TFM modalidad B:
RAISING GENDER AWARENESS IN THE EFL CLASSROOM: E-Portfolio

Máster Universitario en Profesorado de Educación Secundaria Obligatoria, Bachillerato, Formación Profesional y Enseñanzas de Idiomas, Artísticas y Deportivas.

Tutora: Mónica Calvo

Especialidad: Lenguas extranjeras – inglés

Tamara Martínez Martínez

Curso 2013-2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction and justification

Gender equality is an issue that is thought to have been achieved nowadays but according to recent statistics there is still a room for improvement. Although women have acquired rights in terms of gender equality such as the access to a higher education and the entry of women in the labour market, there is still a gender gap between men and women in different stages of life. For instance, women are still paid less than men for performing the same job. According to the European Commission statistics the gender gap in Spain has increased from 11.5% in 2007 to 12.8% in 2011.

In addition, according to the last statistics of the Spanish Ministry of Health and Equality there were 37% of Spanish women who were killed by their partners or former partners from 2013 to 2014. Moreover, in a piece of research carried out by the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality and the University Complutense of Madrid it is shown that there is a risk that 32,1% of the adolescent boys become future abusers, 4.9% of the adolescent girls have been victims of gender violence and one out of five could be a victim of gender violence because they justify sexism and aggression as a way of dealing with conflicts. On top of that, with the development of the use of the Information and communication technologies (ICTs) among adolescents new types of gender violence have emerged.

Consequently, the purpose of this master thesis is to promote gender equality among adolescents and make students able to identify gender stereotypes in order to avoid them. It is also important to enable students to develop critical thinking on gender awareness not only to avoid being manipulated by the media but also to be able to think by themselves and define who they want to become in the future. Added to this, stereotypes are not static phenomena, they are constructed by people and they are changing throughout the historical context (Ovejero, 2010; pp.169-184). Education is therefore one of the most powerful tools to fight against gender discrimination because through education we can change and improve society due to the fact that education makes men and women equal. The Education Act (LOE, 2007) is blunt about this topic because it promotes the development of personality and effective equal opportunities between men and women among the purposes of education.

Furthermore, the family is also another important figure in the education community, so it is important to involve families into the educational system to make students aware of gender stereotypes in order to recognize and change them. It is also essential to make students understand the damages that stereotypes can generate in certain social minorities. People who are stereotyped and discriminated against tend to create a negative image of themselves; consequently, this fact influences the stereotyped person's self-perception, which sometimes can be assumed by society increasing discriminating issues (Crocker & García, 2010; in Ovejero; p.244).

What is more, textbooks are very influential in adolescents because they spend most of their academic journey learning through them. In addition, most of the students are visual learners (Felder, R.M. & Soloman, B.A., 1999; para. 10), so it is very important how images are represented on course books because these images will have a great influence on them. However, the best way for students to remember is through visual elements, such as pictures, diagrams, flow charts, time lines, films, and demonstrations. Also, in most clases the main source of information for students comes from textbooks and teachers present very little visual information (Felder and Soloman,1999; para. 10).

Regarding the organization of this project, it is divided into two main sections. The first part introduces the context of the teaching and learning proposal, the methodology that is going to be followed and a brief review of literature dealing with the topic of gender issues. Then, the main part of the project presents the proposal aimed at covering gender awareness and developing critical thinking. In this way, the proposal includes a learning unit based on gender equality and a portfolio to make students reflect on their own learning process and to help teachers improve their teaching strategies. For that purpose, this unit provides six lesson plans and the analysis of the proposal addressing gender discrimination problems.

2. Context and Participants

The unit of work "Define yourself!" (Appendix 1) is contextualised in the state-subsidized school Sagrada Familia, which is located in the neighbourhood of Casablanca, where my practical period took place. This learning unit is focused on the A group of the second grade of secondary education. The A group is composed by ten girls and eight boys. The A group students have a good level of English and they usually work in an effective way. However, as I could observe in the first period of my *practicum* the official teacher only followed the course book, what discouraged students, giving them a monotonous dynamic. Therefore, students showed no interaction and were not participative at all.

Although in the Aragonese Curriculum (BOA, 2007) there are some references promoting gender equality, there is not a specific section including principles to deal with this crucial topic in the classroom. This is why I have decided to create a unit of work based on gender equality –"Define yourself!"– to implement together with textbooks as a complement for teachers to promote gender equality among adolescents. In the high school Sagrada Familia educating students in democratic values is one of the main objectives. For instance, one of the aims of this high school is to prepare adolescents for their transit to their adulthood and their future involvement in society, promoting values like equality, a peaceful coexistence, sexual education, and healthy eating habits, avoiding any type of violence or discrimination. Regarding these democratic values the school creates a group of secondary-school students to mediate between their course-mates when there is a conflict and their objective is to prevent other students from being discriminated against by putting themselves in their mates' place. Although in the school's set of principles there are several educational workshops to endorse democratic values in students, these measures should point to a greater commitment to promote the development of gender equality among students.

3. Methodology

Regarding the methodology that is used to elaborate the proposal, the suggested activities are based on the communicative language teaching approach (CLT) and follow communicative principles. The CLT approach is based on the idea that the main goal of language is oral and written communication (Hymes, 2007). Nowadays, mastering communicative skills in English is a demand for learners because "English is a prerequisite for success and advancement in many fields of employment in today's world" (Richards, 2006; p.1). Therefore, CLT approach is an efficient methodology among students because it promotes the use of English as a tool for communication in the classroom, providing activities that simulate real-life communication. It is organized around tasks which are defined by Nunan as "a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, manipulating, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than on form" (1989; p 10). In addition, the use of authentic materials is very useful to motivate students as well as to present them a real context and a reason to learn English as a tool for communication. Additionally, an important ingredient of CLT is the information gap that is associated to real life communication, in which speakers usually try to use their communicative strategies and negotiation of meaning to create meaningful communication in real life. Therefore, skills should be integrated and not separately taught because it is in this manner that they are used in real life communication.

However, course books are not usually organized around tasks, and skills are taught separately. In addition, textbooks are designed to suit students' needs as a homogeneous group but classes are heterogeneous because students have different learning needs and learning styles. Regarding democratic values, which are prescriptive according to the Aragonese curriculum (BOA, 2007), textbooks contain some sections making reference to different cultures, which promote the intercultural competence. After having dealt with different textbooks during the teaching period it can be stated that there is a lack of gender awareness consideration. This is the reason why I do believe that textbooks must not be the only didactic material to take into account when teaching English as a foreign language in secondary education. Added to this, there are several complementary materials that should be used by teachers not only to cover students' individual needs but also to educate students in democratic values and to

connect students with real issues such as gender awareness that could be crucial to the development of their future lives and careers. Therefore, "it is important to connect the English classroom with other subjects of the curriculum because English is not a stand-alone subject. Task based learning reflects this approach and seeks to develop fluency in text types that can be used across the curriculum. Project work also is useful to allow students to explore other issues outside the language classroom" (Richards, 2011; p.25). Teachers could also modify, delete, reorganize or extend content (Richards & Bohlke 2011; p.36) if the textbook contains stereotyped images of men and women or simply if the activities that appear in the textbook do not have a communicative purpose or are irrelevant for students' needs.

In addition, cooperative learning is an important approach to instruction of CLT for avoiding stereotypes and promoting gender equality among students. The four basic principles of cooperative learning are called the PIES (Kagan 1994; p.1-2): Positive interdependence, individual accountability, equal participation and simultaneous interaction. Cooperative learning creates a positive interdependence in students because it creates a sense of belonging that implies that students cannot succeed alone, they need each other to learn and complete different group activities. Moreover, individual accountability is related to the idea that each individual contribution to the achievement of the task is required. Regarding the individual accountability principle, cooperative learning activities are designed to increase equal interaction between the members of the group. Simultaneous interaction increases learners' opportunities to communicate, for instance many of the cooperative learning activities are pair work activities because it is shown that opportunities for communicative interaction increase through these activities. Another important advantage of cooperative learning instruction is that it creates a positive classroom atmosphere so that none of the students is discriminated against and all students' ideas are valued. Cooperative learning lowers the affective filter contributing to the students' participation in the classroom because they do not feel the pressure of speaking in public due to the fact that they are supported by their group mates Through cooperative learning there is a greater comprehensible input because students adjust their speech to the level of their classmates when they are working together. In addition, there is a greater production of output because students have many opportunities to interact with their course-mates and practice the input students have acquired in the lesson. Cooperative learning could be useful to promote

gender equality because through different activities students create a sense of interdependence that avoids any kind of discrimination (Kagan, 1995; in Kagan, 1994; pp.1-3).

What is more, the use of ICTs in the ESL classroom is very advantageous to cover students' individual needs and promote gender awareness among students. As students have different cognitive styles, teachers have to be able to know students' different learning styles to create effective classes and learning. Students' cognitive styles are divided into visual learners, auditory learners and kinaesthetic learners. Visual students learn in an effective way through videos and graphic explanations of the teacher in the classroom while auditory learners acquire language through teachers' explanation or sharing their knowledge with their classmates in group-work activities. However, kinaesthetic students learn by doing activities physically such as role-plays (Richards and Lockhart, 1994) The use of ICTs is also relevant to learn a foreign language because students can acquire different linguistic features such as different accents as well as different cultures and customs that are relevant in order to learn English as a foreign language. Moreover, the digital competence is also essential to promote the key competence of learning to learn because students can acquire information through Internet participating in their own learning process (BOE, 5 January 2007). However, the role of the teacher is crucial to promote a safe access to information through Internet guiding students to be critical and encouraging to use the ICTs with an educational purpose avoiding any type of discrimination or bullying. This is the reason why it is important to encourage students to be able to recognize stereotypes, sexism and gender discrimination or violence that are usually represented across different social websites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Tuenti, so as to prevent and avoid them.

Finally, The learning unit " Define yourself!" considers most of the key competences included in the Aragonese Curriculum: the competence in linguistic communication (L1 and foreign languages), knowledge of and interaction with the physical world (science and technology), digital competence, cultural and artistic competence, learning to learn, personal initiative and autonomy. In this way, these competences are integrated throughout the six lessons dealing with gender awareness. According to the Aragonese Curriculum (p. 205-208) in the teaching of a foreign

language teachers should foster the morphosyntactic, pragmatic, procedural and intercultural competences. Hence, the activities proposed in the learning unit deal with these competences becoming the goal of the teaching-learning process.

4. Literature Review

The term gender has traditionally been associated with sex, which refers to biological identity as female or male. However, through the Anglo-American feminist discourse, the term gender has been associated to social, cultural and psychological meaning imposed upon biological sexual identity (Showalter, 1989, pp.1-2). Therefore, gender should be seen as a process of social construction and not as an isolated category. It is also associated with power due to the fact that throughout the history of gender relationships in every known society there exists genre inequality and male dominance (Showalter, 1989, pp. 3-4). However, male discrimination is increasing nowadays mainly with the need of selling beauty products: advertisements promote an "idealized" image of perfection on male and women that is impossible to acquire, thereby creating frustration on them. These images offered by the media create an ideal of beauty, which can produce many damages on people such as, eating disorders, low self-esteem and consequently depressions, gender violence and sexual harassment. It is believed that we live in an apparently equal society, although its representation in the mass media clearly reflects the opposite.

In addition, advertisements, films and magazines offer a stereotyped image of men and women that influences students' lives negatively. Stereotypes are cognitive structures that people use as mental pictures to simplify and understand reality (Lippman, 1992, in Ovejero, 2010; p. 242). Adolescents are very influenced by these images due to the fact that in this period of their lives they are physically changing and constructing their own identity and therefore, adolescents are very vulnerable to these stereotyped images that the mass media usually offers of men and women. From childhood to maturity women are associated with beauty and passiveness while men are more associated with action and power. These stereotyped images can be dangerous because they can influence men's and women's self-esteem and therefore they could predetermine their future.

These images appear not only on media advertisements or on TV but also in some textbooks where there is still a stereotyped image of women when representing professions, hobbies, and students' abilities. For instance, women are still related to the private sphere due to the fact that they are associated to the idea of beauty and households while men are related to the public sphere, usually represented as adventurous sports men, or associated with technology and business. According to (Lesser, 2008; p.347) "gender bias in schoolbooks is 'hidden in plain sight'. Their stereotypes of males and females are camouflaged by the taken-for-granted system of gender stratification and roles and this constrains girls and boys' visions of who they are and what they can become". Additionally, teachers should be aware of the representations of gender bias in textbooks, designing their own materials to promote gender equality and reflection on gender issues in the classroom as a tool for social change. Textbooks are therefore "a vehicle for norms, values and social behaviour through the representations that they contain" (Brugeilles & Cromer, 2009; p. 16). Hence, in order to promote gender equality in the English classroom teachers should analyse textbooks' representations of men and women to prevent students from being influenced by stereotyped images. Teachers, as models of behaviour, should also transmit democratic values and gender equality avoiding discrimination and promoting a positive classroom atmosphere of tolerance and acceptance.

According to Naomi Wolf (1990), beauty advertising is one of the main reasons why women have not achieved equality at the same level as men in the public sphere. In addition, women are more vulnerable to beauty advertising due to the fact that from childhood "what little girls learn is not the desire for the other, but the desire to be desired" (Wolf, 1990; p.157). Beauty advertising uses a persuading language that creates in women the need to buy these products to become part of the public sphere, which adversely affects women's self-esteem. Accordingly, "people who are vulnerable to cults have a poor sense of identity, which needs to be reinforced by becoming another person in as many ways as possible" (Wolf, 1990; p.126). Additionally, adolescents are vulnerable to this type of advertising so it is crucial that teachers provide students with the necessary tools to develop critical thinking towards beauty advertisements and gender issues to prevent students from being conditioned by them in the future. The objectification of women throughout the mass media is another common image that students are used to seeing as a routine. Moreover, "images that turn women into

objects have arisen to counterbalance women's recent self-assertion" (Wolf, 1990; p. 142). In this way, it is essential to transmit gender awareness in the English classroom and enable students to change this reality in the future.

What is more, gender violence is another important issue that must be dealt with in the classroom. The overall results obtained in a research carried out by Díaz Agudo Jalón & Carbajal Gomez (2010; pp.387-412) have shown that although adolescents reject very widespread sexism and gender violence, and are more likely to avoid abusive situations, cases of gender violence continue to be detected from the early ages. Hence, it is necessary to increase efforts to improve the eradication of this issue, bearing in mind that a single victim of gender violence is too many. In addition, the main risk for adolescents is the sexist mentality that underlies gender violence. Therefore, prevention should focus on the problem and evaluate its effectiveness. Also, it is essential to increase the use of tools and resources like teaching strategies promoting gender awareness to support children and adolescents who have gone through gender violence (either directly or indirectly). In order to stop violence and mitigate its potential consequences we must ensure the collaboration of specialist services and schools throughout the process. The prevention of gender violence requires certain conditions that favour their long-term effectiveness, including specific activities against gender violence. Added to this, digital literacy is crucial to teach students to use the ICTs properly and prevent and detect violent situations through technology.

5. Teaching-learning proposal

5.1. Learning Unit: "Define yourself!"

According to the methodological principles detailed above, the learning unit "Define yourself!" has been designed to avoid gender stereotypes and to create gender consciousness among students. The activities proposed in this learning unit have been created to be carried out together with the textbook in the second grade of secondary education of the high school Sagrada Familia. Some of these activities have been performed although others could not be implemented and have been created in this project to be performed in the future within a different teaching context.

The title of the unit, "Define yourself!", makes allusion to the idea that adolescents are usually constructing their identity in their transit to the adulthood. However, they are surrounded by different messages mainly launched through the mass media telling them how teenagers should be. The learning unit is divided into six lesson plans and each of the lessons deals with different topics related to gender awareness: *How do I look?, What is a stereotype?, Teen dating violence, Body image, Women discrimination across different culture*s and *Reflection on gender issues*. Each lesson plan contains an issue connected to a different gender matter to make students understand in a consecutive way terms and concepts related to gender inequality, gender violence and discrimination of men and women from all around the world.

It is worth analyzing each of the lessons in depth in order to show the manner in which these activities promote gender awareness while following communicative principles. In this way, this section provides an analysis of the proposal in order to give an example for future implementation in the EFL classroom. The learning unit and each lesson plan structure include the most relevant sections for organizing an English lesson such as learning objectives, outcomes, timing, grouping, and so forth. Therefore, the tables are included at the end of this project as an appendix (appendix 1) so as to facilitate the activities' implementation. To that extent, teachers could include these activities into their syllabus to promote democratic values in their EFL classrooms.

Regarding the assessment of these learning unit activities, the teacher will collect information by means of classroom observation, with positive attitude in the classroom and active participation and interest. Additionally, students will be provided with rubrics and checklists for peer assessment (Appendices; 2.C, 3.B, 4.B, 5.D, 6.E, 7.A)

Reflection on and awareness of gender issues consists of a few questions and activities addressing the contents learnt in each of the lessons. In order to promote the digital competence in the English classroom students will have to answer these questions and do the activities online for homework in the classroom's Wiki. This online resource is a web application in which students can upload their work and share their thoughts simultaneously. In this way cooperative learning is fostered because they contribute to their classmates' learning process. This web application constitutes the students' e-portfolio for the assessment of the learning unit. Additionally, the e-portfolio is aimed at making students reflect on the concepts developed in the English classroom promoting gender awareness. The e-portfolio will be used after each lesson as a way of strengthening the concepts dealt with in the lesson and encouraging students to form their own opinion about gender issues. Regarding the grading criteria, these online activities will constitute 50% of the final grade and the class work and teacher's observation will count another 50% percent of the final grade of the learning unit.

6. Analysis of the learning unit: "Define yourself!"

6.1. How do I look?

To begin with, the lesson plan *How do I look?* has been created to identify students' stereotypes towards other people regarding physical appearance and to enable students to avoid them. This lesson is used as an introduction to the next unit, which is based on stereotypes.

At the beginning of the activity, students are shown a PowerPoint (PPT) slide with two images of celebrities. For instance, Marilyn Manson and Lady Gaga. Then, they are asked to describe these celebrities physically and students have to try to imagine their personality; their background knowledge on descriptions is thus checked. Next, students have to argue why they think that these celebrities make a good couple according to the characters' personalities and likes. Then, students are shown a PPT presentation (Appendix I) based on how to describe people physically with the aim of revising adjectives and introducing new ones.

In the second part of the activity, students are given celebrity cards (Appendix I) and they have to write the description of the provided celebrities individually. Additionally, students are shown a PPT slide as a guide for them to facilitate their writing. Then, students are told that these characters are single and they have to find a couple having to move around the classroom to seek their corresponding partners. During the performance of the activity, there could be love background music to help students to get engaged in the activity. In this way, students work in pairs sharing their knowledge and using the cooperative learning principles. Finally, in the post-task activity students have to share with the rest of the class and justify their elected couple. The teacher shows the matching couples in a PPT presentation and asks questions to make students reflect on physical stereotypes.

Consequently, the learning objectives of this lesson are based on communicative principles by which learners have to use English as a tool for communication to perform the activities provided in the following section. Likewise, learners are urged to use their communicative strategies and negotiation of meaning to share their interests like in real

life communication. Moreover, students have to be able to recycle their previous knowledge about making descriptions as well as to acquire new vocabulary and learn how to use it in a specific context. At the end of this lesson, students have to be able to recognize and use adjective order to describe people in a real life situation. In addition, students will be able to write general descriptions according to certain organizational principles explained and reviewed in this lesson. They will have to argue and express opinions according to the couple election, being aware of physical stereotypes and prejudices when they describe and organize their couples.

Regarding differentiation, different learning styles are covered by means of the ICTs. Visual learners' needs will be addressed by means of visual aids like a PPT presentation and images. Aural learners will be taken into account through individual explanations made by the teacher and encouragement of communicative practices with the students' mutual support. Moreover, in this lesson kinaesthetic students will be able to take part in the classroom interaction cooperating with their partners.

Regarding my teaching experience during the practical period, I elaborated a survey (Appendix 7.B) in order to find out students' opinions about the activities carried out and the results showed that they had a positive attitude towards this activity dealing with physical descriptions and stereotypes. Additionally, this was the only lesson that was implemented related to gender issues. Due to the fact that it was their favourite activity it was a success because students were very motivated and engaged during the whole lesson. Indeed, the celebrity cards were created according to students' ages to increase their motivation. However, students organized couples in a stereotyped way, according to their physical appearance or the way characters were dressed instead of taking into account their personality traits. In sum, this activity showed that students judge people according to their physical appearance, which makes them associate certain personality traits according to the celebrity's clothing or hairstyle. In addition, although the celebrity cards were distributed randomly some of the students refused to describe their celebrity cards merely because these celebrities had different characteristics from the rest, having dreadlocks or a Mohican hairstyle.

Concerning the assessment of these lesson activities, the teacher will collect the students' summaries and will take into account students' attitude and interaction among them. Additionally, students will be provided with a checklist (Appendix 2.C) for the peer assessment of the activity to be filled in at home in order to promote collaborative principles. Also the written composition of their summaries and the oral presentation of the required information will be part of the assessment.

6.2. What is a stereotype?

The lesson plan *What is a stereotype?* has been designed to make students understand what stereotypes are in order to make students able to reject them. Media advertisements contain many stereotypes to persuade people to buy a product and adolescents are especially vulnerable to this type of advertising. In this lesson students will learn how to be critical with advertisements to avoid being influenced by stereotypes.

In the first part of the lesson, students are presented the concept of stereotype: "widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing" ("stereotype", 2014). Also, students are provided with examples like the stereotype of the woman as a caretaker. Then, to facilitate the understanding of the term students are shown a visual representation in which a stereotyped person appears in a specific situation to help visual learners to understand the concept in context. Next, in order to clarify the concept of stereotypes in our society, the teacher draws two boxes on the blackboard and asks students to identify examples of stereotypes associated to men and women in our society. *Examples:*

Men do not cry

Women's place is at the kitchen

Then, in the main task, the teacher gives students an activity sheet (Appendix 3.A) with the sentences related to gender stereotypes and asks them to induce grammar on comparatives by writing sentences with the gender assumptions. Through the accomplishment of this task students will recognize gender stereotypes and avoid them while they construct sentences using comparatives. *Example:*

Women are weak. Men are strong.
Women are not weaker than men

In the post-task activity students show that they have understood the concept of stereotypes through the creation of a neutral advertisement, which must not contain gender stereotypes. Students are given an example of an advertisement based on genre stereotypes and they are asked to answer some questions related to the video to help them identify and analyze gender stereotypes. Then, the teacher organizes students in groups of four and asks students to create an advertising slogan to sell a beauty product avoiding stereotypes. Students have to record their advertisements performance with their cell phones and their recordings will be uploaded to the e-portfolio for further reflection on this activity for homework.

At the end of this lesson students will be able to recognize and avoid different types of stereotypes as well as to be able to understand and explain with their own words the meaning of stereotypes looking for some action points to avoid them. Through this lesson it is also crucial to make students aware of the negative consequences that stereotypes could cause in certain social minorities in our society. According to the contents of this lesson, students will have to induce grammar on comparatives, reviewing the contents learnt in the previous lesson, through a classroom debate. This lesson is based on communicative principles and students have to be able to express their opinion related to different topics by participating actively in classroom discussions. Cooperative learning principles are used in this lesson, in which students have to work in groups creating and advertisement avoiding gender stereotypes and sharing their knowledge in a cooperative way.

Regarding the evaluation of this activity the rubric (Appendix 3.B) to evaluate the advertisement created by the students will be provided to the students in order to help them perform the activity. Students' attitude, performance and oral communication skills will be evaluated in this activity. In addition, students have to use ICTs to record the advertisements they have devised through their cell phones and the following week they will present them to the class. Another option can be designing a PPT presentation using images and explaining students' chosen products to the classroom and arguing why they are avoiding gender stereotypes. This activity will be carried out for homework and uploaded to the students' e-portfolio.

6.3. *Teen dating violence*

The lesson plan *Teen dating violence* is focused on identifying violent signs in students' first relationships. It is important to detect and understand the different types of violence to prevent teen dating violence and gender violence. At the end of the unit students will be able to identify violent signs, be aware of them and consequently avoid these practices in the future.

To introduce the topic, students are asked to brainstorm their ideas on gender violence, so as to identify what kind of perception students have on gender violent signs in a relationship. In this way, students use their previous knowledge on the topic and the teacher has the opportunity to know the students' personal opinion and correct any misconception on the topic. The use of English is promoted during the whole lesson. Brainstorming activities are good for improving the teacher's relationship with students because they share their personal opinion freely, so that the affective filter is lowered and there is a positive classroom atmosphere. The teacher must not overcorrect students in this kind of activities to help learners to develop fluency and increase students' participation. In addition, the teacher should ask focused questions to students as illustrated in this example:

> *In a relationship, if the boy controls the cell phone messages of his girlfriend, is it a sign of gender violence?*

Then, the teacher provides laptops to students and in pairs the teacher asks them to look for information about what gender violence is. Students have to create a mind-map with the main ideas of a web site related to gender violence. This activity promotes the autonomy of the students because they have to learn how to search information through a website. Additionally, reading skills are used because students have to skim and scan a text to understand the whole concept of teen dating violence. Creating a mind-map is a good way to help students organize their ideas to create a draft for writing.

Moreover, in the main task students will have to recycle the vocabulary and the concepts that they will have acquired in the previous activity to write a letter of advice to an adolescent who has suffered from teen dating violence. The teacher provides a model of a letter of advice to guide students in the writing process. In the post-task activity the teacher will play a video on gender abuse and ask focused questions on the

topic. Students will have to perform this activity for homework through the e-portfolio (Appendix 8.D) in which they will show their understanding of the topic as well as their personal opinion. Some of these questions will be commented on in the classroom and students will share their thoughts:

What kinds of gender abuse could you identify from this video?

Do you think that Bella Swan, the main character of the Twilight film suffers from gender abuse?

Do you think that when someone controls you it is because he/she loves you?

Do you believe that being jealous is a sign of love?

The main goals of this lesson will be to make students aware of violent signs in their first relationships and know how to act. It is very important that the teacher offers students relevant information such as the places where they can go in case of suffering teen dating violence as well as gender violence helplines. Also, students will learn vocabulary related to gender violence and how to extract specific information from a text. They will also know to write a letter of advice to a girl or boy who has suffered from gender abuse offering their support, thereby promoting the students' social commitment. Finally they will learn how to judge violent signs from a clip on the *Twilight* series film and share their opinion on the topic. To conclude, students will have to reflect on gender violence in the student´s portfolio for homework (Appendix 8.D). The assessment of this lesson will be covered by means of the written productions in the letter of advice. Students will be provided with a checklist (Appendix 4.B) including teacher expectations for their writings.

6.4. *Body image*

The lesson plan *Body image* deals with the idea of beauty and how the mass media manipulates it with the purpose of selling products. Students are physically changing at this stage of their lives so it is essential for them to learn how to judge advertisements' images. It is also important to encourage students not to discriminate people for their physical appearance and not to practice bullying because they can cause dramatic consequences on discriminated people.

At the beginning of the lesson students should be organized in groups of four and be asked to create a mind-map on what *body image* means. Then, students should be encouraged to share their findings with the class. The teacher should check their answers and show a definition of *body image*:

> "How you think and feel about your body. Body image involves your perception, imagination and emotions. Our body image may not be accurate. Many people think they are overweight/underweight when they are not. A positive body image exists when we feel satisfied and happy with our body. A negative body image is when you feel dissatisfied and unhappy with your body or appearance. It is about feelings and thoughts more than perceptions". (Better Health Channel, in Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria, 2011) -

After having described and understood the meaning of body image in society the teacher hands out cards of beauty products advertisements (Appendix 5.B) and organises students in pairs providing one laptop for every pair of students. Then, students have to create two PPT slides describing the advertisements. The teacher should show students some models on how they have to carry out the activity (Appendix 5.A). After finishing this activity, students will share their descriptions with the class. Additionally, the teacher provides students with a Glossary of concepts that could help them to carry out the activity (Appendix: 5.C). At the end of the lesson the teacher plays a video on physical discrimination and bullying to create students' awareness on this topic. Then, students are asked to take a piece of paper and write down if they were discriminated like the girl of the video and how they felt about it. Finally, the teacher asks students to share their thoughts on the video or telling their personal experiences related to the topic.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dik1oNlvSng (Martial Arts Industry Association, 2012)

To create bullying awareness, students will have to develop a role-playing activity in groups of four students. One of the students will play the role of the victim and the rest of the students will be the abusers. Students will have to create a script using the vocabulary learnt in this activity as a measure to prevent and avoid bullying in

the future. The main goal of this activity is to put students in the place of a victim who suffers from bullying as well as to propose measures to avoid it in the future. Students will present these activities in the classroom the following week but their reflections on bullying and body image will be uploaded to the students' e-portfolio (Appendix 8.E). Concerning the assessment for the evaluation of the role-playing activity students will be provided with a checklist (Appendix 5.D) included in the assessment section in the students' e-portfolio accessible to students.

At the end of this lesson students will have to be able to be aware of how beauty advertisements influence society and learn how to judge these images. They will have to be able to analyse these beauty advertisements using their writing and speaking skills by creating two PPT slides and presenting them to the class. Moreover, they will be aware of the harm that bullying can cause in the victims by using their creativity and their speaking skills to perform a role-playing activity about a bullying instance.

6.5. *Women discrimination across different cultures*

In the lesson plan *Women discrimination across different cultures* students will learn how women´s rights are violated in other countries. This lesson plan promotes intercultural competence because students learn how women are discriminated against in other countries by cultural or religious reasons or simply because they are women and they are considered inferior to men.

Firstly, the teacher distributes newspaper´s headlines of different articles (Appendix 6.A) about women discrimination across different countries. Then, students have to work in pairs analyzing the newspaper´s headlines and after that, they will share their comments with the rest of the class. In this activity the role of the teacher is to help students analyze the headlines by asking focused questions on the topic and adding relevant information to make students aware of the situation of women throughout other cultures. After having made students aware of the situation of women in other cultures, the teacher organizes students in groups of four and hands out activity sheets to carry out the activity *"Equality land"*. In the activity sheets containing handprints (Appendix 6.B) students have to write down in each handprint a measure for avoiding women discrimination in *Equality land* and things that women could do if they lived in *Equality Land*. The teacher emphasizes the idea that in this imaginary world sexual harassment, gender discrimination and gender violence do not exist, and that it is in the student´s

hands to change this reality and promote gender equality from all around the world. Students will have to practice the future tense to carry out this activity.

Ex: *In Equality land women in Kuwait will vote.*

In Equality land more women will be born in China

Finally, students will have to perform a jigsaw activity. The teacher has to hand out parts of the same newspaper´s article (Appendix 6.C) on women discrimination from all around the world to each member of the same group. The rest of the groups have different parts of the same article, students have to move to other groups rephrasing their articles' main ideas to complete the whole story with their original group. The teacher will provide an activity sheet with the instructions to carry out this activity (Appendix 6.D).

For homework, students will have to reflect on the different issues dealt with in the classroom about women discrimination from all around the world and upload the jigsaw activity sheet (Appendix 8.F) to the student´s e-portfolio, which will constitute the assessment of the lesson.

6.6. *Reflections on gender awareness*

The last lesson plan, *Reflections on gender awareness,* is devoted to the elaboration of the student´s e-portfolio. Although students' reflections on gender awareness have been carried out for homework at the end of each lesson, students will share their reflections in groups in order to promote cooperative learning among students. In this way, students can see different points of view by means of comparing their own reflections to their classmates' opinion on gender issues. Therefore, students learn from each other sharing their knowledge in a group discussion using English as a tool for communication.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher organizes students in groups of four and provides students with laptops to review their individual reflections uploaded in the student´s e-portfolio. Students will have to choose one of the topics dealt with throughout the learning unit related to gender issues and explain the main concepts and their general reflections of the selected topic. The guide for the final reflection on

gender issues is uploaded in the e-portfolio as well as the checklist to assess the portfolio to facilitate students' elaboration of the final project (Appendix 6.A). In this lesson students will have to create a PPT presentation explaining the main features of the selected topic and their final reflections on gender issues as well as their proposal for future improvement related to gender issues. In other words, students have to explain how they are going to contribute to promote gender equality in their future. Moreover, this PPT presentation will be uploaded to the e-portfolio and a student´s voice recording explaining in their words the main points of their PPT presentation as well as their reflections on what students have learnt during the process of the elaboration of the e-portfolio.

7. Assessment of the learning unit: e-portfolio

After finishing the five lesson plans, the sixth lesson plan will be devoted to a group reflection dealing with each of the topics included in the learning unit on gender issues. Some of the activities proposed in the learning unit have been created to be performed through an e-portfolio (Appendix 8) to make students reflect on their own learning process, enhancing the learning process as well as promoting critical thinking on different topics related to gender awareness. In addition, the e-portfolio not only allows students to reflect on their own learning process but also it is very useful to personalize students' learning, solving individual doubts as well as helping teachers to reflect on their own teaching process.

The e-portfolio will be composed by the questionnaire for reflection that students have to do as homework at the end of each lesson plan. Hence, at the of the lesson plan each student will have five questionnaires with their personal reflections regarding stereotypes, teen dating violence, body image and gender discrimination of women from all around the world. This e-portfolio contains a section in which students can ask and solve their doubts during the implementation of the whole learning unit. Another section of the portfolio is devoted to the process of the student´s elaboration of activities proposed in the e-portfolio. In this way, the teacher can evaluate the whole process of the elaboration of the student´s e-portfolio and not only the final result.

Most of the activities of the e-portfolio are based on the constructivist theory of learning, which is based on the idea that learners construct knowledge from their previous experiences. Therefore, the role of the teacher is to formulate good questions to guide students to obtain knowledge, but the learner is responsible for their own learning process. Students are not passive beings who have to be filled with knowledge, they have to participate in their own learning process so that meaningful learning takes place. The teacher acts as a facilitator that directs, mediates, promotes and helps students to develop and access to their knowledge producing an effective learning (García Aretio, 1989).

The e-portfolio is a good tool to prevent students from memorizing the contents of a subject to pass a test instead of acquiring knowledge which could be useful to their future careers. Added to this, "the learner's reflections are the rationale that specific artefacts are evidence of achieving the stated standards or goals. An electronic portfolio is a reflective tool that demonstrates growth over time" (Barrett, H., Carne. J, 2005). Therefore, using an e-portfolio to promote students' reflection on gender issues is a good way to reflect upon issues connected to the real world in depth. In this way the e-portfolio promotes a life-long learning process due to the fact that students' reflections and tasks are recorded, which could be useful for learners to reflect on their own learning process at the same time as it allows teachers to reflect on their teaching process.

What is more, an e-portfolio can be useful to increase students' intrinsic motivation because students can use computers as they do in their real lives to communicate, create and share information with their classmates (Attwell, 2005; pp. 119-127). The use of focused questions is another essential tool to motivate students intrinsically due to the fact that questions can present a challenge to the students because they can bring students' curiosity to further investigate independently. This idea is associated to Buchberger, who argues that "the problem may be that to move beyond the superficial requires intrinsic motivation. As such it is not possible to 'teach' someone how to reflect. However, it is possible provide learners with the skills required for reflection and to practice those skills and equally to provide a stimulus to encourage reflection" (2005, in Attwell 2007; p.10). Moreover, sharing checklists and rubrics with students through an e-portfolio increases students' self-confidence because they can be

aware of the evaluation criteria and it makes it easier for students to achieve their objectives to perform an activity.

The e-portfolio can be used as a one-minute paper, in which students answer some focused questions to reflect on what they have learnt during the class The "one-minute paper" is an anonymous short-writing used at the end of the class to check students' understanding about different topics.

While one-minute paper was originally designed to assess student learning at the end of a day's lesson, it may be adapted for use at times during class and for other purposes. For instance, instead of being used to provide feedback to the instructor about whether students have mastered a course concept, one-minute papers may be used as a learner-centred reflection strategy to help students actively discover personal meaning in a concept covered in class, and to build instructor-student rapport (Cusoe, 2012; p 13).

However, the use of the one-minute paper through an e-portfolio can be more effective because students answer the questions related to the main topics of the lesson at home, so that students have more time to reflect on them and there is no pressure to answer quickly. This idea helps teachers to meet students' individual needs because there are students who need more time to complete and activity whereas other students finish the activities too fast. The e-portfolio to reflect on gender awareness not only contains questions to reflect and review what students have learnt in the classroom but there are also videos and activities to foster the critical thinking of the students individually.

8. Conclusion

As has been stated throughout this project, gender issues are not covered in most of the English lessons and the importance of students' awareness and reflection on the topic has been shown. Throughout this paper I have tried to show the importance of the development of critical thinking on gender matters for the future of students. Moreover, course books seem to increase the problem by offering stereotyped images of men and women in different contexts. Hence, in this project I have included a proposal to put an end to this situation and promote gender equality by increasing students' awareness.

For the accomplishment of the objectives dealt with in each of the lessons, teachers are encouraged to follow methodological principles concerning CLT, Cooperative learning and the use of the ICTs to address differentiation in the EFL classroom. In addition, teachers should take into account their own teaching context, trying to foster democratic values such as gender equality in every subject taught considering the implications that gender issues may have in students' lives.

To that extent, the teaching-learning proposal addresses key aspects concerning the raising of gender awareness in the EFL classroom. Therefore, the suggested lesson plans try to avoid gender violence, gender discrimination, stereotypes and prejudices associated with images. What is more, this learning unit promotes students' reflection to keep students away from these harmful practices. In addition, the assessment of the learning unit through the e-portfolio provides both students and teachers with an account of the learning process and students' development of critical thinking.

To conclude, the whole teaching proposal will help my future teaching career and will provide a guideline for the implementation of democratic values in the English classroom. Moreover, I encourage teachers to get involved in their students' future and to take action on the matter of promoting gender awareness in the English syllabus for future improvement.

9. Works cited

Attwell, G. (2005). Recognising Learning: Educational and pedagogic issues in e-Portfolios, In e- Portfolio 2005: *Transforming individual and organizational learning* (2005); pp. 119-127

Attwell, G. (2007). E-Portfolios – the DNA of the Personal Learning Environment? Journal of e Learning and Knowledge Society, 3/2. Retrieved from http://jelks. maieutiche.economia.unitn.it/en/07_02/05Art_attwell_inglese.pdf

Barret, H., Carney, J. (2005) Conflicting Paradigms and Competing Purposes in Electronic Portfolio Development. Retrieved from http://electronicportfolios.org/portfolios/LEAJournal-BarrettCarney.pdf, assessed 14 May 2007

Bernal Ovejero, A. (2010). *Psicología social: algunas claves para entender la conducta humana.* 1st ed. Spain: Biblioteca nueva.

BOA, Orden of May 2007

BOE Orden of January 2007

Brugeilles, C., Cromer, S. (2009). *Promoting Gender Equality through Textbooks: A methodological guide*. France: Unesco.

Cuseo, J. (2007). *An Efficient & Effective Strategy for Promoting Students' Active Involvement and Personal Reflection*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://www.lasc.edu/faculty_staff/staff_dev/documents/One-Minute-Paper-12.pdf. [Last Accessed 25 August 2014].

Cuseo, J. (2012) Effective teaching strategies for first-year seminars & first-year courses, in Seven Universal Principles of Student Success (2012); *Kentucky student success Summit: Kentucky council on postsecondary education*; p.13. Retrieved from: http://cpe.ky.gov/NR/rdonlyres/E9004BDA-2060-432F-8D8D-54907AE0BC15/0/SevenUniversalPrinciplesofStudentSuccess.pdf

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, Victoria. (2011). Seeme Media Literacy web. Retrieved July, 25 2014, from: http://www.seeme.org.au/glossary.html

Díaz Agudo Jalón, M. J. & Carbajal Gomez, M. I. (2010). *Iguadad y prevención de la violencia de género en la adolescencia*. 8th ed. Contra la violencia de género. Documentos.Spain: Ministry of Health, social Services and Equality and the Complutense University of Madrid.

European Comission (2014). *Gender pay gap statistics*. [ONLINE] Available at: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Gender_pay_gap _statistics. [Last Accessed 26 August 2014].

Felder, R.M., Soloman, B.A. (1999). Learning styles and strategies. Retrieved July 12, 2014, from http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSdir/ styles.htm

García Aretio, L. (1989). *La educación*: *teorías y conceptos*. Ed. Paraninfo. Madrid.

Hymes, D. (1972). *On communicative competence.* In Pride, J.B. and J. Holmes (eds.), *Sociolinguistics* (pp. 269-293). Londres: Penguin Books.

Kagan, S. & J. High. *Kagan Structures for English Language Learners.* San Clemente, CA: Kagan Publishing. *Kagan Online Magazine,* Summer 2002.

Lesser Blumberg, R. (2008). The invisible obstacle to educational equality: gender bias in textbooks. *Prospects* Vol. 38, pp.345–361

Martial Arts Industry Association (2012, July 7). We Are Human Bully Awareness & Prevention [Video file]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dik 1oNlvSng

Ministerio de Sanidad, Servicios sociales e igualdad Gobierno de España (2014). *Violencia de trata de mujeres*. [ONLINE]. Retrieved from: https://www.msssi.gob.es/ssi/violenciaGenero/portalEstadistico/home.htm. [Last Accessed 25 August 2014].

Nunan, D. (1989). *Designing tasks for the communicative classroom*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. (2006). *Communicative language teaching today*. 1st Ed. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Richards, J. & Bohlke D. (2011). *Creating effective language lessons*. 1st ed. USA: Cambridge University Press.

Showalter, E. (1989). *Speaking of gender*. 1st ed. Great Britain: Rouletdge.

Stereotype (2014). Oxford Dictionaries: Language matters. Oxford University Press. Retrieved from: http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/es/definicion/ingles/ stereotype

Wolf, N. (1990). *The Beauty Myth*. 1st ed. Great Britain: Chatto & Windus Ltd