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Trabajo Fin de Máster

From Self-Talk to Self-Esteem:
Designing an Action-Oriented EFL Unit for Teenagers with an Ungrading Approach.

Del diálogo interno a la autoestima:
Diseño de una unidad de inglés como lengua extranjera (EFL) orientada a la acción para adolescentes con un enfoque sin calificaciones.

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Abstract

This master's thesis proposes a didactic unit for the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom that integrates emotional education with communicative language teaching. Drawing on Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the Action-Oriented Approach (AoA), the unit positions learners as social agents who use language not only to communicate, but also to construct and transform their self-concept. It addresses adolescents' self-esteem, self-concept, and self-talk, encouraging students to reframe negative inner dialogue and express emotions in English.

The design employs authentic tasks, collaboration, and reflection, supported by an ungrading approach that prioritizes formative feedback and learner autonomy over grades. Aligned with the Aragonese curriculum (LOMLOE, Order ECD/1172/2022), the unit fosters linguistic competence, metacognitive growth, and personal well-being while contributing to Sustainable Development Goals on education and health.

The thesis ultimately reimagines the EFL classroom as a space where language learning and emotional development reinforce one another, promoting student agency and resilience.

Este trabajo de fin de máster propone una unidad didáctica para el aula de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera (EFL) que integra la educación emocional con la enseñanza comunicativa de lenguas. Basada en el Enfoque por Tareas (TBLT) y el Enfoque Orientado a la Acción (AoA), la unidad concibe al alumnado como agentes sociales que utilizan la lengua no solo para comunicarse, sino también para construir y transformar su autoconcepto. Aborda la autoestima, el autoconcepto y el diálogo interno de los adolescentes, animándoles a reformular pensamientos negativos y a expresar emociones en inglés.

El diseño se apoya en tareas auténticas, colaboración y reflexión, acompañado de un enfoque de *ungrading* que prioriza la retroalimentación formativa y la autonomía del alumnado frente a las calificaciones. En consonancia con el currículo aragonés (LOMLOE, Orden ECD/1172/2022), la unidad fomenta la competencia lingüística, el desarrollo metacognitivo y el bienestar personal, al tiempo que contribuye a los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible en materia de educación y salud.

En última instancia, la tesis reimagina el aula de EFL como un espacio donde el aprendizaje de lenguas y el desarrollo emocional se refuerzan mutuamente, promoviendo la agencia y la resiliencia del alumnado.

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1) Introduction

Adolescence is a critical period marked by emotional turbulence and identity formation. Yet formal education rarely provides structured opportunities for students to explore, understand, and regulate their inner lives. During my placement in the IES Andalán, I witnessed firsthand the challenges many students faced with self-esteem, emotional regulation, and motivation.

This master's thesis presents a didactic unit for the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom that integrates emotional education with communicative language teaching, drawing on the frameworks of Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the Action-Oriented Approach (AoA). More than a language-learning sequence, the unit positions the classroom as both a psychological and political space, where language functions not only as a tool for communication but also for self-construction and transformation.

The lessons are designed to foster metacognitive and emotional competences by addressing internal dialogue, introducing key psychological concepts such as self-concept and self-esteem, and promoting agency through reflection, collaboration, and autonomous learning. The unit also challenges the competitive, grade-centered logic often embedded in education through the use of ungrading practices, aligning with the LOMLOE's emphasis on learner agency and formative assessment.

Grounded in the principles of the LOMLOE and aligned with key Sustainable Development Goals, this proposal aims to help students articulate emotions in English, challenge negative self-talk, and develop strategies to support their mental well-being. In doing so, it redefines students not just as language learners, but as active agents capable of understanding and shaping their inner worlds.

2) Purpose and aims

The purpose of this master's thesis is to present a teaching unit for the English classroom at a high school level implementing up-to-date communicative language teaching methodological approaches; namely TBLT and AOA. These approaches make language learning a more dynamic process in which students are engaged in making their own meaning, using language in a real-life context with authentic materials. This way students develop their communicative competence in meaningful and emotionally relevant contexts. The task structure ensures affordances in which students need to use the language to participate in meaningful conversations with their peers, collaborate, listen, plan and mediate to solve the problems set by the tasks. At the same time, students tangentially learn ideas and concepts beyond their linguistic competences by integrating emotional education into the EFL classroom. This helps form whole-rounded individuals that are prepared for the challenges of the adult world. Specifically, this unit aims to teach strategies for the mental well-being of students by fostering student's self-esteem and self-concept through English Language Learning. This dissertation also aims to explore the improvements and limits the LOMLOE represents towards a truly formative education.

The specific objectives of the didactic unit are to provide students with vocabulary and structures to talk about their emotions and self-perceptions; to guide students in identifying negative self-talk and transforming them into positive affirmations. Moreover, the unit offers structured opportunities for students to express feelings and experiences in written and spoken English. And finally, to encourage reflection on emotional habits through guided journaling and class discussion

3) Justification

It is common for adolescents to suffer from low self-esteem and feelings of loneliness (Solera et al., 2024; Rojas-Pedregosa, 2022; Ford, 2015) During my placement period this was clear from the start (see Appendix 6). A few months later, I had an engaging conversation with a few psychologist friends about mental health issues and how poorly our mental well-being is addressed during our formative years.

Presumably, teenagers are given few if any tools or strategies to understand their feelings, or others'; and so, they are more prone to mental instability and low self-esteem. This unit is designed for teenagers, who go through a stage of life marked by significant mental and physical changes. The unit aims to help them understand their inner world while providing tools to improve self-esteem and self-concept. This is aligned with the communicative approach in the ESL classroom, which encourages the use of non-linguistic topics to develop language competences (Ellis, 2003). The unit introduces the ideas of self-concept, self-esteem, and self-talk, while fostering students' ability to reflect on their learning and emotional processes to better navigate their feelings in various situations

In this way this unit aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) number 3 “Good health and Well-being” and 4 “Quality Education”. Moreover, the proposed unit helps students to work towards their 21st century skills such as their metacognition, life and career skills, and personal and social responsibility.

The proposed unit implements the main tenets of ungrading approach in order to eliminate grades. This aims to lead students to focus on the formative feedback given and engage in revisiting previous work done to improve on it (Chu, 2020; Spurlock, 2023). This cyclical approach fosters self-efficacy and agency in students learning rather than a peer competitive mentality (Ferguson, 2013; Blum, 2020).

4) Curricular framework

4.1) Key Competences

For the proposed learning unit, I have followed the standing Aragonese curriculum (Order ECD/1172/2022) where there are eight general competences described which students need to work towards during their compulsory education as per their exit profile.

The first is the Linguistic Communication Competence (CCL) and it relates to all different forms of communication: comprehension and interpretation of different media, oral written or multimodal texts. It sets the base for critical thinking and understanding needed for the formation of new knowledge.

The Plurilingual Competence (CP) implies using different languages appropriately and efficiently in order to develop the official languages along with other familiar languages integrating historical and intercultural dimensions in order to learn about, value and respect linguistic diversity.

The Digital Competence (CD) corresponds to a secure, sustainable, critical and responsible use of digital technologies for work and participation in society. This includes understanding information and data, media education, creation of digital content, cyber security and topics related to digital citizenship.

Citizenship Competence (CC) contributes to students exerting responsible citizenship and participating fully in social and civic life understanding social structures, laws and politics as well as global events and commitment to sustainability. It also includes conscious understanding of democratic values, respect to human rights and critical reflection about the great ethical problems of our time.

The Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn Competence (CPSAA) includes the capacity to reflect about one-self, to achieve self-knowledge, self-acceptance and promote constant personal growth; time and information management; constructive collaboration; resilience; and life-long learning. It also includes the ability to face the unknown, and complexity; adapt to changes; manage metacognitive processes; and contribute to physical and mental well-being. This competence is especially relevant for the unit proposal, as many of the learning objectives fall under this category.

The competence in Cultural Expression and Conscience (CCEC) implies an understanding and respect for other forms in which ideas, opinions, feelings and emotions are expressed and communicated in different cultures through a wide array of artistic and cultural manifestations.

The Mathematical, Science, Technology and Engineering Competence (STEM) implies the compression and explanation of the natural and social environment using knowledge, and methodologies such as observation and experimentation with the goal of setting questions and providing answers based on proof in order to interpret and transform the world.

Finally, the Entrepreneurial Competence (CE) implies developing a life orientation to act on opportunities and ideas to generate value for other people. It allows us to detect needs and opportunities.

4.2) Specific Competences

On top of the general competences the Aragonese curriculum defines six specific competences for the English language subject that represent a progression from those acquired during primary education and towards the exit profile. The specific competences define the skill level the students need to achieve based on the Common European Framework.

The first competence is CE.LEI.1 and it focuses on comprehension. That is understanding and interpreting oral, written and multimodal texts. It emphasizes extracting main ideas and details using strategies such as inference, selection and organization of information. The aim is to respond to communicative needs in personal, academic or social contexts using progressively autonomous strategies.

The second refers to production (CE.LEI.2). Learners are expected to create clear and coherent oral, written or multimodal texts about familiar and personally relevant topics. This competence promotes creativity and clarity through planning, self-correction and the use of diverse tools and formats. It supports formal and informal communication and encourages the development of a personal voice

CE.LEI.3 involves interaction by participating in respectful and cooperative communication with increasing autonomy. It includes both digital and face-to face communication. It fosters active listening, turn-taking and clarification skills

Mediation it developed in CE.LEI.4. It involves explaining or simplifying concepts to help others understand information in different language contexts. This competence teaches learners to bridge communication gaps by using reformulation, interpretation and collaboration. It highlights the importance of empathy, clarity and responsibility.

CE.LEI.5 aims for learners to expand and reflect critically on their linguistic repertoire. They compare languages, identify strategies, and use tools to enhance their communication skills. This competence encourages learners to become more autonomous and self-aware of their linguistic needs, strengths, and weaknesses.

The last competence (CE.LEI.6) is about interculturality. It aims to foster appreciation and critical awareness of linguistic, cultural, and artistic diversity. It promotes empathy and respectful behavior in intercultural settings by helping students recognize and overcome stereotypes. Learners are encouraged to engage in multicultural dialogue and build shared understanding through language.

4.3) Learning Objectives and essential Knowledge contents

To ensure that the unit follows a competency-based and communicative approach, I have defined a series of learning objectives according to the essential knowledge contents defined by the LOMLOE. The learning objectives are used to articulate what students are expected to learn during the unit and related to the key competences analyzed above. The essential knowledge contents define the necessary attitudes and skills to achieve the specific knowledges. They are divided into Communication, Interculturality, and Plurilingualism.

Communication relates to the development of linguistic abilities such as comprehension, production, interaction, and mediation. These skills ascribe to the Action-oriented Approach of using language for communication as the means to learning. Interculturality incorporates aspects of culture of the target language and other cultures that can be introduced through the use of foreign languages. For this specific unit it is not especially relevant as we delve into internal psychological perspectives that are dissociated from culture. Plurilingualism refers to an interlanguage theory

that states that learners of a language reflect on the functioning of all the languages they know. This metacognitive reflection not only helps improve the target language but consolidates the rest of the linguistic repertoire of the students.

Based on Specific competencies I have formulated a list of objectives that the students should achieve by working on this unit (see Appendix 2). These objectives are specific for this didactic plan and therefore mostly relate to social and personal well-being and learning the necessary skills for self-regulation and emotional management.

Following these objectives Appendix 2 also includes a translation of the selected relevant essential knowledge contents.

5) Theoretical framework

The teaching of ESL has come a long way since the last century. The long-standing debate on whether instruction should focus on meaning or form has solidified in a middle point which states that both are important although and focus on form is integrated within the broader communicative context focusing on meaning (Ellis, 2003). Out of this perspective two main approaches have been developed: Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and Action-Oriented Approach (AoA). Along with these two methodologies I will develop the Ungrading method I have followed for evaluation, and the theories of motivation relevant for choosing this methodology. Moreover, I will expose the principles in the currently standing curriculum that uphold the juridical framework to apply these methodologies in the classroom as well as the limits presented in the curriculum which our educational endeavors should overcome.

5.1) Task-Based Language Teaching or Task Based Learning (TBLT/TBL)

Task-Based Language Teaching is a methodological approach born out of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT). Both of these theories prioritize the role of communication, that is of meaning, over formal teaching of language. The main difference rests on the emphasis of using tasks to structure the learning situations. The class revolves around a task which students need to complete, usually in a collaborative manner in pairs or groups. Hence, students need to interact in the target language and mediate meaning to successfully solve the task. This strategy conforms with a series of principles developed in language teaching and education more broadly during the last quarter of the 20th century. Ellis and Willis became the main precursors of TBLT with a back-and-forth finetuning of the general framework for the methodology. Willis (1996) first creates a structure for tasks in a three-stage task cycle: pre-task, task and post-task.

The first stage is used to activate prior knowledge, reduce learners' anxiety and pave the way for the main task ensuring students know what is expected of them although no new structures are presented.

The second stage is the main task cycle. For Willis (1996) as well as Ellis (2003) serves as the main affordance for students' interaction and communicative use of the language and mediation. Its primary aim is to convey meaning, not to practice specific vocabulary or grammatical form.

Although Ellis (2003) concedes in chapter 5 the possibility of focused task (later called focused on form) whose primary intention is to produce or receive a specific formal feature. This relates to his exploration (Ellis, 1999) that input focusing on structures helps students notice and incorporate differences between L1 and L2 in their interlanguage. However, Ellis maintains that this noticing is non-linear as opposed to the structuralist position that language is acquired in a specific order.

During the task cycle students need to complete a task with a “non-linguistic outcome which serves as the goal of the activity [...] determining when participants have completed the task” (Ellis, 2003). The use of language “serves as the means to achieving the outcome not as an end in its own right” (Ellis, 2009, p. 3). However, there should be some gap for students to convey information or express an opinion, and students should rely on their own resources to achieve the outcome (ibid.) Then students plan a report for the class and finally the groups present their reports and receive feedback (Willis, 1996).

The last stage is the post-task. Willis (1996) uses it for language focus for students to reflect on their accuracy and language use. It can be used to reinforce grammatical structures or simply for students to report or reformulate their results in such a way that greater importance is given to the correct form. Thus, the task structure “provides the three basic conditions for language learning — exposure, use, and motivation. Within the framework there is a natural progression from the holistic to the specific.” (Willis, 1996, p.41). She continues emphasizing the importance of the structure as it ensures explicit study of the language form at the end, which gives students security while providing variety of language use during the meaning focus sections that contextualize the focus on form. D. Willis & J. Willis (2007) comment that if the structure was inverted and the focus on form was given before the task, students would be more concerned with displaying the new form than expressing meaning and explore language with forms they are unsure of.

In order to foster more unfocused communication, the main task stage is usually performed in pairs or groups, although individual tasks could be possible if they met the specific criterion. Authentic tasks require learners to use language for a genuine real-life purpose like solving a problem or completing a real activity (D. Willis & J. Willis, 2007). For Ellis (2003) the activity does not necessarily need to be found in the real world, it can be artificial like comparing two pictures, but the process of language use reflects those of the real world like dealing with misunderstandings.

In this model the role of the teacher is to provide help during the planning stage and feedback after the report. While Willis (1996) admits that preparing the task cycle requires a lot of preliminary work, once the class is used to working through tasks the lesson time is mostly autonomous work (in groups), and the pressure is taken off from the teacher.

During my placement period I noticed this greatly, especially during the lessons when the students had to research on the computer and prepare a presentation in groups (see Appendix 6). Students worked on their own, they constantly asked for feedback or clarifications, but the teaching was not upfront. This allowed me to individualize the teaching and feedback given while still calling the group's attention when I felt it necessary.

Willis (2018) builds on the framework by observing flexibility within it. For instance, a pre-task could be done at the end of a previous lesson, or the focus on form could be homework. Moreover, the post-task does not necessarily need to follow a specific grammatical issue. It can simply be a repetition of the task with a different partner, a game to reinforce the vocabulary or grammar used in the task or any activity that raises consciousness of said form by underlining verbs in the simple past or asking individual questions.

Ellis (2009; 2014) addresses TBLT critics regarding different perspectives. Most importantly Ellis highlights the wide range of perspectives within the approach. For instance, Skehan and Long see traditional teaching as indefensible while for Ellis it has a place within TBLT. Other criticism thrown at TBLT includes the lack of grammatical syllabus as teachers cannot predict what language structures the students will use; the tasks need to be performed entirely in L2; or that the approach is not suitable for entry level language teaching. While these are valid issues Ellis points out that they correspond to a shift in paradigm where the teacher needs to abandon the role of the knower and simply become a participant and co-learner. Ellis points out that teachers can adapt the approach to address these and other issues.

5.2) Action-Oriented Approach (AoA)

Out of the TBLT approach and in combination with the CEFR published in 2001 a new model called Action Oriented Approach (AoA) was developed. According to North (2023), the CEFR was ahead of its time and introduced some conceptual changes in language teaching. It re-

structured the traditional four skills into modes of communication: reception, production, interaction and mediation. The new framework sees the learner as a user and social agent that develops strategies to speak and mediate in a new language. This also provides an opening to integrating plurilingual and pluricultural competences necessary for an outright global citizen. CEFR (2001) sees language use in society within four broad domains. That is the personal (talking about oneself), public (talking in public contexts, giving-receiving information), occupational (giving presentations, negotiating), and educational (writing essays, class discussions etc.). Proficiency should be seen within these real-life contexts. And so, to assess language proficiency, AoA uses a series of descriptive scales with Can-Do statements. Just like in TBLT tasks are also the central medium in AoA to create the affordances necessary for authentic communication. However, this approach sees tasks as any social action that requires language in a real-world situation. Tasks in AoA follow the same key characteristics of TBLT, although North & Piccardo (2019) stress that while all AoA are tasks, not all tasks are action oriented. Tasks are goal oriented, contextualized in real life and focused on meaning through interactive group activities, and to be AoA they need to incorporate real-life applicability, collaboration, learner choice, agency and concrete outcomes. At the classroom level AoA implies providing collaborative tasks that:

- “a) allow initiative, so that learners can strategically exert their agency;
 - b) have a defined mission for the learners (usually to create a product, an artefact);
 - c) require co-construction of meaning through mediation in interaction;
 - d) set conditions and constraints;
 - e) specify a ‘language policy’ of when to use one language or another in which phases/activities, and when free *plurilinguaging* (Piccardo, 2017, 2018) is encouraged.”
- (North, 2023, p. 8)

A key concept of AoA that has been mentioned above is seeing the learner as a social agent. North (2023) quotes Bandura (1989, 2001) to define agency as having four core characteristics. The first is intentionality, that is an action plan that is reworked during the process of task completion. Second, forethought involves considering the consequences and anticipating outcomes to adjust the plan. Third is self-regulatory processes in relation to specific goals and how to achieve them. And fourth, self-reflection is based on the soundness of ideas and actions taken, based on the outcomes achieved so far.

Ensuring that students are agents in the process of learning is both highly complicated and extremely difficult. Enclosing the lessons with specific tasks is rather contradictory to student agency as one limits the other. A relevant example was during my placement period, when I planned an eighteen-lesson project-based learning in which students had, by the end of the project, to research and write collaboratively an international recipe book (see Appendix 6). About half the lessons were left for group work in class. By leaving students to research by themselves, agency is achieved to its higher degree and creates the affordances to not only mediate and communicate in the target language with their peers, but also creates a rhythm to divagate and wander, inquire and grasp knowledge beyond what is presented by the teacher, resounding Freire's (1968) pedagogical principle against the banking system of education. This is connected with the distinction that D. Ford (2016) makes between learning and studying, which is addressed below.

Both TBLT and AoA aim to make language lessons more interactive and interesting for students to improve their motivation, as this is one of the biggest factors in educational achievement.

5.3) Inner-speech and self-talk

Within educational psychology there has been extensive research that correlates self-system (self-concept, self-esteem, self-efficacy etc.) with academic achievements, motivation, and attitudes towards school (Green et al., 2012; Sheykhjan et al., 2014; Tus, 2020). Moreover, Burnett (1999) shows that teachers' comments and students' self-talk have a positive correlation to academic achievement.

By understanding the effect that self-talk has on us, students are able to use this strategy for effective self-regulation and self-motivation going from "identified regulation" to "integrated regulation" according to Dörnyei's (1994) categories, more of which will be explained in the sections below.

Self-talk could also be seen as connected to Dörnyei's (2010) concept of the ideal self. This ideal self serves as a goal that students want to achieve and motivates them towards that goal. Self-talk has been related (Ford, 2015) to the construction of self-concept, in this case in the construction of the potential self. Self-talk therefore provides the ability to use "self-directed language to

enhance or impede the development of the self by means of consciously choosing the direction of our internal self-talk” (Ford, 2015, p. 3)

5.4) Motivation in L2

Motivation is a critical factor in students’ success in education. It has a direct correlation with the effort put in to overcome challenges and to overall academic achievement. Gardner (1985) as cited by Dörnyei (1994), first proposed his socio-educational model establishing the foundations for research in language learning motivation. Dörnyei (1994) proposes three levels to understanding motivation in L2 acquisition: Language level, Learner level, and Learning situation. These correspond both with the three dimensions of language learning (social, personal and educational subject matter dimensions) as well as the three constituents of L2 learning (the L2, the L2 learner and L2 learning environment) (ibid.)

The language level includes ideas and perceptions about the language and its associated cultures. This is related to Gardner (1985)’s concept of integrative motivation, that is the motivation of wanting to be integrated and connect with a culture for which you need an L2. This moves students to learn the language with enthusiasm. Whereas the learner level is related to the individual learner and how their self-confidence, anxiety, self-efficacy etc. alters the motivation to study a language or anything in general.

The learning situation is what Dörnyei (1994) pays more attention to. It is related to the environment such as the class atmosphere, the teacher’s attitude and classmates. He identifies three components. Course-specific motivational components like the syllabus, teaching materials, and task types. Teacher-specific motivational components such as the teacher’s enthusiasm, expectations and the teacher’s ability to create a supportive environment. While the third component is group-specific, which includes group dynamics (cohesion and cooperation within the classroom). If the group bonds are stronger, more collaboration is expected to increase overall motivation of the class.

Dörnyei (2010) introduces a new system of motivational categories by incorporating self-concept. Dörnyei argument is that if the ideal person a student wants to become is a fluent speaker of a language, this projected self-image would be a powerful motivator to learn a language. The ideal

L2-self therefore refers to the motivational aspects that encourage the pursuit of this image. The ought-to L2-self is more related to extrinsic motivation. This category includes the attributes the learner thinks they need to meet external expectations from teachers or parents etc. Lastly, the L2 learning experience relates to the previous classroom environment.

Dörnyei and Ushioda (2021) change the approach to motivational research moving a bit away from categorical visions to a dynamic and fluctuating understanding. When seeing motivation as a process a strategy for teachers can be delineated. They propose a three-phase approach. First, the pre-action phase sets the goals and intentions of students. Teachers can help set realistic goals that students can follow through and get motivated by a successful experience. In the actional phase, students execute the learning activities. Teachers need to create engaging tasks and a positive classroom atmosphere to keep motivation, as well as giving supportive feedback. The Post actional phase serves to self-evaluate performance and receive encouraging words to continue motivation in the future.

5.5) Learning vs Studying

Derek Ford, an American Marxist pedagogy philosopher, has written a series of books as critique of traditional education and the different constraints that the schooling system imposes in children's development. Most interestingly is his distinction between study and learning and connected to it, the agency, rhythms and processes of inquiry and potentiality. While Ford takes a philosophical approach to the knowledge and distances himself from a materialist perspective and therefore distances himself from Marxist epistemology, his conclusions however are very relevant to the critique of schooling and the processes of learning.

In Ford (2016) he first made the distinction between learning and studying subverting the contrast commonly conceived by romance language speakers in which learning (*aprender*) is usually seen as passive and study (*estudiar*) is an active action. For Ford's nomenclature we have to first invert these connotations but also add that "learning [*estudiar*] is concerned with and determined by *ends* (learning goals, outcomes, etc.), studying [*aprender*] is about *means*" (p. 76). That is, when one engages in study one does not have an end in mind. Even when goals exist such as a dissertation, or a theoretical development, the goals retreat as we engage in studying. In this way, studying

becomes a space for open-ended exploration and genuine integration of knowledge. Ford illustrates this with the following example:

When we roam in the archives, follow link after link after link on the internet until we end up watching obscure YouTube videos, the ends of our project are distanced or, more accurately, they are *suspended*. In the learning society, such wandering is interpreted as procrastination. We tend to think of what is studying as getting distracted and sidetracked. This interpretation follows directly from the obsession with actualizing potential and from the demand that learning contribute directly and immediately to the functioning of capitalism. (Ford, 2016, p. 53)

What Ford highlights here is that the capitalist ideological framework which prioritizes productivity and goal-orientation renders the open-ended nature of study, curiosity and digression as inefficient or unproductive. Yet it is precisely in these moments of wandering that meaningful learning, or rather *studying*, takes place.

Ford (2021) proposes that the distinction that Marx makes between the process of inquiry and that of presentation are not only different methods but different pedagogical logics. While presentation (*Darstellung*) corresponds to learning (*estudiar*) as the knowledge is organized in a linear manner ready to share, inquiry (*Forschung*) relates to study (*aprender*). Inquiry has to “appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development, to trace out their inner connection.” (p. 94). In other words, what the school system considers distractions or procrastination is an essential element of the process of knowledge creation.

Bringing this abstract conceptualization to ESL teaching means that there is a need for students to wander and use the language beyond the limits imposed by tasks. By teaching less, students *study* more. This proved true during my placement period, as stated before, students had plenty of time to digress and look for different things (see Appendix 6). At a time, a group was done working (not finished with the project), they started reading jokes online, to which I simply ask them to find English jokes, and they spent the last 10 minutes laughing at puns and dad jokes. This contributed more to their motivation and acquisition of L2 than any task I could set for them.

5.6) Arrhythmia: the rhythms of un-learning

The last concept I incorporate into my teaching practice from Ford (2023) is that of the pedagogy of arrhythmia or the rhythms of un-learning. Drawing on LeFebvre, Ford (2023) critiques the dominant educational rhythm imposed in education in which learning is a pulse of linear repetitions, from ignorance to mastery “The learning process begins with an inability, proceeds by measuring, assessing, and developing that inability, and results in the actualization of that ability.” (p. 112). This mirrors capitalist demands for efficiency, productivity and growth. In contrast to this, Ford proposes the arrhythmia of un-learning: a cyclical, fragmented, and exploratory rhythm that resists these. “Unlearning is the state of encountering in which we’re in-between who we were and who we are, resistant to capital’s quantification and measurement. By upending the demand for realization, unlearning opens the possibilities of what can be.” (p. 113)

In my ESL classroom, I have found this idea of arrhythmia particularly relevant when working with teenagers who are often constrained by testing and curricular expectations. I try to disrupt the linear rhythm of language instruction by including moments of digression, re-visitation, and unstructured exploration. These practices encourage students to embrace the messiness of language learning as a non-linear, recursive process and allow them to dwell in the discomfort of uncertainty, a key part of unlearning rigid expectations about “correct” language use.

In this way, Ford’s concept of arrhythmia helps me rethink the pacing and goals of my classroom valuing slow, indirect and often “unproductive” moments as essential to the process of language acquisition. This arrhythmic pedagogy resists the commodification of learning and invites students to inhabit language in ways that feel more personal, curious and free.

5.7) Curriculum Critique and Ungrading

This didactic unit has been designed in alignment with the current Aragonese curriculum (ECD/1172/2022) under Organic Law 3/2020 (LOMLOE), which defines the exit competences for the Compulsory Secondary Education (ESO) cycle. The curriculum is based on the CEFR and the latest L2 research, particularly embracing the Action-Oriented Approach. While it does not prescribe specific methodologies, it presents competences in the form of can-do statements, emphasizing learner autonomy and the development of active citizens capable of navigating an increasingly global, multilingual, and intercultural society.

LOMLOE promotes formative assessment as a key pillar of language learning. However, institutional obligations to assign grades often undermine this aim, resulting in the persistence of grade-oriented practices. Though rubrics are encouraged to objectify performance, they remain inherently subjective as they depend on the weight given by the assessors' judgement (Sadler, 2009; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). Evaluations vary significantly between teachers and even within the same teacher over time. Moreover, rubrics can unintentionally encourage comparison among students, reinforcing competitive grading structures. This undermines the formative function of assessment, especially in SLA, where language acquisition is recurrent, nonlinear, and uniquely individual.

Despite efforts to present feedback as formative, the necessity of translating assessments into grades leads students to focus on outcomes rather than learning processes. As Ferns, Hickey, and Williams (2021) argue, this emphasis on grades distracts learners from growth, fosters peer comparison, and can lead to 'learned helplessness', where negative feedback is internalized as inability, reducing motivation and self-efficacy. Based on this contradiction during the master program a group of classmates and I made an academic poster for a course on innovation and classroom research. The innovative trend we presented represents an alternative assessment approach, ungrading, which has been gaining traction in response to this tension (see Appendix 5).

Ungrading does not simply eliminate grades but reframes assessment as a dialogic, reflective process centered on formative feedback, self-assessment, and student-teacher dialogue. Spurlock (2023) found that ungrading significantly increased intrinsic motivation, confidence, and students' belief in their capacity to learn, while slightly reducing anxiety. Similarly, a study cited by Ferns, Hickey, and Williams (2021) from the University of Singapore reported positive effects on student mental health and stress reduction when grades were removed.

Ungrading also supports learner autonomy, a core value in both the CEFR and LOMLOE. Students engage more actively in monitoring their progress, setting personal goals, and reflecting metacognitively which promotes self-regulation and deeper learning. One practical tool in this process is the student portfolio. Ferguson (2013) emphasizes that portfolios allow students to collect evidence of their learning and growth, encouraging self-assessment and reflection over time. Ferns et al. (2021) add that portfolios facilitate a more holistic, student-centered approach where learning is demonstrated iteratively rather than fixed through numeric evaluation.

A key feature of ungrading is the possibility of resubmitting work based on feedback. This practice fosters a growth mindset and reduces fear of failure by framing learning as a process rather than a performance. Feedback becomes constructive and collaborative rather than terminal, helping build a supportive, equitable classroom environment. While most institutions still require final grades, ungrading advocates suggest these be negotiated with students based on their portfolios and demonstrated progress. Ferns et al. (2021) report that this practice enhances students' sense of agency and ownership. During my teaching placement, I implemented this approach: students reflected on their progress and contributed to their final assessment (see Appendix 6). The result was greater trust, increased satisfaction, and reduced anxiety, all supported by consistent feedback and absence of traditional grading.

By integrating ungrading into my practice, I aimed to create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. This approach aligns with the LOMLOE's competency-based model, which emphasizes formative assessment and learner agency (Moya Otero & Luengo Horcajo, 2023). Crucially, ungrading helps resolve one of the curriculum's major implementation challenges: the tension between its pedagogical aspirations and the institutional demand to quantify learning. By centering student growth, reflection, and dialogue, ungrading offers a meaningful path forward.

6) Methodology

The design of this lesson plan adheres to the active methodologies in language teaching. It follows the action-oriented approach, and all the lessons follow a task-based structure using authentic materials and looks at students as agents of language use that create their own meaning.

The topic was selected as there is a gap in the curriculum for emotional intelligence tools. Managing emotions is a crude reality in a teenager's life and society in general. Creating good self-talk habits and understanding how our inner speech affects us on a daily basis is essential for a well-rounded person. Connecting the English lesson with broader topics that address students' needs for a fulfilling life is a way to motivate and engage students as the talks link directly to their personal growth and personal relations.

As explained in the theoretical framework, active methodologies in language teaching prove to be more engaging and adept at incorporating the target language in their interlanguage for the simple reason of actively using the language with a communicative purpose. For this reason, I followed a TBLT structure for lessons while trying to make the tasks conform to the action-oriented approach in the way students and interactions are seen.

To design the unit, I have followed a backwards design (D. Willis & J. Willis, 2007) which means I have first determined a learning outcome: understanding self-talk and using this knowledge to create an action plan to improve self-concept and self-esteem. Once the outcome was determined, I built the unit as a scaffolding introducing the topic progressively using a series of real materials to create different learning situations in which they tackle the same concepts from different angles in an increasingly more sophisticated manner. After establishing the learning situations, I contrasted the communicative learning aims with the key and specific competences according to the Aragonese curriculum ECD/1172/2022. This is developed in its own section under the critical commentary.

After analyzing the competences, I further considered the language forms that were more useful for each of the tasks and designed a post task to complete the objectives with a focus on form that would settle the specific language forms when possible. As explained in the theoretical framework above, I have followed an ungrading strategy for evaluating students. That means that all tasks were designed to have a specific written outcome that the teacher could collect as a portfolio and

give formative feedback on each task on top of the constant informal evaluation the teacher does during the lesson by listening to each group's conversations. Students are also given a short checklist to confirm they have completed every aspect of the task (see Appendix 4). Stating other evaluation criteria is impractical as I aim to evaluate progress rather than results, hence the teacher needs to take into account each student's starting point and acquisition rate.

After the whole unit was designed and the materials monitored for difficulty, interest and progressive development of the topic, I proceeded to critically analyze each pre-task, task, and post-task as developed below.

7) Critical analysis

7.1) Lesson plan

This didactic unit is designed for 4th ESO students and combines English as a Foreign Language instruction with emotional education. It is structured across six thematically connected lessons. The unit explores psychological concepts such as self-esteem, self-concept, and self-talk, using these as relevant and engaging contexts through which students develop their communicative competence.

The unit follows a thematic and pedagogical progression. Students begin by exploring their own emotional habits and internal dialogue, gradually moving into more interactive and collaborative tasks such as giving advice, describing emotional experiences, and developing personal strategies for emotional regulation. Language is always used with a purpose: to express, connect, and reflect—not just to practice form.

Rather than approaching language through isolated content blocks, the unit builds towards complexity by layering vocabulary, structures, and communicative functions throughout. Key language elements are recycled and expanded upon in different formats through individual reflection, peer interaction, and group collaboration. This allows for reinforcement and deeper engagement with both language and content.

The final task invites students to synthesize everything explored in previous sessions by designing a personal action plan, which gives the sequence a sense of closure and personal relevance. In this way, the unit is not a collection of separate lessons but a coherent learning journey where emotional awareness and language use grow side by side.

7.2) Contribution to key competences

As the unit follows communicative approaches (TBLT and AoA) all the lessons include communication and mediation as the medium to learn the L2. In other words, the Linguistic Competence (CCL1, CCL2, CCL3) is constantly fostered throughout the unit. Moreover, I have designed the lesson to work with different media. In lesson 2, students have to synthesize and

discuss information from a video; in lesson 3 and 4 they produce written texts through mediation, first in pairs they describe how emotions are felt physically and then in groups they give advice to overcome those feelings. In lesson 5 the input comes from a written article written for teenagers and checked for their skill level, while on lesson 6's post-task, students use their language to help their peers improve their action plan hence using language towards democratic coexistence (CCL5) and help each other as agents.

While there is no specific lesson dedicated to the Plurilingual competence, the teaching methodology allows for the use of L1 as a mediating language to supplement and confirm knowledge. During my experience in the placement period, I implemented a project-based unit in which students were given lots of group work time (see Appendix 6). While I tried to make them understand the importance of using English as the medium of communication, inevitably every student resorted to Spanish at some point or another. The role of the teacher during these group times was partly to bring back students to the L2, asking them to reformulate in English and asking peers to help do so when a specific student could not find the words. I found this worked very well and after a few days I only had to look at them from across the room for them to switch back. This was possible due to a kind approach that did not chastise them for using the L1, in fact I encourage it so long as they tried to reformulate in English afterwards. This approach aligns with both Willis (1996) and Ellis (2003) on their vision of using L1 to help students set goals and promote weaker students to participate more. In this way, every lesson sets the space and environment to develop Plurilingual Competences (CP1, CP2)

The most relevant competence for this unit is the Personal, Social and Learning to Learn Competence (CPSAA2, CPSAA3, CPSAA5) as it is the central theme of the unit. By the end of the unit students should be able to understand and self-regulate their emotions (CPSAA1), specifically in lessons 2 and 5 they learn about strategies to do so while previous lessons build up to this goal. In lessons 1 and 2 they learn about personal and social factors affecting mental health (CPSAA2). Lessons 3 and 4 put them in a situation where they need to understand others' problems and perspectives as they need to empathize with different emotions and then give advice to the people feeling in a certain way (CPSAA3). At the end of the unit, in lesson 6, students develop an action plan to consciously improve their self-talk to encourage their academic endeavor and mental

health instead of having negative self-talk that prevents them from engaging in academic tasks (CPSAA5)

The Civic Competence (CC1, CC3) and Cultural Awareness and Expression Competence (CCEC3) are dealt with tangentially. During lessons 3 and 4 students need to relate to others through empathy and cultural aspects relating to moral, ethical and practical advice and mutual understanding to improve self-esteem and social relations with their peers. If more lessons were dedicated to this topic the unit could be expanded to make more use of art and cultural expressions to delve into the psychological concepts dealt with or others stemming from them.

7.3) Contribution to Specific competences

Throughout the unit, students need to interpret a series of oral, written and multimodal texts advancing the specific competence CE.LEI.1. For instance, students need to interpret a self-esteem test in lesson 1, a multimodal (audio and video) text in lesson 2, an advice column in lesson 4, and a written article in lesson 5. They also need to interpret oral texts whenever interacting with their peers in the communicative activities of each lesson.

Learners practice production (CE.LEI.2) when rephrasing negative statements into positive ones in lesson 2. In lesson 3, they need to create and write a short description of feelings and their associated physical manifestation. They also produce a better version during the self-correction in the post-task of the same lesson when they have to improve the descriptions with more concrete adjectives. Similarly in lesson 4 students engage in production when giving advice to their peers.

The specific competences CE.LEI.3 and CE.LEI.4 relate to interaction and mediation respectively. These competences are constantly being worked on during this unit as most lessons require some form of interaction and mediation. In lesson 1, students discuss their test results with some prompts given by the teacher. In lesson 3, the task includes a part in which students need to guess the emotions described, this encourages active listening, asking for clarification, turn-taking, reformulating and interpreting in a collaborative setting. Moreover, in lesson 4, the students give advice to each other and later they discuss which was the best advice and why to further develop these interactions and mediation skills. Finally in lesson 6, students give suggestions to each other to improve their progress ladder strategies.

Even though the last two specific competences, CE.LEI.5 and CE.LEI.6 (plurilingual awareness and interculturality) are not directly treated in this unit, the students develop these skills to some extent. The focus-on-form activities in lesson 2's post-task, as well as lesson 4's post-task, aim to put forward grammatical features that students can notice from the previous exercises allowing them to compare to the other languages in their repertoire. In lesson 4, I specifically selected advice seekers from different parts of the world writing to a columnist to compare the conflicts experienced by teenagers in different cultures in order to overcome stereotypes.

7.4) Learning objectives and essential knowledge contents

The goals set for the proposed learning unit are explained in the Appendix 2. The first goal is achieved through the pre-task of lesson 2 as the video explains broadly the effects of self-concept and self-talk. Moreover, the topic is recurrent throughout the unit. The second, third, and seventh goals are related to this and also tackled in the second lesson's main task. Students change negative statements into positive and encouraging ones, not only to learn how to rephrase, but rather to pay attention to the possible internal dialogues they use and hence to develop a strategy to fight that internal impulse of being too harsh and negative on one-self. Other useful strategies to manage emotions and how we react to our environment are tackled in the reading of lesson 5. Then they are all put together for the self-development plan of lesson 6.

The fourth goal is elaborated on lesson 4 as students directly practice how to give advice to their classmates. The fifth goal relating to reading comprehension is worked on in lessons 4 and 5. The sixth goal is achieved throughout the unit as each lesson encourages students to participate, be creative, and take initiative. However, it is also specifically treated in lesson 6 when students arrange a plan for personal growth.

The essential knowledge contents are present throughout the unit. The Communication essential knowledge content is the most developed in the unit. Each lesson is designed to encourage communication between peers, allowing for errors and self-correction in order to hone in their communicative tools and strategies. The plurilingual essential knowledge is also encouraged through constant communication focusing on meaning rather than form. This essential knowledge is dealt with more in the style of teaching by allowing the use of L1 and helping students connect

ideas within their interlanguage. As this is impossible to foresee it is not reflected in the unit plan itself but in the teaching strategies explained in the theoretical framework. Finally, interculturality is not explicitly treated in this unit proposal as the unit's topic is relating to the psyche and this is seen as somewhat universal, and I lack the knowledge to explain different cultural approaches to the concepts dealt with in the unit. Despite being less explicit, there is some approach and appreciation of different cultures having similar problems that we can experience. To showcase this, the text used in lesson 4 is written by a Brazilian teenager expressing his problem and anguish which the students can relate to.

7.5) Task-Based Language Teaching

Throughout the whole unit, the lessons are organized according to the pre-task, task and post-task structure described in the theoretical framework. The pre-tasks are used to activate prior knowledge such as in lesson 3 with a brainstorm, or lesson 6 as students write what they have learnt about themselves throughout the unit. In lesson 4, the pre-task is used to see examples of what students are expected to do later on. While lessons 2 and 5 use audiovisual and written materials respectively to introduce the topic in the following tasks. Lesson 1's pre-task does not follow the uses listed above, but it serves as a lighthearted way to introduce the general topic of the unit while letting students move around the class and promoting a better class environment.

The tasks proposed throughout the unit have different non-linguistic outcomes and are set in real-life contexts such as filling up a self-esteem test in lesson 1 or creating a personal action plan in lesson 6. Other times the task is not directly a real-world context, but reflects the language used in it (Ellis, 2003) for instance in lesson 3, students need to write a character experiencing strong emotions, while this is a fictional set up, students could use the same language to express their feelings in a real-world conversation. In the same way, writing some advice is not the immediate real context where students will use the linguistic form, but they practice giving advice, which is a common conversational context. The tasks proposed have nonlinguistic outcomes such as the self-esteem test in lesson 1; trying to guess the emotion described in lesson 3; organizing a text in lesson 5; or creating a personal action plan in lesson 6. In tasks 2 and 4, students have a more linguistic outcome, as they are more grammar oriented.

The post task is used to reinforce the grammatical structure used during the lesson and present it in a direct form (Willis, 1996; D. Willis & J. Willis, 2007). For instance, at the end of lesson 4 the grammatical structure for modal verbs is given. In lesson 2, students are guided to notice the structures used by their peers, and lesson 3 reinforces vocabulary by asking them to rewrite with more complex adjectives. While lessons 1 and 5 use this phase to reformulate the results of the task. Lesson 6 not only allows for reformulation, but also for collaborative learning as they give each other suggestions on how to improve their strategies.

7.6) Action-oriented Approach

As discussed in the section above, the lessons aim to create a real-life situation and context, focused on meaning through interaction and mediation with the other class agents. While not all the lessons can be said to be real-life context, but rather reflecting real conversational needs, the whole unit's topic has real-life immediate repercussions in the students' life. In lesson 1, they are confronted with understanding their self-esteem and its effects. In the same way, in lesson 2 they learn about inner speech and how to use it in a positive way. This not only shows a real practical strategy for self-regulation, but also it makes them agents of their own mental well-being. This is especially relevant in the personal action plan and progress ladder used in lesson 6's task.

The tasks are designed to allow initiative and agency by opening the floor for discussion and collaborative construction of meaning, such as in lessons 2, 3 and 4. The tasks have defined missions, they either engage in collaboratively creating a written text give advice or create a self-development plan. The tasks have a set of restrictions to make the activity more effective even though these simply aim to guide the end-goal into a specific format rather than limit their creative possibilities.

Regarding a language policy, as mentioned above I encourage students to use their native language in specific situations when understanding cannot be reached, but I asked them to reformulate in English even if they need the help of a classmate. This language policy is not stated anywhere in the activities, but it is reinforced during the lessons themselves, and the students' needs are noticed by the teacher.

Students are seen as agents that can take control of their own psyche and perspective. The whole unit revolves around making students aware of the power of self-talk in changing how they react to different situations, making them agents of their inner and outer world.

7.7) Motivation

The proposed unit tries to motivate students from different angles. First the learning situation: as the topic was chosen for being relevant to the questions and challenges that teenagers are facing. In this way it aims to connect with students' needs and motivate them to open and participate in class. Moreover, the unit is drawing in metacognitive learning about self-concept and projecting oneself, so students achieve their ideal person as proposed by Dörnyei (2010) as a way to help students find motivation.

Second, at the learner level the unit is designed to reduce language use anxiety by presenting the tasks as a game in groups and allowing the space to make mistakes with the possibility of correcting them in a safe environment. For instance, lesson 2's task is gamified by pulling the negative sentences out of a hat and doing quick turns prompts faster responses without giving too much importance to the form until the post-task when attention is called to it. Similarly lessons 3 and 4 are designed to tackle the tasks in small groups where students feel safe to make mistakes and practice L2 production.

Third, from the language level as explained in Dörnyei (1994), students get motivated by integrating or having interest in the target language culture. Although, the unit does not reference directly English nor American culture; by giving students authentic English materials, students are given roles that help them imagine themselves as part of an English-speaking community. For instance, lesson 2 shows real-life English usage to describe mental health, and lesson 4 uses the advice columnist format which is common in English media.

Moreover, the unit as a whole provides students with a sense of control over external expectations by reframing them as actionable goals, so they can reflect on external expectations. Specifically in the transition from the first lesson when students first engage with their self-esteem and how it is affected by external factors to the self-improvement plan in lesson 6 where students set their own goals step by step.

Finally, Each the unit is structured based on Dörnyei and Ushioda's (2021) process-oriented model, with each lesson supporting pre-actional, actional and post-actional phases to sustain learner motivation over time. For instance, the warmup in lesson 1 or the pre-task in lesson 6 serve as a pre-actional phase as they represent a motivational goal-setting moment. All collaborative tasks are engaging and personal to engage motivation, from the gamified rephrasing in lesson 2 to the jigsaw reading in lesson 5. At the end of each lesson the post actional phase is activated by offering opportunities to reflect and consolidate learning by sharing personal reflections, having peer feedback or class discussions.

7.8) learning vs studying

Unlike the project-based unit used for my placement period see (Appendix 6), this unit did not allocate specific time for students to wander. During the placement period I designated whole lessons for group research during which students could find their own interests about cultures and their foods.

However, the wandering process of studying is still present in more indirect ways such as in lesson 3's post task as students need to upgrade the descriptions written in the previous task, they are encourage to use thesaurus to find new words and explore different options that can lead to off-task learning as looking for the adjectives might lead to finding other interesting words.

As a teaching strategy I implement and encourage Ford's (2016) idea of studying by giving extra time in group discussion so that students can finish the task and continue talking between them to practice conversation on their own terms such as in lesson 1's post-task when they need to discuss and reflect on their test results and their validity; lesson 4's task ends with students deciding which was the best advice and why, then they can divert to different subjects and ideas. Lesson 5's post-task sets the tone to reflect on how they react in different situations so they can talk and discuss their own experiences, how they felt and why they reacted the way they did; or lesson 6's post-task as they advise each other how to best implement their self-development plans and commenting on their friends strengths and how to overcome their weaknesses.

7.9) Arrhythmia

First, arrhythmia is felt in the rhythm of the whole unit as the concepts presented are recurrent and not simply moving from one topic to the next, by the end of the unit the students need to involve all the concepts dealt with throughout the unit to complete the final task. The rhythm of repetition can be seen as well in individual lessons such as lesson 3 where first adjectives are brainstormed, then students use them to write a description, which is rewritten and upgraded during the post task.

7.10) Materials and resources

For this unit I have chosen to keep the materials to a minimum as my primary focus and goal was to engage students with interesting tasks. On the other hand, all materials chosen follow the basic criteria according to the principles of communicative approaches such as TBLT and AoA. That is, materials need to be authentic and relevant to the real-world use of language. The materials have been taken from real sources and checked for language difficulty and kept intact as much as possible. However, the materials have all been carefully prepared and formatted to be print-ready using large and clear fonts as a way towards Universal Design for Learning. Instructions have been written clearly on each print for students to follow as the teacher explains each task and therefore cater for the diverse learning needs of students by simplifying the materials as much as possible in this regard. Moreover, each task is accompanied by a short checklist, so students know what is expected of them during each lesson (see Appendix 4).

The materials diversify through different media leaning towards the written material over audiovisual only used in the pre-task of lesson 2. The video used in that pre-task serves to introduce the concepts and ideas that will be used throughout the unit and is not worked intensively. Despite the higher use of written texts, these provide very different affordances to practice English. The text in lesson 1 is more interactive, it is a self-esteem self-assessment which students have to read and complete individually to then reflect on and participate in class discussion. The text for lesson 4 serves mostly as an example of how professional advice columnists answer their readers. While in lesson 5, reading and summarizing the text to do a jigsaw puzzle as the task itself.

The other materials used are a set of sentences presented as a game in which students need to rephrase negative statements into positive ones. Gamifying tasks and materials is very useful to increase interest and motivation in students as the format is new and appealing to them. Finally,

the last print used for lesson 6 is a goal ladder with instructions for students to formulate the steps needed to successfully make use of the tools learnt during the unit making students into agents of their own personal development.

All the materials are designed to be printed and used for students to complete the tasks, which consistently include instructions for students to write the ideas and conclusions reached during group discussions. This little writing is used for the teacher to have some solid material to review and give formative feedback on.

7.11) Formative Assessment and ungrading

For this didactic unit and according to the LOMLOE framework and ungrading methodology I have moved away from summative assessment towards formative assessment. This can be done informally during the lesson or formally, usually in written form. Throughout the unit, students are asked to write down the final conclusions and ideas discussed in each task. All these task outcomes are collected in a portfolio. This provides the teacher with something material to collect constantly at the end of every other lesson on which to give formative feedback. While it is certainly more laborious and implies a heavier workload on the teacher, through this method the teacher can follow individual progress based on what they can do and did at each moment in time. For this rather short unit there is not substantial material to see progress, however I tried this method during my internship consisting of ten tasks in the period of 18 lessons and I could see consistently the most common mistakes and issues each student had (see Appendix 6). This, in a classroom, allows the teacher to address each student individually or to design specific lessons to tackle common class mistakes.

8) Conclusions

This dissertation has explored how the English language classroom can foster not only linguistic development but also students' personal and emotional growth by offering a pedagogical proposal that addresses learners as emotional, social, and linguistic beings. The proposed teaching unit aims to develop both communicative competence and psychological resilience through communicative methodologies, specifically Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) and the Action-Oriented Approach (AoA).

Active methodologies position students as agents of their own learning, reflecting the CEFR's view of the learner as a social actor. Similarly, the rejection of grades as a motivational tool supports a more humane, dialogic, and emancipatory vision of education. One that fosters intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, and autonomy. Ungrading, in this context, is not just a methodological decision but a political stance. It resists the commodification of learning and reframes assessment as a continuous, reflective process rather than a final judgment. This approach also embraces the "arrhythmia" described by Ford (2023) a non-linear, recursive, and exploratory rhythm of learning. Moments of ambiguity, digression, and emotional insight are not disruptions but integral to meaningful education.

Nonetheless, the unit operates within real contradictions. Curriculum limitations, institutional demands for grading, and broader ideological constraints impose boundaries. Even so, the unit represents a step towards a more student-centered, reflective, and humane pedagogy. Ultimately, it reimagines the classroom as a space of empowerment where language becomes a tool for understanding both the world and the self.

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Appendix 1: Lesson Plan

01	“How confident are you?”	
Goal	Define self-esteem and self-concept. Identify factors that influence them.	
Time	Description	Notes
15’	<p>Pre-task: True or False?</p> <p>The teacher reads or projects a series of statements and students will go to one side or other of the classroom and discuss why they went to that side of the room. Then they are asked to explain why they chose that side, and a little discussion is open to see if anyone changes their ideas.</p>	<p>"People with high self-esteem never doubt themselves."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion: Can confidence and self-doubt coexist? What’s the difference between self-esteem and arrogance? <p>"Self-esteem is something you are born with."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion: Is self-esteem fixed, or can it grow? What influences it? <p>"Other people’s opinions affect your self-esteem more than your own thoughts do."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion: How much power do we give others over our self-worth? <p>"Giving compliments to others helps boost your own self-esteem."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion: How does supporting others affect our own confidence? <p>"Social media has no impact on self-esteem."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discussion: What role does comparison play in self-image?
25’	<p>Task: Teacher reads the first paragraph of the test (it answers the last question of the pre-task) Explain</p>	Appendix 3.1: Teen self-esteem test

	<p>instructions on the test.</p> <p>Students answer the test.</p> <p>Then they read how to count the test and get the results</p> <p>Students read the descriptors out loud</p>	
10'	<p>Post-task: in groups of two or three discuss the test and the follow-up questions (Notes) Groups share one insight from their discussion with the class. Highlight themes that arise, reinforcing the importance of self-reflection and awareness.</p>	<p>Write on the blackboard:</p> <p>Do you agree with your results?</p> <p>Identify two strengths and one areas of growth.</p> <p>Do you think these traits are visible to others?</p> <p>How do external factors (e.g., friends, family, media) shape our self-esteem?</p> <p>What can we do to build or maintain positive self-esteem?</p>

02	<i>“That’s crazy talk!”</i>	
Goal	Recognize the role of self-talk and practice reframing negative thoughts into positive ones.	
Time	Description	Notes
7'	<p>Pre-task: watch video once and try to answer these questions</p>	<p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNyUmbmQQZg</p> <p>Why is self-talk important?</p> <p>What is instructional and motivational self-talk?</p> <p>What is distanced self-talk?</p> <p>What is cognitive behavioral therapy? What strategies does it teach?</p> <p>Appendix 3.2</p>

8'	Discuss the main ideas and the influence of negative and positive self-talk. Watch a second time if necessary	Have extra questions ready: What is inner speech? Is it normal to talk to yourself out loud? Are you aware of your inner speech? Do you use positive or negative self-talk? Do you think positive speech influences you?
10'	Task: Sorting negative self-talk: In groups of 3 or 4, students pick from a bag a paper slip with a negative self-talk statement. They then have to collaboratively rewrite them as positive and encouraging affirmations.	Annex 3.3
7'	Individually, students reflect on personal challenges or situations when they experience negative self-talk and they write 1-2 personal affirmations to counteract these thoughts on a sticky note and place them on an affirmation wall	
8'	Post-task: Noticing the pattern (Focus on form) Students read the statements of their peers and try to find the sentence structure pattern	Guide students to see how the sentences start, what tense is used, type of strong positive words etc
10'	Teacher writes a series of formula of how these positive statements work. then students need to write a new statement using one of these formula	Formula 1: "I am + positive quality/ability." - I am strong. / I am capable of handling challenges. Formula 2: "I can + action + positive outcome."

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can improve with effort. / I can learn from mistakes. - <p>Formula 3: "I choose to + action/attitude."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I choose to believe in myself. / I choose to focus on progress. <p>Formula 4: "Mistakes/failures + positive lesson."</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mistakes help me grow. / Failure is part of learning.
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03	<i>“Where’s that feeling?”</i>	
Goal	Use appropriate adjectives and descriptive phrases to talk about emotional states and personality traits.	
Time	Description	Notes
8’	Pre-task: brainstorm common adjectives for emotions. Teacher asks where those emotions are felt physically in the body	This can be done with an interactive word cloud if the students are allowed to use their phones
7’	In pairs students talk about the different situations in which these feelings might appear	
13’	Task: In the same pairs students create a short description of characters experiencing one or two strong emotional states. They need to include a description of physical manifestation of the emotions	At the end of lesson 3 the descriptions will be taken by the teacher to give individualize feedback along with the buildup of the next lesson
7’	The pairs separate and join a group of three different pairs. They read to each other their	If they go fast, they switch to a different classmate

	description and they have to guess the emotion being described.	
10'	Post-task: adjective upgrade. After guessing the emotions described. They try to make the sentences stronger and more precise with new adjectives. Encourage using thesaurus if for HW	Example: "His hands were cold" → "His fingers trembled, icy against his skin."
5'	Some students share the new sentences. Discuss how stronger descriptions make emotions more powerful	

04	“Help me, please!”	
Goal	Give advice and suggestions about self-esteem and emotion management. Practice using modal verbs (<i>should, might, could, etc.</i>)	
Time	Description	Notes
13'	Pre-task: A couple of volunteers read out loud two examples of advice columnist written by teenagers and the answers given by experts.	See Appendix 3.4
17'	Task: In groups of 4-5 students take turns reading the descriptions from lesson 2 and 3 the rest of the group act as “advice columnist” and give advice for each situation. Each columnist writes the different advice they give.	Make the groups random, not their desk neighbors
5'	When they have all received advice for their characters and descriptions, they discuss which was the best advice received	
5'	Post-task: Grammar table with the different modal verbs and the students are asked if they recognize them, did they use any of them to write the advice.	
10'	Students are asked to re-write the advice they gave but using different modal verbs	

05	<i>“Let’s figure it out together”</i>	
Goal	Learn techniques for emotion regulation, such as mindfulness, journaling, or problem-solving.	
Time	Description	Notes
10’	Pre-task: Read first half of the article: “Tips for Teens: Strategies to Help you Build Better Self-Regulation Skills”	Read out loud or individually
25’	Task: The class is divided into 4 groups (5-6 students). Each group is assigned a different “R” from the article (Reframe, Recognize, Reduce, Reflect, except Respond) They then read the relevant section and summarize it in their own words they then explain their section to the rest of the class. Finally, a student reads the last R, “response”	Jigsaw reading Appendix 3.5
15’	Post-task: As a class discuss: Which "R" do you think is most important and why? How might using multiple Rs at once help in a tough situation? What’s a real-life example where these skills could make a difference? How could different R’s be used together?	

06	<i>“Your Personal Action Plan”</i>	
Goal	Create an action plan that students can use to improve their self-esteem and emotional management.	
Time	Description	Notes
10’	Pre-task: Individually, students write a few (3) sentences on what they have learnt about themselves	

25'	Task: Create a personal action plan progress ladder with specific steps to improve self-esteem or manage emotions.	WAGOLL: Progress ladder Appendix 3.6
15'	Post-task: In pairs or groups of three, share their action plan and give each other suggestions on improving their strategies	Allow friends to get together for this

Appendix 2: Unit Goals

Goals to be achieved through this ESL didactic unit:

- To become aware of the importance of self-talk and self-concept for mental health, specifically for self-esteem.
- To acknowledge self-limiting internal dialogue and to change it with self-encouraging words.
- To develop communicative skills and strategies to effectively mediate calmly in different situations.
- To give and receive advice for different contexts and situations.
- To develop reading comprehension abilities to understand somewhat complex texts of social significance.
- To strengthen independence and personal growth with activities that encourage initiative, participation, creativity, decision-making and self-confidence.
- To identify and critically assess negative or disrespectful practices towards themselves and their communities.

The following table is based on selected skills and attitudes taken from the LOMLOE Aragonese Curriculum for 4th ESO, used specifically for this didactic unit proposal:

Essential knowledge contents	Knowledge, skills and attitudes
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-confidence and initiative. Error as an integral part of the learning process. - Strategies of common use for planning, execution, control and repairing comprehension, the production and coproduction of oral, written and multimodal texts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow mediation activities to be carried out in regular situations.- Communicative functions of common use, adequate to the environment and communicative contexts: Give and ask for instructions, advice, orders; offer, accept and reject help, propositions or suggestions; to express partially taste or interest and emotions; narrate past events, describe present situations and state future events; express opinion, possibility, capacity, obligation and prohibition; express simple arguments; formulate hypothesis and suppositions; express doubt; reformulate and summarize- Contextual models and discursive genres of common use in comprehension, production and co-production of oral, written and multimodal short and simple texts, both literary and non-literary- Linguistic units of common use and meanings associated to said units such as expression of the entity and its properties, quantity and quality, the space and space relations, time and time relations, affirmation, negation, interrogation and exclamation.- Lexis of common use and interest to the student in relation to personal identification, interpersonal relations, places and environments, social and free time, health and physical activity, regular life, housing and home, climate and natural environment, information technologies and communication.- Conventions and conversational strategies of common use. Both synchronic and asynchronic to start maintaining and end the communication, take and give
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	<p>word turn, ask for clarifications and explanations, reformulation, comparing and contrasting, summarize, collaborate, debate, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analogic and digital tools of common use for comprehension, production, oral, written and multimodal coproduction; virtual platforms of interaction, cooperative and educative collaboration for learning, communication and development of projects with speakers or learners of the foreign language.
Plurilingualism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategies and techniques to answer efficiently with increasing levels of fluidity, adequation and correction for a concrete communicative need, regardless of the limitations derived from the level of competency of the Foreign Language and other languages in the linguistic repertoire. - Strategies of common use to identify, organize, retain, recover and use linguistic units creatively through the comparison of languages and varieties of the personal linguistic repertoire - Strategies and tools of common use for self-evaluation, co-evaluation, self-reparation, analogic m digital, individual and cooperatives - Expressions of specific lexis of common use for exchanging ideas regarding communication and learning
Interculturality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The foreign language as a means of interpersonal and international communication, source of information and tool of social participation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Interest and initiative in the realization of communicative exchanges through different media with speakers of the foreign language- Strategies of common use and detection and action against discriminatory verbal and non-verbal language
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Appendix 3: Materials

3.1) Self-esteem Test

Teen Self-Esteem Scale Directions

Self-esteem is the way you feel about yourself. It is your perception of your worth, as well as your perception of what others think of you. Good self-esteem is being able to think and speak positively and confidently about yourself without bragging or being arrogant. It is one of the most important aspects of your personal development. It is necessary for effective social and emotional growth and is vital in your efforts to reach your full potential.

The *Teen Self-Esteem Scale* can help you identify how you currently feel about yourself. This assessment contains 32 statements. Read each of the statements and decide if the statement is true or false. If it is true, circle the word True next to the statement. If the statement is false, circle the word False next to the statement. Ignore the letters after the True and False choices. They are for scoring purposes and will be used later. Complete all 32 items before going back to score the Self-Esteem Scale.

In the following example, the circled False indicates that the item is false for the person completing the scale:

1. I need constant approval and recognition.....True (B) **False (A)** Score _____

This is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time thinking about your answers. Your initial response will be the most true for you. Be sure to respond to every statement.

Teen Self-Esteem Scale

1. I need constant approval and recognition.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
2. I am often embarrassed by the actions of others.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
3. I am concerned about what others think of me.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
4. I am hurt by the opinions and comments of others.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
5. I give in to other people quickly.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
6. I am judgmental of others.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
7. I openly voice my opinions.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
8. Even if I don't want to, I often go along with the crowd.....True (B) False (A) Score _____

I. Total= _____

9. It doesn't bother me to talk in front of a group of people....True (A) False (B) Score _____
10. I rarely know how to start a conversation.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
11. I often feel inadequate in a new situation.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
12. I am shy when I am with other people.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
13. Big crowds make me nervous.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
14. I am friendly and comfortable with new people.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
15. I like new and different situations.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
16. I don't like to be with other people.....True (B) False (A) Score _____

II. Total= _____

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- 17. I don't think I'm anyone special.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
- 18. I often say I should have.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
- 19. I am able to evaluate what is good about me.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 20. I have a high opinion of myself.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 21. I can figure out what I need to improve about myself.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 22. I don't often speak my mind, even if I know I'm right.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
- 23. I am proud of myself.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 24. I often feel like a loser.....True (B) False (A) Score _____

III. Total= _____

- 25. I often exaggerate the truth in order to maintain my image.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
- 26. I don't feel ashamed of myself.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 27. I often wish I had what other people have.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
- 28. I make excuses when I make mistakes.....True (B) False (A) Score _____
- 29. It is most important to me to do what I think is right.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 30. I feel that I look as good as most people.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 31. I would not change much about myself.....True (A) False (B) Score _____
- 32. I often brag about myself and my accomplishments.....True (A) False (B) Score _____

IV. Total= _____

Teen Self-Esteem Scale Scoring Directions

The *Teen Self-Esteem Scale* is designed to help you better understand your level of self-esteem. This assessment will help assist you in getting to know yourself better and provide you with insights into your perceptions of yourself. People with high self-esteem consider themselves worthy and view themselves as equal to others. They do not think that they are perfect, but they recognize their limitations and are continually striving to grow and improve.

Scoring the Assessment

Look at the 32 items. Now you need to focus on the **A** and **B** after each choice rather than the True or False. In the space marked Score for each item, award yourself one (1) point for every answer you circled with **A** next to it and zero (0) points for every answer you circled with a **B** next to it. Then total your score on all items and write that number in the blank below.

- I. Approval Total _____
- II. Social Total _____
- III. Pride Total _____
- IV. Image Total _____

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Teen Self-Esteem Scale Profile Interpretation

Individual Scale Score	Result	Indications
0 to 2	low	You seem to possess few of the characteristics of someone who has healthy self-esteem. You need to develop skills to respect yourself, consider yourself worthy, and begin to move directly and realistically toward your personal and future goals.
3 to 5	moderate	You possess some of the characteristics of someone who has healthy self-esteem. You seem to respect yourself, consider yourself worthy, and show that you are able to move directly and realistically toward your personal and future goals.
6 to 8	high	You possess many of the characteristics of someone who has healthy self-esteem. You respect yourself, consider yourself worthy, and you are able to move directly and realistically toward your personal and future goals.

For scales you scored in the Moderate or High range, find the descriptions below.

Read the description and review the tips and tools in the **Self-Esteem Topic** on www.yourlifeyourvoice.org.

No matter how you scored, low, moderate or high, the tips and tools will help you to increase your understanding of your level of self-esteem.

Scale Descriptions

Approval – High scores indicate that you do not necessarily need the approval and recognition of others, you are concerned about what others think of you but do not obsess over their comments, and you are not easily influenced by what others do.

Social – High scores indicate that you enjoy and feel at ease when meeting other people for the first time, you feel comfortable in new situations, and you enjoy being in social situations where you can be with other people.

Pride – High scores indicate that you take pride in yourself and your accomplishments, hold yourself in high regard, and know what your strengths are and work to improve on those aspects that you feel are your weaknesses.

Image – High scores indicate that you have a strong self-image, are comfortable with the way you are on the inside and look on the outside, and are not overly concerned about projecting an untrue self-image.

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3.2) Self-talk Video Activity

Is it normal to talk to yourself? - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iNyUmbmQQZg>



Think about these questions after watching the video once.

- Why is self-talk important?
- What is instructional and motivational self-talk?
- What is distanced self-talk?
- What is cognitive behavioral therapy? What strategies does it teach?

After watching it a second time, answer these:

- What is inner speech?
- Is it normal to talk to yourself out loud?
- Are you aware of your inner speech?
- Do you use positive or negative self-talk?
- Do you think positive speech influences you?

3.3) Rephrasing Game

How to Play:

- 1) Take turns picking a paper slip with a negative thought.
 - 2) As a group, discuss why it's negative.
 - 3) Work together to rewrite it as a positive and encouraging self-talk statement.
For example: "I'm so stupid" → "I am learning and growing every day"
 - 4) Write your positive sentences on a piece of paper for later use.
 - 5) When you are done, individually think about some negative self-thought you have and write a positive one to counter it.
-

I always mess things up.

I'm too shy to make friends.

I'm not good enough.

Nothing ever goes my way.

I'll never be able to do this.

Everyone else is better than me.

No one likes me.

I shouldn't even try; I'll just fail.

I can't do anything right.

I'm a disappointment.

I'll fail anyway, so why try?

People are just pretending to like me.

People must think I'm weird.

I don't deserve good things.

I hate how I look.

I always make the wrong choices.

I don't belong here.

I'm too slow at learning new things.

I'm not as smart as everyone else.

I ruin everything.

I'm a burden to others.

I'm not talented at anything.

I always embarrass myself.

I'll never be happy.

3.4) Advice Columnist Task

Instructions:

- 1) Read these two letters asking for advice and their answers.
 - 2) In groups, read yesterday's descriptions of the emotional states and give advice to each other.
-

— December 21, 2024 —

I live in Brazil. I came to this site on the recommendation of my teacher. My problem is the following: Sometimes I feel like my parents demand a lot from me when it comes to studying and taking care of the house. And I don't know how to feel sometimes. I need a tip on how to deal with this pressure, how to talk to my parents about it, or if it's normal for parents to treat their children like this.

— Jon, 14

Dear Jon,

Parents have different ways of teaching their children how to contribute to household chores and prioritize school-related activities, such as studying. Most parents use this approach because they want their children to be prepared for the reality of going to college, getting a first job, and basically living independently. Since you feel your parents don't understand your perspective and you don't understand theirs, it's time to talk to your parents. When there's a calm moment in your household, ask them to set aside some time for a conversation with them. They will probably ask you why you want to talk to them, let them know you have questions about schoolwork and responsibilities at home. This approach will give them time to prepare themselves, and you should come prepared with a list of questions and statements that lay out your feelings (for example, you feel very pressured to fit everything into your schedule and that you don't have time for fun time with your friends). Listen to what they have to say and tell them when you disagree. Keep calm and try to keep the conversation positive. Set a time limit for this meeting, and you can have another conversation in a few days or a week.

— Dr. M.

— August 13, 2024 —

Hi. I'm a guy and consider myself straight, and yet I have the BIGGEST crush on a trans guy at my school. He and I have become really good friends over the past year. I know he likes guys as well as girls because he told me so and I think he may be interested in me, too.

So what's the problem? My parents. They're super-conservative. No way they'll approve of us dating. I really don't want to have to sneak around behind their backs in order to date my friend. At the same time, I can't stand the idea of not asking him out because I really want to give us a shot. So what should I do? I'm really in a dilemma here and don't know what to do.

— Elliot, 15

Dear Elliot,

It sounds like you know who you are and when you feel attracted to someone, which is awesome! However, lots of parents have a hard time accepting their children's sexual expression, let alone when it might fall outside of a perceived norm. And you have a right to explore and figure yourself out separately from your parents' opinions. So here is what I suggest. Don't look for "approval" to date your friend; it's not sneaking around to keep your personal life to yourself. Assuming your friend feels like you do, go ahead and date him. Allow your feelings for him to grow and change, and as they do you will deepen self-knowledge and confidence. Use this experience to develop a positive perspective on your current life and your right to privacy, so you won't be caught off-guard if your parents find out and confront you.

— Síocáin

3.5) Jigsaw Reading

Tips for Teens: Strategies to Help you Build Better Self-Regulation Skills

by Thrive Training and Consulting | Aug 26, 2021 |

Do you sometimes find it difficult to control your emotions, behaviors and what you say? Have you gotten in trouble for disrupting class? Do you sometimes have emotional or angry outbursts that alienate your friends? Are you overly impulsive and find yourself participating in activities that you know are dangerous or unhealthy?

If these behaviors sound familiar, you have probably also experienced how they interfere with your learning, your relationships and the things you want to do and achieve.

To a degree, having a hard time with self-regulation is not unusual for adolescents and young adults. Research shows there are major changes in brain development that occur during this time. Throughout adolescence brain systems that seek rewards and process emotions are more developed than cognitive control systems responsible for good decision-making and future planning. In other words, acting or speaking before you think, is fairly common teenage behavior.

However, adolescents and young adults with mental health conditions such as anxiety and ADHD or those who have suffered trauma, tend to struggle more with self-regulation than the average teenager. They often feel emotions more intensely than they should, feel them for longer than they should, feel them at inappropriate times or respond to them in extreme ways.

Building Self-Regulation Skills

Self-Regulation skills are all about developing coping strategies that help you deal with your emotions in healthy ways and ultimately become more resilient.

Psychologist Stuart Shanker, an internationally recognized researcher and author on childhood development has categorized these skill-building steps into the “5 Rs”:

-
- 1) Read with your group your assigned R, discuss what it means and then explain with your own words to the rest of the class.
 - 2) Read the final “R” — Response —

- **5) Respond** – Work on these strategies over time to build self-regulation skills.

In the Moment

Building self-regulation skills is important. But how can you prevent reacting in an extreme way in the moment you feel intense emotions?

- **Take a Deep Breath** – Breathe in deeply through your nose (to the count of five) and out through your mouth (to or past the count of five.)
- **Push Pause** – Stop what you are doing and remove yourself from the situation. Take a walk, play with your pet and then come back when you feel calm. If you can't leave, think of a place you feel relaxed and imagine you are there.
- **Practice Self-Talk** – It may be helpful to have some mantras using phrases like, "I can handle this" to repeat to yourself when you feel overwhelmed.

Write it Down – If you are itching to say something or ask something that may not be appropriate or could be disruptive, write it down instead of verbalizing it.

- **1) Reframe** – After you have had an outburst, consider your behavior from various angles. Determine whether it was simple misbehavior or if it was unfortunate behavior brought on by an underlying cause such as stress or anxiety. When you can understand the distinction, you can reframe the incident and become more aware of your actions.
-

- **2) Recognize** – Learn to identify types of stress and how they impact you. There are five types of stress: physical, emotional, cognitive (stress over schoolwork), social (this is often made worse by social media), and pro-social (the stress individuals feel when they consider other people’s distress). When you recognize the types of stress that cause you to become dysregulated, you will better be able to avoid them or focus on learning to cope with them.
-

- **3) Reduce (manage your stress)** – This requires practice and developing new self-care routines. These can include regularly going on a run or walk, practicing breathing, meditation or mindfulness techniques that can help you be present rather than immersed in your feelings, talking with someone you trust, establishing a healthy sleep routine, etc. The Center for Parent and Teen Communication has created a guide for developing an individualized Stress Management Plan that may be helpful.
-

- **4) Reflect** – Take time to identify and acknowledge your feelings, possibly with the support of a mental health professional.
 - Name your emotions. By singling them out and giving them a name, you can gain some clarity, and your emotions may feel less overwhelming.
 - Process your emotions by talking about your feelings with someone you trust or a professional.
 - Release your emotions in healthy ways and in safe settings so they don’t overwhelm you at other times.

3.6) Goal Ladder Guidelines

Self-Esteem Progress Ladder Worksheet

Instructions: Complete each level by answering the guiding questions with your own thoughts. Be honest with yourself and think about small ways to improve your self-talk and self-concept. After all sections are answered, write them on the progress ladder in a more concise manner. Show your ladder to a classmate and give suggestions to each other on how to make the progress more achievable.

Level 1: Noticing My Self-Talk (Start Here)

What are some common negative thoughts I have?

When do I usually speak negatively about myself?

How do these thoughts affect my emotions and actions?

Level 2: Questioning Negative Thoughts

What could I say to challenge these thoughts?

How would I respond if a friend said this about themselves?

What is a small way I can change my thinking?

Level 3: Replacing Negative Self-Talk

What phrases can I use to be kinder to myself?

What is one encouraging thing I could tell myself daily?

How can I remind myself to practice this?

Level 4: Strengthening My Self-Concept

What are three positive things I like about myself?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

What accomplishments, big or small, am I proud of?

How can I start accepting compliments instead of brushing them off?

Level 5: Self-Compassion and Confidence (Final Level!)

How can I treat myself with the same kindness I give others?

What can I do when I make a mistake to stay positive?

What mindset do I want to work towards?

GOAL LADDER

Name:

Date:

 My goal:	
	Step 5: 
 Step 4:	
	Step 3: 
 Step 2:	
	Step 1: 

Appendix 4: Checklists

Lesson 1 — “How confident are you?”

Pre-task – True or False statements

- I chose a side for each statement.
- I explained my choice or wrote down one interesting point I heard.
- I listened to others’ ideas and considered if I wanted to change sides.
- I paid attention to different ways classmates explained their opinions.

Task – Teen self-esteem test

- I read the instructions before starting.
- I answered all the questions honestly.
- I calculated my score and read the description.
- I checked I understood any new words or phrases in the test.

Post-task – Discussion

- I shared at least one idea or reaction with my partner/group or noted one insight from the discussion.
- I listened to my partner/group’s ideas.
- I noted at least one way to maintain or improve self-esteem.
- I reflected on whether my results matched how I see myself.

Notes:

Lesson 2 — “That’s crazy talk!”

Pre-task – Video & questions

- I watched the video carefully.
- I answered the main questions (even with short notes).
- I asked or answered at least one extra question in discussion or wrote down one useful idea I heard.
- I noticed at least one example of positive self-talk from the video.

Task – Rewriting negative self-talk

- I worked with my group to rewrite each negative statement.
- Each new sentence was positive and encouraging.
- I wrote 1–2 personal affirmations for myself.
- I made sure each affirmation sounded natural to me.

Post-task – Pattern noticing

- I read my classmates’ positive statements.
- I identified at least one common sentence pattern.
- I wrote one new statement using the given formulas.
- I chose my favourite positive statement from today’s activity.

Notes:

Lesson 3 — “Where’s that feeling?”

Pre-task – Brainstorm & body mapping

- I helped list emotion adjectives or noted 3–5 new ones during the brainstorm.
- I shared where the emotions might be felt in the body.
- I listened for any unusual or interesting ideas from others.

Task – Writing descriptions

- I described a character with a strong emotion.
- I included at least one physical sign of the emotion.
- I worked with my partner to finish the description.
- I checked my description was clear enough for others to guess the emotion.

Post-task – Adjective upgrade

- I listened to other groups’ descriptions.
- I guessed at least one emotion correctly or wrote down one strong adjective I liked.
- I replaced simple adjectives with stronger/more precise ones.
- I kept at least one “upgraded” sentence for future use.

Notes:

Lesson 4 — “Help me, please!”

Pre-task – Reading advice column examples

- I read or listened to two example letters and answers.
- I noticed how the advice was given.
- I underlined or remembered a phrase I could use later.

Task – Giving advice

- I listened to my classmate’s situation.
- I gave clear, respectful advice using modal verbs or wrote down one useful advice phrase I heard.
- I wrote down the advice I gave/received.
- I made sure my advice was practical and encouraging.

Post-task – Focus on form

- I looked at examples of modal verbs from our advice.
- I tried writing one or two new pieces of advice using different modals.
- I checked that my modal verbs matched the meaning I wanted.

Notes:

Lesson 5 — “Let’s figure it out together” (Jigsaw Reading)

Pre-task – Reading

- I read my part of the article carefully.
- I underlined or noted key points.
- I checked I understood the main ideas before sharing them.

Task – Sharing in jigsaw groups

- I explained my section to my group or wrote down the main points others explained.
- I listened and noted ideas from other sections.
- I worked with the group to organize the information.
- I made sure our group’s notes were complete.

Post-task – Reflection

- I discussed with my group how the strategies could work in real life or wrote one short reflection.
- I shared at least one personal reaction or example.
- I thought about which strategies I might actually try myself.

Notes:

Lesson 6 — “Your personal action plan”

Pre-task – Self-reflection

- I wrote what I have learned about myself during the unit.
- I noted at least one habit I want to improve.
- I considered which lessons helped me most.

Task – Goal ladder

- I filled in each step of my goal ladder.
- My plan is clear, realistic, and personal.
- I included strategies we learned in earlier lessons.
- I checked that each step is small and doable.

Post-task – Peer suggestions

- I listened to my partner’s plan.
- I gave at least one helpful suggestion or noted one good idea from my partner.
- I updated my plan if I wanted to make changes.
- I chose one action I can start this week.

Notes:

Appendix 5: Ungrading Poster

UNGRADING

Fernando Pérez
Pablo Ruiz
Samuel Pérez



Introduction

Traditionally, evaluation has been used for grading students with numeric marks from tests, which can distort its purpose and impact the education system. "Desarrollo Curricular LOMLOE: Teoría y práctica" notes that the LOMLOE regulation lacks clear procedures for ensuring coherence, validity, and reliability in evaluation processes.

Despite the promotion of formative and peer evaluation, the focus on quantitative grades remains prevalent among teachers and students. This approach can overshadow student learning by prioritizing numeric grades over meaningful assessment. Critics such as Kohn and Blum argue that rubrics and narrative rankings mask the subjectivity of judgment without providing effective assessment.

Literature Review

The LOMLOE curriculum has been analyzed and criticized by authors such as Jornet, Suárez, Moya and Luengo.

A movement towards completely remove or at least remove the focus from grade in order to shift it to the learning process has been termed as un-grading (Fergusson, 2013; Kiapp, 2015; Kohn, Blum 2020; Ferns Hickey Williams, 2021; Mesland, 2023; Spurlock, 2023).

All these authors and more have implemented this innovative method in different subjects and levels of education. (MAIN INSIGHTS ARE: Furthermore, they offer numerous examples on how grading negatively affects intrinsic motivation, raises anxiety, hinders creativity, and shifts the focus from learning into getting grades. Not only that but if grades are not really an objective way to measure students' learning, why do we grade?)

To further advance the change in paradigm proposed by LOMLOE in which evaluation serves a formative learning outcome we propose to completely remove grading from the system.



Purpose

The purpose of this innovation project is to contribute to the improvement of evaluation proceeds and instruments of the current education law and curriculum established in Spain, that is, the LOMLOE, particularly in Aragón and in the English subject. It also has the intention of proposing alternative methods of evaluation to the ones that are currently used so that there can be a change not only in the way of evaluating but also in the way of thinking and approaching acquisition of knowledge and learning and its assessment both by teachers and students.

The LOMLOE curriculum focuses mainly on the evaluation of competencies and criteria rather than on the evaluation of individual skills, trying to put in relation those skills and understand language as a whole as well as an interrelated communicating tool where some if not all of the communication elements take its role at the same time. The problem with this focus on competencies is that it presents some contradictions and incoherences among the different aspects that are supposed to be part of competencies and evaluation (López Rupérez, 2022).

The LOMLOE also focuses on the type of evaluation that teachers are supposed to carry out, trying to get rid of the classical qualification system and betting on a formative assessment and a summative evaluation which assess every student's progress along the course. However, there's a lack of information and guidance on how to actually carry out this kind of evaluation and how to follow the whole process. Furthermore, the present curriculum also states a set of competencies which are understood as minimums to be achieved by students rather than as a guidance, which does not leave much room for flexibility and individual progress.

This innovation project intends to focus on both deepening into how to carry out an evaluation of competences while trying to focus on the student's individual progress according to the student's background rather than the reach of these competencies.



Methodology

The innovation project proposes eliminating written exams and grading individual tasks in favor of a formative evaluation using portfolios. This approach assesses students' body of work and progress, engaging them in receiving feedback to acquire new knowledge and develop competencies rather than merely aiming to pass an exam.

The project targets 1st ESO students, who have not yet developed a strong "grade culture." The research aims to measure the impact of the new method on motivation, self-efficacy, control of learning, and reduced anxiety. Students will not receive grades for individual tasks; instead, their progress will be assessed at the end of the term through self-assessment, peer-assessment, and collaborative assessment (teacher-student agreement on a grade).

The evaluation is divided into two categories: acquisition and development of competencies, and how these competencies are acquired. Methods and instruments measure students' work related to key competencies and basic knowledge, considering criteria such as studentship and thinking and learning. Students will understand what they need to learn and how to learn it, and will perform self-evaluation at the end of the term. Performance and acquisition levels are indicated using three categories: exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or needs improvement.

Expected Results

- We expect that students will be more creative as they experiment different approaches to tackle a task because they know they can meet expectations easily so they are focused on the task and not what to do to get the highest grade.
- More interest in the learning process and more awareness of it. Being able to self-evaluate their work and performance.
- More motivation.
- Otras cosas buenas que dicen en los artículos y los libros habra que repasar lo que he subrayado (aquí usar graficas de Spurlock, 2023)

Expected Issues

- WGetting used to a different method of evaluation and stop thinking about grades.
- Being obligated to put a mark as Spanish administration works like that to access other studies after secondary school.



INTRO (Pablo) (2 min)

Hi, we are Samuel, Fernando and Pablo.

We have called our presentation Digi-Evaluation because we need to evolve the way we evaluate. We are adjoining and promoting a recent academic trend called “Ungrading”. This trend aims to eliminate or at least shift the focus away from grades in any learning setting. We will explain how this is carried out in the following sections.

The current standing curriculum intends to make strides in this direction but it falls short of the goal. The LOMLOE advocates for an evaluation that is formative –in which grading is not as important. However it does not provide any specification on how to carry this out beyond transforming the numerical grade into a worded grade which is still a scale at the end of the day.

Not to mention that the reality of schools is that as soon as the feedback can be seen as a scale the students just weigh their mark with their classmates and disregard any feedback.

We want to put into question the relevance and purpose of grades in schooling. Why do we grade? Does it benefit learning in any way?

We all have felt the anxiety and pressure to achieve high grades. To the point that the whole goal of studying is to memorize answers to vomit in an exam and then forget any information instead of actually learning and integrating knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW (Fer) (2 min)

In order to be able to propose an alternative method of evaluation which doesn't focus on grades, we've mainly researched two main areas: the LOMLOE and ungrading in itself.

As Pablo was saying, the LOMLOE doesn't specify how to carry out different evaluation methods, and not only that, but as authors such as López say, the organization of competences, criteria, basic knowledge and descriptive operators, that is, what is supposed to be evaluated, makes it difficult for teachers to know how and what they have to assess in the end.

On the other hand, it's also been important to get a general understanding of the concept of ungrading as well as some of its possibilities and applications in the classroom. Ungrading does not consist only of avoiding marks but giving opportunities

to resubmit and improve assignments as well as making the student part of the evaluation process, shifting the focus from grades to the process of learning and the task at hand.

The studies we have used to support our project are mainly those by Ferguson, Spurlock, Masland, Kohn and Blum and their methods of evaluation have been implemented on primary, secondary and tertiary education, showing similar results.

PURPOSE (Sam) (2 min)

- The aim of this project is to improve the evaluation process and assessment tools that the Aragonese LOMLOE curriculum establishes for the English subject. By proposing new evaluation methods. This new method implies a change in approaching knowledge acquisition and assessment, both for teachers and students.
- Moreover, competencies, rather than as a guidance, are established as a minimum standard to achieve, which does not leave a lot of room for flexibility or individual progress.
- This innovation project intends to give some real guidance to carry out the evaluation of competences and how to focus on the student's background in order to reach these competences.

METHODOLOGY (Pablo) (2 min)

This action research could be carried out in any course, however if the goal is to change the educational culture of our students, it should ideally be implemented as a longitudinal study from 1st ESO until the end of high school.

The school system requires us to provide a grade at the end of each semester, but it does not specify how evaluation should be carried out other than it being formative. In order to make evaluation formative. We propose to evaluate students based on a portfolio as a whole. Of course, each individual task is evaluated and appropriate feedback given to it, but no grade is given other than "meets expectations" or "it doesn't". On the contrary, tasks are seen as a work in progress that students can improve with the feedback given. Truly making feedback meaningful. Being able to resubmit assignments incorporating feedback is essential to the learning process.

To define the criteria and operators used to evaluate students we have divided them under two categories: their competences and student's learning process

In order to know what we want or should evaluate, we have divided criteria under two basic categories: competences (what the student has to achieve) and products (student's work and how this shows their grade of achievement), that is, performance and the instruments where this is shown.

With this we aim to both give value to achievement as well as effort and progress in an individualized manner as each student starts from a different point and advances at a different pace.

Finally, as a way to grade students for the system, what several upgrading teachers propose is to negotiate grades between students and the teacher. Again this is according to their whole portfolio. The upgrading teacher's experience is that the majority of students assigned themselves the same grade that the teacher had initially in mind. As we can see in the graph only a few marginal students gave themselves up to a point above their grade.

I have to say that after putting this into practice during my placement. We might need to be careful with this and teenagers, as some students who normally fail, and I had a good but average grade for them gave themselves high eights... and Ehh no baby, come back to earth.

The implementation was not perfect as I didn't explain how we were going to work and what they should value beforehand. And again this is because of the grade culture and a bit of spanish picaresque to which we need to adapt

EXPECTED RESULTS (Fer) (2 min)

So what can we expect when applying this type of methodology? As it can be seen in the graphic, the results are similar in every case and show that students have reduced anxiety and stress significantly as they are not constantly worried about marks. Apart from that, other factors such as intrinsic goal orientation, self-efficacy for learning and performance and control of learning basis have also been boosted. Some other factors like extrinsic goal orientation and task value have also increased, although not so much.

Another result is the fact that allowing for resubmissions makes it easier to integrate feedback and further interest while it also reduces peer comparison and avoids students' basing self-esteem on their marks.

EXPECTED ISSUES (Sam) (1 min)

- Cultural Clash: Both students and teachers are immersed into a system that has grades as its main objective and as a way to restrict the access to a higher education.
- Teacher's assumptions: Some teachers would argue that the workload would be tremendous if a system like this was implemented, nevertheless, the reality is that the majority of students only redo one or two papers every semester. (Chart).

Appendix 6: Placement Period Portfolio



Facultad de Educación
Universidad Zaragoza

PORTAFOLIO DE PRACTICUM II

Pablo Ruiz Peciña

I.E.S. Andarán

Tutor: Miguel Ángel Vela Tafalla

CURSO 2023-2024

Introducción a los contenidos del portafolio (max. 100 palabras)

Actividad 1 (1700-1900 palabras en total): _____

Actividad 2* (2700-3000 palabras en total): _____

*Recomendación: Contextualization: 200 palabras; Analysis: 900-1000 palabras; Reflection: 1600-1800 palabras

Conclusión (max. 500 palabras)

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Introduction

Activity 1 Interaction in the EFL classroom

Observation task 1

1. Introduction and objectives

This observation task was carried out during a few different sessions that my placement tutor had with his students in the IES Andalán. The goal of this task is to compare the use of the L1 in different grades, 1st ESO, 2nd Bch, 4th ESO (Brit), to see any differences in the way the teacher addresses the students and specifically the use of L1 in these interactions as well as its use by students and the reaction of the teacher. As a countertendency to the previous trend of exclusively using the target language in the classroom, some researchers like Brown (2007), Ellis & Shintani (2014) have pointed out that there are some benefits in using the L1 in the English classroom such as serving as a scaffolding tool because students mediate in their interlanguage.

2. Results and discussion

Despite the difference in age, there is more similarity between the interactions in 1st ESO and 2nd Bch groups than those with the Brit program. During the observation period, the teacher was away for a week and a half taking some students on a trip to Germany, so during this time he gave the students exercises and tasks to do. However, the guardian teachers did not enforce these exercises. As a result, the teacher had to spend the days after his return finishing the exercises as well as correcting them and as a result there was little interaction.

The students in 1st ESO have a very low level of English. A few of the students are foreigners that have not had much formal education in their places of origin and much less English training. Of these, one has curricular adaptation, and she does exercises at her own pace. The rest of the students have more or less similar level, but rather low for their age. Due to the low level of the students the teacher rarely uses the target language in class other than when reading the sentences and exercises that the students are doing. Talking to the teacher about the L1 use in class he admitted he was not happy with the fact that he rarely used the target language. Similarly, the other teacher in the department teaching another group of 1st ESO also admitted she did not use English for instruction either because the class level is so low that if the teachers use the target language the students get lost.

3. Reflection and conclusion

This observation was meant to showcase instances in which the L1 was used in the classroom, in reality this was more prevalent than the use of L2 in the non-brit groups. I could not identify any specific strategy used to promote the use of L2 in the classroom other than asking the students to read the exercises to correct them. This in my opinion does not qualify as proper practice as the students are not really producing any language of their own but rather just reading a sentence out of context and focusing on a specific grammar to review.

The use of L1 or L2 is not necessarily linked to the type of tasks carried out as similar exercises are also done by the Brit groups with very different interactions. On the one hand I believe the most important key to introduce L2 in the classroom is getting the students used to the teacher speaking in English. It can be as simple as starting every lesson with a small talk with the students asking about their weekend, afternoon or general plans or interests. This can also lead to a stronger student-teacher relationship increasing their motivation and interest for the subject. However, it is also true that book center activities such as filling the gap does not create the affordances for students to create their own language.

Even though the use of Spanish in the classroom is not an issue, having it as the main medium of instruction is a lost opportunity to give input to the students. While the use of English in low level courses may be rather difficult for the students as they cannot follow the instructions, and this can be counterproductive. Yet this is not really an excuse as the teacher should in these cases give bilingual instructions, that is, first in English and then in Spanish. This is paramount for students to get used to the language and start using it themselves sooner than later. Otherwise, there is a clear danger of getting stuck in a rut in which the target language is rarely used and in turn hindering and slowing students' progress even further. This is a hard to break habit, so it is recommended to force oneself to use the L1 as much as possible.

Once English is established as the main vehicular language of the class, allowing a certain amount of mother tongue use can be helpful for students in different ways. There are no clear rules when the L1 is best used, and I think it depends greatly on the students' needs at the moment. So long as students use it punctually and not constantly every instance can be beneficial to students in some way or another. Other than that, it can be used to clarify or repeat instructions when they are more complex than usual or if there are time constraints for a lesson and instructions need to be given quickly and clearly. Moreover, the mother tongue can be used to make connections either of similarities or differences with the target language. This enriches their interlanguage and promotes learning through a metacognitive process beyond the simple language practice and use of the target language.

Observation task 2

1. Introduction and objectives

The second observation task was with the exact same groups as the first task. The objective of this task is to list all the different roles the teacher adopts during the classes to compare the performance he has in the different levels. With each teaching method come different roles that the tutor has to take. In a communicative approach the teacher tries to guide conversation with and among the students. On the other hand, traditional methods revolve around the teacher imparting knowledge on the students: drilling practices fill the time of the classroom.

2. Results and discussion

Similarly, as with the previous observation the teacher had to continue correcting exercises after he came back from the school trip. Once he finished, he continued doing book exercises with the 1st ESO group. For the 2nd Bch group, the lesson consisted of practicing the EVAU exams. Even though the classes followed a traditional format, several roles were noticeable in the classes.

The first group observed was 2nd Bch. The teacher adopted several different roles even though the tasks were mostly individual work and nowhere near close to a communicative approach. He had to be a manager as he had to provide tasks and help the students make a studying plan for the EVAU exams. This was done from the desk. Then, as a task provider, he selected specific exercises to practice in class, writing them on the blackboard and then correcting them. Here he had to take on giving feedback. On top of correcting and showing the right answer, the teacher also clarified the meaning of specific words as well as giving them quirky tips to memorize its meaning. To continue progressing with the lesson The teacher also had to time track how long they could afford to spend on each exercise as they have a time limit during their exams. Finally, the teacher also adopted the role of motivator. When students are not focused on the task at hand, the teacher needs to shift their focus back to the exercises and to motivate them to participate. These are not the only roles the teacher adopts, but these were the observations during this placement period as the students are focused on EVAU examinations. After further discussion with the teacher, he mentioned other significant roles in his teaching practice such as supporter and assessor, however, as explained in the previous task, the teacher does not engage as a model or as an activator as much as he believes he should, so these roles are laid aside more often than not.

For the 1st ESO had more or less the same roles as the previous group. First as a manager he tried to bring the class together. This is rather difficult as this group is very chaotic with children getting up and moving around, talking out loud across the room. For this reason, in this particular group the teacher often adopts a policing role. He has to also go around checking if they have done the homework before correcting them or otherwise, they just copy the answers. He also has to yell so that students stop talking and get focused on doing the exercise, and when this is not enough, he may threaten to give the students a warning note or

even a detention note. When the class goes by somewhat smoothly, the teacher can take his normal roles of proposing tasks for the students as well as to solve doubts.

3. Reflection and conclusion

After this observation it is clear that the methodology that a teacher applies in the classroom, some roles will be promoted above or in favor of others. Observing my tutor imparting from a teacher centered methodology, in which he follows the book, or students practice English through exercises and correcting these, the roles he had to take was that of manager, proposing tasks and even policing students so they do not talk in a disruptive manner or that they copy from each other's exercises.

The course being taught also highly determines what you can do. The English level of the students determines how communicative the lesson can be. As stated above, my tutor could not talk to his 1st ESO students as they could not follow the lesson. While at the same time he had the same issue of not talking to the students in English with the 2nd Bch students despite the fact that their level was good enough to have conversations among them. However, he had got used to some specific roles and disregarded others such as being an activator.

Regardless of the level, students will never learn to understand English if they are never spoken to in English. This is particularly important for 1st ESO students as the earlier they are activated the earlier they will get loose and be able to produce speech and express themselves.

Therefore, my conclusion is that the most important role for a second language teacher is that of an activator. This is clear when implementing any communicative approach, regardless of whether it is AoA or TBL. The fundamental, and correct in my opinion, assumption of these methodologies is that to learn a language it needs to be used in a meaningful context in which the student tries constantly to express their own ideas and not simple to drill perfect grammar through exercises.

Activity 2 Analysis of materials and reflection on implementation

1. Contextualization

During the first placement term, I informed my tutor of my intentions of implementing a project-based learning. He very kindly offered me to give as many lessons as I wanted to Brit 4th ESO groups. One of the groups was formed by 22 students that had very good relations among them, while the other had a more tense dynamic despite being only 12 students. I had complete freedom and just enough time to implement my project. The only condition imposed by my teacher was to teach the conditional structures.

During the time between the first and second placement I prepared a series of tasks and a lesson sequence for the project. The lessons were created for my "Design of Learning Activities EFL" course. All the activities were designed using the AoA and TBL approaches with a focus on peer communication. Having a final

outcome at the end of the unit helped give context and purpose to the different tasks and activities. The unit included an activity for listening, another for reading, writing and oral expression. Each activity was usually spread through several lessons. In total I imparted 17 lessons of 50 minutes to each group. I started with two introductory lessons, two sessions working on a mind map. One day working around a video. Two lessons for the reading activity and focus on form. A total of five sessions were used to prepare the oral presentation plus giving them in front of the class. Another four sessions were used for writing the final project, including giving peer feedback, and revising their work to incorporate said feedback. On the final day, it was time for assessment, for which I gave them a self-assessment questionnaire and I applied the ungrading technique of negotiating the grade with students (Spurlock, 2023; Blum 2020). This will be further explained at the end of the next section. I also used the questionnaire to get some basic feedback for my own teaching practice.

2. Analysis and Critique of material

This section will describe the purpose of the materials used, analysis of these, and their implementation. Along with a reflection and a critique to improve these materials based on the experience gathered through implementation.

First two lessons were dedicated to doing some introductory activities. On the first day we did an activity called two lies and truth to get to know the students and for them to know me. On the second day we finished the same activity with the larger group and in the second group we played 21 questions, a game in which they had to guess a word I thought of in only 21 yes-or-no questions. The purpose of these activities was to connect to students to create a more relaxed ambient in the class and group specific dynamics Dörnyei (1994) as well teacher-specific motivational component.

In retrospect, I could have prepared an initial assessment of their level and their usual mistakes to compare it at the end of the unit and therefore see their progress.

a. Foodstorming

The first real task prepared for the unit was to collaboratively make a mind map. The goal of this first session was to freshen up their vocabulary related to food and to generate words that they have not integrated yet. The activity was done following the thinking routine “generate, sort, connect, elaborate”. Following this structure, I projected a chart with different columns, and I encouraged them to say words to fill in the chart. They then had to sort the words in different categories and subcategories. Next, they had to create the mind map to connect the different words and ideas and see how some could be used in different categories. I found that they added very few words by themselves, while at the same time I gave them too many words to organize. Some examples of WAGOLL were also provided before they started working on the map. Finally on the next day students put the mind maps on their table and I gave them time to go around checking each other's maps. They then discussed in pairs what aspects of the different maps they liked and

how they could improve theirs. This second part worked very well, the pair discussions were good, and they had several ideas on how to improve their own work –Which they had time to do in class.

The main issue I encountered during this task was the few words the students had in their vocabulary beforehand. Instead, I would work directly with the words I provide outside the chart and then ask them to mark the ones they don't know. I would still let them choose and add the subcategories to them and organize them as we go. The second day would remain as it was.

b. Food Around the World

After introducing new vocabulary, it was time to introduce the main topic, food around the world. This task revolved around a video ranking their top 15 favorite foods around the world. The task consisted of an introductory chat with the students regarding foreign food they had tried and how they remember them. They were encouraged to use the words from the day before to describe texture, colors, smells etc. Then the video was played first without subtitles. While listening they filled up a chart with whatever facts they could gather about each of the meals mentioned in the video. The video was played a second time, now with subtitles in English. After the viewing I raised three questions to discuss in pairs. They were asked to write their answers and a summary of the main ideas of their discussion on the back of the paper. These were read and feedback was given on them, both of their ideas and their English language. They were then asked specific questions about the video to check their detailed reception. We finished correcting these questions on the next day.

Initially, the task was designed in a different order but I changed the implementation at the last minute because I thought it was more important to have the peer conversation with the ideas from the video still fresh instead of answering the more direct questions with straight answers and leaving the open conversation for the next day as I notice there would not be time to do everything in one session. Leaving the questions for the next day proved a good way to see how much they retained a day after. I noticed some areas to improve in this task, for instance the back of the paper could have the open-ended questions written behind so I can dispense with the ppt presentation.

c. Cookie Day

After finishing the post-task on the video, we jumped straight into the reading task. I gave the students my very own cookie recipe to read along with a homemade cookie to try. The goal of this task was to motivate students as well as to connect the words with a real-life experience. Furthermore, the recipe was also a WAGOLL for later in the sequence although I did not explicitly bring up the relevance of the recipe when they were writing their own.

The pre-task consisted of a small chat about their favorite dessert, after which I showed the cookies, I had brought. The students were astonished and went crazy, even jumping over the desks to get a cookie. To give importance to the experience I ritualistically guided them through how to eat the cookie by making them

hold it, touch it, look at it closely, close their eyes, smell it, break it, and finally eat it. After this I asked them to explain all the properties and characteristics of the cookie with the words they learnt a few days prior. Then I gave them the recipe to read by themselves and organize the paragraphs which was the main task. We then corrected the text.

Finally, they were asked to mark all the conditional sentences they found in the text to move to a focus on form for the post task which was continued in the next session. The day after I used some online material to explain the conditionals as I asked them to explain the differences in meaning between the different conditionals. At the same time, I wrote them on the blackboard confirming understanding.

The focus on form could have been more developed. I would include a whole lesson dedicated to practicing conditionals within the unit even if it was with an unrelated topic, this way switching a bit topic and making the project less tedious. Possibly using a game similar to "If I were..." "Would you rather" etc.

When I finished explaining the grammar we had just about enough time to make the groups to start working on the group project. I wrote the different culinary regions we were going to work with and asked them to rank them from their favorite to the least. This way I tried to give them their preference while still having more or less homogeneous groups. The students felt they had a choice in making the groups, but I had plenty of control as their first choice was not guaranteed. I tried to make groups that did not usually work together, although my priority was making similar sized groups.

d. Oral Presentation

To get acquainted with the regions they had selected, the students had to prepare an oral presentation which served to evaluate and give feedback on their speaking skills.

I first explained they would have to give a presentation about their group's cultures and one recipe per member as a final product of this task. Once they had the task clear we did a brainstorming mind map that was drawn on the blackboard with the word culture in the center and they said the branches (religion, history, literature, music, art, etc.). This was done to help them select a few of those aspects and used them as the presentation's introduction.

They had 3 days in class to prepare the presentations. Then two days were dedicated to presenting. After each presentation as a mini post-task, they had to vote for the healthiest recipe of each group as a class. Then from the remaining recipes each group selected another one just based on their liking. These two recipes were the ones used for the final written task.

Looking back, I believe the explanations could have been clearer as looking for a recipe each while researching something about the culture felt like two different tasks. In fact, my initial idea was to do two different tasks for this, but I didn't because of time constraints. Other than that, the group work with the computers went rather smoothly. I'll leave the analysis of this for later as its own section.

With this in mind, when time constraints are not an issue in a future implementation of the unit, I would separate the task into two different oral presentation tasks. First a presentation just talking about the different shapes and forms of culture in those regions and doing a presentation for this before the cookie session. Then a second presentation only focusing on finding one recipe per person in the group after the cookie and conditional lessons.

I also noticed that when listening to their peer presentations, the students were too still or doing something else. I could give them a listening task such as selecting the healthiest recipe in their opinion with an argument why that one and not the rest. Then take it as a written task that they can get more feedback on. I also consider giving them a checklist of what they could do, but I think this limits creativity.

e. Writing Task

The final task of the project was to take the two selected recipes and write the complete process as a group. I knew most of it would be copying the ideas or instructions from one source but the process of reading and selecting the information is in my opinion more important than writing itself.

After selecting two recipes per group, they had to work in groups to find reliable recipes. They worked on the recipes for 3 days. On the fourth day we used a session to give feedback and correct the mistakes before “publishing” or rather get the files ready to print in one file. I told them I would do this by the beginning of June and send them a single file all formatted. A promise I still have to fulfill.

This task could have been more guided. The feedback lesson was particularly chaotic. As I was running out of time, I could not spend a whole extra day on explaining how to give proper feedback or shaping the activity like a task.

I would improve this section of the unit in several ways. First, I would dedicate one day to explaining the process of writing through 5 different stages. I would spend one helping them compare two versions of the same recipe to see the different ways a recipe can be made and choose their favorite one or to even mix them into one. Then two more days need to be spent in writing the whole first draft. One day to give feedback by providing examples: two stars, one wish; glow and grow etc. One more day to the fourth stage of writing – editing the draft by incorporating feedback– and one more day to get the recipe print ready. Understanding the process of writing from the beginning would deter students from spending time at the beginning looking for pictures without barely knowing the recipe they are looking for.

f. Group Work with Computers

Even though working with computers is not a material used, I think it is relevant to mention the insights I got from this experience. On the one hand, I think it worked well. Students tried to talk to each other in English specially as I approached my walks around the class. The students asked for help and when they did not, I went to the groups to ask them questions about what they were finding or how far along they were. This not only helped me see the progress, but also to engage in conversations and small talk with them.

At times some students would go off track, talk to each other too much or even play some browser game or just linger on the task to procrastinate.

This could be because all the computer work had been concentrated in the two major tasks at the end of the unit. For a revised version in which computer work is more spread out across the unit this might be less of a problem

Another hurdle was that students had one or two computers per group so when working or when giving feedback it was registered as one person. Tracking who did what, and who said what to who was rather difficult. Ideally each student would have to use one computer, or at least sign in through their phones when writing comments.

Conclusion

This experience has been fantastic. I proved to myself that implementing a project-based learning methodology that aligned both with the AoA and TBL was possible and satisfactory both for me and the students. Despite the many constraints and hurdles that I had to salvage; the implementation was a success. Needless to say, that there are plenty of aspects to improve both of the materials and their presentation to the class. Thanks to this experience I have plenty of ideas on how to improve this unit and future units I may need to prepare.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Data for observation tasks

Teacher's reaction to students' use of the L1	Normal he answers in Spanish as well		allows it but tries to bring them back to english
When and what for do the students use the L1?	When asking questions to the teacher (in 1º ESO) In Bach: when asking stuff related to exams	1º ESO practicamente todo el rato	4ºESO (BRIT) only few words intrjections
Students' utterances in the L1			
When and what for does the teacher use the L1?	To solve questions that are asked in Spanish	To explain and give instructions about the EVAU Exam	To tell students to work when they are not doing the exercises.
Teacher's L1 utterances: (note down samples of actual data)			

Day: 2024-04-24

Class: 2 Bach

Teacher's role	Description and comments	Where is she/he?
Manager	He is providing tasks and a plan of things to do to prepare for the EVAU	By the desk
Proposing tasks	In order to practise EVAU exercises he's writing some exercises on the Bboard.	Black board
Motivator	When the students are not focused on the task the teacher has to call attention to them to start working on the exercises TBF it's the first day after 2 weeks off	By the desk
Solving doubts	The students didn't know a word in the exercise, and he explained what the word meant and some quirks to remember it	By the desk
Time tracking	So that students don't get stuck in one exercise he puts time pressure on them to finish the exercise and then correct them	By the desk

Day: 2024-04-25

Class: 1 ESO C

Teacher's role	Description and comments	Where is she/he?
Manager	tries to bring the class together but they are pure chaos, even on the best days. some days he talks to the class to give instructions or collect homework	moving around
Proposing tasks	Hector came back from a school trip and the guardian teacher didn't do the tasks he set up for the students to do	By the desk
Motivator		
Solving doubts	He's going around the class helping the students to do the exercises	Going around the class to help
Time tracking		
Policing	He had to yell so that the students stopped talking and would do the work	At the back of the class

Appendix 2 Materials analysed

Mind map after completion:

Cooking:	Textures:	Colors:	Flavors:
<u>Preparation:</u> Add Cut Chop Mince Spread Julienne Dice Slice Crush Peel Grind Shred Grate Melt Marinate Mix Muddle Pound	<u>Soft:</u> Soft Smooth Silky Velvety Tender <u>Hard:</u> Rough Solid Hard Crunchy <u>Chewie:</u> Chewie Jelly <u>Wet:</u> Moist Liquid Watery Wet Creamy Slick Thin <u>Grainy:</u> Crumbly Spongy	<u>Red:</u> Red Scarlet Crimson <u>Green:</u> Green Mint Lime <u>Blue:</u> Blue <u>Purple:</u> Purple <u>Orange:</u> Orange <u>Yellow:</u> Yellow <u>Brown:</u> Brown Chestnut Caramel Beige White Black Pink	Salty Spicy Hot Tasty Bitter Sweet Sour Spoiled Rotten Raw Savory Mint Lime Citrusy Vinegary Caramel Chestnut Plum Grape Tangy Zest Zesty Coffee Indigo Tart Buttery Sugary Honeyed BBQ Umami
<u>Cooking Methods:</u> Boil Bake Simmer (slow boiling) Puree Stir-fry Blanch Glaze Braise Grind Mix Toss (saltear) Fry Melt			

Food Around the World:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqcVT-X2hXs>

Cookie Recipe:

Now that the butter is cold, it is time to cream it with the sugar. Add the sugar to the big bowl and mix it with a whisker until the mix gets a creamy texture. It will take a few minutes of whisking by hand. The more you mix it the fluffier the cookies will be.

These cookies hit the spot on many levels. They are sweet, tangy, and salty with a nutty flavor. They are crunchy and crumbly while spongy and soft. To achieve these perfect contrasts, we need to pay attention to a few processes. Moreover, the measurements of each ingredient need to be very precise just as whenever baking sweets.

To bake the cookies, preheat the oven at 200°C, and make 50g balls. Place 6-10 balls spaced in a tray and bake them for 10 minutes. When the cookies come out of the oven, they'll still be soft, but they'll harden as they cool. Aim at baking them just as they start to golden before they toast completely. Wait until they are cold to eat and enjoy with friends and family.

The first step is to brown the butter. To do this, add 285g of unsalted butter to a small pot and warm it up to medium heat. It is very easy for the butter to burn instead of browning, so be careful. When the butter melts, the oil will separate from the white lactose product. Slowly swirl the pot so the white part gathers at the bottom. At some point the butter will start foaming and the white blob will become brown and grainy. Quickly take it off the heat and let it cool completely in a big bowl where the rest of ingredients will be mixed.

After mixing the egg yolks, add the rest of the dried ingredients. The dough will become hard to mix so use a wooden spoon or paddle to mix it. When it's fully mixed it should have a sandy texture that sticks into clumps.

While the butter cools down, weight the dry ingredients in other bowls. In one bowl mix 265g of white sugar and 265g of brown sugar. If you cannot find brown sugar, substitute it with more white sugar. In a different bowl measure 505g of white flour, add 2'5 teaspoons (tsp) of baking powder, and 1'5 tsp of salt (preferably coarse salt).

Finally, roughly chop and add the chocolate to the mix. To make sure the dough is well mixed, don't be afraid to use your hands. Just remember to wash them first. The dough can be baked immediately, but if it rests overnight in the fridge, more complex flavors will develop. If you use sourdough, it will be especially important to let the dough rest so that the bacteria do their thing.

Next add 4 egg yolks. Separate the white of the egg in a different bowl. It can be used to make meringue or some omelet. If you add the egg white to the cookie dough, it will turn out sticky and more difficult to handle at the end. The texture shouldn't change much after adding the egg yolks. It will just be a bit more dense.

Next add 320g of sourdough discard. Sourdough flour and water with active bacteria used traditionally to make bread and different types of desserts. If you don't have a sourdough ferment, mix 160g of water and 160g of flour.

Using sourdough will give the cookies a particular acidic and tangy flavor, but they will turn out great without it regardless. At this point the dough will feel like playdoh.

Appendix 3 Reflection think chart

THINK CHART/ PRACTICUM REFLECTION 2023-2024



Please describe the context in which you have completed your student teaching. Include an accurate description of what you have been asked to do, for whom and with which means and resources you have worked.

Context:
I have taught two Brit 4th ESO groups. One was 22 students, the other 12. The larger group was more cohesive and friends among them. The other had a more divisive environment.
I asked my tutor if I could do my teaching in the form of project-based learning, and he gave me free rein to implement it so long as I introduced the conditionals as part of the grammar. During the semester between the two practicums, I designed tasks for my students with this project in mind, so all the resources used were created by me and a classmate and reviewed by our "Designing activities" teacher. These included in order of presentation: 1) a vocabulary building session that used a "generate, sort, connect, elaborate" thinking routine while creating a mind map that was useful for the whole project. 2) A listening activity that activated the general topic of the project. 3) A reading task that was used to introduce two different focus-on-form, on the one hand they saw the recipe format and on the other hand it introduced the grammar as I was asked by my tutor. 4) As an oral task, students had to give a presentation about what they were researching about. 5) Collaborative writing tasks as the end-goal of the project was for each group to write two recipes in a long writing process that included draft, peer review, rewriting and editing spanning 3 different sessions. On top of this I had two introductory sessions to get to know the students and introduce myself. This helped me relate to and engage the students. To carry out task 3 students had 3 sessions to research together and prepare the presentation in class. This was done with the school laptops and letting them work in a group.

	GIVE YOURSELF A MARK FOR EACH OF THESE ITEMS FROM 1-4 where 4 is Outstanding 3 is Very Good 2 is Good 1 is Poor	Strengths: What do you feel you have been particularly successful at?	Weaknesses: What have been the challenges that you have faced?	Implications for future implementation: What have you learnt that you can apply to your professional future as a teacher?
<p>1. Classroom management Do you think you were successful in giving instructions? Which techniques proved more effective? Could you keep students on task?</p>	3	I manage well to explain students what they had to do, although sometimes I had to repeat instructions to specific students. Most got the idea on the first time but I had to repeat the instructions to more students that I'd like to	Sometimes the instructions were too complex. I noticed that when students had to do more than one thing within the task they got a bit overwhelmed	Give shorter instructions and if I want them to do several things break it in chunks that they can tackle one at a time
<p>2. Structure and timing of activities and sequences Did you structure activities and build sequences around them? Were you able</p>	4	For the most part I nailed the timing, and when not, I had simply to start the next task	Some difficulty arose in planning the amount of time dedicated for research and preparing the presentations	I would like to have more sessions just for in class group work. This can be a challenge as it feels the students are working too slowly.

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THINK CHART/ PRACTICUM REFLECTION 2023-2024

to plan the time dedicated to each activity accurately? If not, why do you think this was?				
<p>3. Variety of activities or tasks proposed Were the tasks and activities proposed varied? Did they provide varied sources of oral, written or multimodal input? Did they require different types of response (output) on the students' part? How did this variety might promote learning?</p>	4	The tasks included all the different skills, they had videos to watch articles to read and discussions about them were done as pairs, groups and whole class	I would include more listening activities in a project as long as this one to balance the amount of research time	Balance a bit more the activities between project work and non-project activities
<p>4. Clear aims Did you have clear aims in mind for the tasks and activities proposed? Did you manage to communicate them to the target learners? Were the activities well aligned with those aims?</p>	4	The aim was to create an intentional recipe book and all tasks revolved around it in different ways	Include more tangent tasks that are not so straightforward about the topic to widen the scope of their ideas when properly working on the project	I would continue working with project based learning
<p>5. Language as a means of communication and learning Was your instruction primarily focused on meaning? Did you manage to integrate language support and a focus on form? Were learners required/ supported to exert some agency (i.e. act upon the world/ upon their own learning process)? Did you support the use of communicative language strategies?</p>	4	Yes, the whole learning unit revolved around a final task for which they had to constantly mediate and communicate between them to find solutions and agree to do things in different ways. They were the primary agents of their learning, researching and finding information on their own, although I was always around to support them and help solve questions	I would include more focus on form. They saw focus on form for some grammar and also for the writing example and how to give feedback.	I would include focus on form at the end of the unit to correct the mistakes that are repeated the most
<p>6. Promotion of interaction How did you promote interaction between the students and/or between the students and the teacher? Was it</p>	4	The promotion of interaction was mostly through classroom management.	The only condition for letting them free range to tackle the project as they pleased was for them to talk to each other in English.	Them speaking in Spanish is okay and inevitable. However, I'd like to raise their awareness a bit

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through classroom management / through design features?		I went around asking them questions as they worked in the project in groups. some tasks were designed to work in pairs to have student-student interaction	This was not always successful, and they talked in Spanish but I managed to bring them back to English when they did so. Yet there's room for improvement	more so they keep each other talking in English.
7. Feedback and error correction Did you use specific tools or techniques to provide informative feedback to your students? Did you have a clear policy on error correction and were you able to follow it throughout?	3	When correcting writing and oral exercises I used the <u>ungrading</u> method in which detailed feedback is given along with tips to improve those aspects, however no grade is given so no distraction from the feedback. Then they <u>have opportunity</u> to improve on their work.	My policy on error correction was not clearly defined. When I saw errors being repeated I called them out. But I don't always correct the mistakes. I choose depending on each student what might benefit them better	Take note of the errors and dedicate one or two lessons to correct mistakes at the end of each project/learning unit
8. Use of ICT Did you manage to make good use of the resources provided by your mentor? Were you capable of effectively using other additional resources (to design and implement activities) or to help students to manage learning?	4	All the material was designed during "designing" course. these were mostly successful	Helping students manage their own projects was the most difficult aspect of the unit. I had never worked with project-based learning and I found it difficult to let go of class control so that students took charge	I would continue doing this but I would guide them better in taking control by including tasks that purposely teaches them independent work skills and methods
9. Other Please note any other elements (together with their strengths and weaknesses) which have not been mentioned above.	4 (motivation)	I think I managed to motivate and channel students energy into the project	Some of the more disruptive students were all over the place and was difficult to refocus them	I would include more sensorial experiences. Bringing them homemade cookies to talk about flavor and textures was a great success. It was also a fantastic way to engage and motivate them. I would bring them more things to experience sensorially