correction. If the students worked on the activity

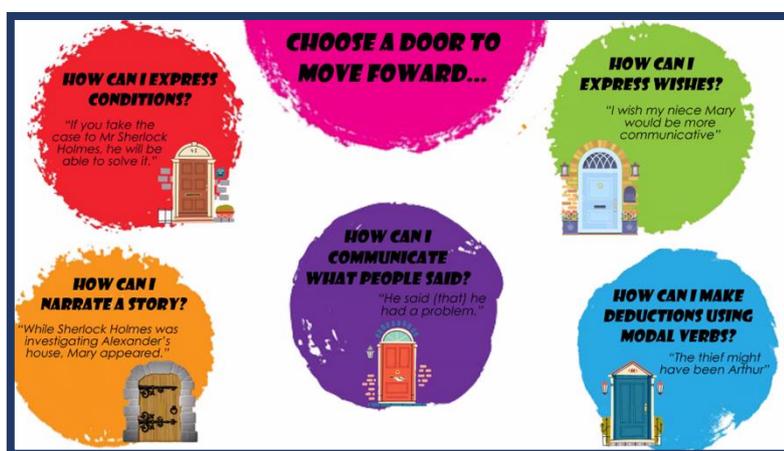
individually, this time the learners can go over it in pairs, for example, so that they can help each other monitor their performance in the task. This procedure also takes longer than just asking the students to do an exercise and then correcting it. Yet, it is worth trying it out since it will give the students the chance of becoming aware of how well they have performed and what they need to correct or improve. It is also a constructivist approach to the task.

## Cognitive Modelling

We are all familiar with the idea of giving our students a model of the type of composition they have to write. Coursebooks usually include models for parallel writing. However, cognitive modelling is something else: it implies doing the activity alongside our learners to model the approach to the task. This can be useful for writing and for any other activity for exam training. It consists of showing how to do the task by doing it with the students' participation. So, instead of asking them to complete a gap-fill, we do the gap-fill with them as we reason it out. Thinking the task out loud with the students can provide significant assistance.

## Gamify revision/practice

When we gamify language learning, we bring elements of games into non-game activities. Therefore, revision and practice can be gamified to become fun. One of the easiest ways of doing so is to unlock



new content for revision while the students complete levels as in video games. Here is an example of gamified revision by Agustina Massin Assisé and Diego Rodríguez Vidal, where the students had to choose a door that opened content to be revised.

# Metacognitive Experience at AEXALEVI



**Mgter. Myrian Casamassima**

**F**ollowing our research on *Metacognitive Experience*, which we presented at the 2021 FAAPI Virtual Conference, we would like to share with our readers some of the conclusions that we were able to reach in relation to the enhancement of exam training through metacognitive experience.

Metacognition is often a desirable goal in language learning. Yet, its boundaries are unclear. The concept is relatively abstract and it is often hard for most teachers to find ways of implementing it in their classrooms. At AEXALEVI, we are well aware of this difficulty partly because we receive permanent feedback from our extensive community of member teachers and member institutions, and partly because we experience it ourselves in our classrooms.

This is why we decided to delve into it, but from a different point of view. At AEXALEVI, we are concerned with the practicality of the real classroom so we wished to experiment with new

procedures for metacognitive development associated with exam preparation, another difficult area for most teachers. We thought that, if we put them together, we would be able to get better results in exam performance while we contributed to language learning.

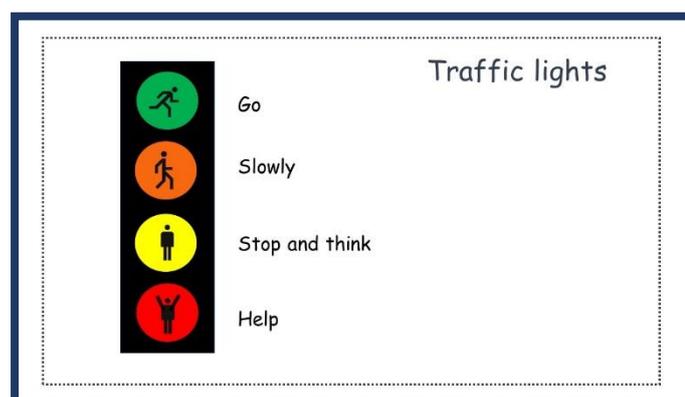
*Metacognition* is the monitoring and control of thought (Martínez,2006). In his model of Cognitive Monitoring, Flavell (1979), considered to be the father of Metacognition, described four components: metacognitive knowledge, metacognitive experience, goals or tasks, and actions or strategies. Metacognitive experience tends to overlap with metacognitive knowledge, which is the knowledge of cognition in

general, and of our own cognition in particular. Thus, metacognitive experience tends to occur when we are engaged in solving a task. It is the careful thinking before, during and after task performance that renders metacognitive experience and that provides us with information for self-regulation. These experiences, whether short or long, simple or complex, need to be sustained over time for metacognition to be developed.

With these ideas in mind, we sought to find a simple way of conveying to our students what metacognition is all about. We told them that reflecting on your work is like taking a selfie. When you take a selfie, you can assess what you are

doing at that moment and how you are feeling about it. That is exactly what you aim to do when creating metacognitive experience: you take a selfie before and after doing a task, and you check if there has been any difference or not.

Now, we needed the scales for our learners to be able to rate their confidence in relation to the task ahead and, then, upon its completion. We set out to design rather unusual scales based on images and sounds. They were nothing like the scales we all know, with descriptors. Below we show a sampling of the scales that we developed:





**References:**

FAB BG: fabulous  
big grin

FWM:  
fine with me

OMG:  
Oh, my God!

SS:  
so sorry

Although we included words in the some of the scales, it was the images that carried the full force of meaning. Words only clarified the images, which was necessary especially in the case of emojis. We developed another scale with sounds only, which we are unable to include here, unfortunately. All scales turned out to be great fun for our students: children, pre-adolescents, adolescents and adults.

In order to use the scales, we asked the teachers to implement the following task cycle:

1. Give the students the instructions for the task (in general, activities for exam training).
2. Give the students the scale that they will be using, show them how to go about it, and ask them to complete it by deciding how they feel about the task ahead (the same scale had to be used for several weeks).
3. Ask the students to do the task.
4. Ask the students to complete the scale again, but this time thinking about how well they did in the activity.
5. Correct the task with the whole class.

6. Assist the students so that they can compare the ratings of the scale before and after the task, and their actual performance.

7. Carry out a feedback session with the whole class, asking the students to reflect on how to improve their performance and giving them tips (our main idea was to work on feedback as something prospective, thus building bridges with future performance).

The procedure took some time in class, but soon the students got used to the scales. What is more, the children would ask when they were going to use the scales right from the beginning of the class. Adult learners reported being able to assess their confidence about the performance of certain tasks more effectively on the basis of the scales. As we said earlier, all students enjoyed using the scales and thought they were funny.

Some students showed accurate calibration. *Calibration* is the degree of fit between someone's self-judgements and their actual performance (Bol & Hacker, 2012). It is considered that well-calibrated responses are associated with high task achievement. The self-judgements before the task are called *predictions* and the ones after the task are known as *postdictions*. It is interesting to compare and contrast predictions and postdictions to see to

what extent the students are aware of their performance in specific tasks. We observed many cases of students rating themselves high in the prediction and very low in the postdiction, and even rating themselves high in both and then obtaining poor results in actual performance. This phenomenon has been called *the illusion of knowing* (Martínez, 2006), and it affects performance and motivation since the students have an inaccurate self-concept in relation to certain tasks.

However, where the scales proved to be the most useful was in those cases where our learners needed to ask for help. We, teachers, are always ready to provide our students with assistance. Now, the question is whether they are aware that they need it. In the scales with the emojis and in the traffic lights, we had included an item to ask for help which was picked by several students who felt they were in need of support. The experience of providing assistance to someone who was requesting it in order to perform a task was more effective than providing such assistance with no previous demand for it. These students exhibited a quick improvement in performance and a boost in motivation. We were most interested in the pedagogic interventions that helped our students move forward and enhance their self-confidence. We should not

forget that metacognition involves emotions and motivation.

In the feedback sessions, especially with adolescents, we were able to observe how accurately some students voiced what they found difficult, why the difficulty occurred, and what they needed to improve and how. We also observed some learners commenting on how the scales could be used in a different manner, which gave us the hint that they had appropriated them and were now making suggestions for possible changes.

By means of simple things from real life such as emojis, traffic lights, Whatsapp messages and selfies, we succeeded in creating metacognitive experiences for

our learners linked to exam training. We observed that motivation and task achievement increased during exam preparation. The scales were enjoyable for the students and practical for the teachers. Those learners who needed to ask for help were able to do so through the scales. We managed to keep track of their learning processes and, best of all, they became aware of their progress.

We will surely continue our research along these lines after these positive initial results. We would like to encourage other teachers to try the scales in their classrooms, and to design their own.

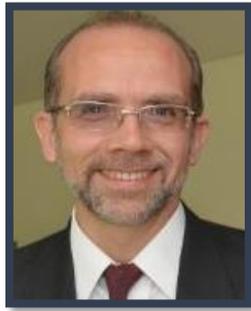
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# Can “suggesting” be better than correcting?



Trad. Gustavo Sevilla

**S**ocrates is said to have declared that the unexamined life is not worth living. Can we say, as ESL teachers, that the unexamined sentence is not worth writing? We certainly cannot, but I think we should try and imbue our students with the sense of how important it is to check what they write, without their going to the extreme of developing a feeling of fear or lack of confidence that stops them from facing the invaluable challenge of expressing themselves in another language, even with some mistakes.

With the pandemic, correcting files shared on Drive in Classroom or some other platform, or sent by email, has become common practice. The red or green pen we used so often in the past almost belongs to an ancient, long-forgotten world, and this also seems to be the case with correction fluids. There are at least two aspects where electronic revisions can be higher quality than manual ones: extent and precision.

As part of the communicative language competence we expect our students to develop, we want them to acquire linguistic skills in terms of extent and precision of vocabulary and grammar, and our revision should go hand in hand with what we expect them to produce. The more detailed and accurate our corrections, the more likely they will learn from their mistakes.

I recall having an ESL teacher when I was a teenager who would propose altogether different phrases and sentences to express what I wanted to say. I never knew if what I had written was wrong or simply less idiomatic than what she proposed. Her corrections were indeed extensive and thorough, but she failed to explain whether my writing fell short of grammar and vocabulary, or only idiomaticity. Electronic correction can be very helpful here, by

including comments and explanations or suggesting changes rather than merely striking through text.

I also remember working as an assistant lecturer at university and being at pains to differentiate by hand the various kinds of mistakes students made, and scoring them accordingly: mistakes of meaning, style, grammar, inappropriate omissions, redundancy, punctuation, spelling, lack of cohesion, etc. I used different symbols, such as circles to identify wrong ideas, arrows to indicate missing words, and dotted lines to mark style and register errors. All these things can now be more accurately done by using the features offered by Word.

As a college lecturer, and also as an editor, I have found that using Word review tools can prove to be an extraordinary way of correcting. Most or perhaps all of you are well aware of the usefulness of the Track Changes feature of Word. Here is a short video explaining how it works:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/track-changes-in-word-197ba630-0f5f-4a8e-9a77-3712475e806a#:~:text=Review%2C%20accept%2C%20or%20reject%20changes&text=reject%20the%20change.-.Click%20or%20tap%20at%20the%20beginning%20of%20the%20document..move%20to%20the%20next%20change.>

What students often find difficulty seeing is the corrections, comments included. This may be due to the fact that we forgot to select “Display all markup”. If this is the case, Word will show by default “Simple markup”, and students can select “All markup” or follow the steps below to see all changes. Let’s suppose we are correcting this sentence:

- *The bears like honey.*

If we cross out the article, include an explanation and send the file to our student with simple markup, they will only see this (for a spotless correction, the teacher should obviously also capitalize “Bears”):

| - bears like honey.

If we want them to see our correction and our comment, we should tell them to select Full markup, or to click on View / Outline (*Vista / Esquema*, if Office is configured in Spanish):

**View – Outline:**

○ - The<sub>[GJS1]</sub> - bears like honey.

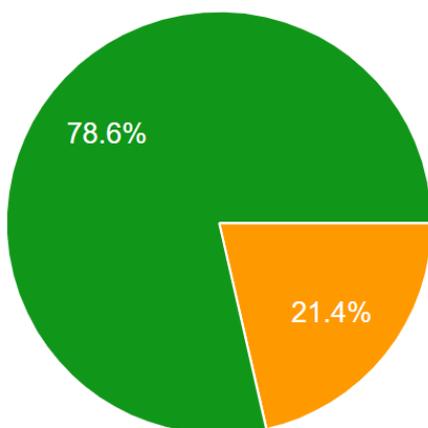
and then, View / Print Layout (*Vista / Diseño de impresión*):

- The bears like honey.

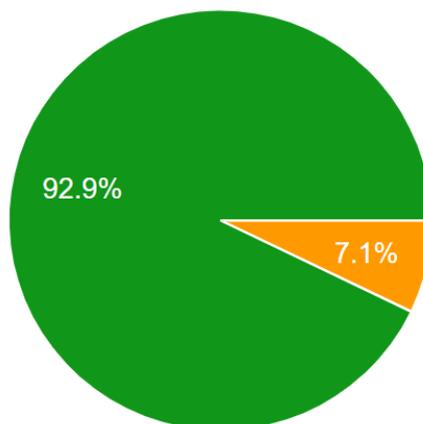
On Drive, the key lies in “suggesting” rather than “editing” so that students can see the mistake and learn in the process. It is important to clarify from the beginning what each type of correction amounts to. For example, I usually enclose between parentheses words, phrases or sentences which, even if not altogether wrong, could be better stated in some other way. I cross out things that are outright mistaken, and sometimes even colour them red, or bold red, if the mistake is gross. Just as I penalize students, I also make a point of rewarding them by colouring in blue any word, phrase or sentence that is particularly good or outstanding, perhaps above the level I expected from them.

None of this was possible or at least easy when our corrections were “pen-based”. And we no longer have to resort to a correction pen to delete something we did not correct well. Computer correction is much neater and safer, and is therefore worth using to the best of our knowledge. It may take some more time than manual correction, but the advantages are immeasurable: the teacher can reinforce learning by making comments and characterizing the different kinds of mistakes, as well as retrace their steps to fix a correction that was not good or clear enough. Students will also value the teacher’s effort immensely. In an anonymous survey completed by 14 out of 18 students at the end of one of my courses last November, I got the following answers to the question “How did you find the corrections of your work?:

Group/collaborative work:



Individual work:



- Seldom useful
- Sometimes useful
- Useful most of the times
- Always useful

Yes, it can mean harder work, but the satisfaction is well worth the effort.

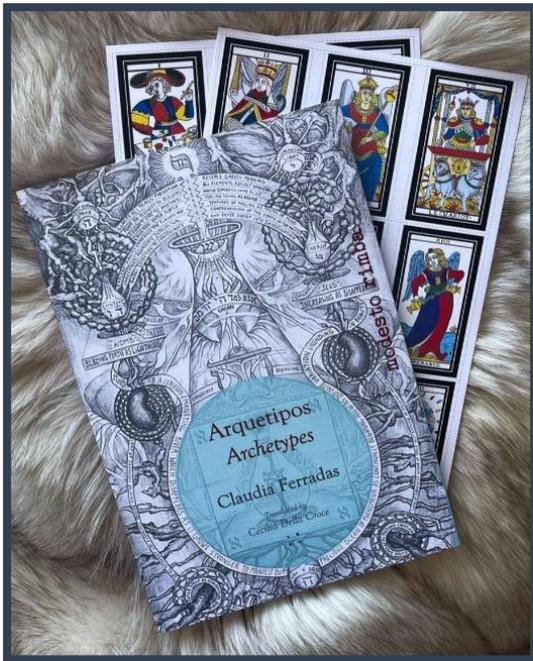
Bibliography:

- <https://rm.coe.int/1680459f97>
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# Highly Recommended

## Archetypes

By Claudia Ferradas



Claudia Ferradas' new poetry collection is an invitation to read the Tarot as poetry –each of the major arcana speaks a dramatic monologue that addresses us.

It is an invitation to play –to decipher new archetypal symbols in every reading of each card or their combinations.

It is an invitation to reflect –to emerge from the dialogue with the arcana with new questions that may allow us to get to know ourselves better.



Claudia's book presentation at AEXALEVI